MUSICIAN

PLAYER & LISTENER

No. 24 April-May, 1980 $1.50

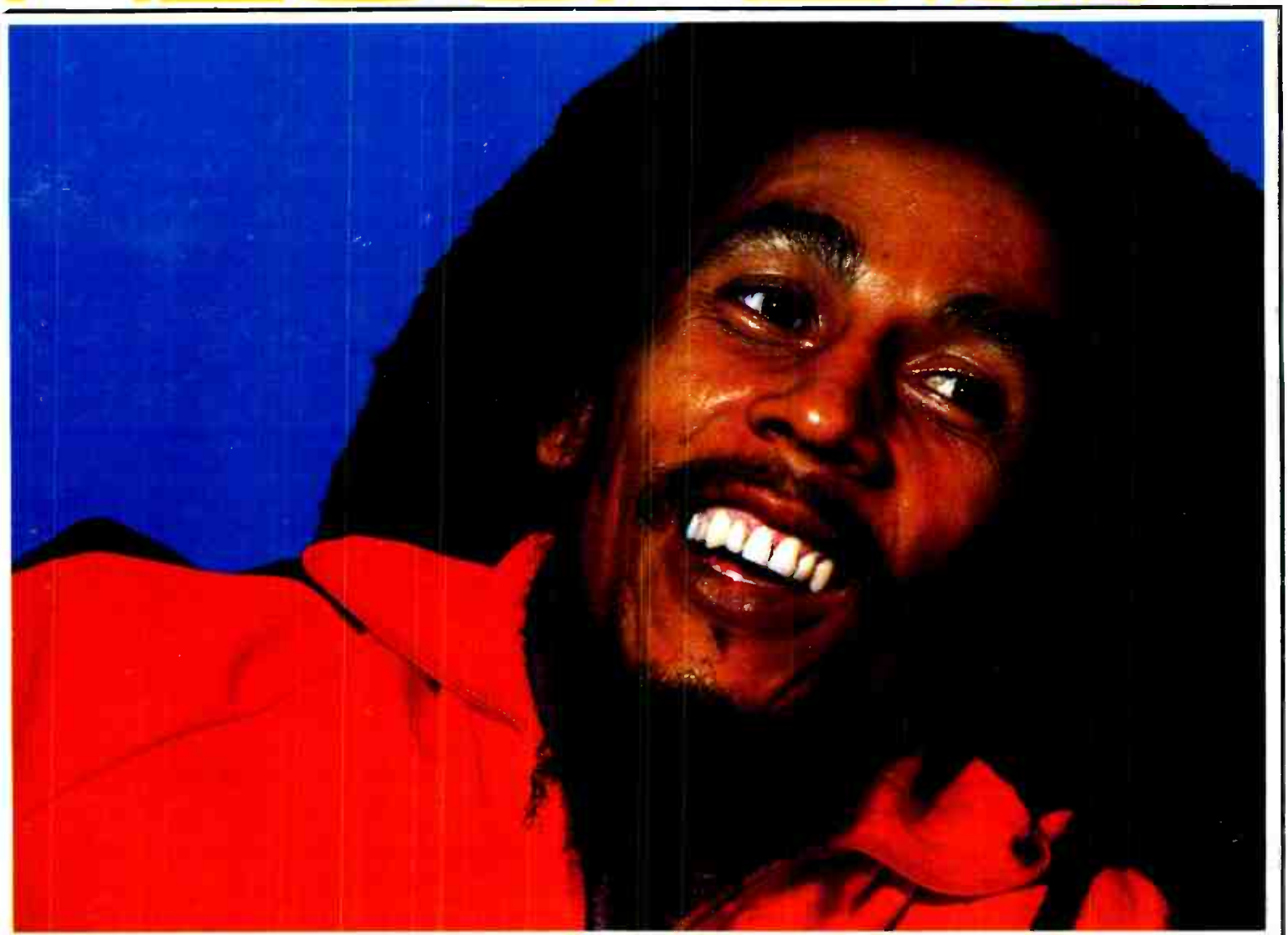
Dave Marsh and Radio 1984

Lester Bangs on the Free Jazz–Punk Connection

Robert Fripp's Vinyl Solution

REGGAE

MARLEY'S RASTA ROOTS



Blue Note, Hancock, Sun Ra and Weather Report

0 72246 00227 05

Expression through equalization.

The MXR Dual-Fifteen Band and Thirty-One Band equalizers are cost effective electronic signal processors designed to meet the most exacting equalization requirements in a wide range of professional applications.

The MXR Dual-Fifteen Band equalizer can be used to tailor the frequency response of two sides of a stereo system, or it can act as two separate mono equalizers. In performance one channel can equalize the house system, while the other is used independently in the stage monitor line adjusting frequency response and minimizing the possibility of feedback. In the studio the Dual-Fifteen Band equalizer can be used to compensate for control room acoustics.

The MXR Thirty-One Band equalizer provides maximum detail in the most demanding equalization applications. It can be used in pairs for ultimate stereo control, or in live performance interfaced with PA systems and other instruments. The Thirty-One Band equalizer is also the perfect tool for conditioning film or video sound tracks, and in mastering applications.

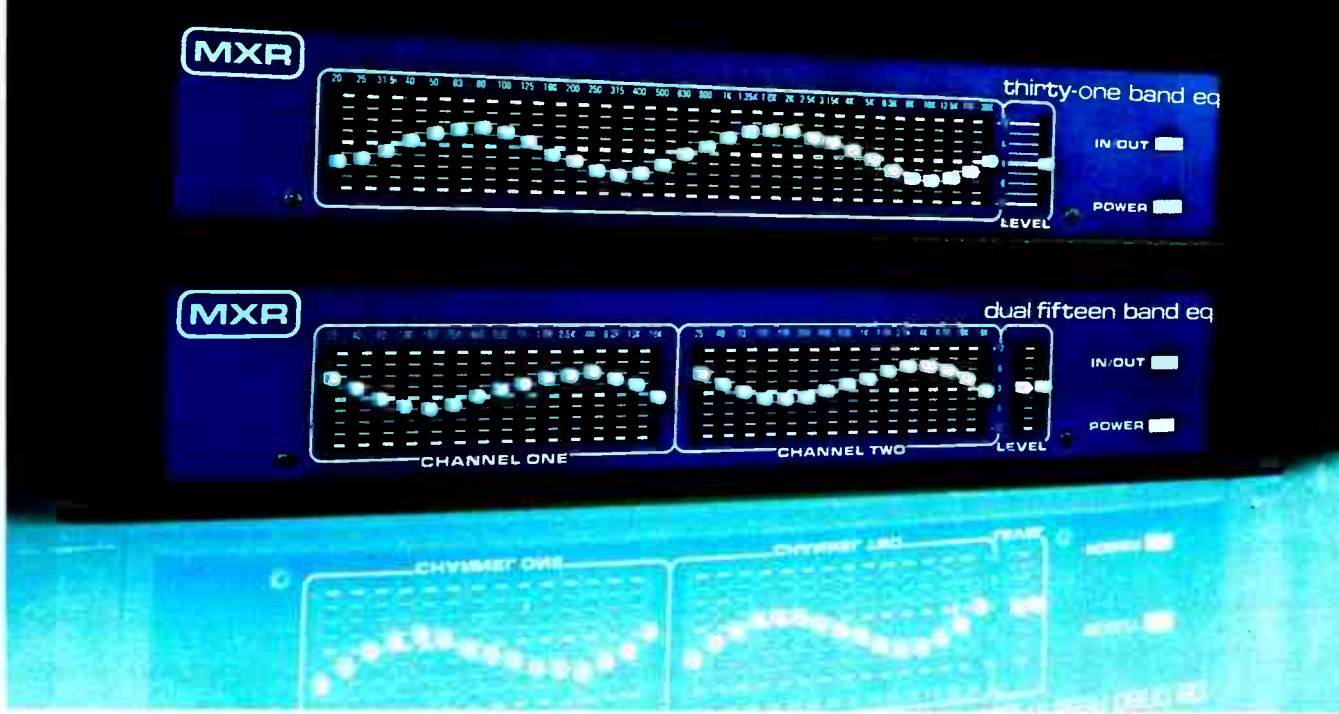
The spacing of frequency bands on ISO centers (2/3 octave in the Dual-Fifteen Band; 1/3 octave in the Thirty-One Band) and a flexible system of controls offer superior accuracy in frequency equalization. Each band can be boosted or cut over a range of ±12 dB. Clear, readable markings alongside each level control allow for quick and accurate checks of equalization settings, and aid in resetting the sliders to predetermined positions. The tight mechanical action of the sliders prevents slips during indelicate handling.

The MXR Pro Group equalizers afford maximum control of frequencies while maintaining the highest level of sonic integrity. The Dual-Fifteen and Thirty-One Band equalizers both have a dynamic range exceeding 110 dB and, as all MXR Pro Group products, will drive low impedance lines. Audio signal, including transients, is reproduced faithfully due to a high slew rate and a wide bandwidth.

The MXR Dual-Fifteen and Thirty-One Band equalizers are designed to withstand the demands of a professional road and studio schedule. Their superior design and superb craftmanship reflect MXR's continuing commitment to the manufacture of the highest quality electronic signal processors for today's creative artists.

MXR Innovations, Inc., 740 Driving Park Ave., Rochester, New York 14613, (716) 254-2910

MXR Professional Products Group



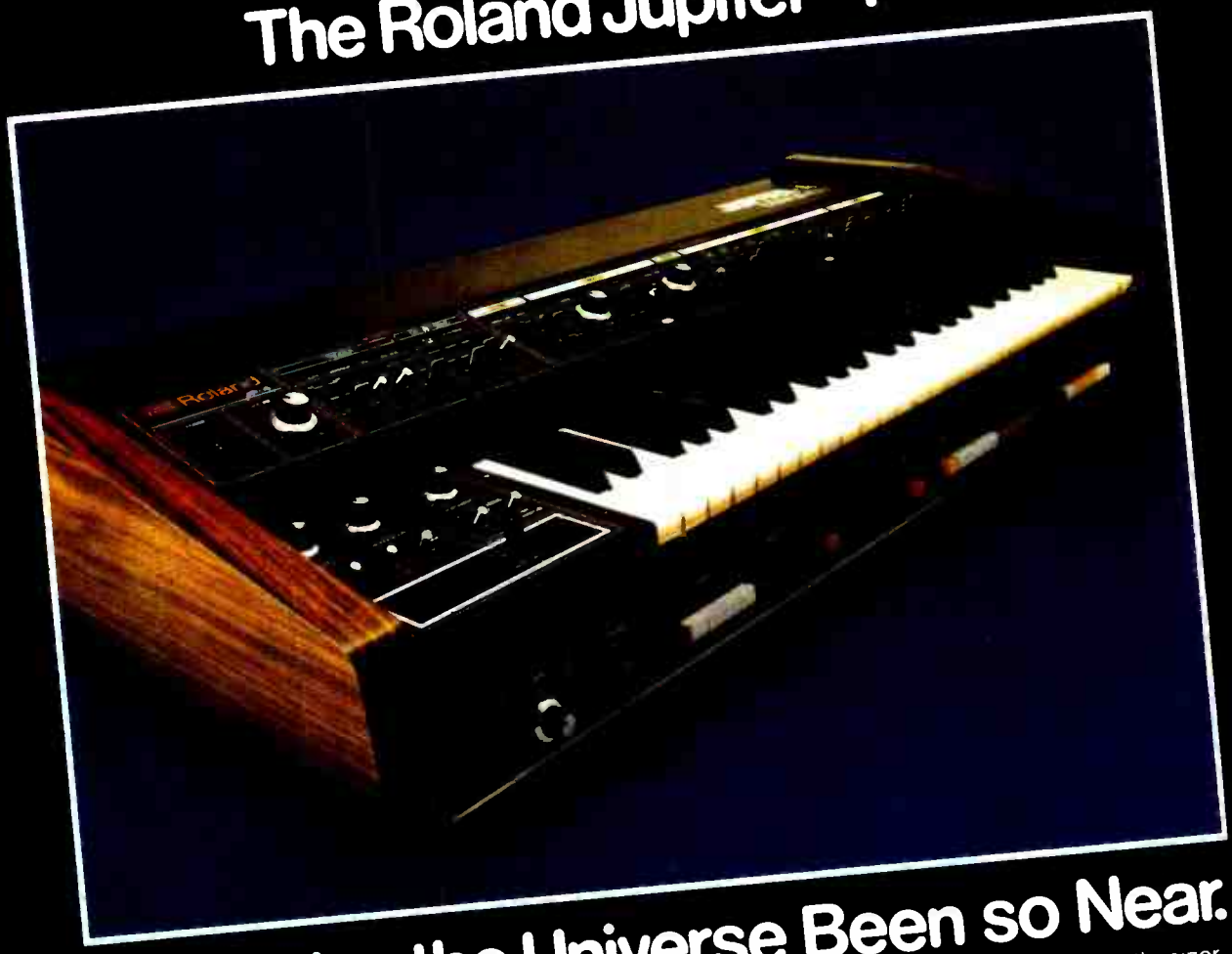
Tools of the trade.

The King 2000. And you. Professionals building beautiful music together. Five models in the 2000 Series allow for a range of playing styles. The Model 2000T has a bright sound and quick action trigger excellent for jazz and stage bands. A larger bore differentiates the Model 2001T, for a freer blowing sound. A darker sound marks the Model 2006 for symphony playing, while the Model 2007 is differentiated by a larger bore size. The Model 2008, in "C", boasts exceptional intonation, also for symphony playing. All King trumpets. All stunning examples of horns born to come alive in your hands.

Play your best with a King.

King Musical Instruments, Inc., 33999 Curtis Blvd., Eastlake, Ohio 44094

The Roland Jupiter-4



Never Has the Universe Been so Near.

You can make an incredible amount of music on a polyphonic synthesizer. The only problem is that you have to be rolling in money to afford one. Until now. Presenting the Roland Jupiter-4, the first truly polyphonic synthesizer that gives you all the features you need at a price you can live with.

We designed the Jupiter-4 to give you the kind of performance you'd expect from a poly-synth costing twice as much—and then we decided to add some extras. The Jupiter-4 provides four independent voices with instantaneous selection of 19 available programs. The Programmer allows the storage of *ALL* synthesizer parameters (VCO, VCF, VCA) and, in addition, allows the programming of each program's output volume and LFO vibrato—features our competition somehow forgot.

Where the others leave off is where the Jupiter-4 really begins. We've included a built-in Chorus Ensemble that eliminates the need for detuning banks of oscillators to achieve a fat sound, and our stereo output can span the effect across an entire stage. An incredibly versatile feature is our built-in Arpeggiator which cascades the entire keyboard in any of four patterns. The arpeggio can be controlled either internally or by an external trigger from a digital sequencer or Roland Compu-Rhythm.

The Jupiter-4's spring-loaded Bender is functionally engineered to be the simplest, most effective design possible for adding expression to your music. The Key-Assign mode allows you to select which oscillator bank goes to which key you depress, and if you want, all four oscillators can be played in unison making the JP-4 an unbelievable lead line synth.

If the controls on the synthesizer itself aren't enough for you, we've also included a sustain pedal, AND a rocker pedal that can be used for either volume or VCF control—all of which makes the Jupiter-4 easily the most expressive synthesizer on the market.

But if all of this still isn't enough to make you try out a Jupiter-4, this one fact will be: It costs $2895.00. Why do the others cost so much more? You'd better ask them that question.

RolandCorp U.S.A., 2401 Saybrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90040 (213) 685-5141. Enclose $1 for a copy of our latest keyboard catalog.

Roland
We Design the Future

MUSICIAN
PLAYER & LISTENER

NO. 24, APRIL-MAY, 1980

Free Jazz Weds Punk Rock A strange but fitting union that is developing into a whole new artform Lester Bangs shows how Lydia Lunch, James Chance, Captain Beefheart, John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman eat at the same table

Bob Marley and Reggae Marley walks a fine line between Jamaica and Babylon while the reggae movement waits in the wings Cris Cioe and John Sutton-Smith provide a thorough background to the dilemma

Sun Ra has been touring and recording extraordinary music for 25 years and you've probably never even heard of him It's a bizarre show full of great music Michael Shore makes you listen

Table of Contents

Columns & Departments

Features

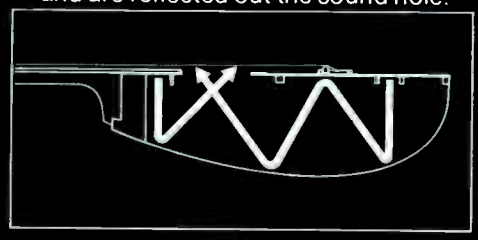
Studios

Cover Photo by Allan Tannenbaum

the Guitar that turned its back on tradition.

Tradition says that acoustic guitars should be made with flat backs and sides. In 1966, we took a closer look and found a better way.

A smooth, reflective surface.
The body of an acoustic guitar is an air chamber. Its main job is to amplify and project the vibrational energy coming off the guitar's soundboard. Sound waves bounce off the instrument's back and are reflected out the sound hole.



The science of acoustics says that a smooth, non-porous surface is the best reflector. To check this principle, we tested the best flat-backed guitars on the market. Science was right. Their wooden backs absorbed the tops' energy. Braces and squared-off corners trapped the sound inside. Roundback prototypes, on the other hand, showed outstanding projection throughout the entire guitar range. The smooth, rounded back pushed-out the sound more efficiently. Each note was clear and strong.

Deeper bass, brighter treble.
The amount of air inside the guitar body affects tone. Because different styles of music demand different tonal qualities, we've developed two body sizes: the deep-bowl and the shallow-bowl. Our deep-bowl guitars have more air volume to give you a warmer, fuller sound that helps you fill an auditorium. If you're a lead player, the shallow bowl gives you the extra cut you need in the mid and treble ranges to be heard over other instruments.

