buffalo jazz report

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Issue 42
Free

Buddy Rich
Lionel Hampton
Emil Palame

Big Bands!
also: Art Pepper interview

AUG 22 1977
Big Bands!

During the month of August, anyone who enjoys big bands will be able to satisfy their appetite with little or no problem. Lionel Hampton will be at Eduardo's on Bailey for two nights with his orchestra. Hampton began as a drummer, and later switched to vibes, becoming the first jazz musician to play the instrument. His first recorded vibes solo was done in 1930, with the Les Hite band then fronted by Louis Armstrong. He played with the famous Benny Goodman Quartet (w/Krupa & Teddy Wilson) for four years, and formed his own orchestra in 1940, which he's led ever since. Buddy Rich, one of the best known drummers in the world, comes to Eduardo's for a one night stand. He recently sold out an appearance at the same club. Rich, a drummer of phenomenal technique and drive, started working on stage at the young age of 18 months, with his parents vaudeville act, playing "Stars & Stripes" on a snare drum. After working with many big bands, he formed his own in 1946. In addition to a host of albums as a leader, he can be heard on discs with Charlie Parker, Count Basie, J.A.T.P., Art Tatum and others. Rich, whose talents also include singing, tap dancing and acting, always features first class musicians in his bands.

Emil Palame's 16 piece band can be heard at Edurados, The Tralfamadore & Starvin Marvin's. Emil led the "Fredonia Jazz Ensemble" for three years. He graduated last year and at age 23 is leading a screaming band, playing a good amount of gigs in the area. Most of the arrangements are his, and some come from trumpeter Howie Shear. Saxophonist Dick Griffen was on the band's album - Make Room (Mark Records), and played the band's first Tralfamadore gig a few months ago. He's now with Woody Herman! The Palame band will also appear at the Artpark Jazz Festival next month, opening for Stanley Turrentine. We've just received word that bassist Gerry Eastman's "Little Big Band" will be at the Tralfamadore the last two Sunday nights of August. The band is made up of some of the finest jazz musicians. Eastman is a member of Birthright, one of the cities foremost jazz groups.

For information on these events, consult the ads in this issue for Eduardo's, The Tralfamadore & Starvin Marvin's.

GARY BOVE

The director of entertainment for the Statler Hilton's Downtown Room, Gary Bove, died of cancer on July 4 at age 27. Bove, an attorney, served as legal counsel to Bill Hassett as well as tending to Downtown Room operations and those of Improv records. He was responsible for booking such artists as Stanley Turrentine, Kenny Burrell & Phil Woods into the club. A man who preferred to remain behind the scenes, Gary Bove did a lot for jazz in Buffalo and is surely missed.

HANCOCK, SHORTER, CARTER, WILLIAMS & HUBBARD AT SHEA'S BUFFALO

The V.S.O.P. Concert July 8 could quite safely be termed the jazz event of the year - it would be hard to top it. A better name for this band is the alternate used in the promotion of the event - "The Quintet."

I attended the first show, during which they played two of modern jazz' most popular compositions - Hancock's Maiden Voyage and Shorter's Nefertiti. Free of electronics or funk, the band played masterfully - perfect ensembles and magnificent, though often laid back, soloing.

There were some problems, however. The concert started about an hour late, and the amateurish sound company blasted everyone out of their seats when John Klemmer's band opened the concert. The sound was uncomfortable - distorted to the point of not being able to distinguish between the instruments. Klemmer put on a decent performance, but his band wasn't quite up to his level. The best moments were his solo saxwork and a duo with his pianist.

The sound was better for the quintet, but Herbie had to keep standing up to give hand signals to the sound people before there was any balance. Shorter was relaxed and reflective and
HANCOCK and CARTER
his soloing the same. Williams re-assured everyone that he's one of the elite jazz drummers. Carter was incredible. Herbie, on acoustic grand piano, a remedy for sore ears and eyes - dressed conservatively in white shirt and black pants and playing as I knew he could be almost forgot. Hubbard started off poorly, but the lack of applause let him know the audience wanted no bull. Then he burned. No-one stole the spotlight in any way - an equal partnership.
Since it started late, the band quit after playing five tunes.

photos: Bob Riley
For the amount of time people were applauding there could've been a short encore, but there was none. The band played less than an hour.
I'm told that the second show went on much longer and the band stretched out more, with a different program of tunes.
Musically speaking, it was a concert no one should have missed. And, though there were numerous faults with the production, Festival deserves a word of thanks for making it happen.

B.W.

MORE HOT WAX ON

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ART PEPPER
Speaks With
Hal Hill

The great alto saxophonist Art Pepper has made a smashing comeback to the scene after being inactive for almost a decade. Jazz fans were first treated to two magnificent newly-released albums on Contemporary Records - Living Legend, with the late Hampton Hawes, Charlie Haden & Shelley Manne; and The Trip - with Elvin Jones, George Cables & David Williams. Then Art played New York, receiving standing ovations at the Newport Jazz Festival, as well as the same type of acclaim from critics and listeners afforded Dexter Gordon last summer.

Art appeared at Bourbon Street nightclub during the week of June 13th-18th. This was his first tour as a jazz soloist away from the State of California. (He had toured with the Kenton Orchestra in the late 40s). During the week's engagement Art and his wife Laurie spent considerable time with BJR correspondent Hal Hill, who conducted this interview with Art. The interview and recordings from recent releases were used on Hal's programme "From Bop to Now" on CKQS-FM 94.9 on Saturday, July 16th, under the sub title "ART PEPPER TODAY - A MAN AND HIS MUSIC."

Hal: Who do you listen to today?
Art: For historical purposes I listen to John Coltrane, Pres & Bird. For inspiration now it's Miles. Today I really listen to everything, unlike many other people, I listen to singers, country music, rock, all blues. I kind of like everything, anything, so long as it's good, classical music, anything that's done well, I like and appreciate. Usually I find that my mood tends to direct what I listen to. I have a Bill Withers 8 track tape in my car that is just marvelous, and when I'm in a certain mood I'll put the Bill Withers tape on. Also, my wife has a tape that she put together of some different singers, a side that I did with Melanie - the Photographs album. But if I'm in jazz mood, I'll listen to the last album I made, just to learn - what I did wrong, or right, just as a learning experience.

Hal: To where you've progressed to?
Art: Right, the things I like, and didn't like, it all depends on my mood. But if we are talking strictly about jazz, then I will listen to Miles.

Hal: You mentioned the other night in the club that Miles was one of your inspirations. Now of course Miles plays trumpet, why would you lean towards that kind of inspiration, because of his rock fusion, or because of his advanced techniques?
Art: He is music to me. He is jazz music. He is so great, that it is just beyond comprehension. I have his Live Evil tape, the first time I played it I really didn't like it that much, and then I played it again, and every time I played it I liked it more. And the guys in the band, DeJohnette, Chick Corea, Dave Holland, John McLaughlin, Gary Bartz, the whole band was fantastic, beyond description. Then when Miles came in they were playing this simple little line, a kind of unison little line I think that John McLaughlin started, just the most basic type of thing and Jack DeJohnette was just roaring behind this line, and it was just like wild animals. It was animalistic and beautiful at the same time, then Miles came in with just one note, or two notes, or three notes, and his playing was in the middle register, low like he used to do with Gil Evans, and also the Kind of Blue album with Coltrane, Sketches of Spain, Miles Ahead, and all those things with Gil.

Hal: You obviously have an affection for Gil Evans.
Art: Yeah, I loved all those things, but now Miles has gone way beyond that, and some people don't like him at all.

Miles has eliminated the space, that I liked about him before, but now the space is even greater, every note is like a gem, he has reached the epitome of music. I can't think of anything more rewarding than to get to play with his group. Before Miles it was Coltrane, I loved the way he played, the speed, dexterity, the knowledge that he had, especially his middle and late period.

Hal: A lot of that shows in your playing. I find that on the Living Legend album, a sparseness that Ornette Coleman used in his playing, and Coltrane too, and I feel you must have been influenced by Coleman in a subtle way.
Art: It is the melody that I feel, Ornette and Don Cherry, in particular I think of the Lorraine record of some long time ago.

Hal: You also like speed, I noticed at the club you have a tremendous amount of dexterity with your fingering, it is almost as if you can't spit enough out fast enough.
Art: On one hand I like the sparseness, the openness that Miles has, the occasional note, then I also love the way Trane played with speed, it's like a Jekyll and Hyde thing in my mind, and those are the things I like most, and of course the beauty. Hal: Are you impressed with the calibre of the musicians you are working with in Toronto?
Art: Yes, Bernie Sanensky, the pianist, is an excellent player; and I love the way he voices the changes, the way he moves changes within a seventh chord, the way he'll go up a half step or down a half step, and the way he thinks. He's a very listening player, a very learned player, and a very swinging player. And the bass player, Dave Pilch, is just fantastic. It's amazing the things he can do at such a young age. And the drummer too, Terry Clarke, phew! He sure can cook.

Note: We went on to discuss current recordings, new material ready for release, the upcoming gig at the Village Vanguard, and the Newport Jazz Festival appearance. A new album called No Limit with Carl Burnett-dms, George Cables-piano, and Tony Dumas on bass. His contract with Contemporary records, the possibility of doing a tour once a year with his own group, the thrill of doing the current tour. And lastly, advice to young upcoming musicians, "Be yourself".

Editor's note: Hal Hill is the manager of Sam the Record Man at the Sherway Gardens Mall. He stocks an incredible amount of jazz with some great European imports. Drop by and see him. Somehow, he also finds time to represent BJR in Toronto and do a show on CKQS Saturday nights from 10-midnight.

BEAUTIFUL BABE

Babe Barlow, known to many as the big, beautiful doll - 197 lbs. of pure brown granulated sugar, received another feather in her cap in radio by going to the N.Y. State Women's Meeting in Albany June 8-10 and returning with a 3 hr. taped report, aired on WBFO (N.P.R.). Babe showed that she's not only in the know about jazz but has a good sense of humor while easily handling a report of this type. Babe later commented "it was something I really wanted to do, and being a woman did help."

Babe, a former child movie star who played Farina in "Our Gang" comedies during the silent film era over 50 years ago, is heard on 'Round Midnight (Friday nights 11PM - Mid.) and Shades of Blue (Sat. nights 11PM - Mid.) on WBFO 88.7 FM.
YELLOWFINGERS JAZZ

In the last year a club called Yellowfingers has established itself on the Toronto Jazz scene in a very large way. Competing with two already well established bastions of jazz, namely Bourbon Street and George’s Spaghetti House, Yellowfingers fought it’s way to recognition for many fans who had heard of, but not had the opportunity to see the many, many superb musicians that Toronto has. The settings originally made extremely popular by young guitarist Andy Krehm, who was the first musical director, have brought packed houses on weekends, and comfortable crowds the rest of the week. Regular nightly sessions, After Hour sessions on weekends, Sunday Dinner Concerts provide work for the cream of the crop as far as musicians are concerned, a chance to write, try out some new ideas, and generally excite a throng of new jazz fans.

The new musical director is Dave Caplan, well known jazz aficionado, who has made some changes to the benefit of the club. Yellowfingers is a good place to spend some jazz time, anytime, and the musicians being presented there deserve to be heard.