Play the Ovation roundback. It will change your ideas about traditional acoustic guitar design.

Ovation

New Hartford, CT 06057
A Kaman Company
Send $1.00 for a complete catalog.

MUSICIAN
PLAYER & LISTENER

Co-Publisher/Ad Director
Gordon Baird
Co-Publisher/Editor
Sam Holdsworth
Art Director
S.H. Swift
Assoc. Publisher/Advertising
Gary Krasner
Distribution Coordinators
Brian Beaudry
Paul Sacksman
Managing Editor/N.Y.
Vic Garbarini
Associate Editor
Rafi Zabor
Art Assistant
Jane Winsor
Staff Photographer
Deborah Feingold
Administration
Cindy Amero
Cathy Thompson
Helen Costello
Michelle Nicastro
Typography
Don Russell
Main Office/Production
42 Rogers St.
P.O. Box 701
Gloucester, MA 01930
New York Sales/Editorial
125 East 23rd St. #401A
New York, N.Y. 10010
(212) 260-0850
Contributors
Lester Bangs, Bob Blumenthal, Cris Cioe, Tom Copi, Deborah Feingold, Robert Ford, Dan Forte, Robert Fripp, V. Gaits, Vic Garbarini, Peter Giron, Lynn Goldsmith, Chuck Hughes, Ralph Humphrey, Mark Mehler, Robert Palmer, Ebet Roberts, Tom Sahagian, Terry Shea, Michael Shore, Chip Stern, Zan Stewart, Roy Trakin, Jane Winsor, Rafi Zabor

Musician, Player & Listener (USPS 431-910) is published eight times a year (every six weeks) by Amordian Press, Inc., P.O. Box 701, 42 Rogers St., Gloucester, Ma. 01930 (617) 281-3110. Musician Player & Listener is a trademark of Amordian Press, Inc. 1979 by Musician, Player & Listener, all rights reserved. Second Class Postage paid at Gloucester, Ma. 01930 and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions $12.00 per year, $19.00 for two years, $28.00 for three years. Foreign and Canadian subscriptions add $2.00 per year. U.S. Funds only. Manuscripts and artwork are welcome, however, we assume no responsibility for their return, although all due care will be exercised.

LENNY WHITE PLAYS THE AQUA'S

Tama Superstar Drums . . . Now in beautiful Aquamarine stain and gloss lacquer finish . . . Lenny loves them . . . So will you.

TAMA

For a full color catalog send one dollar to:
TAMA, Dept M.P. P.O. Box 469, Bensalem, PA 19020
327 Broadway, Idaho Falls, ID 83401
6355 Park Ave, Montreal, P.Q. H2V4H5

LETTERS

NOT WITH A BANGS...

Your article on Rock in the Seventies was very incomplete and inadequate. How can any chronicle of the past decade of rock fail to mention such notable groups as Steely Dan, Chicago and Santana, and have only one lame, derogatory paragraph on the whole British Progressive Rock scene? Next decade try giving the job to a more objective writer, rather than Lester Bangs, who seems to think that the only redeeming feature of seventies rock was the evolution of New Wave. His negative attitude toward rock is matched only by his fondness of equally negative and cynical music. There's a lot of good rock around if you just know where to look for it.
Preston Kauk
Richmond, CA

...BUT A WHIMPER

I read and reread Lester Bangs' summary of rock in the seventies and I, for the most part, echo his general sentiments. Too much of the recorded music in the rock genre was over-commercialized, non-creative and stagnant. I feel, however, that Mr. Bangs has failed to take note of the several positive accomplishments during the decade. In addition, I must take issue with his summation of the work of several artists in the field.

Mr. Bangs, a few of us out here take our music from somewhere other than the *Billboard* Top 100. Somehow you've managed to completely ignore some of the most innovative and creative works in the history of rock music.
Drew Eaton
Miami, Fla.

GREAT PRETENDERS

Robert Palmer's "admittedly personal" view of the seventies was rolling along its noncontroversial course when all of a sudden he lashed into a tirade — not about the seventies, of course, but the sixties. He really overstepped himself with his list of pretenders. He says that the sixties harbored "almost as many pretenders as it did genuinely inventive musicians."

OK, once and for all, who are they? I take it they aren't Coltrane, Tyner, Ayler, Shepp, Rivers, Dolphy, Coleman, Taylor, Cherry, Blackwell, Pharoah, Lyons, Shorter, Sun Ra, Gilmore, Pullen, Graves, Tchicai, Blackwell, or Haden — and that's just twenty, an easy number to double. So if "almost" means anything, Palmer should have no trouble coming up with fifteen pretenders. I want to know who they are so I can avoid their records and aim for the pure and true.
John Benson
New York, NY
(Land of Pretenders)

SONNY THOUGHTS

I've never written to a magazine in my life but the article on Sonny Rollins by Rafi Zabor was *excellent!!*, and I had to let you know. This man blew me away. Reading the article was like listening to myself talk about Rollins. I thought I was one of the few people who were hip to the Freedom Suite album but I was wrong! It's so great to read an article about a Jazz musician when the writer knows what he's talking about.
Barry Sperti
Glenwood, Ill.

RADIO ACTIVITY

Your "Into the 80's" piece was a great slice of tomorrow's pie! It's nice to see so many forward thinking folks in our Industry. The music must remain a #1 priority to those who use it . . . otherwise abuse sets in and all you have is mule meat. Rock-n-roll has been an easily-led-astray musical genre. Bringing it back to the people is no easy task in light of the epoxy brigade!
Joe Piasek
Program Director, WPIX-FM
New York, N.Y.

SHEILA JORDAN

It was very nice to see a review of our Boston concert in your March issue. A very special thank you is extended to Fred Bouchard and V. Gaits. I'd just like to clear up a couple of things that are important to the group's image. The ECM album which was quoted as my album is actually Steve Kuhn's album. I was fortunate to be a part of Steve's music. Steve and the trio do not accompany me — if anything we accompany each other. Thanks again for the write-up and lots of good luck with your fine magazine.
P.S. The article quoted me as celebrating my 50th birthday — it was my 51st. Every year in jazz counts . . . right?
Sheila Jordan
NYC, NY

NEW YORK SYNDROME

Although I've admired the breadth of Robert Palmer's writing for some time, I feel obliged to make a couple of comments aobut his "Jazz in the Seventies" in your January issue. He states the argument that many writers, including himself, over-emphasize or exclusively focus on musicians who live and work in New York, but does nothing to refute it, instead conceding the 'unfortunately monolithic' role of New York in the jazz world. In the course of his decade-review he goes on to mention no musician, American or otherwise, who's not New York-based or a frequent visitor. I'm particularly bothered by his not mentioning any of the current European improvisors (at least one of which, Evan Parker, is surely one of the world's most important musicians) or any of several American players (like Joe McPhee) who already live in the "heartland" Palmer would like to see jazz brought to. When people stop looking at jazz as a New York phenomenon and see it as a truly American music, then perhaps something can be done about the disgraceful inequity between federal funding for jazz and for classical music. The exceptional musicians *are* out there, and it's up to the jazz writers to find them, not to wait for them to come to the writers.
Kevin Whitehead
Baltimore, MD

LOADED FOR BEAR

"The Bear" is getting to me, right in the heart. Thanks, Rafi, I have never ever read anything that I could relate to as much, especially when the Bear and Jones get into the police car. I hope it works out for them or else I'll cave in.
Steve O'Neal
Flagstaff, AZ

MANNY THANKS

A magazine that features a regular article by Robert Fripp is O.K. by me! I like your coverage of New Wave bands and coverage of jazz (Jazz in the 70's, issue #20). Your writers really do their homework! Issue #21 was out there — Eno, Talking Heads, Tom Verlaine, Weather Report and reggae, all in one issue — wow! Great work.
Manny Guevera
Buffalo, NY

WE WALK THE LINE

I recently bought your issue #21, and was very pleasantly surprised — you tread a kind of thin line between 'standard' fusion and pop and the stuff I really like and search out — 'progressive music' (though that's a bad term for overuse and misapplication): modern experimental rock, jazz (including avant), etc. A cunning stunt, which I hope doesn't sway into more pop-orientation ('pop-rock,' 'pop-jazz,' etc.). Keep that line!
Ross Rhodes
Pittsburgh, PA

ENO UNO

Concerning the Fripp 'manifesto' — Mr. Fripp does not seem to consider the fact that the only way that the record company syndrome can be eliminated is for the artists themselves, the Fripps and the Enos and the Talking Heads and the Stan Getzes, to lead the way by abandoning that system themselves, and so as countless unknowns are already doing — market their music by mail order.
Chuck Larrieu
Corte Madera, CA

music industry news

By Robert Ford and Nelson George

Highlights

The record industry is coming off a Christmas buying season that was both encouraging and disappointing. It was encouraging because it was better than last year's disaster, but disappointing in that it was nothing like years gone by.

Gone are the lavish record company press parties and promotional junkets. Gone are the big expense accounts and frivolous marketing gimmicks.

The biggest losers are, of course, the new artists. Acts that might have had no trouble getting signed a few years ago suddenly find themselves looking at a lot of slammed doors. Many acts that had label deals are also out in the cold. Most marginal record sellers have been cut as most big labels are trimming their rosters.

Fusion appears to be a real loser with many of the biggest names in the genre now looking for deals. The era when anybody that played with Miles Davis, Jimi Hendrix, or the Yardbirds could walk into a label and write their own ticket is long since past.

FM Tightens Playlists

In the land of AOR rock (that's FM, folks) there has been a general tendency to tighten playlists, thus making the most popular cuts come up more quickly in the rotation. If that sounds like Top 40 radio you're absolutely right. If one thing was apparent during the late 1970's it was that AOR, an outgrowth of progressive rock format, was becoming the new Top 40. Songs like "Stairway To Heaven" and selections from *Sgt. Pepper*, revolutionary in their time, had become as predictable as the pimple cleaners and Pepsi of early rock radio. Fortunately, this was pretty much confined to the major markets. Outside of New York, Los Angeles, etc., there seemed a little more room for regionalism and just plain seat-of-the-pants programming gambles.

Many of the new wave bands find the newly tightened playlists a problem. Heavy metal lives, make no mistake about it, and many of the East Coast media darlings will have to deal with (and overcome) hostility in the heartland if they are going to be important parts of the American music scene. The traditional outlet for new rock, AOR stations, may not be too helpful. If a band's not in the arena-rock style of a Foreigner or Boston, they'll have to fight their way onto the playlists.

Tape Pirates

A two year old Justice Dept. probe into illegal record and tape packaging has resulted in a highly publicized indictment of Sam Goody Inc. and two of its top executives. Goody's, a major East Coast retail chain that is owned by Pickwick, has been accused of knowingly handling counterfeit product in its stores. Most industry insiders feel that these indictments are just the tip of the iceberg, and that the more the Feds dig, the more dirt they'll find; watch this one, it could get messy.

Independents Boom

While CBS, WEA, RCA and the other conglomerates that control popular music both in America and around the world have been hit hard by the thin times, many small independent labels have never had it better. Unlike their big budget brethren, these small operations are not concerned with reaching two or three million consumers with almost every release, but are communicating to limited audiences interested in the musical forms they specialize in.This is not very different from the early days of rock and rhythm and blues when small labels (early Atlantic is a prime example) served the musical needs of the black market while the majors embraced MOR.

The entire new wave scene has become a hotbed of independent activity as the acts find that singles and EP's serve their musical approach better than the album format. Colorful sleeves containing lyrics, group pictures or anything else the band desires make the outside of these 45's as interesting (and sometimes more) than the music inside.

The champion of this approach in new wave quarters is clearly the UK's Stiff label. Their list of discoveries is impressive (Elvis Costello, Ian Dury, Nick Lowe). Stiff has consistently gone to the people first (through concerts and retail promotion) and worried about deals with the majors second. This is as central to new wave thinking as three-minute records, and it's working. (Stiff now has a distribution agreement with Epic.)

An example of a growing independent, Bruce Iglauer of Chicago's Alligator records has been pushing nothing but the blues since he formed the label in the mid-1970's. Not the over-produced stuff that B.B. King has been making lately, but South Side, tough Chi-town sounds that feature the guitar work of Son Seals, Albert Collins, Fenton Robinson and others.

Iglauer has not only let the musicians be free to play their way, he has used the natural interest of music writers in the blues to promote his product. Despite having limited resources, Iglauer has promoted his product with a verve (and success) that the majors should all envy.

In a move related to the success of indies, David Krebs and Steve Leber of Contemporary Communications (they handle Aerosmith, Ted Nugent, Parliament-Funkadelic) recently announced the proposed formation of Word of Mouth records. The idea is to sign local

groups with a strong following, record them for $15,000 or less, and then encourage sales in their home region. This system is built around an understanding that at a certain point (maybe 50,000 units) a major company will pick up national distribution. If this company has any success look for others along this line to follow. The result would be to

make managers, the industry's real talent scouts, more important than they already are. It's hard to say whether that would be good or bad. But if Leber & Krebs Mgmt. are an example of the men to do the picking, order your ear plugs as quickly as possible.

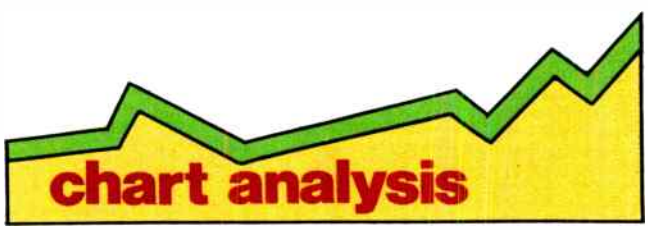
Label Talk

Last time we reported that PolyGram was sending some Dutch accountants to L.A. to look at the books at Casablanca. The books apparently made interesting reading, since Neil Bogart has "resigned" as president of Casablanca. According to the press release PolyGram has bought Bogart out and acquired a controlling interest in Casablanca, but insiders say that Bogart was tossed out because he mismanaged a seemingly profitable operation that included such recently hot acts as Donna Summer, Kiss, and the Village People as well as a successful film operation. Bogart's colossal folly with the four Kiss solo albums is well known. Four million albums were shipped out and more than three million were returned by retailers in one of the biggest flops in the history of the business.

New hints of shenanigans recently came to light when Donna Summer brought suit against Bogart and the label. It seems Summer was unhappy with the contract she signed with the label. And no wonder since the agent that negotiated the contract for Donna was Joyce Bogart, Neil's wife. Look for the Dutchmen to settle out of court now that Neil is gone.

Cry not for Neil, however. One of the most gifted hypesters in the business, Bogart is already planning his own entertainment company to be called BogArts.

continued on next page



With this issue we begin a new feature that will attempt to explain and analyze what is happening on the pop music charts. To begin the series we will try to provide you with a general understanding of the trade charts (*Billboard, Cashbox* and *Record World*). Fortunes are made and broken by the fluctuations of these charts yet few people, including many alleged industry insiders, know how they work.

Contrary to popular belief, the trade charts are not designed to give an accurate reflection of current record sales. The charts tend to reflect "action" rather than sales. Action is a nebulous term that includes airplay and hype along with sales. A record can hit the trade charts without any substantial sales if it is getting a great deal of airplay and a strong label push. But to make it to the upper reaches of the chart it must have sales.

The trade chart departments determine sales by calling up a sampling of retail and wholesale record stores. The sampling includes one-stops (wholesale stores that handle all label product), rack jobbers (retailers who provide complete record departments for department stores), chain stores, and mom and pop stores (small single store operations).

Someone at the trade will call someone at the record store every week and read a list of records to the store employee. The employee tells how each record is doing by rating it from poor to excellent. The trade caller will translate the employee's responses into points and the points are fed into a computer which compiles and weights the responses and comes up with a chart. The chart can be altered by hand if the chart manager at the trade feels that the computer did not take into account all of the factors.

If this seems a bit inaccurate to you, you're right. Most college statistics students would be appalled at the way the trades compile their charts. But the inaccuracies tend to balance themselves out and it seems the charts are as accurate as the industry deserves. A strict sales chart, which *Variety* attempts to compile, is too slow to reflect the almost daily trends in the music business.

Most industry vets have their own theories about the charts, but the general consensus is that *Billboard* provides the slowest but most accurate and honest chart of the three trades. Each chart varies slightly since each has a different sample and a different formula.

The trades also offer soul, country and MOR (or adult contemporary) charts that are compiled more or less the same way. The trade disco charts are compiled for the most part from club djs' lists of the most responded-to disco records in any given week. These charts are the most inaccurate, since most of the samples are not representative and most of the dj's tend to pick their personal favorites rather than the favorites of their customers.

Almost all of the charts signify the fastest moving records of the week with bullets, boxes or stars. The bullets are important because many retailers will only order bulleted records and few radio stations will add a record that does not have a bullet.

The charts are very complex and are probably not as important as most people think. We'll be doing a condensed overview of all the charts for the pre-publication time period to give you a feeling for the happening trends.

Superstars dominated the album charts during this past holiday season with Stevie Wonder, the Eagles, Donna Summer, Styx, Barbra Streisand and Fleetwood Mac hogging the top positions. But based on past efforts, Fleetwood Mac and Stevie Wonder's albums must be considered disappointing. In spite of a few fairly successful singles, Fleetwood Mac could barely stay in the top 20 of the album chart a little more than four months after the release of *Tusk*. When you consider that the last two Fleetwood Mac albums stayed on top months after their release, the group has taken a step backwards. Wonder's record fell deep into the middle of the album chart in less than four months after release which must mean that the world just isn't interested in the "Secret Life Of Plants."

The springtime top 20 features names like the Whispers, Rush, Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers, Pat Benatar and Dan Fogelberg. With the exception of Benatar, all of these acts have been putting out records for a while and most of them have paid their dues through extensive tours, but they are all new to the list.

New Wave and Ska, still the darling of the critics, have yet to make a substantial impact on the album chart.