COUNT BASIE - PRIME TIME - PABLO 2310 797

The news of Count Basie’s illness late last year had many wondering how soon (if at all) he’d be able to return to the grueling pace of life on the road and the special demands that the recording studio, which is his only four month residence he hopped right back on the bus and back into the recording studio.

Prime Time, recorded in January of this year, is classic Basie - from his economical piano statements to the joyful, full-bodied arrangements of Sam Nestico. Basie’s bands have always swung as few other big bands on earth can. He remains a perennial traditionalist. But to let you know his ears are always aware of new ideas. Basie has included a comfortably modern piece called Bundle O’ Funk written by Nestico that features the rare (for Basie) addition of a Fender bass in the hands of Reine Press. Sweet Georgia Brown has quite a lengthy piano opening from Basie and it sounds as spritely and alive as always with a touch of the Basie humor thrown in. Ja Da’s, Reachin’ Out and Sweet Georgia Brown are the archetypal Basie tunes - sometimes muted trumpets, wah-wah trumpets led by Al Grey and Curtis Fuller, the light guitar comping of his original guitarist Freddie Greene and the unflagging, toe tapping tempo. His recent performances show him to be fit in good spirits and in full control of another great Basie orchestra.

Michael CARVIN - THE CAMEL - INNER CITY 2038

This is another of the Inner City releases from the Danish Steppelchase series.

Carvin is a superb drummer who has worked with numerous leaders, including Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Cecil McBee, Hampton Hawes, and Art Taylor. His quintet for this 1975 session is quite impressive - Sonny Fortune, Cecil Bridgewater, Ron Burton &Calvin Hill.

Naima runs over 8 minutes and features Fortune on soprano sax as the only soloist - gorgeous. Kwabena’s Blues is a modal tune starting with slow paced ensemble passages, and switching into a brisk tempo for solos by Cecil, Sonny & B.L. Short, but well done. Sonny shows his affection for the blues as he opens the snail paced MC Blues, with additional offerings from Cecil and pianist Burton. The title track rocks, with Carvin chugging and churning throughout. Sonny rips off one of his unmistakable alto solos (if you missed him in Buffalo last year you missed a lot) followed by Burton & Bridgewater. Carvin delivers an extended lesson in musical drumming before the closing.

A fine group effort that will especially please those looking for more from Sonny Fortune. B.W.

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J.H.

CTI SUMMER JAZZ AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL:
LIVE ONE - CTI 7076; LIVE TWO - CTI 7077; LIVE THREE - CTI 7078

These three records were recorded live in 1972, a period during which CTI records recorded some fine music - music that brought thousands of people from rock to jazz.

The label’s lineup at this time was most impressive, and they’re all here. The outside of the jackets don’t list any tunes, so we’ll cover each disc.

Live One opens with a straight ahead blues, opened by organist Johnny Hammond. Solos come from Hank Crawford, Joe Farrell, Geo. Benson & Hammond before the full ensemble closes. Grover Washington, Jr. is up next for Inner City Blues/What’s Going On. Its a funk groove, but Ron Carter & Jack DeJohnette are as tasteful here as everywhere else throughout the three discs. Benson is spotlighted on California Dreaming, a tune also heard on his studio recorded “White Rabbit” album. It’s a fine version, and George is the only soloist. The last cut is Freddie Hubbard’s First Light, and Freddie is the only soloist here. Each track runs just over 8 minutes.

Live Two begins with the medium tempo Blues Force featuring Stanley Turrentine & Milt Jackson. Next, things get funky with Aretha’s Rock Steady with statements from Benson, Grover & Hammond. Hubert Laws does a medley of tunes from his early (9& best) CTI efforts - Theme from Love Story/Pavane /Fire & Rain. Well done and Laws is the only soloist for the fourteen minutes. Hubbard is back for a version of People Make the World Go Round - a beautiful composition which he does justice.

Live Three opens with Funk Fathers, which is the same tune
that is issued as "Sister Sanctified" on the Turrentin/Milt Jackson album "Cherry" released on CTI the same year as this concert. (Somebody goofed somewhere on the titles.) This version features Stanley & Benson. Cherry follows, a ballad highlighting Milt Jackson & Turrentine. Bowl Full O’ Blues is a slow, hard blues with solos from Crawford, Hubbard & Hammond. Esther Phillips appears, on "Live Three" only, for the two closing cuts. She’s at home with the blues and she does it on Cherry Red. The show ends with a fine version of God Bless the Child, featuring Esther & Benson.

All these recordings offer some good music in early CTI tradition. The full ensemble is heard in support throughout most of the tunes and there’s none of the slick, synthetic funk or overproduction found on the label’s more recent records. The time playing averages to about 35 minutes per disc. Now you know the tunes, so the choice should be easier. B.W.

UNITED STATES REISSUES ON DELMARK

Founded in the early fifties, United Records was one of the first black owned record labels in post-war Chicago. It produced a formidable catalog of releases in jazz, blues, gospel and R&B.

Delmark purchased the rights to the material a few years ago and the albums reviewed below are the initial reissues of the material, with a Junior Wells album and several blues reissues on Pearl forthcoming for blues enthusiasts. The artists Paul Bascomb, Tab Smith and Chris Woods were part of a jazz roster which included Gene Ammons (reissued on Savoy) among others.

Paul Bascomb, along with brother Dud (a trumpeter), played a major role in creating Erskine Hawkins’ Big Band. Bad Bascomb (Delmark DL-431) featured his Coleman Hawkins’ influenced tenor in the context of the 1952 big little band recordings that are included. This is a fine bluesy album featuring several vocals by altoist Frank Porter, who is reminiscent of Billy Eckstine, and a Louis Jordan styled vocal on "Pink Cadillac". This is a fine swinging set which also includes the fine piano of Duke Jordan. Blues fans who think they don’t like jazz should give this a try.

Because of You was a #1 R&B hit in 1951 for Tab Smith selling over 500,000 copies. Tab Smith was an alto player, who doubled on tenor, who served in Count Basie’s Band and the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, and formed a big little band in 1944. Along with the title track, a fine ballad performance, this Delmark issue (DL-428) features a mix of ballads and blues performed with a fat sweet tone. Like the Paul Bascomb this album helps the big little band scene and is swing rooted jazz.

Chris Woods is possibly better known because of his association with Ted Curson, and the Jazz Composer’s Orchestra in recent years. Somebody Done Stole My Blues (DL-434) reveals Woods to be a bop flavored alto player who possessed considerable warmth and fluency in the early fifties when these recordings were made. Dig his responses to Jewel Bell’s vocal on “Raining” as well as his blues-drenched solo. Most of the album features his own quintet, and the title track (two takes of it are included) is a jumping blues. The recording of Xavier Cugat’s “Brazil” (which was recently a disco hit) provides some nice latin-tinged bop.

Delmark is to be congratulated for putting these albums out. For a small label to reissue recordings by obscure artists is quite a risk yet these albums provide valuable documentation of not only lesser known jazz artists but of some popular black music of the early fifties. The sound is clean and the pressings are good. The albums include interesting packaging, generally thoughtful annotation and discographical details (though on the Chris Woods’ set there are some inaccuracies or information is left out). I like these, especially the Bascomb and Woods, very much and await further issues of United Records material. R.W.

BEN WEBSTER - MY MAN - INNER CITY 2008

This is one of the late Ben Webster’s last recordings. Webster, one of the great jazz tenor players, resided in Copenhagen during his later years, and often played at the Montmartre Jazzhus, where this music was recorded in 1973. The tunes are standard Webster fare - such as Sunday, I Got Rhythm & Exactly Like You. My favorites are Willow Weep
For me and Old Folks. Ben was a master at slow blues and ballads — pure sex — and these are no exception, as his satin soft yet full tone comes through. The up-tempo cuts find his tone more “gruffy” than usual. The Danish rhythm section — Oie Kock Hansen, Bo Stief & Alex Riel — plays well throughout.

An important album by one of the departed greats. B.W.

ARCHIE SHEPP — STEAM — INNER CITY 3002

Shepp is known to many as an avant gardist, a repuration he had gained during the sixties. His more recent work has mellowed out substantially — as documented on albums such as Montreaux One and Two (Arista), and those on the Italian Horo & Black Saint labels.

Steam was released on Germany’s Enja label, coming to these shores via Inner City. It presents Shepp with his trio — bassist Cameron Brown & drummer Beaver Harris, recorded live in Germany last year. This is straight ahead jazz, and some of the best Shepp I’ve yet to hear. The renditions of Ellington’s Soir, Shepp’s Steam & Calvin Massey’s Message From Trane (only 3 cuts are heard) are superb, as is the individual work of each of the three musicians. This is simply excellent Shepp.

B.W.

CHARLES EARLAND — REVELATION — MERCURY 1149

The jazz organ has never been one of my favorite instruments. However, I used to love Larry Young until his recent releases on Arista. Another favorite was Charles Earlard — he had drive and a different, gutsy sound. Things do change. Revelation is a funk disc with Earlard leading a Mundane band, himself focusing on electric piano and synthesizers. His unique sound of yesterday has turned into the indistinguishable sound of a thousand other funk bands. There are a few good tracks where one can recall the original Charles Earlard, but its not enough.

Perhaps some day both Young and Earlard will return to restore life to the jazz organ. In the meantime, perhaps they’ll make some money to make the current phase worth it all.

B.W.

SAVOY REISSUES

Among new Savoy reissues is The Roots of Rock ’n Roll (SJV 2221). A collection of rhythm ‘n’ blues recordings from 1947 to 1956, this double album set provides fine examples of the music that would become rock. Artists include Johnny Otis, Little Esther (Phillips) Huey ‘Piano’ Smith, and Big Jay McNeely. Sides range from the 13 year old Little Esther sounding like Dinah Washington, to wailing tenor sax to lively doo-wop sounds. Many of the originals are high priced collectors’ items, and the music is of considerable merit. Excellent notes from Bob Porter cap a fine package.

Of greater jazz interest is CHARLIE PARKER Bird at the Roost (SJJ 1108) and LESTER YOUNG Pres Lives (SJJ 1109). On the Lester Young set the only other identified person is Jesse Drakes. Annotator Ira Gitler speculates these sides were recorded at a dance and there is much spirited playing. The Bird dates from 1949 air checks from the Royal Roost. Kenny Dorham, Al Haig, Tommy Potter, Milt Jackson and Lucky Thompson make up the ‘All Stars!’ Typically fine Bird with highlights including ‘Scrapple From the Apple’ (the quintet version that opens the album) and ‘Half Nelson.’

HOWARD McGHEE is another of jazz’s unrecognized masters. Maggie (SJJ 2219) documents the trumpeter in 1948 and 1952. The 1948 are some nice bop sides including Jimmy and Percy Heath and Milt Jackson among the personnel. McGhee is both a lyrical and hot trumpet player who is a thoughtful soloist as these sides show. The 1952 sides include J.J. Johnson and aren’t as uniformly satisfying. Material here ranges from Dixieland style material to more boppish stuff. A nice introduction to a man still living.

Ben Webster, Ike Quebec, John Hardee, Illinois Jacquet and Coleman Hawkins are all featured on The Tenor Sax Album (SJJ 2220). The music is mostly swing rooted and ranges from the lush toned Mr. Webster to the blowing Texas Tenor of Illinois Jacquet.