The singles chart of late has been dominated by truly commercial records with no new sound breaking through to give the followers in this business something to chase. Pink Floyd is far and away the hottest thing in this post Christmas season with the biggest album, its first hit single, "Another Brick In The Wall," and a short but wildly successful tour.

The current jazz chart reads like most other jazz charts in recent years, with names like Grover Washington, Bob James, Earl Klugh and Chuck Mangione on top. With everyone on earth having their own opinion on whether or not this stuff is really jazz, the current charts in the trade do not mean much.

The big names in crossover country still dominate the country charts as Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Anne Murray and Kenny Rogers seem to want to keep all the top spots for themselves.

Despite reports that disco is dead, some people still must be dancing, as dance music still dominates the soul charts with Michael Jackson the hottest name, Quincy Jones the hottest producer, and Dick Griffey's Solar Records (Whispers, Shalimar) the hottest label in recent months.

As for PolyGram, the acquisition of Casablanca fits in with a total restructuring of their U.S. record operation. Designed to bring all of the conglomerate's domestic operations under one umbrella company called PRO.S.A. and headed by former Mercury president Irwin Steinberg. The new structure will mean that Mercury Records, long headquartered in Chicago, will be moving to New York and share offices with Polydor.

Robert Stigwood's RSO records will remain a distributed label with PolyGram though rumors are rampant that the Dutchmen are looking to buy Stigwood out, too.

Record Prices Drop

The cultivation of an audience for young or unknown performers is having a profound effect on the price of records in North America and England. CBS has a program where seven young artists will have their product sold initially at $5.98 to stimulate sales. Reorders will be at the regular $7.98 or $8.98 list price. In England, Arista and Virgin have adopted a similar strategy with some success.

In a related development Polygram Canada has abolished suggested retail

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

pricing on all records and tapes, leaving all pricing decisions to the individual retail outlet. This move will in many cases result in retailers offering cut-rate prices for new product.

Industry executives are always talking about how new artists are the life blood of the recording industry. But until these moves to bring down the price (at least initially) for new performers they weren't doing enough to help them. High retail prices send buyers reaching for old reliables like the Eagles and frighten off the more adventurous.

Disco Dead Yet Again

Last issue we reported that disco is not dead. Well, this issue we can confidently say that disco radio is now thoroughly dead, at least disco radio as it was defined just a few months ago.

Case in point is the New York market, the home of the disco aesthetic, where not long ago the city's two leading stations, WBLS and WKTU, were battling for higher ratings by declaring their allegiance to the thump-bump and the synthesizer.

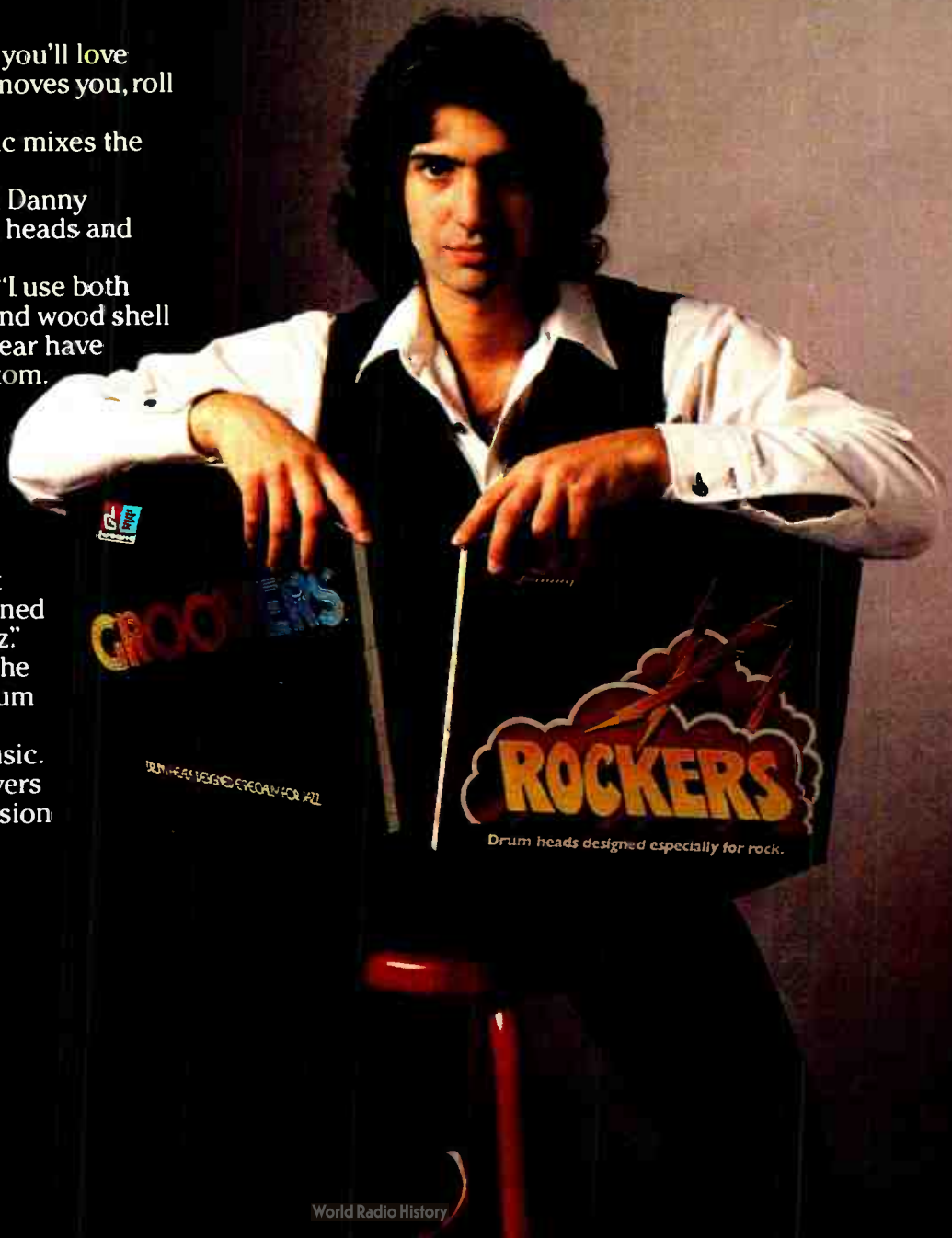
Listening to them now, one hears a mix of r&b ballads, oldies, and dance records that are never called disco. Mixing techniques adapted from club play are still utilized, but the word itself is carefully avoided.

A similar shift has occurred in Chicago, Memphis, Los Angeles, and smaller markets across the country. Black audience radio hasn't sounded this good in years, though things will never be the same in the here-today gone-tomorrow sweepstakes.

The days of hard-core soul stations are probably over in the major markets. In order to appeal to national advertisers (a most conservative group) and reach a self-consciously sophisticated black audience, as well as whites, the music mix is quite diverse. Kenny Loggins or the Rolling Stones now fit hand in hand with the Bar-Kays and Peabo Byson as Black stations try to woo General Motors and the Wall Street Journal.

"Jazz heads where I need 'em. Rock heads when I want 'em."

Danny Gottlieb
Pat Metheny Group



If your head's into rock, you'll love Ludwig Rockers. If jazz moves you, roll with Groovers.

But what if your music mixes the best of both?

Maybe you'll do what Danny Gottlieb does: mix your heads and cover the spectrum.

According to Danny, "I use both Ludwig clear Vistalite and wood shell drums in my set. The clear have Rockers on top and bottom. The wood shells have Groovers."

"Depending on who solos, I'll move from Rockers to Groovers. Right now I'm even thinking about two bass drums, one tuned for rock and one for jazz."

Danny understands the real value of Ludwig drum heads. They bring him closer to his kind of music. Rockers for rock. Groovers for jazz. Or a smooth fusion of both.

Ludwig®

BEWARE RADIO 1984

Programmer Lee Abrams controls too much of your radio dial already. Now he wants to make the music as well.

By Dave Marsh

Gentle Giant's *Civilian* is one of the year's most important albums, not because of its music, or the band's past credentials, or any technological breakthrough, but because it was produced by an entity known as Onward US, which is a pseudonym for Lee Abrams.

Abrams is the 27-year-old "programming consultant" who is responsible for the highly successful "Superstars" format FM radio stations, which span the nation from Miami to Seattle, with 63 other stopovers in places as diverse as Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Hartford, Atlanta, Worcester, San Diego and Sacramento. *Civilian* is Abrams' debut production effort, however, which represents a milestone not just for him but also for us. Not since the 1960 Payola Scandal has such an important national radio figure lent his name to such a project. After all, Alan Freed was busted for lending his name to songwriting credits he hadn't earned (among other things) and Dick Clark was forced to divest himself of his record company and pressing plant interests in order to remain on the air.

But there's nothing illegal going on. Abrams has filed the necessary conflict of interest documents with the FCC and FTC, giving him the same legal status as such corporate giants as CBS and RCA/NBC. "The only thing I can't do is promote the album to my own stations," Abrams says. Does he need to?

"For most of the stations, Lee is the link to the big time," says Bill Hard, of the influential FM tip sheet, the Hard Report, and himself a former Superstars jock. "If there's one guy you'd like to please it's Lee Abrams." But Hard also points out that there has been no rush to air the initial *Civilian* package, a 12-inch sampler. True enough. The only station reporting to *Record World* and *Billboard* in their issues of March 8 that Gentle Giant is being played is WKLS-FM, which happens to be the Superstars station in Atlanta, where Abrams' consulting firm is based. (On the other hand, as Hard and others point out, most stations don't play 12-inch samplers anyway.)

But the failure of the sampler to make much pre-release impact is an initial failure for Abrams, perhaps an early indication that his career in records won't be as meteoric as his one in radio, where he's been a national power since age 19. For

Gentle Giant's *Civilian* is one of the year's most important albums, not because of the music but because it is produced by radio mega-programmer Lee Abrams. Not since the 1960 Payola scandal has such an important national radio figure lent his name to such a project. . . . "The only thing I can't do is promote the album to my own stations," says Abrams. But does he even need to? As Shakespeare said: "Who can ignore the whims of a king?"

the sampler was an integral element in Abrams' *Civilian* marketing strategy, as outlined in a memo entitled Report on the Proposed Strategy for Gentle Giant, addressed to CBS Records and dated Jan. 19th, 1980.

In radio, Abrams is most famous for his heavy reliance on research and statistics, what he calls "science," which boils down to an ability to take the key elements of free-form FM rock radio and combine them with certain aspects of traditional Top 40 AM. The resulting stew is frequently a numbing formula, although at best (as on Chicago's WLUP), the actual research can be used in distinctive and creative ways.

But the Gentle Giant marketing memo goes beyond "science" into preposterously bureaucratic and somewhat frightening 1984-style proposals. Some samples: Gentle Giant plays orchestral rock, which has been on the decline since the heyday of Yes and ELP. "There is a huge audience indoctrinated into this type of music," writes Abrams. The radio commercials for the album should contain "short song segments" connected by "beeps," designed to "realert the subconscious every time another riff . . . kicks in. If the hooks are right, it'll sound like a K-Tel album package presented in a spacy 1980's way." Furthermore, "as far as industry press is concerned, we would prefer to see ads made up of testimonials from the proper people . . . this can be coordinated . . to take natural advantage of the emotional side of the music programming circle. If the right people say the right things, it can work wonders." Do tell.

Abrams also has plans for the band members themselves. John Weathers, his fans may be happy to know, "requires little change from his present basic appearance . . . a general tough look to his presentation could help, therefore *smiles should be toned down.*" (My italics.)

But the majority of the report is concerned with promotion to the sort of AOR radio stations with whom Abrams works the rest of the week. "We hope to coordinate with . . . the CBS promotion staff an overall cooperative type of promotion plan," Abrams writes. "Needless to say, because of my radio position this has to be handled with integrity and full legality . . ." Legality is established, I guess. What about integrity? Acceptance by Abrams can mean the difference between success and failure for an album. Should record companies, and by implication the audience, be dictated to by a "consultant" who both makes the records and decides which records should be played on the air? How can CBS or any other label ignore overtures from a man on whom their financial well-being so largely depends? Plainly it's a deal that can't be refused.

The point isn't that Abrams should not be allowed the same freedom to diversify as larger corporations. But what large corporations are really up to is easily obscured by clamor about falling profits. In 1978, about 80 percent of the US record business was controlled by six companies: CBS, WEA, Polydor-Phonogram, Capitol-EMI, RCA and MCA. In 1979, RCA absorbed A&M's

continued on next page

IF YOU THINK ALTEC LANSING ONLY MAKES GREAT SPEAKERS...

...Meet The Great Power Behind Them.

At Altec Lansing, we've been making high-quality loudspeakers for over forty years. And we're very proud of the reputation that they've earned during that time. But perhaps it's because we're so well known for our speakers that some people tend to forget that we also make a full line of professional electronics. Equipment that's built with the same quality and reliability that our speakers are famous for.

Case in point: The Altec Lansing 9440A power amplifier.

The 9440A is a dual-channel power amp that delivers the high performance standards that today's audio professional needs. It produces more than 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms of highly reactive loudspeaker load. At 4 ohms the power is typically greater than 400 watts. And even at these levels the 9440A has less than 0.25% THD or IM distortion and a frequency response that's flat ±0.25 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz.

Of course high performance must be matched with high reliability. The 9440A is designed to meet the most demanding conditions. Day-after-day. Year-after-year. Reliability provided by sixteen 250-watt homotaxial power transistors backed up by a massive die-cast aluminum heat sink. Reliability ensured by an efficient VI limiter, a unique 40% power-limiting circuit and an output relay that protects against dangerous turn-on/turn-off transients. Reliability good enough to earn both UL and CSA approval.

And because we think that an amplifier should do more than just amplify, we've incorporated some features in the 9440A's design that will help make life a little easier. Features like lighted VU meters, meter range switches and provisions for adding plug-in input transformers. Features like a front-panel-mounted switch that converts the 9440A into a single-channel amplifier with a true balanced output. Features that help make the 9440A a versatile addition to any sound system.

But perhaps the best feature of the 9440A is that it's from Altec Lansing—a leader in quality audio products for over four decades.

So if you're thinking about power amps, think about Altec Lansing. Check the Yellow Pages under Sound Systems for the name of your local Altec Lansing sound contractor. And meet the great power behind our speakers.

ALTEC LANSING
SOUND PRODUCTS DIVISION

1515 So. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Ca. 92803 • 714/774-2900
ALTEC CORPORATION

D'Angelico's

"GREATEST HITS"

For top-of-the-chart Performance, electric bass players rely on D'Angelico **SMOOTHROUND BASS HITS.**

Because they're made exactly like our Smoothround guitar strings—with windings ground and polished to a satin-smooth finish—**BASS HITS** are fluid-fingering and gentle on frets. And their *super magnetic* properties assure a **BIG, FAT** sound from your bass.

BASS HITS come in two playing textures: S-50's for ultrasmoothness and S-25's for more brightness. That's something few others offer.

Try a set and discover why the pros score with **BASS HITS.**

Ask you music dealer for any string in D'Angelico's full line.

distribution and manufacturing, MCA bought ABC and Capitol-EMI purchased United Artists.

In radio, the situation is similar: Burkhart-Abrams, the consulting firm of which Abrams is a partner, programs not 65 but almost 200 stations, in formats ranging from Top 40 to disco. And Burkhart-Abrams is only one among several consulting organizations, including those associated with such corporate giants as ABC, CBS, NBC and RKO. The question is really what happens when the handful of recording organizations is allowed to interlock with the handful of major broadcasters.

The Abrams case highlights the conflict of interest inherent in such deals in several ways. One might wonder for instance, whether Gentle Giant would be a CBS Records act in the first place if not for his involvement. The group recorded for Columbia at the outset of its career, then moved to Capitol, where it had an undistinguished commercial record. Its return to CBS is almost unprecedented — the only other example I can think of is Bob Dylan, who is not exactly of parallel stature. Secondly, Abrams' position with both the band and the radio stations he consults is much more directly personal than anyone in similar positions at any of the larger corporations. I doubt that many CBS radio programmers could tell you the name of Columbia Records' head of A&R. But Abrams' jocks move from one of his stations to another frequently — their allegiance is clearly to him as much as their nominal employers, the station licensees. And this is an altogether different sort of unspoken pressure than a corporate monolith may bring to bear.

Finally, there is Abrams' approach to music itself. "Really, Lee's just a mirror of the audience," says Skye Daniels, the WLUP program director, whose tastes are considerably more outrageous. "He never tries to lead the audience." So Abrams' involvement as a record-maker is also disconcerting because it intensifies the natural direction of all corporations to market only to least common denominator palates. "The music is geared to be escapism more than anything else," he writes, which is hardly to my taste.

Which doesn't mean Abrams should be barred from expressing his tastes, not even as a record producer. The real answer to this whole issue is for Lee Abrams to make the same choice that people involved in the intermingled worlds of radio and records have traditionally made: choose one side of the fence or the other. When someone starts playing both ends against the middle — which in this case is an audience that includes everyone who listens to or cares much about contemporary popular music — it is time for the middle to rise up and ask a few hard questions. Or even demand that the conflict cease. Immediately. M

and loose, and it worked.

Many of the new tunes, including the ones from the studio side of *8:30*, are staccato connect-the-dots ventures that jump up and down and around the scale — the most difficult kind of melody to play with forward momentum and human phrasing. Shorter and Zawinul simply zinged them off, with Pastorius percolating (still a little busily) underneath them, then raised the tunes aloft and flung them into the air. Many of the tunes built along the lines set out by *Sweetnighter*'s "Boogie Woogie Waltz" — slow, unpredictable accretion of thematic material, seemingly spontaneously generated in the heat of the jam — yet the new tunes are more complex, and they tease by making you wonder just what's thematic and what's not. And just when the band would seem to be heading for fireworks-and-brimstone climaxes, they'd detour for one more strange, wonderful and illuminating tangent. There was structure aplenty — and the willingness to trash it for the sake of jazz or just plain high spirits.

They never settled for one mood per song, but would gear up as if heading into a crescendo, but instead of going for the stomping cliche, they'd spin out for a duo or trio and deflect the full-band momentum into improvisation. Shorter and drummer Peter Erskine played one memorable energy duet, out of reach of straight time or chord changes; even "8:30," a fairly typical Zawinul pan-Third-World dance riff, took the scenic route. And there was a drumless ballad passage in another new tune that was so delicate the audience held its breath, afraid to disturb the ethereal counterpoint.

It didn't sound like *Live in Japan*: that was a different band, much more attached to jazz/swing time than to the rock 4/4. Later versions of Weather Report have learned to harness rock bashing, and — miraculously — to do so without cramping anyone's style. Putting rock power behind improvisation seemed like it'd be easy in the early '70s rash of fusion, but only the Mahavishnu Orchestra (for a short time) and Weather Report pulled it off, because they refused to condescend to rock. While Erskine isn't the best drummer Weather Report have ever had (I still prefer Ndugu Leon Chancler), he's been with the band long enough to meet Shorter, Zawinul and Pastorius as equals; when he backs a full-band riff, he's a cymbal-slinging elemental, and in dialogues he listens as hard as he plays. In fact, that willingness to listen is what keeps Weather Report, even at its simplest and riffiest and most structured, from becoming an instrumental rock band: they hear each other, and their jazz-honed reflexes mean they can act on what they hear whenever they want to.

In a night of curveballs at the Beacon, the most unexpected one was that Weather Report actually played a cover: Duke Ellington's "Rockin' in Rhythm." It was perfect, not only for its title, but for the way the band tore into it. They treated its bluesy line as they'd treat anything Shorter or Zawinul might have come up with, hard and swinging, while behind it Zawinul punched sustained modal Fender Rhodes chords off the beats in trademark style. In totally regrooving Ellington, Weather Report asserted their continuity with jazz tradition, simultaneously proving they had something of their own to add to it.

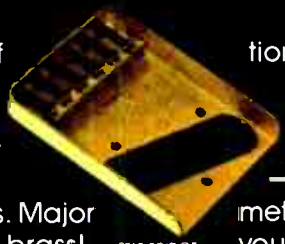
What did the audience — some of whom were doubtless unfamiliar with Ellington — make of it? Well, they were taken care of with a surprisingly tasteful slide show that montaged shots of city streets and all of the icons of jazz, from Louis Armstrong to Miles Davis. For visual interest elsewhere, there was a spooky blue-and-green light show behind one sustained, elegaic tune, and of course Pastorius disported himself throughout the concert. Basically, however, Weather Report played to their own better instincts and dared the audience to hang on. Which is as it should be. A band this good shouldn't let anything like crowd expectations or some fool's idea of pop accessibility affect them, and at the Beacon, they didn't let anything stand in their way. As if anything could. M

Fender breaks through the brass barrier!

New...high technology. finish...advanced design brass components

Now—after five years of extensive laboratory research on brass alloys, finishes, designs—Fender introduces professional quality brass components. Major breakthroughs in crafting brass!

Finish breakthrough—M52 Epoxy. Brass is beautiful, but unfinished brass discolors. Most brass is coated with lacquers which deteriorate from scratches and body acids. Fender refused to make brass until this problem was solved. Every potential finish was tested against salt, acid, heat, abrasion. At last, Fender selected M52 Epoxy, high technology finish that keeps brass gleaming under all playing conditions. Only M52 Epoxy is good enough for Fender brass.



TELE BRIDGE ASSEMBLY

Design breakthrough—Resonance Bar. Most metal components on your Fender electric guitar or bass are now available in brass—plus several new designs. Fender has created a universal bridge assembly with an exclusive resonance bar which gives significant support to your instrument's sound. Adds to sustain. Expands tone color and volume. Extends volume range. Sensational in heavy brass!

STRAT CONTROL KNOB

UNIVERSAL BASS BRIDGE ASSEMBLY

BASS BRIDGE ASSEMBLY

BASS THUMB REST

Super Pickups—another breakthrough. Now your hotter pickups can be Fender and totally hot. These new Fender Super Pickups are "overwound" with extra wraps. They are more dynamic, responsive, sensitive—hotter. Give more volume; almost like having louder volume control. With Fender's Super Pickups you can even overdrive your amp's preamp stages. That's hot!

Today...see what's really new...Fender Standard Brass, Fender Brassmaster, Super Pickups, and the full line of Fender accessories. They make a real difference.

SUPER PICKUP

Change for the better.

Fender® Accessories

RAPPING DEEJAYS

In the clubs
and on the street,
the rappin' king lays on
over the beat.

By Nelson George

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Kurtis Blow weaves his rap

Now if your name is Annie
get up off your fannie
If your name is Clyde
get off your backside
If your name is Pete
you don't need a seat
Cause I'm Kurtis Blow
and I'm on the go
Rockin' to the rhythms
in ster-e-ereo
from "Rappin' Blow" by Kurtis Blow

If you ask anyone who is not black, not under 20, and not a resident of Harlem or the South Bronx, who started the rapping deejay style, they will undoubtedly cite the Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight." To anyone who follows popular music by studying the trade publications and their top 100's, that would seem a logical answer, since the Sugar Hill disc was the only rap record to cross over. Slightly more insightful music fans might suggest that the veteran funk-r&b group the Fatback Band had something to do with it, since their single "King Tim the III" first appeared on *Billboard*'s soul chart at about the same time "Rapper's Delight" made its debut.

Well, so much for what charts in major publications can tell you about what is really happening musically in America. Because in either case you would be very, very wrong.

A much more accurate idea of where rapping deejays began can be found any Saturday night at a South Bronx disco called Club 371. There, if you're lucky, a local legend named DJ Hollywood will be orchestrating a merger of black street wit, the latest dance hits and turntable technology and driving a crowd of tough-to-please New York dancers into total ecstacy. The crowd is composed of young adults and teens, college students and low-on-the-ladder office workers, blacks and hispanics, who smoke their herb, search for some companionship and in general get loose. Dreams of upward mobility may spin in their heads, but the reality is that more of them may end up in Attica than in that suburban house with its regulation two cars and 2.3 kids.

A terrible school system, an addictive welfare system, and a government that lets drugs pour into the community have, along with twin turntables, somehow conspired to make these young people come up with their own distinctive brand of entertainment. All in all, the situation doesn't differ greatly from the one that sparked England's punk rock movement. Lower-class kids have always wanted and created their own insular thing. London youths of the mid-1970's plugged in their guitars, just as the generation before had, but said something different this time. Meanwhile in Harlem the plastic disco of Studio 54 was ignored, and the music was transformed into a uniquely black and streetwise form closer to home.

The deejay raps over the instrumental sections or breaks of popular dance records are reminiscent of Jamaica "toaster" records, on which Jamaican deejays talk over the heavy dub instrumentation of reggae. Most of the youngsters who do this in America are ignorant of the Jamaican precedent, yet the raps serve the same purpose in both these African-derived cultures. Whether it's heard in a park in Brooklyn or a junkyard in Kingston, it is rhythmic music and the spoken voice unconsciously creating a potent echo of Africa.

Unfortunately the rapping deejays are looked down upon by older and more middle-class blacks, who see them not as a continuation of a tradition, but as perpetuators of old stereotypes. One black writer with access to a major music publication told me he'd never write about them "because they don't deserve the ink."

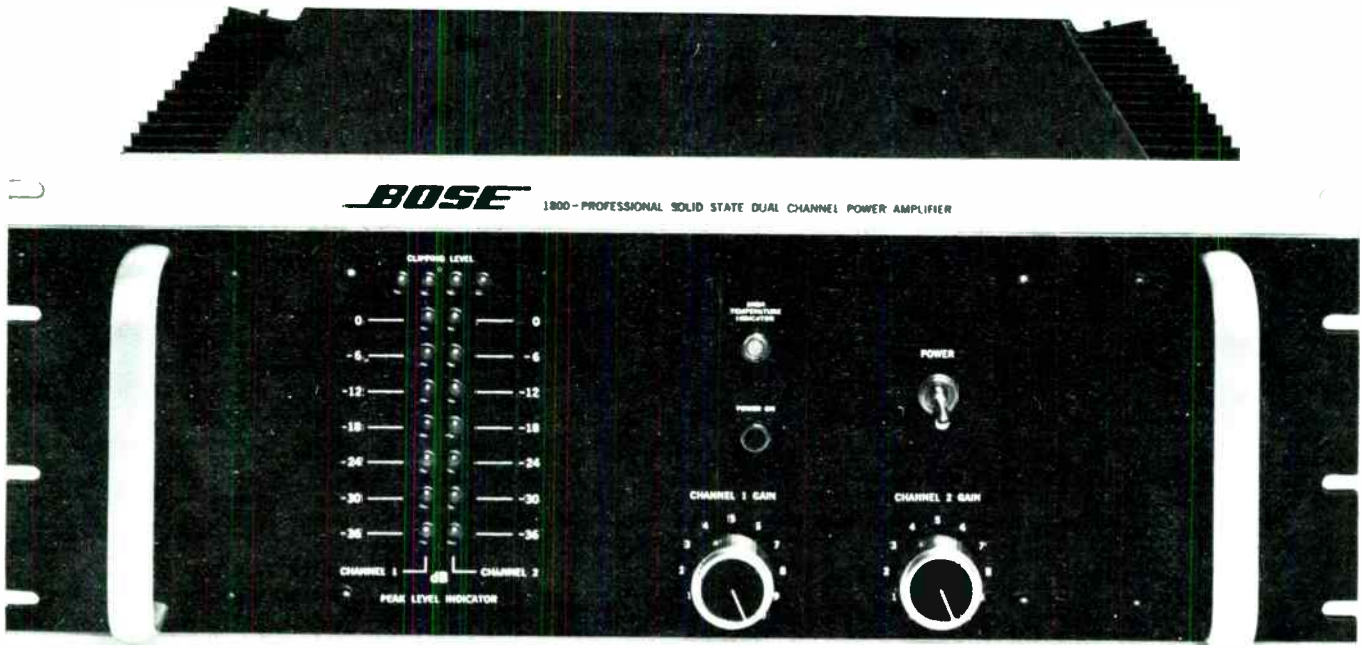
His condescending attitude is hardly isolated and to my mind reflects a wish by some to coat black culture with a superficial "high mindedness" and "art", European concepts that seem to take any form of expression out of its context, mount it, and drain away its relevance to everyday life. The rappers make no claim that they are artistic or are presenting "positive images" to black America. They talk about what they feel and know, simple as that.

Like their antecedents, the jive-talking air personalities of r&b radio such as Dr. Jive and Jocko, the rappers are crowd-pleasers whose rapport with their audience is remarkable. The rapping deejay cited by his contemporaries as developing the current rapping approach is Hollywood, a hefty 24-year-old with gold chains around his neck and a short, razor cut hair style. When he was at the peak of his popularity a few years ago he could command and guide a crowd with the dexterity of a James Brown. My first encounter with Hollywood came in 1977, at a concert held at the City College of New York's Harlem campus. I knew his reputation and of Club 371. Tapes of his performances were becoming a valued item among young Harlemites and his style was already being copied by mobile deejays around town, but I wasn't prepared for what would happen live. Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, Evelyn King, and Brainstorm were on the bill. Hollywood was to provide between-the-acts entertainment. Instead, the headliners were only interludes between his performances. Two thousand black and hispanic youths were totally under his control, all the way.

With MFSB's "Sexy" grooving underneath him, Hollywood scat-rapped a la Eddie Jefferson. "Hip, hop, de hip be de hop, de hip hop, hip de hop. On and on and on and on. Like hot butter on what . . . ?" Hollywood then cut the music, leaving the crowd room to shout "Popcorn" right on time. The huge college gym had become a gigantic disco, and people were dancing everywhere.

Performances like this inspired a whole slew of deejays to follow his lead. DJ Starski, Grand Master Flash, Kurtis Blow, and Eddie Cheeba (blow and cheeba are slang terms for marijuana)

continued on page 77



The Bose 1800.

When you turn the power up, it won't let you down.

The Bose Model 1800 power amplifier delivers 400 watts RMS per channel with both channels driven. Its massive power transformer and filter capacitors prevent power supply voltage droop, allowing the amplifier to deliver large amounts of solid, sustained bass.

Not only that, the Bose 1800 is so reliable, we gave it the longest warranty of any professional amplifier on the market. What makes it so durable?

The use of 14 power transistors per channel results in unusually low thermal stress. And massive heat sinks reduce the operating temperature even further. Computer-grade electrolytic capacitors increase reliability by providing extra temperature and voltage safety margins. A turn-on delay circuit limits power supply inrush currents to extend the life of the components. Electronic current limiting acts instantly to protect the amplifier from short circuits and other abnormal load conditions.

If you want to take your Model 1800 traveling, it can take the beating of hard road use. Its optional transit case has built-in fans and air-flow baffles to keep it cool, even under continuous high-power use.

With all its ruggedness and reliability, and with enough reserve capacity even under the most demanding conditions, there is no compromise in what you need most from a power amplifier: lots of clean power, with absolutely no audible distortion or coloration.

The Bose Model 1800. Check it out soon.

Bose Corporation, Dept. PL
100 The Mountain Road
Framingham, MA 01701

Please send me a copy of the Bose Professional Products catalog and a dealer list.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

Tel. ( ) _____ Zip _____

BOSE®

Bose for Pros

What's not new from Martin?

Over the past few years we at Martin have introduced several guitars to meet the changing requirements of today's acoustic player. Some models are new while others are modifications of previously manufactured instruments.

Our M series for example with the recently developed M-36 and the original M-38 is specifically designed to reduce overtones detected when dreadnought guitars are played through sophisticated sound systems or in recording studios. With a wider and shallower body than traditional acoustic guitars, the M series produces increased treble response and improved tonal balance.

In our HD-35 we have borrowed characteristics from our "Herringbone" D-28 which was originally offered between 1931 and 1946 and reintroduced in 1976. The HD-35 provides a balanced response with a brilliance that is generated when a dreadnought body is combined with a top featuring scalloped braces.

So, as we examine these models we ask ourselves . . . "What's not new from Martin?" Our ability to draw from nearly 150 years experience of creating acoustic guitars in an environment that demands attention to detail and quality hand craftsmanship—**that's what's not new!**

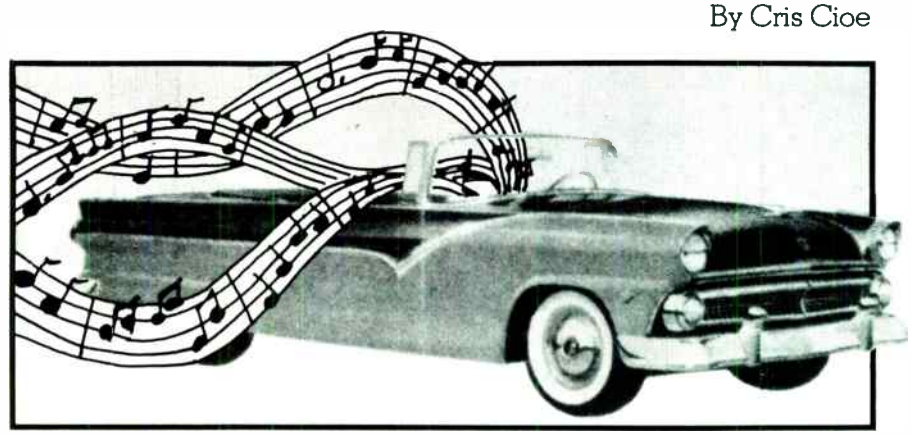
CF MARTIN & COMPANY NAZARETH, PA. 18064

MARTIN & SIGMA GUITARS ARE THE OFFICIAL GUITARS OF OPRYLAND U.S.A.

45's; RELIC OR REVIVAL?

The venerable rock single may be making a comeback; open minded radio stations and the independents lead the way.

By Cris Cioe



Maybe LSD was to blame, because somewhere in the psychedelic era — circa 1969 — acid rock, "free-form" FM radio, and burgeoning album sales sounded the death knell for the pop single as a viable product. Recording artists began to look down on the 45 rpm disc as a crass commercial device, an artistically limiting, less-than-three-minute top 40 format that inherently stifled their expressive souls. As album sales increased, of course, record companies encouraged this attitude and began supporting FM radio's album-oriented programming approach. Ironically, though, every record label executive worth his bottom line has always known that one bona fide hit single on an album can make the difference between its going gold (500,000 copies sold) or platinum (a million sold).

At the same time, top 40 AM radio largely became the domain of lowest-common-denominator trends like bubblegum music and more recently, pop disco blather, in part because many musicians themselves stopped aiming at the pop singles market. And yet, whenever major artists have concentrated on singles, the results have been among their best work. The Rolling Stones (with "Brown Sugar" and "Honky Tonk Women"), Bob Dylan ("Like A Rolling Stone"), Elton John ("Benny And The Jets" to name one of many), and the Bee Gees ("Stayin' Alive") — these pop artists have consistently hit the biggest mass-audience-response chords in their careers with singles. Why? Well, it's partly because the hit single itself is a hook-laden format which at its best deals in pared-down, archetypal riffs, harmonies, lyrics, and solos that embody, for want of a better term, virtuosic simplicity. In ultimate terms, George Clinton, of Parliament-Funkadelic fame, once told me that "in the history of pop music, there have only been two really total, 'big vibes', where as soon as you put on a single, the listener immediately recognizes its source: those two vibes were Motown in the 60's, and the Beatles."