R.W.

DAVE MATHEWS BIG BAND — NIGHT FLIGHT — MUSE MR 5098

Dave Mathews is much more successful as a leader of his own big band than he is as an arranger for other artists. His arrangements for Esther Phillips, Hank Crawford, Mark Murphy and others have been over-funked, impersonalized statements that lack the originality and sensitivity displayed in his two albums as a leader for Muse, The Live at the Five Spot album (Muse MR 5073), reviewed in an earlier BJR issue, was an exciting introduction to the powerful musical statements Mathews can make. Night Flight has virtually the same personnel as the Five Spot recording except Sam Butsill replaces Michael Gibson on trombone and Sue Evans is included on piano.

After the first few bars of Milton Nascimento’s Vera Cruz you’ll hear the tightness of the arrangements in the ensemble passages that also manage to give room enough for some fine soloing from Frank Vicari on tenor sax and Joe Shepley on trumpet. This is followed by a traditional rendition of Miles Davis’ All Blues with a Chambersish bass intro by the multi-faceted Harvie Swartz who has been heard recently with the group Double Image. Guitarist Sam Butsill’s comping shows a great deal of taste but his solos still have the same lack of direction and continuity evidenced in earlier days with Jarrett and others. The reports of the Mathews big band at Stryker’s in New York have been very positive and with this assemblage of young, fiery talent its no wonder.

If you’ve only heard Dave Mathews as an arranger you’re missing a lot and Night Flight would be a very pleasant way to get acquainted.

J.H.

OSCAR PETERSON, JOE PASS, RAY BROWN — THE GIANTS — PABLO 2310 796

The talents of Peterson, Pass & Brown have been recorded and released in substantial quantities and various Pablo albums since the label’s first release in 1974.

The Giants presents them as a trio delivering some top flight music. Caravan and Riff Blues are taken at breakneck tempos, with superb interplay and soloing. Who Cares also moves along at a quick clip as Pass shines. Peterson plays organ on three tracks, and the best of these is Blues For Dennis. However, I’d very much prefer to hear him stick to the piano. Jobim, a duo with Brown out, is a gorgeous ballad — with a focus on gentle lyricism.

While the organ tracks are a bit weak, the remainder of this album is well worth your attention.

B.W.
FATS WALLER - PIANO SOLOS 1929-1941 - BLUEBIRD AXM2-5518

LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY - CRESCENT CITY BLUES - BLUEBIRD AXM2-5522

These two latest additions to RCA's Bluebird reissue series offer valuable documentation of jazz and blues piano history with the typically fine packaging and annotation of the series. Fats Waller's place in jazz as a master of stride piano should be (if it isn't) common knowledge and the Piano Solos provides a generous helping of his sparkling piano. Eurreal Montgomery, a great barrelhouse blues pianist is represented by the overwhelming bulk of his pre-World War II recordings. Besides his own fine compositions such as "Vicksburg Blues No. 2" and "The First Time I Met the Blues", and the fine barrelhouse "Farish Street Drive", he accompanies singer Annie Cole, "Monkey Joe" Coleman and Creole George Gueson whose "Goodbye, Good Luck to You" is melodically the same as "Nobody Knows You When Your Down and Out". The instrumental "Sheveport Farewell" is a ragtime flavored number which along with Little Brother's accompaniment to "Goodbye..." shows his skills transcended the blues idiom. If I spent most of this review on Little Brother's music its because no one should be have to be told of Fats Waller's place in jazz and American music. Of course the solo performances are essential. The Little Brother Montgomery double set is likewise an important reissue for blues enthusiasts demonstrating his place in blues piano history.

R.W.

SONNY STITT - TRIBUTE TO DUKE ELLINGTON - CATALYST 7620

Stitt has got to be one of the most recorded of jazz musicians. New Stitt albums seem to be released every other month. Quantity, however, is no guarantee of quality; and this Ellington tribute falls short of Sonny's normal standard. The biggest problem here lies with the strings, which are totally unnecessary and prevent the basic quintet from stretching out. Stitt's solos are all right, but not of the memorable variety. There's so much better Stitt available on Catalyst, Muse and other labels that I couldn't recommend this as a prime choice for building a Stitt collection.

B.W.

VICTOR FELDMAN - THE ARTFUL DODGER - CONCORD 38

Feldman has chosen to leave his vibes at home, employing only piano and electric piano for this recording. He offers a balanced program of nine tunes here, with fine support from bassists Chuck Domanico or Monty Budwig, drummer Colin Bailey & trumpeter Jack Sheldon (the funny guy from the Merv Griffin show who's an exotic trumpeter) who also adds vocals to Haunted Ballroom.

Six of the nine compositions are Feldman's, including Agitation, which is slightly similar to Miles' tune of the same name (Feldman wrote Seven Steps to Heaven, but Miles changed the bridge and became the co-composer). It's a good trio date. (Sheldon's work is heard only on the one track) and worth your attention if you're into piano music or Feldman in particular.

B.W.

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PAUL GRESHAM
Composer/Saxophonist

photo: Philip Gresham
ROLAND PRINCE - FREE SPIRIT - VANGUARD 79388

Guitarist Roland Prince has been heard to good advantage over the last couple of years on albums by Elvin Jones, James Moody, The "Summit Meeting" disc and his own debut recording Color Visions (Van. 79371).

Prince comes from Antigua, in the Caribbean, and plays with a bright West Indian flavor. He's joined by some notables - Frank Foster, Michael Carvin, Kenny Barron, Frank Willis, etc. Though no groundbreaker, the album is good listening, with the music setting a playful-like mood. The tunes are originals by band members, including two from Prince, and a pop tune Alone Again, Naturally - this version probably being the best on record, done with a quartet.