I grew up in Detroit in the 60's, and the experience forged forever my attachment to pop singles, especially as they emanate from a car radio. The list of great singles and groups from that city and decade is endless, from Mitch Ryder's remake of the Shorty Long/Motown blues number "Devil With A Blue Dress" to Smokey Robinson's "Tracks of My Tears." The whole modern tradition of great singles, in fact, started in the early 60's. It's a tradition that combines eloquent succinctness with florid emotionalism, and on a conceptual level, the format provided the aesthetic basis for pop art in general. To put it another way, songs like the Four Tops' "Reach Out" or the Stones' "Satisfaction" helped make the pop single one of the premier cathartic over-the-counter experiences available to post-industrial humans.

The pop singles charts today are quite different from those glory years, to be sure. Most artists currently identified with top 40 singles purvey MOR, "adult contemporary," ballad-oriented, or soft rock music. For example, Barry Manilow's last 16 consecutive singles have been in the top 30. Dionne Warwick, a 60's singles artist par excellence, has resurrected that career recently with a couple of MOR hit singles — "I'll Never Love This Way Again" and the Isaac Hayes-penned "Deja Vu" — both, coincidentally, produced by Manilow. Even R&B singles that score big on the pop charts today are ballad-oriented (witness the Commodores' string of slow-motion tearjerkers) or softened funk (like Michael Jackson's lightly infectious "Rock With You" or the formerly raw Kool and the Gang's very smooth recent one "Ladies Night"). The other big singles hitters today include old warhorses like Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, whose current multi-platinum albums, both much-played on FM, have spawned singles which crossed over to top 40 (singles that make it on top 40 radio first rarely crossover to FM, partially due to the latter's aforementioned snobbish attitude.

One record company *has* had a somewhat unexpected success with singles on both FM and AM bands: Sire Records, distributed by the conglomerate Warners. John Montgomery headed national FM promotion at Warners before becoming vice president of same at Sire. He told me recently that "Warners puts out an LP, waits to see which songs AOR stations pick up on, then chooses a single. At Sire, Seymour Stein (label president) has always picked up on European trends earlier than others, and he found a master of a single there last year called "Pop Muzik," by the group M (which is really a pseudonym for multi-instrumentalist Robin Scott). We released it here, and got both FM and disco airplay immediately. Since then, we've had similar disco/radio hits with Telex's "Moscow Discow" and Talking Heads' "I Zimbra/Life During Wartime". FM stations generally don't like to play singles, but there are some adventurous ones across the country who feel that having a hip, advanced image is more important than just helping record companies move units. This group includes stations like WBCN (Boston), KSAN (San Francisco), WMMS (Cleveland), and WPIX (New York). These stations have taken chances on imported or non-major label singles. Most of the imports come from England, where singles are still a happening sales item. There, radio doesn't have the same power it does in America: kids learn about and buy records from word-of-mouth, street buzz, live gigs, reading the music press, and TV exposure. In the States, records by groups like the Pretenders and the Police are finally transmitting that street-oriented attitude to American radio."

continued on next page

Joe Piasek is program director of one of those vanguard stations, WPIX-FM in Manhattan. I asked him how his station's programming relates to the question of singles, and he told me that "we approach music as individually as possible. A song speaks for itself. Radio has done a great deal to distort the musical quality of 45's as opposed to albums. The 60's is where the music being played today started, and in the late 60's, the price of a single and an album were within a dollar of each other. When major labels started promoting LPs and AOR radio started, singles became a dying breed. It wasn't really until Elvis Costello's import single of "Watching The Detectives," in 1976, that a new artist broke here on the basis of that song alone, without an album being released at the same time. Likewise, when I heard an import of "Roxanne," by the Police, I didn't think 'This is a hit,' but rather 'This is a great single.' We'll also track a single locally, looking for momentum from call-in requests, local sales, etc. We even have a program on Saturdays called the No Major Label Show, which plays nothing but tapes and singles of bands without a record deal. The B-52s' "Rock Lobster" debuted on this show, and was later added to our regular playlist before Warners signed the group. Of course, New York has a strong sub-culture of musicians and industry people, so there's an audience for this type of thing. But we look for music with a lot of energy, and that's kept us looking at imports. Unfortunately, many of those who control the music business here are less knowledgeable about the music than its audience, and that audience is being compromised."

Joel Webber is an independent promotion man on the East Coast specializing in new rock and roll, and as such has "worked" albums by Talking Heads, the Ramones, and many independently produced singles, seeking coveted radio airplay for music that's often seen as outside the homogeneous norm of most FM radio today. He admits that "it's very, very difficult to get a station to listen to a single that doesn't come from a major label. And yet, the last few years have seen a surge in independently produced singles. The trend started on the West coast in '74 with Beserkely Records and its artists Jonathan Richmond, the Rubinoos, and Greg Kihn; on the East coast it began with singles by Patti Smith and Television's "Little Johnny Jewel." For years the major labels have ignored what it means when an independent single sells 10,000 copies, which is exactly what singles like "Satisfaction" by Devo have done. I produced a single by a New York group, the Speedies, a few months ago that sold 2,000 copies in three weeks in New York alone. And anything above 2 or 3,000 copies is profit with most independent singles. But again, major labels feel that there's no market for FM singles. An AM hit single will sell 2 million copies, but an FM single — one which only gets FM play, like Graham Parker's "I Want You Back" — will probably only sell 15,000."

So what can a poor boy or girl do, besides listening to oldies and the odd sleeper on the airwaves? FM radio is timid about exploring the wonderful world of singles, because FM is concerned with homogeneity and as a result, it feels, increased audience demographics. Instead, I'm looking for musicians themselves to open up the singles scene. On the independent production level, the sheer number of new singles being made today in cities across the country, many for the sake of getting a bigger record deal, guarantees that overall quality and excitement will increase. And I'm also looking for established artists to rekindle the flame, to carry on the legacy that they inherited, borrowed, or stole from 60's singles artists like Wilson Pickett, the Grass Roots, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Dusty Springfield, Sam and Dave, the Crystals, etc., etc.

For example, many Americans today consider Bruce Springsteen to be our #1 boss rocker, the main man with a Telecaster, the keeper of the feedback flame. Here's a guy whose last two albums have sold extremely well, whose concerts sell out all across the country, and who has one of the highest FM, album-oriented profiles in rock. He's also never bothered to appeal specifically to the top 40 charts. And yet, Springsteen has written several songs, which he's given to others, that have become certified, all-time great singles. "Because The Night," covered by Patti Smith, propelled her into the top 10, a place she'd never even approached before. Manfred Mann's version of "Blinded By The Light" several years ago gave his sagging career a much-needed lift, and recently, the Pointer Sisters' smoking rendition of the Boss's even hotter "Fire" was a #1 hit. So why, I ask you, doesn't the man himself record more singles-oriented material? I'd bet dollars to donuts that, driving in a '65 Pontiac down the Garden State Parkway on a Friday afternoon, Bruce Springsteen would go as apeshit as the next guy if the Tempts' "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" or the Animals' "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place" came on the radio.

Certainly a string of hit singles coming from an artist as gifted as Bruce Springsteen, with such an instinctive feeling for the collective emotions that the format generates, could work wonders, rejuvenating and adding prestige to the whole medium. And such success wouldn't necessarily alienate his loyal FM following or drastically alter his image. Well, Bruce has an album coming out this summer, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Meanwhile, I think I'll spin a few platters on the box myself; let's see, here's "Cold Sweat" by James Brown, and then I'm gonna play the Stones' "Tumblin' Dice", and then .... M

Peavey equalizers have been designed using the latest computer assisted design techinques and precision components to offer the musician, sound man, and home audiophile flawless performance without extravagant cost or compromises in quality.

The Stereo Graphic features two independent ten-band sections with 15 dB cut or boost at ten center frequencies. Filters are provided for each channel with continuously variable 12 dB high and low cut or boost.

The EQ-27 features 27 bands at one-third octave centers throughout the audio range and is fully compatible with the most professional real time analyzers.

Each system's input circuitry can be matched to a wide range of signal levels thanks to special gain/attenuator level controls. Balanced and unbalanced outputs are equipped on each unit with protection for any accidental overvoltage or short circuit situation that may occur.

Because of a high level transformer balanced output circuitry, the Stereo Graphic and EQ-27 have the capability of providing greater than +16 dBm into 600 ohms making them excellent as high quality line amplifiers.

The Peavey Stereo Graphic and EQ-27 are technically two of the finest equalizers available today. Exceptional performance and compatibility with a wide range of signal and impedance levels make these units an unmatched professional value.

PEAVEY STEREO GRAPHIC & EQ-27 price/performance no other graphics can equal.

Complete specifications and descriptions of the Stereo Graphic and EQ-27 are available upon request by writing our Literature and Promotional Department, Peavey Electronics; 711 A Street; Meridian, Miss. 39301.

THE BLUE NOTE MYSTIQUE

Blue Note records had a magic that defined a decade. Ten new finds from the old days still have that thrill.

By Bob Blumenthal

Two of my favorite new releases of last year, Jackie McLean's *Consequence* and Hank Mobley's *A Slice of the Top*, are actually 14 years old. While they hardly promised the revelations of contemporary recordings, they still stood out among the bulk of jazz albums as bold, vibrant statements of two of the music's most reliable voices and their equally commanding cohorts (the late Lee Morgan and Billy Higgins appear on both sets). Moreover, they represented something very special to me which I had despaired of seeing again — new and honest-to-goodness classic Blue Notes.

I was already well aware of my status as a Blue Note freak; it is a condition familiar to many of my contemporaries who watched the evolution of jazz in the Sixties and Seventies. For us, the music recorded by producer Alfred Lion (don't look for a credit on the album covers, Lion never took one) serves as a touchstone, a base for either validating or debunking what has followed. The depth of my passion only became clear to me, however, when EMI-America unveiled ten previously unissued Blue Notes at the close of 1979. Covering the years 1957-69, and featuring artists such as Wayne Shorter, Grant Green and Bobby Hutcherson in addition to those named above, the consistency of these dates overwhelmed me. Did any other jazz label reach this level of quality so unerringly?

It was at this point that the skepticism of the critic overtook the enthusiasm of the fan. Hadn't I been remarking, just a few months earlier, at the effusive allegiance of an older generation of fans when ten Commodore albums were reissued? And didn't I always chuckle to myself when less seasoned listeners expressed a willingness to put their faith in a certain new album because "it's on ECM — I know I'll like it"? The ability of a record label to embody an entire stylistic episode in jazz history is familiar enough; other examples can surely be given. Yet why do I, and so many others, find the particular approach implicit in the name Blue Note so special?

As one of the earliest jazz independents, Blue Note has a catalogue dating back to 1939, when Lion and his partner Francis Wolff began recording such giants as Sidney Bechet, Charlie Christian, and several classic piano soloists. In the Forties and early Fifties, Blue Note documented some of the major statements of Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Tadd Dameron, Fats Navarro and Miles Davis. The real essence of what has come to mean Blue Note jazz, however, can be heard taking shape on the Birdland recordings made on February 22, 1954 by the Art Blakey Quintet with Horace Silver and Clifford Brown (BN 1521/1522), and the studio dates which followed later in that year under the leadership of various members of the Jazz Messengers (most notably the Horace Silver sessions on BN 1518). The extroverted, expressive soloists and catchy themes; the blue-edged ambience coupled with the growing assertiveness of Blakey's drumming; all of this epitomized an approach which soon gained the label "hard bop." Without getting into the merits and sins of nomenclature, let's simply admit that hard bop was a distinct variation on the idiom pioneered by Parker, Gillespie *et al*. The interesting question is why the best hard bop is consistently found on Blue Note.

Other labels, of course, taped essential works in the genre. Prestige, for example, was recording Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins at the same time, and throughout this period Prestige and Blue Note worked with several of the same musicians and the same engineer, Rudy Van Gelder. Several labels, in fact, focused on a core group of musicians and used Van Gelder's studio, yet there is more of an aural wallop in the Blue Notes. Part of the credit goes to Van Gelder, who has never been less than the epitome of the jazz engineer, but the difference seems to have been Lion, and the way his ears centered on the drums. Van Gelder is famous for isolating Paul Chambers' bass on the Miles Davis Prestige recordings; on many Blue Notes, however, the bass lines are more felt than defined, while every part of the drum kit resounds with a deep and expansive resonance.

Musicians make the sound happen

continued on page 77

ROBERT PARENT

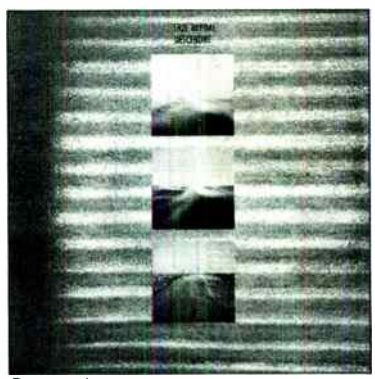
ROBERT PARENT

Hard bop began with Horace Silver (above) and Art Blakey (below), and the Blue Note went on to record Monk, Rollins, Coltrane, the Messengers, Philly Joe and others.

ECM

Terje Rypdal

Terje Rypdal,
guitar, keyboards, flute.
Palle Mikkelborg,
trumpet, flugelhorn, keyboards.
Jon Christensen,
drums, percussion.



Descendre (ECM-1-1144)

Special Edition (ECM-1-1152)

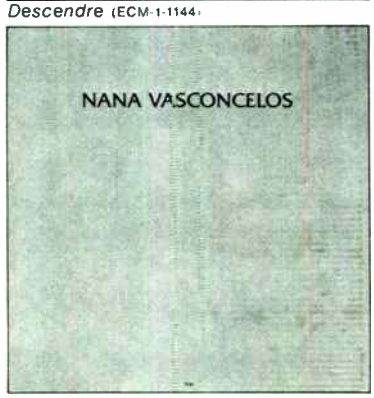
Jack DeJohnette

Jack DeJohnette,
drums, piano, melodica.
David Murray,
tenor saxophone, bass clarinet.
Arthur Blythe,*
alto saxophone.
Peter Warren,
bass, cello.

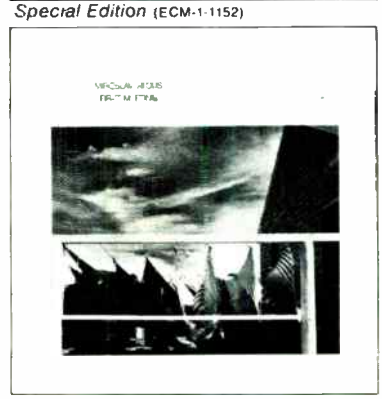
*Appears courtesy of Columbia Records.

Nana Vasconcelos

Nana Vasconcelos,
berimbau, percussion, voice, gongs.
Egberto Gismonti,
8-string guitar.



Saudades (ECM-1-1147)



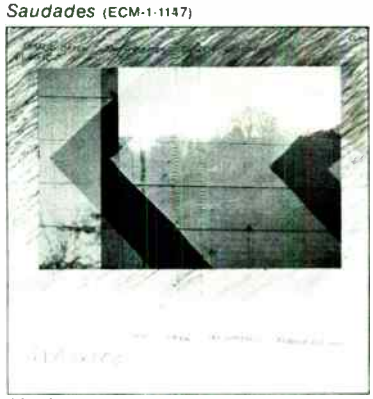
First Meeting (ECM-1-1145)

Miroslav Vitous

Miroslav Vitous,
bass.
John Surman,
soprano saxophone, bass clarinet.
Kenny Kirkland,
piano.
Jon Christensen,
drums.

Charlie Haden, Jan Garbarek, Egberto Gismonti

Charlie Haden,
bass.
Jan Garbarek,
saxophones.
Egberto Gismonti,
guitars, piano.



Magico (ECM-1-1151)

ECM

On ECM Records and Tapes
Manufactured and distributed by
Warner Bros. Records Inc.

CABARET ROCK

Artists like Manhattan Transfer and Robert Kraft are reviving the tradition of light, intimate cabaret pop — long swamped by the disco deluge.

By Don Shewey

"Cafe society's the only way to take it
When pandemonium's a way of life
Cafe society, it's everything you make it
From the tips on the table to the butter knife . . ."

— "Cafe Society" by Robert Kraft

The term "cabaret" comes from the French word "camberet," literally meaning "small room." Several years ago, small rooms calling themselves cabarets began popping up all over New York City. Eventually, they grew into a circuit consisting of clubs like Reno Sweeney, the Ballroom, Tramp's, and Brothers and Sisters, just to name a few. For a while, it seemed as though cabaret might break into the mainstream as a new and prospering market. The scene had a precedent within recent memory: the post-World War II era, when niteries like the Bon Soir, Cafe Society, and the Blue Angel served as spawning grounds for such talents as Kaye Ballard, Carol Burnett, the Weavers, and, later, Barbra Streisand. Its biggest selling point was that the limited capacity of the clubs, the isolated intimacy, and the relatively high prices encouraged a sense of adventure and discovery in both performer and audience. Because there's not a lot of money to be made singing in cabarets and most performers are unknown, people who will pay the steep tab must therefore be willing to take a chance in the hope of seeing someone new and interesting. Likewise, the performer feels free to try out-of-the-ordinary approaches without worrying about pleasing hundreds or thousands of paying customers.

But the resurgence of cabaret in the mid-70's never developed into the Next Big Thing — partly because such intimate watering holes were too small to stick a Big Thing into in the first place, and partly because the primarily gay taste-making audience transferred its energies to disco, the rise of which coincided with the (re)birth of punk. While it's encouraging that disco and punk have remained, for the most part, small-scaled enterprises ("human-sized" activities, to use Robert Fripp's terminology), both genres promote styles of music and social interaction that are simplistic, even primitive. By contrast, the artists who have evolved out of the New York cabaret scene in recent years present a persuasive case for cabaret as a nurturing atmosphere for creative pop music. Manhattan Transfer and Robert Kraft and the Ivory Coast, for example, make important and exciting (if commercially marginal) music. Though they don't sound alike at all, they do share a sensibility honed by prolonged exposure to an environment where immediacy is essential, experimentation is encouraged, and individuality is prized.