The high points here are Al Foster's Senorita and Prince's People's Song and Free Spirit. And, of course,Roland's guitar - which is always a pleasure to hear.

B.W.

GENE RUSSELL - LISTEN HERE - OVATION 1803

I'm not very familiar with pianist Gene Russell. Unfortunately, he does little here to make me remedy that situation.

This is a piano trio recording, with the addition of a conga player for two tunes. While Russell has support from twoGENE engineered fades. B.W.

Sax and There's a wealth of fine soloists, including Bob Mintzer/tenor

This is a piano trio recording, with the addition of a conga

The choice of material is decent, but this is not one of your

There is also a guitarist listed, but

BUDDY RICH PLAYS AND PLAYS AND PLAYS-...RCA 2273

Don't pre-judge this new Rich big band album on the basis of his previous disco record.

Rich & Company play their tails off on this hard driving, full steam ahead set of music. The program consists of blasting cookers, swinging medium tempo cuts and delicious ballads.

There's a wealth of fine soloists, including Bob Mintzer/tenor sax and flute, Steve Marcus/tenor & soprano saxes and John Marshall/trumpet.

There is one cut that doesn't quite fit - a funky number with a vocal chorus titled Kong.

Overall, this is an album that big band fanciers should have in their collection, regardless of Kong and a few unnecessary engineered fades.

B.W.

SHORTS

Another record comes on Savoy for JOHN COLTRANE & WILBUR HARDEN (1110). The title is DIAL AFRICA and the music was recorded in 1958 with Curtis Fuller, Howard Williams or Tommy Flanagan, Al Jackson & Art Taylor. Its fine music and a good companion to the Coltrane/Harden twofer issued earlier on Savoy.

If you enjoy LONNIE LISTON SMITH'S recent work, you might try his latest, LIVE! - RCA 2433 - was recorded in May of this year at Smucker's Cabaret in Brooklyn, with Smith heading his regular working group. There is one drawback - the group's cosmic sound isn't captured quite so well here as in the studio. The recording is rather muddy.

CLARK TERRY offers THE GLOBETROTTER - Vanguard 79393. It's a decent disc, but that's due to the work of pianist Ronnie Mathews and guitarists George Davis & Roland Price.

When they're not up front, the music is little more than average - if that. Recommended only for devoted Terry fans.

Catalyst records has been releasing an enormous quantity of material lately. EARL HINES/MARVA JOSIE - Jazz is His Old Lady, & My Old Man (7622) presents the same basic band (with some guests) that appeared at the Statler and on Hines' Improv record. However, where the Improv disc kept vocalist Marva Josie in the background, this album puts her up front.

So if you dug her live, check this one out - it's her show.

Percussionist WILLIE BOBO has a new one on Blue Note. Tomorrow is Here (LA 711-G) has little to offer to jazz fans since there's little or no jazz here. It's a commercial/soul disc full of short tunes and weak arrangements.

Other Recent Releases - some of these will be reviewed next month.

Dave Frisberg - Getting Some Fun Out of Life - Concord 37
Richie Kamuca - Drop Me Off in Harlem - Concord 39
Eric Kloss & Richie Cole - Battle of the Saxes - Muse 5082
Jo Jones - The Main Man - Pablo 799
Enrico Rava - The Plot - ECM 1078
Hilton Ruiz - Piano Man - Inner City 2036
Carla Bley - Dinner Music - Watt 6
Steve Lacy/Michael Smith - Sidelines - Imp. Artists 37.38.27
Arlid Andersen - Shimri - ECM 1082

New Directions

BARRY ALTSCHUL - YOU CAN'T NAME YOUR OWN TUNE - MUSE MR 5124

How could it miss? The five musicians on this record are all new jazz heroes, and not only that, they've all been performing together in various combinations for years. Sam Rivers, Muhal Richard Abrams, Dave Holland, and trombone sensation George Lewis join percussionist Barry Altschul for his long-awaited debut as a leader.

Ever since the mid-sixties, Altschul has been attracting attention with the likes of Paul Bley, Chick Corea, Sam Rivers, and Anthony Braxton. Not content to confine himself to the tonal limits of the standard drum kit, Altschul expanded his timbral palette with such things as gongs, bells, temple blocks and whistles.

On this album, Altschul exhibits a wide stylistic range, as well as a tonal one. The title tune is a raucous, jagged, neo-bop romp with boisterous solos by all, sounding like a group of men trading their best dirty jokes.

"For Those Who Care" makes me think of four people who, having lost a bet, must walk backwards for a day.

Natal Chart is a hilariously warped fusion of avant-garde and Dixieland. This album is so good that even the horrendous, self-consciously hip liner notes and the poor pressing quality can't dampen my enthusiasm. Get it!

C.J.L.

CECIL TAYLOR - INDENT - ARISTA FREEDOM 1038

In conversation or reading about Cecil Taylors' Music some points that are always mentioned are his conservatory training, the speed and accuracy of his arpeggio runs, his ability to blast out clusters of tones, and his incredible technique in general. All of this is true. Technically, there is nothing that Taylor can not accomplish on his instrument.

Taylor has been an improvising artist and composer of the highest order for many years. His playing is filled with intensity and emotion, yet there is something more to his music, something other worldly.

Cecil's music is a part of the invisible vapor which connects the mundane and the super mundane. While listening to the music you sense that Taylor is moving through and hovering over and about his instrument, being initiator and initiate of the creative taking.

At different space periods in the Music I had the sensation of being in several places at the same time. Sun Ra, John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Duke Ellington, and Cecil Taylor are some who have carried, and continue to carry on this magic correctly.