Manhattan Transfer have extended the cabaret sound beyond nostalgia.

Manhattan Transfer are not only the finest example but also an identifying emblem of the scene they come out of — they're the Clash of cabaret. Along with Bette Midler, whose appearances at proto-cabarets like the Continental Baths and Upstairs at the Downstairs almost instantly catapulted her to national acclaim, the Transfer established cabaret as a canvas for creative nostalgia. From their stylized monochrome 30's eveningwear to their scientifically precise four-part harmonies, they displayed a fetish for details that made them ideal curators of pop music history. Tracing the group-vocal tradition 30's dance band music to 50's doowop to Lambert, Hendricks & Ross's jazzy vocalese to Motown, Manhattan Transfer (a coed foursome founded in 1969 by Tim Hauser) exhumed obscure pop relics partly as historical treasures and partly as campy artifacts; the speed and precision of their singing made them as thrilling and funny as a screwball comedy. And by exercising their characteristic deadpan ambiguity in reproducing cartoon-Negro mannerisms and suave Hollywood sexism intact, they sometimes delivered a subtle but devastating social critique of pop culture.

Although they've long since abandoned cabarets for concert halls (mostly in Europe, where they're famous), Manhattan Transfer have retained the emphasis on visual style and the sophisticated interpretive taste developed in front of small, appreciative club audiences. Their latest album *Extensions* (Atlantic) is somewhat of a departure for them. Visually, they have exchanged white-tie-and-tails for geometric futuristic Bauhaus designs; musically, they have expanded their sound to incorporate more electronics, obviously influenced by synthesizer bands and pulsing Europop. The effect is still the same; that of surveying the entire spectrum of pop music from the viewpoint of one devoted and spectacularly versatile singing group.

Robert Kraft's approach is almost diametrically opposite to Manhattan Transfer's. Though he draws on a variety of styles from the past, he molds them all together into a highly individual, thoroughly contemporary concoction. His attitude is knowing but not nostalgic, cool but not camp. And what he has cultivated while playing in cabarets is not slickness but spontaneity, an ability to gear each performance to the audience in front of him. Kraft writes hip, literate songs with positively contagious tunes, and he fronts an excellent ensemble featuring Ross Levinson on violin and Steve Tarshis on guitar, as well as himself on piano. His debut album *Moodswing* (RSO) offers an unusual smorgasbord of swing jazz ("A Jump for Miles"), straightforward pop ("False Start"), and sophisticated ballacry ("Bon Voyage"). But the most important cuts — and the riskiest — are the two recorded live at Tramp's, which show off Kraft's unschticky quick-witted

continued on page 66

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS. $50 TO $150 REBATES ON HOHNER KEYBOARDS.

Nobody makes a better keyboard than Hohner. And now, with our "Great Rebates," nobody makes a better keyboard offer. Buy one of these fantastic-sounding Hohner keyboards before May 1, 1980, and Hohner will mail a factory rebate check for up to $150 direct to you.

Visit your music dealer today. He has all four of these popular Hohner keyboards set up and ready to play. Just walk in and try out the powerful, portable Pianet T, the classic Clavinet, the versatile String Performer or the most exciting sound in keyboards today, the Pianet/Clavinet Duo.

When you've made your choice, make your best deal. Then send Hohner the special Rebate Certificate with your keyboard's Rebate hang-tag and a copy of your sales slip. In a few weeks, a check will arrive in the mail: $50 if you buy the Pianet T, $75 for the Clavinet, $125 for the String Performer or $150 for the Pianet/Clavinet Duo.

If you've been waiting for the right time to buy a Hohner keyboard, this offer should be music to your ears. Don't miss out. Hohner's Great Rebates end May 1. So pick out a Hohner keyboard and pick up on the greatest deal in Hohner keyboard history.

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THAT BIG BREAK, HOHNER CAN BE INSTRUMENTAL.

M. Hohner Inc., Hicksville, NY 11802

FACES

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Michael Gregory Jackson

THE SPECIALS

These seven latter-day rude boys, sporting shaved heads, short-brimmed "pork-pie" hats and flat-heeled, crepe-soled wingtips, have latched onto one of the most irresistible dance beats in music. Known in various forms as ska, bluebeat or rock steady, this skiffling, skanking Jamaican rhythm effortlessly grafts New Orleans swing onto a pre-reggae R&B based form of West Indian calypso, with the important addition of horns. From the heart of working class England in Coventry, the bi-racial Specials have injected ska with the dynamic urgency of three-chord punk it needed to turn the teens of the world (as well as the adults) into a mass of undulating bodies.

Keyboardist Jerry Dammers founded the Specials, wrote all their original material (the band performs a bunch of well-researched *and* accredited covers) and organized the record company, 2-Tone, that disseminates their music. Along with the Specials, 2-Tone includes modern English variants on ska/bluebeat/reggae like Selecter, Beat, Madness and Body Snatchers, an all-girl ska band. The fledgling label has proven to be an amazing success in England, dominating both the singles and album charts there for months, and America looks ready to fall in line. During their current cross-country tour, the Specials are reportedly sending audiences into dancing frenzies at locales as far afield as Oklahoma City, where few people have ever heard of a pork-pie hat, let alone the legendary ska trombonist who performs with the Specials, Rico Rodriguez.

In concert, the Specials leap and sway into beatific abandon, a united front dedicated to obliterate the inequities of the world with an infectiously care-free island shuffle fused to a rock 'n' roll beat. The songs, sung by Terry Hall in a voice that cavorts easily between Rasta dub and Cockney punk, range in social significance from the rallying cries of "Doesn't Make It Alright," "It's Up To You," "A Message To You, Rudy" and "(Dawning Of A) New Era" to the utter abandon of "Nite Klub," "Do The Dog" and "Too Hot." Back-up vocalist and non-stop mover Neville Staples provides some dizzying dance steps while ex-punk guitarist Roddy "Radiation" Byers reels off wickedly metallic leads in the midst of an otherwise gently swaying rock steady. Black rhythm guitarist Lynval Golding provides the syncopated skank and "Sir Horace Gentleman's" bass is as sinewy as it is booming. Drummer John Bradbury holds the whole enterprise glued together with some well-timed whacks on the rim, more than earning his title, "Prince Rimshot," while toothlessly grinning Dammers' roller rink organ propels the tunes breathlessly along.

The Specials' self-titled debut album, minimally produced by Elvis Costello, has just been released in America by Chrysalis and it contains the popular single, "Gangsters." Despite their unabashed dip into the past for their inspiration, and their rather too closely aped rude-boy attire, the Specials, like the Rolling Stones before them, have discovered a vital link between white and black music forms that is not only culturally fascinating, but also impossible not to dance to. The Specials have harnessed these two clashing energies and turned the result into a remarkable product, at once unique and immediately accessible. A look to the future rather than the past. — *Roy Trakin*

MICHAEL GREGORY JACKSON

I admired the intelligence of Michael Gregory Jackson's work with Oliver Lake and found *Gifts*, his first Novus album, though not a complete success, some of the most creative fusion in years; but the routinely formulaic *Heart and Center*, which followed, to great critical fanfare, was one of the most depressing releases I'd heard in 1979. His live appearance at Boston's Modern Theatre seemed the best place to find out what was going on with him. He opened on acoustic guitar in a long duet with Muhal Richard Abrams, and while the pianist went shopping around for interaction, Jackson, after noodling awhile, decided to swagger through on young chops and technical flash, easily dominating Abrams, who resorted to some grandstanding toward the end to regain the audience's, and Jackson's, attention. Jackson did some fine playing, spinning out his usual long, multinote lines and walloping his way through a blues section, but Abrams won on points for taste and grace under pressure.

The second set featured Jackson and the Coloreds (Baikida Carroll, trumpet; Marty Ehrlich, reeds; Barry Harwood, keyboards; Jerry Harris, bass; Pheeroan Ak Laff, drums) and it became apparent that one of the things wrong with *Heart and Center* was the fact that the band was recorded small and tight rather than loud and powerful, which they certainly were in concert. The idea of a strong, unusually detailed and asymetrical funk bottom with Ehrlich and Carroll soloing on top is a good one, and Jackson himself was even better at the difficult task of sustaining a long solo over fixed rhythms, playing coherent melodic ideas instead of the usual discontinuous ornaments. Ak Laff had also revealed himself as a terrific funk drummer, and I was impressed. But then the vocals began ("Come Funk With Me" was first), and Jackson imitated Stevie Wonder for eight or nine pedestrian songs. While Jackson may eventually find an audience for this kind of thing, it seems to me that Wonder and young Michael Ungregory Jackson will always surpass him both artistically and commercially at it; whatever Jackson's special creative quality is, it did not seem very present on these tunes. The band was wasted doing rote backups and the charts were too complicated to be effective pop. To be fair, "Rising Up" seemed to be the one vocal that worked.

The instrumental "Gifts" returned us to effective funk-fusion, nothing great mind you, but interesting enough for me to want to hear more of it. Jackson is the first musician trying to cross over directly from the avant-garde since, let's see, Robin Kenyatta, and the results are unsettling, possibly only because art and commerce are opposed in Jackson's own mind (as they are not, for instance, in Wonder's). It's possible to make good music that is also commercial and commercial music that is also good, but Jackson seems not to have found a way of doing it that is true to his own creativ-

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

The Specials

ity. His next album will be off Novus, onto Arista and looking for a hit. I think Jackson's own uneasiness will betray him, and I'll be listening for what happens next. — *Rafi Zabor*

BOB JAMES

Bob James, who began public life with an ESP-DISK that featured the noise of racing cars over an avant-garde trio, has since come up with the most successful formula for making commercial "jazz" and sold a lot of records. Now and then I've wondered why, and so I went to hear James, his piano and a big band at Carnegie Hall — part of a week of Bob James concerts held in New York in late December. (It followed two nights of James at the Bottom Line with a small band including Wilbert Longmire, Mark Colby, Idris Muhammad, Hiram Bullock and Gary King, and a "formal acoustic evening" at Town Hall with co-stars Joanne Brackeen and Richard Tee, and sidemen Steve Gadd, Eddie Gomez and Billy Hart.)

At Carnegie, in the most characteristic setting for James' music, an almost-twenty-piece orchestra faithfully executed his familiar, circumscribed LP arrangements (with some room for extended solos by James, Tom Scott, Colby, Bullock, and studio utility reedman George Marge, who did a lovely spot on recorder). At its best, this *gestalt* was romantically powerful, as technical precision and

VERYL OAKLAND

Bob James

sheer instrumental mass turned some of James' more lingering melodies (like "Blue Lick," from his *Lucky Seven* album) into themes of, yes, pride and hope; like an ace movie soundtrack. At these moments, I felt sufficiently swept away — and there were a striking number of early-twenties couples who seemed even more emotionally captivated — to be glad Bob James had sold so many records. At other times, though, when the melodies were less lingering, all the brashness overcame itself and give itself the lie. I knew I wasn't hearing jazz (no incisive soloing, especially from James) or rock (not in so carefully orchestrated a genre) or even jazz-rock (too little orchestral tension or complexity). No, then I felt that I was at a Broadway opening, where the pit band was wilfully, even cheerlessly, playing the show's fanfare . . . but I'm not getting into that end of it any further. The debate between art and commerce — consider what a fabulous forum James' glory week would have been for so many other musicians — would flare up for the millionth time without giving light or heat. People will always put down their money for the tunes they want to hear, though critics rage, and Bob James is here to play them. Vroom. — *Michael Rozek*

GIL EVANS

Gil Evans, arranger of Miles' *Birth of the Cool*, *Miles Ahead*, and *Sketches of Spain*, orchestrator of his own acoustic-electronic visions, leader of an adventurous big band that at one point included four electric guitarists, three electric bassists, and several synthesizers in addition to brass and reeds, hasn't been heard from very often in the past few years. Since he dissolved the last of his big bands in the mid-seventies, for economic reasons, he has reassembled groups sporadically; the last time was two years ago, for a tour of England partially underwritten by a British government grant. So his appearance at New York's Public Theater in February at the helm of a specially assembled orchestra was an Event. The 67-year-old Evans has been an innovator since his 1941-48 stint with the Claude Thornhill orchestra, and one had to wonder: would the magic still be there?

The band was star-studded — Arthur Blythe and Hamiet Bluiett on reeds, a brass section that included Hannibal, Jon Faddis, and George Lewis, Billy Cobham on drums — but the rehearsal budget was skimpy, and reports from the first night indicated a loose string of solos, missed cues, occasional moments of rich orchestration, intermittent inspiration. The second night began with a long, rambling set, reasonably tight ensembles, and consistently stirring solos. Blythe's lyricism and sumptuous tone cut through on a ballad feature, George Lewis floored everyone with his incredibly fluent, swinging trombone improvisations, and Cobham turned in the most restrained and musical performance this listener has ever heard from him. A solo-less arrangement of Mingus's "Orange was the Color of Her Dress, Then Blue Silk" was the highlight — shimmering orchestral colors, trombone-synthesizer voicings, whispering trumpets against alto sax and tuba. It was prime Evans, and the group was starting to sound like a real band.

The last set went on for more than two hours, ending sometime after 3 a.m. For those who stayed — more than half the sellout crowd — it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Studio pros, avant-gardists, jazz-rock stars, beboppers, all the various musicians Evans had assembled finally came together as a unit, and Evans the sound-painter took over, making magic pictures with his carefully chosen players and his remarkable ear for instrumental combinations.

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Gil Evans

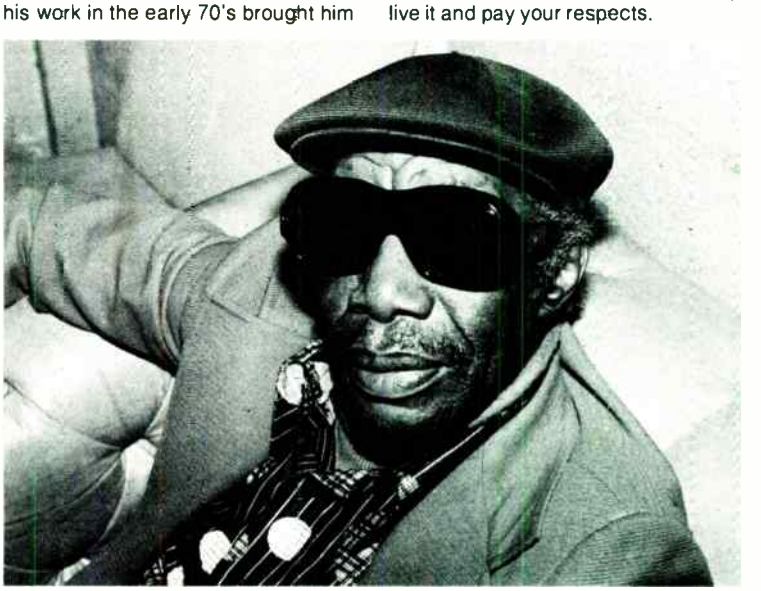
The entire weekend was recorded, but by Trio records of Japan. Apparently, the American industry just wasn't interested. Shame! — *Robert Palmer*

PROFESSOR LONGHAIR

It is probably impossible to play blues-based rock 'n' roll piano without referring to him, and although he was a living encyclopedia of Southern piano styles no one put the gospel influence to work the way he did, and his adaptations of boogie-woogie, the Spanish tinge, Caribbean music and transfigured French minuets and quadrilles were personal to himself. He made some of the greatest good-time music we've got.

He was born Henry Roeland Byrd in Bogalusa, Louisiana, on December 19th, 1918, was a streetdancer as a child and taught himself piano as he grew up. As a young man he absorbed virtually all the influences available to him in tradition-rich New Orleans and came to his first public prominence in the late 40's. His recordings from that period are recollected on *New Orleans Piano* (Atlantic), and although his hometown reputation and audience were immense he never developed a sustained national career. His health began to fail him as early as 1954 but he stayed musically active until the late 60's, returning to cardsharping and menial jobs until a revival of interest in his work in the early 70's brought him back to full-time activity — including a European tour, a gig and an album *Live on the Queen Mary*, and triumphal appearances at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festivals — and the legendary status he doubtless deserved. There is no question that in his home town he was genuinely appreciated and loved, something that may have meant more to him than worldwide respect and critical accolade. When he died on January 30th, a new album on the Alligator label was just being shipped to the stores.

There is nothing funereal about *Crawfish Fiesta*. It is full of terrific, ageless music that celebrates life as it is, and the old man's voice that soars above it sounds like that of a boy. The Professor's body may have aged badly, but this is not something you would guess from the lightness and agility of his piano playing. Assisted by an expert and idiomatic rhythm section, three saxophones and his protege Dr. John on guitar, Longhair romps through a program of old favorites and a few new ones — comprehensive New Orleansiana and just the stuff to turn the tide after the funeral — but the best thing on it might be the title tune, discreetly tacked on at the end, on which the piano comes to the fore to play a folkified and celebratory quadrille. Courtliness meets the street and the old world meets the new over percussion and an uncredited tuba until the album's done. You can't eulogize stuff this epiphanous and alive, only live it and pay your respects.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Professor Longhair

THE VINYL SOLUTION

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

By Robert Fripp

Bigger is better didn't work for the dinosaurs and it's not working for the record companies either. By scaling down ridiculously inflated costs and expectations, more artists can produce more music for less money and together sell more records to a greater number of people. "Fall dino, just don't fall on me."

There are a number of contradictions within the record industry to which I referred in "The New Realism" (January) in the hope, as Zeus explained to Apollo, "that the sight of their division might render them less insolent". The majority of my own energies and thought in America during the past two years have been spent not on music, which can mostly take care of itself, but on the industry. My problem as a musician is how to present music to an audience with the industry as intermediary. I advance three propositions:

1. The industry in America is governed by the industry. Where an oligarchic structure acts on its own dicta isolated from feedback its prophecies tend to be self-fulfilling. Sufficient slack in an expanding market, and the record industry has seen remarkable growth throughout the seventies, has supported the wildest excesses: press junkets, lunches, dinners, expense account abuse and freebies of all kinds (such as hooker, coke and limo waiting in Chicago with regional promo man). All of this, reinforced frequently by office premises designed to anaesthetise the intrusions of common life, has added to industry insulation from change.

In the late Middle Ages music altered as a result of its interaction with the industry structure of that time: the troubador, a small and mobile unit, was replaced by court musicians who suffered court patronage. Thus music came under industry control. The shape of music is still to an extent determined by Big Ears and his prophecies, although colossal blunders I have witnessed in the past three years have undermined his credibility: only one record in sixteen released in England during 1979 made a profit. The tightening marketplace has at least the advantage of providing a direct feedback line to the floors of conventional wisdom. I have seen, close to home, huge amounts of money lost promoting artists vouchsafed by Big Ears as gilt edged simply because the executive was out of touch with structural changes in the marketplace. Among the factors to be considered here are fashion, advertising, taste, habit, inventions, prices of near substitutes, expectation of future trends and changes in price, changes in the distribution of income, and changes in the quality and quantity of money. Although the personal error of Big Ears was in one sense responsible for these mistakes it reflects a fundamental flaw in the structure of the company which affects its performance as a viable system. Stafford Beer in "Cybernetics and Management" suggests that the structure of the company in comparison to executive action is responsible for efficiency by a factor of five times.

Despite the tremendous boost in music, performers and clubs, pessimism in the record industry regarding its future continues even though record sales are higher now in America than three years ago. Perhaps the positive effect of the distortions generated by "Saturday Night Fever" and "Grease" will be to catalyse long overdue changes.

2. What is now considered to be a marginal sales figure will be attractive within two and vital within five years. A record's current marginal profitability is 100,000 units, the break-even point beyond which a company makes money. It follows that no company can be interested in an artist with expectations below 100,000 and intermediate level artists anticipating sales of 50,000 - 100,000 and new bands anticipating 5,000 - 25,000 units are below the marginal level. The record company has two clear choices other than bankruptcy: ingore the myriad artists in the intermediate and "art" levels, or adjust the marginal level of profitability.

The conventional wisdom demands that Big Whizz from Megabucks Records finds and signs the next Big Act in order to replenish diminishing Megabucks coffers, head off amalgamation and avoid direct control by an accountant from Megabucks International hidden somewhere in an office in Germany. But whereas in recent history any one artist was a dominant force in any particular trend the emerging pattern is a consensus determined by the overall work of many artists — any new trend is the aggregate of the conglomerate. So rather than look to one artist selling 500,000 we should expect ten artists to sell 500,000 between them. Freddie Haayen's insightful forecast that a large record company will shortly have a small roster of its own acts and function mainly as an administrative agency for several small labels is commendable; he should now be encouraged to act on that insight. One can act from intelligence and from necessity: intelligence is the mother of invention.

It is my hunch that whichever company adjusts its marginal level of operation downwards to take the intermediate as a norm will survive; in the mid- to long-run the aim will not be profitability but survival. The unit of organisation for the future is the small, mobile and intelligent unit where intelligence is defined as the capacity to perceive rightness, mobility the capacity to act on the perception and small the necessary condition for that action in a contracting world.

3. New music is not a style; it is a quality. It is a human requirement to make music to express all that a person would wish to say but lacks the words. It is a social requirement to make music to express all that we wish to say to each other but lose in the confusion of politics and language. For me, rock music with its malleability of form, varied idioms and accessibility to nearly everyone is ideally suited to act as a music of social requirement. And for anyone who would wish to go as far, music is a cosmic requirement; it is a direct language common to God and man where subtlety is inevitable. In this

sense, music is the cup which holds the wine of silence. For any musician new music is the compromise between innocence and history but for the professional musician his expression of this compromise is tempered by the industry.

In a period of expensive capital (currently 21% in England, only slightly less in the U.S.), restricted cash flow and increasing breakdown in an overly complicated system, the demise of which is proceding at an accelerating rate, there are four paramount rules for staying in business:

1. Guarantee sales;
2. Minimal outlay;
3. Simplicity of operation;
4. Speed of turnover.

Taking these points in more detail:

1a) Guaranteed sales. Although little can be guaranteed, a record of quality is more likely to be accredited than a record of arbitrary connivance. The most likely record to sell well within a three year period is a record of quality whose support is substantially self-generating, and which does not rely overmuch on expensive publicity and promotion (the bane of the budget). The essence of a quality record is the vitality of its ideas which may be expressed roughly and without finesse: a record of originating insight is almost inevitably without polish because the vocabulary is not defined. The expense in delivering records lies in the polishing and packaging: this is unnecessary.

b) Well established artists: the advantage of a Midibuck Project to them is that they can work in areas generally closed to them by Mogul Pressure.

c) Little known artists whose work is nevertheless of a quality and likely to be recognised in time. The short-term advantage of this is that a qualitative leap inwards expands outwards in all directions: the satisfaction of working with quality product is generally underestimated. The association with quality gives rise to what is hinted at in the word "credibility". Simply, a label is only as good as its records.

d) A quality record label attracts its own support and often becomes a cult with a small to intermediate lavel of guaranteed sales. Examples of idiosyncratic labels are Island, E.G., E.C.M., Virgin, Stiff, Sire and Radar, at least at various times in their existence. When this success becomes uncontrolled support dwindles; i.e. low quality product erodes market credibility. Island is only recently recovering from its poor management of success in the early seventies: the addition of a recreation room to its offices was the visible evidence that it had moved past its optimum size, or in Peter's phrase, it had risen to its level of incompetence.

2a) Minimal outlay (see "The New Realism" for a detailed assessment of budgets). An intermediate record sale can be considered as between 50,000 and 100,000. The budget for an album at this level should be between $25,000 and $75,000 depending partly upon its possibility for quick recoupment, crossover appeal and ease of marketing. For sale expectations of 5,000 to 25,000 the budget should be $2,500 to $15,000. In this area fall collectors' editions, one-offs and lesser known artists; it can be referred to as the "art level".

b) In the singles field many new groups will not remain in the present line-ups for long and so short term commitments are feasible. Several singles from different artists can be compiled on an album for little cost and appeal to the album sector (cf. *No New York* for a comparable approach). Often the demo tapes upon which the deal is based are of an acceptable standard or better for final release (see argument under 1a above) and involve little cost. There are several examples of original demos or garage recordings being of a better overall feel than Official Product; e.g. early Devo and B52's singles.

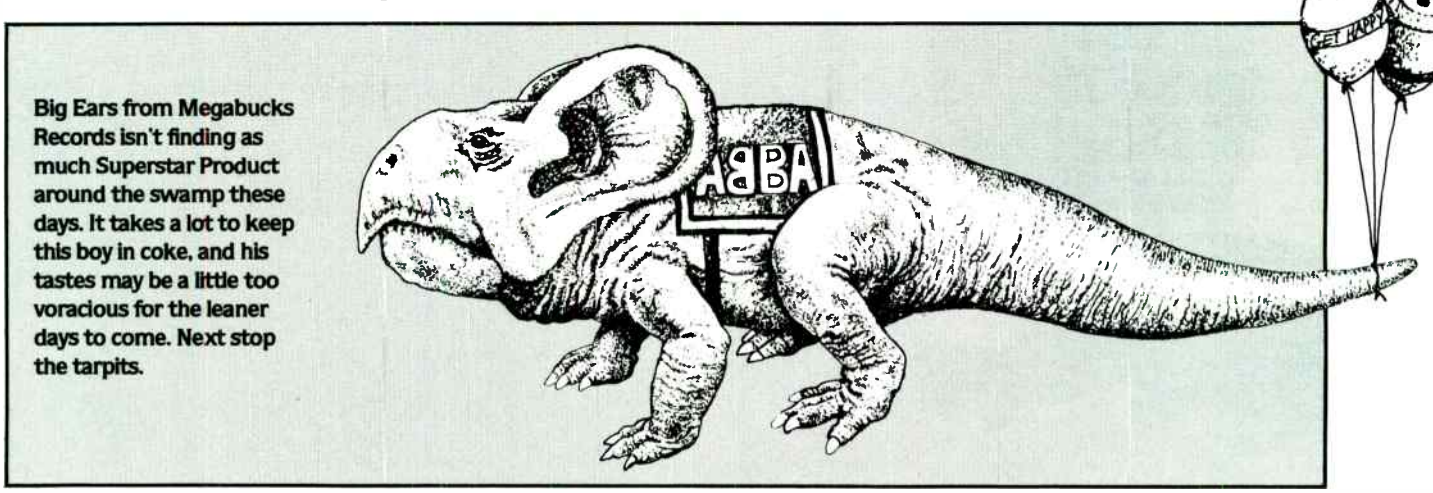
c) No tour support is envisaged, no banquets, no promotional t-shirts or towels, none of the battery of ancillary promotion techniques most of which are generated for the satisfaction of the industry itself. The artist will also need to abandon expectations of extravagance at the company expense; often this needs little more than a minor adjustment in personal perspective.

d) Conventional wisdom assumes that a record must receive airplay in order to sell enough to pass the break-even at 100,000. Therefore a new group needs a steamlined production job on their album to ensure airplay. This streamlined job will probably entail a budget of at least $100,000 to tickle into life the jaded hearing of Radio Ears, but because of the contradictions within radio and the increasing conservatism of commercial radio (see Lee Abrams' latest ruling) is most unlikely to receive airplay anyway. From an artistic point of view the production is probably unnecessary (see argument under 1a), from a promotional point of view irrelevant. Solution: abandon the fallacious notion that production will significantly affect sales and release the demos, lower the cost and bring marginal profitability to a point of 25,000 instead of 100,000.

3. Simplicity of operation. This excludes the nose-wiping and diaper changing of artists. Essentially the intermediate record label sells records and not artists. This also renders unlikely relationships with artists lacking in the sense of personal perspective referred to above.

4. Speed of turnover. All projects should recoup investment (i.e. pass the point of marginal profitability) within 18 months. With the acceleration of the movement of personnel within all parts of the industry, both in performance and service branches, with disruption of personal contacts, the cost of money at 20/25% with a simultaneous decline in cash flow, projects involving investment of $5,000 and above should be seen to recoup within the short term. All plans should be within a three-year frame of reference with the possibility of catalogue sales beyond that.

In the current U.S. context, the weakest area of reliable and organised supply is the small to intermediate level, that is of sales between 5,000 and 75,000. Given the inefficiency of the present structure continued viability would seem to depend upon a swift systemic reconstruction. In the meanwhile the industry seems to regard personnel removal as the vinyl solution. M



Big Ears from Megabucks Records isn't finding as much Superstar Product around the swamp these days. It takes a lot to keep this boy in coke, and his tastes may be a little too voracious for the leaner days to come. Next stop the tarpits.

FREE JAZZ

By Lester Bangs

ALLAN PLATT

Joseph Bowie, leader of DeFunkt

Impossible, right. Preposterous. But pull out your scrapbooks and compare the press reception accorded Ornette Coleman's first free jazz recordings with Johnny Rotten's clippings and you'll find more than a few similarities. Then listen to the music. Since the expression of passion is what music is all about and chops and the technical end have little to do with what's in a player's heart, why shouldn't this be? Read on for a wealth of strange and exotic musical possibilities. The 80s could get interesting. Hang on.

In a New York City nightclub, a skinny little Caucasian whose waterfall hairstyle and set of snout and lips make him look like a sullen anteater takes the stage, backed up by a couple of guitarists, bass, horn section, drummer and bongos. Most of his back-up is black, and they know their stuff: it's pure James Brown funk, with just enough atonal accents to throw you off. The trombone player, in fact, looks familiar, and sounds amazing: you look a bit closer, and of course, that's Joseph Bowie, brother of Lester, both of them avant-garde jazzmen of repute. But then the anteater begins to sing, in a hoarse yowl that sounds more like someone being dragged naked through the broken glass and oily rubble of a backalley than even the studied abrasiveness of most punk rock vocalizations. The songs are about contorting yourself, tying other people up and leaving them there, and how the singer doesn't want to be happy. After a while he picks up an alto sax, and out come some of the most hideous flurries of gurgling shrieks heard since the mid-Sixties glory days of ESP-Disk records. The singer/saxophonist's name is James Chance, and you have just been watching the Contortions.

Across town in another club, what looks like the standard rock 'n' roll lineup saunters onto a stage set right on the floor, making it impossible for anybody in the room except those at the very front to see. The groups consists of two guitars, bass and drums. Then their lead singer wanders out from in back casting a baleful imperious eye over the crowd. She is short and chubby, filmily dressed with waxy black hair and a ring in one nostril. Her name is Lydia Lunch; she used to play guitar in a way that has been compared with Chilean torture chambers. Now she just sings, and surprisingly enough, what was once confined to a banshee wail to match her guitar work has now broadened, from Ilse-She-Wolf barks to little-girl mewlings and back to banshee wail again. They open with "Diddy Wah Diddy" and run through a contemptuously short set of originals and carefully chosen covers like Nancy Sinatra's "Lightnin's Girl." Interestingly enough, the sound of the band is a lot closer to the jungle than that of the Contortions, less strained and more sensual; one of the guitarists doubles on sax and guitar-synthesizer, and the jams are short and to the point. The name of the group is Eight-Eyed Spy.

PUNK ROCK

Finally, back home at CBGB's, original spawning ground of the late Seventies punk revolution, Richard Hell and the Voidoids are running through one of the final sets of their career. Ironically, where the group used to put on sloppy sets in front of small but adoring audiences, now they're playing incredibly tight, slashing rock 'n' roll to a packed house consisting mostly of rubbernecking tourists and suburbanite teens who have heard about all this punk stuff and finally found the courage to come down and check it out, and for whom it wouldn't make much difference which band was onstage. But for those who are there to listen, it's obvious that the Voidoids have something more than the usual punk engine-gunnings going for them: in there in the dense mesh of guitars are, unmistakably, quotes from and elaborations on Miles Davis lines off albums like *Agharta* and *On the Corner*; if you listen and look closely, you can tell that this incredible stylistic melding is emanating mainly from the guitarist over stage left, a quiet, balding guy in sunglasses named Robert Quine. When the Voidoids break up, he will make an album of instrumental improvisations with guitarist friend Jody Harris (ex- of the Contortions) and a rhythm machine.

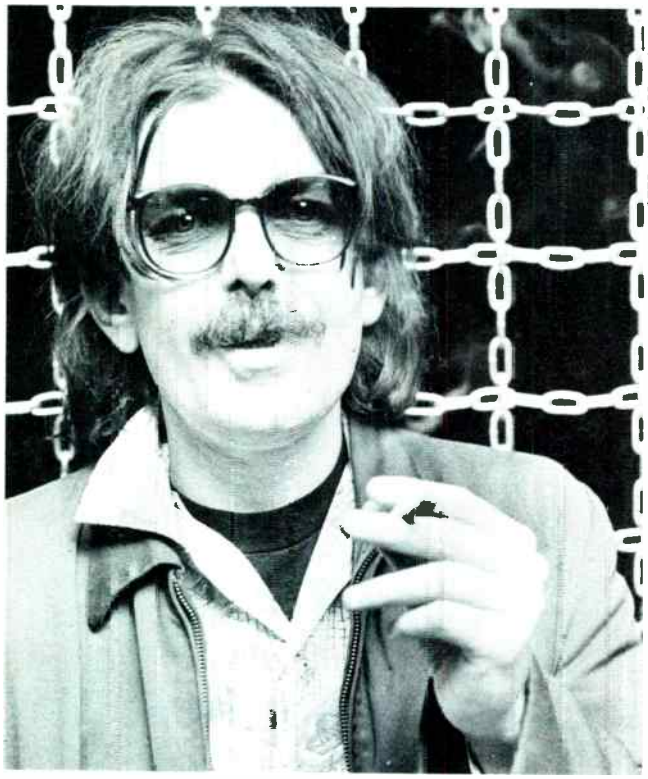
Just what is all this stuff? Well, guess what, folks — the end of the Seventies, with its apparent exhaustion of forms and general disgust with what has come to be known as "fusion music," has brought us what seems at first glance to be the unlikeliest fusion of all: punk rock and free jazz. But it's been a long time aborning, and it has antecedents. If you want to know how we got to such a strange common ground, or perhaps if you just want to be pissed off read on

But before we get into this thing, I think it might be good for writer and reader to have a little eyeball-to-eyeball chat, if only to clear the air. As a probably regular follower of this magazine, your musical tastes I'd imagine are a little more refined, at least in certain directions, than the average person's. Not trying to butter you up; it's just that, let's face it, for most people the whole subject of music and its relative importance in one's life can be summed up by the sales figures of the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack. For most people, music, if it's thought about much at all, is thought of as an underscoring for the far more important concerns of day to day living: music of any kind is a good thing, as long as it knows its place and stays there.

That leaves the rest of you, or us, depending on just exactly what and how much we are going to be able to agree upon. Now, without getting too snobbish about it (snobbery being an affliction unfortunately endemic to a great many jazz fans), I think we can assume that in general good or great jazz is music of a higher calibre than a good deal, if not most, of the more pop-oriented stuff coming out. Duke Ellington was better than Paul Whiteman, Thelonious Monk was better than Roger Williams, comparing John Coltrane to Boots Randolph would be making a bad joke, and so on down the line. The music these figures produced, I further submit, was better not because it was any more technically complicated, or because Ellington and Monk and Trane had the greatest chops of anybody who ever lived (even if they might have), but because

EBET ROBERTS

Lydia Lunch of Eight-Eyed Spy



STEPHANIE CHERNIKOWSKI

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Captain Beefheart (left) has pioneered a melding of blues, free jazz and gutbucket rock 'n' roll since the 60s. Robert Quine (below) plays a genuinely new composite guitar style.

of some rare wellspring of feeling inside them that caused them to create art that moved mountains, changed history, has endured and will continue to.