Listen to Indent and allow yourself to be part of it.

Finally, this is the reissue of the limited edition on Cecil Taylor's Unit Core Records. The one you've been trying so hard to find.

P.S.
CECIL TAYLOR UNIT - DARK TO THEMSELVES - INNER CITY 3001

There are these Cecil Taylor fanatics (myself included) who think that his is the most wondrous music in all the world. We've all had this record for months now, since it originally came out last year on German Enja, so this is a review for those who would like to investigate this master of the avant-garde, but don't know where to start.

You can start by getting Taylor's solo LP - INDENT (Arista/Freedom AL 1038) and after you've accustomed yourself to his hurricane-and-avalanche pianistics, then you're ready for the Unit.

Dark was recorded live last summer in Yugoslavia and each side is an extract of a much longer performance.

Streams features a long and loose ensemble with much of the man's reputation laid in a hallmark of Taylor's music. This gives way to ferocious solos by Raphe Malek (trumpet) and David S. Ware (tenor).

Chorus of Seed is even better. The interaction between Taylor and Jimmy Lyons (alto) is telepathic, but then, why not? They've been together since 1961! Taylor's own solo is filled with goodies, including some gospel-tinged chords near the beginning.

Throughout, Marc Edwards' drumming always supports, never intrudes. His entrances are those of a man who sneaks into bed without waking his wife. By the time you notice him, you just assume he's always been there.

Essential Taylor, as are most of his recordings. J.L.

WILD FLOWERS 1 - THE NEW YORK Loft JAZZ SESSIONS - DOUGLAS NBLP 7045

Side one opens with "Jays" written by Kalaparusha Maurice Mcintyre. Kalaparusha is sounding beautifully melodic for this tune. Chris White on bass and electric bass, and Jumma Santos drums, set a steady beat for Kalaparusha's tenor to build his melodic lines around. He builds to a certain tension, releases, and the group goes out smoothly.

Ken McIntyres' quartet plays an original, New Times. The tune is a nice rhythmic piece. McIntyres' alto sax is easy and confident while pianist Richard Harper hammers out the chords in the background. Percussionist Andrei Strobert, and conga player Andy Vega create interesting rhythmic patterns throughout the piece.

Sunny Murray and his Untouchable Factors treatment of Over the Rainbow is the finest version of this tune ever played. Byars' sax solo is sweet, sentimental and very pretty. Murray displays what matterless drumming is about while still holding a group together.

This piece is one of the highlights of the five albums, and contributions by tenor saxophonist David Murray, vibes player Khan Jamal, bassist Fred Hopkins help to make it so.

Rainbow is another of Sam Rivers' compositions in which he sings praise to the beauty and glory of nature through his soprano saxophone and voice. Jerome Hunter and Jerry Griffen, bass and drums respectively provide ideas for Sam but never become overbearing for they are aware that it is Rivers story that is being presented.

Wildflowers 1 ends with a piece by saxophonist Henry Threadgill. USO Dance, Air, Threadgill, Fred Hopkins bass, and Steve McCall drums is one of the rightest improvising groups in the music today. The sixth sense is prevalent in their Music, hopefully in the near future the world music community will be given the privilege of hearing more of what they have to say.

P.S.

Editors Note - The Wildflowers Loft sessions were released in five volumes. We'll try to cover them all over the next few issues.

JULIUS HEMPHILL - DOGN A.D. - ARISTA FREEDOM 1028

I saw Julius Hemphill a few months ago perform his work Roye' Boye' and the Gotham Minstrels. He wore a silver sequin tuxedo with black velvet trim, red tennis shoes with silver laces, a trim, no shirt, and white hat with the brim rolled down on the right side. He played his saxophones and flute to the accompaniment of his own pre-taped stereo music, monologue, and verbal statements. The music and symbols had real meaning for me, but only Hemphill knew exactly what support live music!

they were about. Julius has staged several multimedia presentations in the past few years. A concerned artist's statements on culture and societies, past, present, and to be. I mention these things because they are important factors that should still be considered while hearing Hemphill's recorded music.

Hemphill is backed by three excellent musicians here, Baikida E.J. Carroll trumpet, Abdul Wadud cello, and Phillip Wilson drums. Three originals by Hemphill, Dogon AD, Rites, and The Painter make up the album. All of the compositions are fresh and rewarding "Painter" displays Hemphill's personal flute style. "Dogon" is my favorite with the quartet sounding at times like a mini Sun Ra Arkestra. When Wadud is not keeping a rock steady beat his cello becomes an extra horn adding color to Hemphill's and Carroll's solos, or another percussion instrument which adds to and inspires Wilson drumming.

Hemphill has that rare and special quality for the blues that the other great Texas saxophonist contain. His playing and composing are rewarding experiences. Dodon A.D. was recorded in St. Louis Feb. 1972 on the same date as "Hard Blues" and released on Hemphill's Miari records. Thanks once again to Arista for re-releasing the Music of this greater though relatively unknown Artist.

P.S.

RICHARD TEITELBAUM with ANTHONY BRAXTON - TIME ZONES - ARISTA FREEDOM 1037

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Anthony Braxton and Richard Teitelbaum have performed together many times in the past eight years. Both men are superior improvisors. Their musical empathy goes beyond description, and their ability to anticipate each others next immediate action is phenomenal. The multi dimensional magnitude of this Music stretches beyond word explanations.

Braxton’s reeds and Teitelbaum’s synthesizers carry out the latters two compositions in moment to moment completeness as one. Listen.

Ray Charles’ Eduardo’s appearance and engagements by Mighty Joe Young and Guitar Johnny and the Rhythm Rockers at the Belle Starr marked the last week in June and the beginning of July. Ray Charles was a treat with a really tight band. Mighty Joe and Texas Alexander went through such classics as ““Mojo Hand,” “If You Ever Loved a Woman” and “Trouble in Mind.” On the last piece he transformed an overworked number into pure Lightnin’ with his bittersweet singing and Texas guitar. “Lightnin’ Boogie” was another instrumental feature including quotes from “What I Say.”

Lightnin’ stood out as a rare individual whose character comes out in his music. A rarity perhaps but perhaps why he is a legend even after one sees him.

---

The New Yorker Theater on Yonge Street in Toronto was the scene of a rare concert appearance by the legendary Texas bluesman Sam ‘Lightnin’ Hopkins on Sunday, July 17. John Hammond opened and did a wide variety of blues from the pens of Blind Boy Fuller, Robert Johnson, Blind Willie McTell and others singing as if the blues possessed his soul. After a brief intermission, during which the group ‘Jammie the Blues’ with Lester Young, Red Callender and others was shown, Lightnin’ took the stage accompanied by a very competent drummer and a loud but enthusiastic bass player. Opening with a fast boogie Lightnin’s presence immediately established itself. Speaking and singing with his distinctive Texas drawl, the inheritor of the tradition of Blind Lemon Jefferson and Texas Alexander went through such classics as “Mojo Hand,” “If You Ever Loved a Woman” and “Trouble in Mind.” On the last piece he transformed an overworked number into pure Lightnin’ with his bittersweet singing and Texas guitar. “Lightnin’s Boogie” was another instrumental feature including quotes from “What I Say.”

Whether rapping about getting busted or singing about the heartaches of Love, Lightnin’ stood out as a rare individual whose character comes out in his music. A rarity perhaps but perhaps why he is a legend even after one sees him.

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Tribute to Homesick James’ Goin’ Back Home (3315). This is Homesick James’ first acoustic album as his slide guitar has been generally re-
recorded in a band setting. Tinges of cousin Elmore James can be heard in "Walking the Backstreets" which is reminiscent of "Dust My Broom." Delta rhythms characterize "1000 Women Blues" and a fascinating "Homesick's Contribution to Jazz" includes quotes from a number of jazz tunes. Homesick is gigging around Chicago as a solo artist these days and on the basis of this album is definitely someone to see if you plan to go to the Windy City. Albums by Pernell Charity, Roy Dunn, Tareheel Slim and Dan Del Santo will be reviewed next month.

The Clifton Chenier Band's Cajun Swamp Music Live (Tomato TOM-2-7002) is a winning double record of the zydeco king recorded live at Montreux. Material ranges from Waltzes and rocking blues to country. Englebert Humperdink's "Release Me" receives fresh treatment from Clifton who wails on the accordian. A couple of numbers features Clifton's Jimmy Reed style harp, and brother Cleveland on rubboard and the band keeps things rocking along. Songs are in English and French, excellent liner notes are included and some great music. The cover art leaves something to be desired.

Mighty Joe Young impressed me with his Belle Starr engagement, but his new album on Ovalion records (OV-1706) doesn't do him justice. The album reminds me of sides Freddy King recorded with Leon Russell on Shelter, and just doesn't grab me. Joe has better records out. You might check Blues with a Touch of Soul on Delmark.

Another disappointing album is Big Joe Turner, Things I Used to Do (Pablo 2310-800). Despite the presence of Lloyd Glenn, Eddie Vinson and Blue Mitchell the album suffers from unimaginative arrangements and a couple of Joe's vocals falter badly. There are some good moments from Joe and Lloyd Glenn is just wonderful. This is not up to Joe's earlier Pablo sets.

Gusto Records of Nashville have put back into print a number of records from the old King Records catalog. The late Freddy King is represented by two albums containing some of his finest work. Freddy King Sings (King 762) contains twelve splendid vocal performances with some of the late guitarists mastery of the blues guitar. Hideaway (King Ks-1059) has four of the vocals but includes six classic instrumental workouts including the famous title track and the extended improvisations of "Remington Ride." Another King reissue, Travelin' to California (KS-1130) includes a number of great slow blues and rocking boogies. I will review other King reissues in future issues.

The new Alligator album by Blind John Davis (AL 4709) arrived after the rest of the column was written. This thoroughly delightful album by the veteran blues pianist was recorded before an enthusiastic German audience. The material is quite varied, ranging from flowing boogies to appealing ballads like "When I Lost My Baby." Considerable charm is given such standards as "Everyday I Have the Blues" and "Summertime" whereas "Moanin' the Blues" is a nice low-key blues. Blind John is quite an entertainer and pianist whose talents transcend the blues idiom. Those who have been fortunate enough to see Blind John Davis live will know what to expect. This is a thoroughly ingratiating album that I strongly recommend. It is particularly nice to see this piano blues album joining new albums by Big Chief Ellis and the Detroit After Hours on Trix.

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BLIND JOHN DAVIS
photo: Amy O'Neal

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R.W.
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CANADIAN-AMERICAN EXCHANGE

The second tape exchange between Canadian & American Jazz Radio announcers will take place Aug. 13 & 14.

Bill Wahl (BJR Editor), of WBFO, will be heard on CKQS 94.9 (Toronto) on Hal Hill's "From Bebop to Now," between 10 & midnight on Sat., Aug. 13.

Hal Hill of CKQS, will be heard on Wahl's Sunday (Noon-2) show, Jazz Contours aired on WBFO Aug. 14.

Both shows will last an hour.

This space is available to private individuals, organizations, mail-order houses, etc. The cost is 10¢ per word - minimum charge $3. Send copy and payment to BJR - 1335 Main Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14209.

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