I'm discounting chops and the technical end because as far as I'm concerned that sort of thing has basically nothing to do with what's in a player's heart, and expression of passion was basically why music was invented in the first place. A lot of people don't see it in quite those terms, of course; their absolutism takes another form: they think you have to 'know how to play" your instrument according to some preset and as far as I can see arbitrary standards before anyone can even begin to take you seriously. They further think that the more technically proficient a player you become, *ipso facto* the better music maker, or let's say maker of better music you become. Why do they nurse this curious notion? Probably because they have been brainwashed, but who picked up the first bar of soap? It seems to me that this kind of thinking is by definition quantitative rather qualitative: you can sling arpeggios all over the place, you can freeze the baby in the bathwater and mail the block of ice to Siberia, but the fact remains that if you take one note, any note, and let two different people play it, what comes out of one's axe just might be nothing more than the note, whereas through some magic the other's note might be just a little more expressive, probably because there was something, a kind of inner urgency and yearning, behind it. And all the conservatories and theory books and virtuoso chops-flashings in the world aren't gonna make one iota of difference in regard to that one humble note.

A good example of this dichotomy is the old argument (which should never have been an argument in the first place) about who was better, Miles Davis or Dizzy Gillespie. Now, I would be the last person in the world to say anything against Dizzy Gillespie. I will concede that technically Dizzy from the starting gate could wipe the floor with Miles and everybody knew it, but Miles has always had something so emotionally compelling in his playing that he changed our lives in ways that Dizzy, magnificent as he is, never really did. I'd say put it down to the fact that they must make two different kinds of music, both valid, but it has been observed more than once that, at least until *On the Corner*, Miles' playing never seemed to change so much as its context; Miles likes the middle register, apparently because that's where he can best summon his quiet fire, and has seldom gone for cascades of notes where a few with optimum soul would suffice. But let it be remembered that when Miles first appeared with Charlie Parker in the late Forties, a lot of people said he couldn't play, was a downright embarrassment to Bird. And you know something? If you listen to some of those old sides, you *can* hear Miles flubbing up here and there, an adolescent fumblingly finding his way. Obviously Bird heard something in Miles that all those detractors didn't, and obviously he was right. What's perhaps even more interesting is that when John Coltrane, the "sheets of sound" man himself, first joined Miles' band about ten years later, people said the same thing about *him*: "Coltrane can't play."

Maybe it was because he had a bit of R&B in his background, and to a lot of people into jazz that was strictly anathema at the time: you could hear them imperiously snooting about the presence of Chuck Berry and Big Maybelle in the movie *Jazz on a Summer's Day*, things like that. Hell, Coltrane used to walk the bar in, I believe it was Philadelphia: can't you just see him. the author of *Om* and *A Love Supreme* and *Meditations*, Ohnedaruth Himself, strutting the length of that thing kicking over whiskey glasses, probably sloppy drunk himself, driving the crowd to a frenzy with those raw, fartlike, obscenely loud and unquestionably tasteless and vulgar "HONKs!" and "SQUEEEs!" immortalized by Flip Phillips and Illinois Jacquet in the old Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts? And people called Phillips and Jacquet "tasteless" and "unmusical" too. But the way I always saw it, all that honk-squee stuff was just one part of rock 'n' roll getting ready to be born, a great cry of freedom from the contraints of "good" music, perhaps even the cerebral conceits of bebop. And a decade later you could hear that same gutbucket approach resurrected in things like Roland Kirk's solo on "Hog Callin' Blues" from Charles Mingus' classic *Oh Yeah* album. It's great that Kirk and Mingus had all that technique to let their eruptions slide on through, but as far as I'm concerned all the technique in the world is never going to make somebody like Al DiMeola or Stanley Clarke or Chick Corea or Herbie Hancock at this point, or almost *any* of those fusion cats matter a damn once their latest little space opera slides off the charts, 'cause if they ever had any soul they lost it by now. So now you know at least part of my prejudices in front.

Another part is that I love rock 'n' roll in its basest, crudest, most paleolithically rudimentary form. That's right, I love punk

rock, and I'm not apologizing to anyone. As far as I can see, what Phillips and Jacquet were doing on those Jazz at the Philharmonic sides was kind of the punk rock of its day. What's more, I don't give a good goddam if somebody can barely play their instruments or even not at all, as long as they've got something to express and do it in a compelling way. Because to me music is any kind of sound made by one human being that moves another one. I suppose that validates a lot of stuff I consider total rubbish, like the aforementioned DiMeolas, Clarkes and Hancocks of the world as well as all the Jethro Tulls and Emerson, Lake and Palmers. But any musician is only as good as his attitude, chops be damned or fall where they may, and rock 'n' roll is *all* attitude. It was originally conceived as an outburst of inchoate obnoxious noise and that's what most of the best of it has remained. In other words, punk rock is as venerable as Little Richard. Admittedly, there have been some people over the years who have made rock that was technically (more often technologically) complex and musicologically erudite and still not be worthless — the Byrds come to mind — but trying to turn the blare of the outcasts into something arty and thereby respectable is as sick as the attempts made over the years to "upgrade" jazz by polluting it with all sorts of European classicist elements (the efforts of John Lewis and Gunther Schuller, few others, excepted).

Okay: by any standards of "good" music, rock 'n' roll is just a lot of garbage noise, always has been and always will be or it's not rock 'n' roll anymore (*cf* Billy Joel). Great jazz is great art. But I submit that, when it's not *arty*, garbage noise can also be great art. Because great art is anything that stirs the human breast in profound ways that may even have deeper psychological and social implications, and that's just exactly what, say, the Sex Pistols did. You may despise them, but they can't be denied their impact. Who cares if they had no talent (a contention I consider debatable anyway)? Their talent was for aural carnage and rabble rousing.

The reason for all this blather is that I'm just about to try and convince you that punk rock and the very best jazz can not only coexist among one group of musicians performing together at one time, but that successful examples of said mutant hybrid already exist in abundance. That's right, Iggy and the Stooges were every bit as good as Archie Shepp, and John Coltrane could have played with the Velvet Underground. (I more or less proved this contention the other night when I went on WPIX-FM in Manhattan and simultaneously played "Race Mixing" by Teenage Jesus and the Jerks on one turntable and the short version of "Nonaah" by Roscoe Mitchell on another, saying "Get ready all you tape hounds, because we have here a vintage unreleased take of Roscoe jamming with Lydia Lunch and the Jerks at the last Montreux Festival," and most people apparently believed it.) It's all music, and has more qualities in common than many fans of either genre might at first think.

For instance, both free jazz (which, with rare and minor exceptions, is probably the only kind of jazz which should ever be mixed with rock 'n' roll — things like Blood, Sweat and Tars were Vegas lounge acts) and punk rock are musics with no explicit existing fundamental *rules*. That's why Ralph J. Gleason once more or less admitted to me that he had no idea whether Archie's *Three For a Quarter, One For a Dime* was a great album, a good album or an abortion, and that's why we currently have the highly laughable spectacle of punk partisans from all over the map claiming that this or that favorite group of theirs is *great*, while the other guy's is obvious *garbage*, and hardly any of them can ever seem to agree on which is which.

Also, beyond a certain point both punk rock and free jazz give up all sense of structure. Result: atonal anarchic spew. Now if somebody told me that some new group was nothing but a bunch of horrible atonal noise, I'd be the first in line for tickets, but like everybody else I have my own highly subjective places where I fanally draw the line. I love Teenage Jesus and the Jerks but can't stand Siouxsee and the Banshees (their classic fourteen-minute version of "The Lord's Prayer" excepted). I lived for *Africa/Brass* and *Ascension*, never could quite make up my mind about *Meditations*, and found *Om* totally unlistenable. I told old Ralph that on sheer quality of a fairly easily perceivable emotional authenticity, *Fire Music* could be recognized as a masterpiece and *Three For a Quarter, One For a Dime* as masturbation. On the other hand, since we had that conversation, it has become common knowledge if not conventional wisdom (*The Hite Report*, etc.) that masturbation is good for you, so if I still owned a copy I might re-audition *Three For a Quarter* now and discover that Archie was up to a wank there that ten years ago I wasn't quite experienced enough to appreciate yet. I do know that I put on

continued on next page

James Chance (right), anteater extraordinaire, combines James Brown vocals with screeching free sax. Pere Ubu (below) creates industrial rhythmic force somewhere between clank and drone.

EBET ROBERTS

EBET ROBERTS

Om the other night for the first time in about a decade, and found that I actually liked it, but I suspect that this may be due to my conditioning by all the punk rock I've listened to over the past few years having broken down my resistance to welters of squawl.

What fascinates me, has in fact since the late Sixties, is the points of intersection. That you could take a bunch of guys who just held guitars in their hands for the first time in their lives yesterday, put them together with somebody who'd mastered tenor saxophone over a 25-year span of rigorous discipline and dues-paying, and come out with something that was not only not oil and water, but aesthetically valid and emotionally compelling.

I'll be the first to admit that I know next to nothing about music technically, but the way I always looked at it, it made perfect sense that you could take one guy playing two moronic chords over and over again, let one other guy whoop and swoop all around him in Ornetteish free flight, and if the two players were blessed with that magic extra element of conviction and the kind of inspiration that produces immense energy if nothing else, then hell, they could only *complement* each other. Because, to get just a little cosmic about it (any free jazz critic has a right to at least once in each article), the two principles of metronomic or even stumblethud repetition and its ostensible converse of endless flight through measureless nebulae should by the very laws of nature meet right in the middle like yin-yang, etc.

All of this, of course, relates intimately to the search for new forms and absolutely open-ended freedom of expression that all the arts were undergoing in the dear, dead Sixties. I can recall my own shivers of delight when, in early 1965, I first heard the Yardbirds and the Who unleash their celebrated deluges of searing feedback. It struck me immediately that this was one element which perhaps more than any other gave the rock renaissance of the day a full-fledged shot at matching the experimental forays that jazz had been experiencing since around the turn of the decade.

Of course, the Yardbirds and Who were, almost from the beginning, relatively accomplished musicians in the rock arena, which was increasingly falling prey to the sort of chops-mania which would eventually give us such abominations as the worship of guitar players who got compared with jazz giants just because they had the stamina to play scales for an hour or two at a time (in other words, to hell with Duane Allman and the Grateful Dead).

No, what I wanted to hear was "Louie Louie" with Albert Ayler sitting in (which should not be confused with Ayler's own rather pathetic attempts at crossbreeding/crossover like *New Grass*; he had the right idea, but went about it all wrong).

Again, since a lot of you probably think I was out of my mind then and have obviously degenerated even more by now, let me remind you of two things. Number One is that for the first couple of years he was playing sax, Ornette Coleman was misreading the bar clef by a third, mistaking C for A, which many people feel accounts for his "freaky" sound then and now. (It might also be instructive for those who think the whole idea of punk rock a hideous upchuck in the face of all musical values held by right-thinking citizens to recall that almost exactly the same things were said about Ornette, Cecil Taylor, *et al.* when they debuted: *Downbeat* critics regularly slagged off classic albums like *Africa/Brass*, *Coltrane Live at the Village Vanguard* and *Eric Dolphy Live at the Five Spot Vol. One*, and one of them called Ornette's *Free Jazz* album "psychotic.")

The second little story I'd like to dig up comes from A.B. Spellman's beautiful book *Black Music: Four Lives*, wherein Cecil Taylor recalled jamming once with a schized-out bassist who just happened to wander into the club one night, played a set and then ran out in a typical paranoid spasm after the set but before Cecil could ask him who he was, where he lived and maybe get his phone number. Cecil said that this guy didn't really know how to play the bass at all, but that *because* of that he did things that more schooled musicians wouldn't even think of trying because they had been taught that there were immutably fixed "right" and "wrong" ways to do everything. Which Cecil felt was a crock — he said that if this guy had stuck around, he might have had a shot at being one of the great free bass players.

A quantum leap in terms of rock 'n' roll freedom occurred in the late Sixties, with the appearance of the aforementioned Velvet Underground. Building on the possibilities opened up by the Yardbirds and Who, the Velvets, perhaps even more than someone like Jimi Hendrix, redefined the meaning of noise in rock. Lou Reed's solo in "I Heard Her Call My Name" in 1967 was so far ahead of its time that even I found it a little abrasive, whereas now it sounds right up to date and totally fresh; and the collective improvisation that he and the rest of the Velvets (who were all musical primitives except for a conservatory-trained Welshman named John Cale who studied under Cage and Xenakis before abandoning "serious" music to form the Velvets with Lou) laid down in the 17-minute "Sister Ray" is probably the finest example of extended jamming anybody in rock has put on record to this day.

One band they inspired was the Stooges, who in their 1970 album *Funhouse* (still available on import, as are the Velvets' experiments in repackaged anthologies) let a young Ann Arbor saxophonist named Steve McKay honk and squawk and shriek his way through a whole side of the most primitive, grinding fuzztone-feedback punk. Obviously McKay had been listening to people like Ornette and Ayler, and other rock 'n' rollers of atonal bent have not been shy about crediting their influence. Captain Beefheart, Tom Verlaine and the Contortions' James Chance have all attested at one time or another to the effect on their playing of Ayler specifically; around the time he was cutting things like "I Heard Her Call My Name" Lou Reed said in interviews that he'd been listening to Ornette and Cecil a lot, and he's recently returned to jazz-rock amalgams in a big way, collaborating with Don Cherry on last year's *The Bells*.

As for Beefheart, the Ayler influence is unmistakable in tracks like "Hair Pie: Bake One" on his monolithic masterpiece from the late Sixties, *Trout Mask Replica*. When Beefheart put together his Magic Band for that album and its successors, he taught everyone else in the group how to play their instruments according to the logic of his own revolutionary musical conception: some he taught from the ground up, others he had to force to *unlearn* everything they'd ever been taught. Drawing equally on Delta blues, Howlin' Wolf, free jazz and the whole gutbucket rock 'n' roll tradition, Beefheart created a unique new musical language. In a way he stands outside not only styles but time — I saw him a year or so ago in New York, and his approach, while it has not changed startlingly in the past decade, remains as uncompromising, unduplicated and unduplicatable as ever. It swings, it rocks, it's filled with wildly unpredictable hairpin turns through blues, dissonance, atonality and sonic dada, yet through all this it remains so distinctively earthy you can *dance* to it. But then, you can dance to an awful lot of Ornette's stuff, too.

If Beefheart still seems to stand alone, he has spawned a whole generation of musicians who credit him as a major influence: the Ohio art-school conceptualist group Devo, Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols (now back to his real name John Lydon in his new band Public Image Ltd.) and the Clash have all credited him as a major formative factor in each of them finally stepping out to make that godawful racket. From the same neck of the woods as Devo come Pere Ubu, who combine Ornette/Ayler sax flurries, synthesizer murk, guitar distortion, and a deep industrial rhythmic force somewhere between clank and drone. They claim to be heavily influenced as well by the sounds issuing from the factories all around their native Cleveland/Akron grounds. Probably because of that, Pere Ubu's music has a rhythmic quality that doesn't *flow* in the sense to which most rock and all blues-derived musics have accustomed us. When you first hear them, what they're doing may well sound upside down and backwards, and it may

continued on page 79

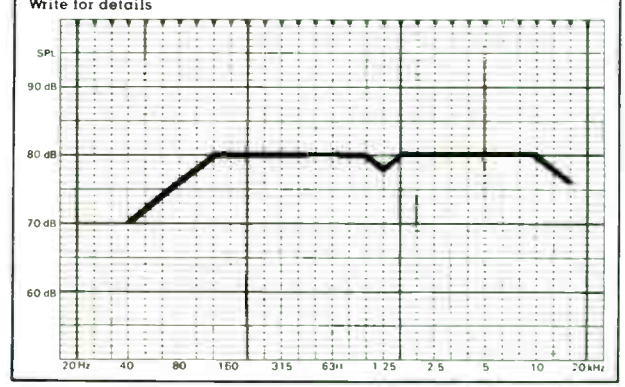
THE COMMUNITY CABINET

Community has a new, truly great full-range cabinet. We believe it is the ultimate full-range PA system for monitoring, club and touring applications. We named it (are you ready?) the **PBLsuper90**. PBL for the excellent round-backed cabinet that was its forerunner, and Super90 for the new 90° radial HF section incorporated into its dazzling face.

The Super90 radial horn is, in our estimation, the best ninety degree horn we've designed. As an integrated part of this single 15" bass-reflex cabinet its performance is merely superb. The round-backed design of the **PBLsuper90** is brought to full advantage through the use of a tuned, ducted port, beautifully reinforcing bass response down to 40Hz. Its smooth, wide-range response and uniform coverage . . . well, it speaks for itself.

This easily portable sound system is the consummation of ten years intensive research in wedding the qualities of advanced fiberglass technology to the physics of sound reinforcement. Hand-crafted construction and rugged detailing insure that the **PBLsuper90** is engineered for a lifetime of reliable service and a multitude of uses—a lasting investment in your career in professional sound.

PBLs90 – ⅓ octave response 0° on axis
Write for details



The Community Cabinet—still the ultimate in sound reproduction technology. Strong. Beautiful. Efficient. Performing professionally in all applications.

The PBLsuper90 from Community. Get it. It's the best there is.

Community

COMMUNITY LIGHT & SOUND, INC., 5701 GRAYS AVE., PHILA., PA 19143 (215) 727-0900 — TELEX 834649

BOB MARLEY AND THE ROOTS OF REGGAE

Marley is in many ways the embodiment of the soul of reggae. He walks a fine line between the worlds of Jamaica and Babylon, and his triumphs and dilemmas ultimately reflect those of reggae as a whole. The music has broken through in Britain, but it may take more for it to break in America.

By Chris Cioe and John Sutton-Smith

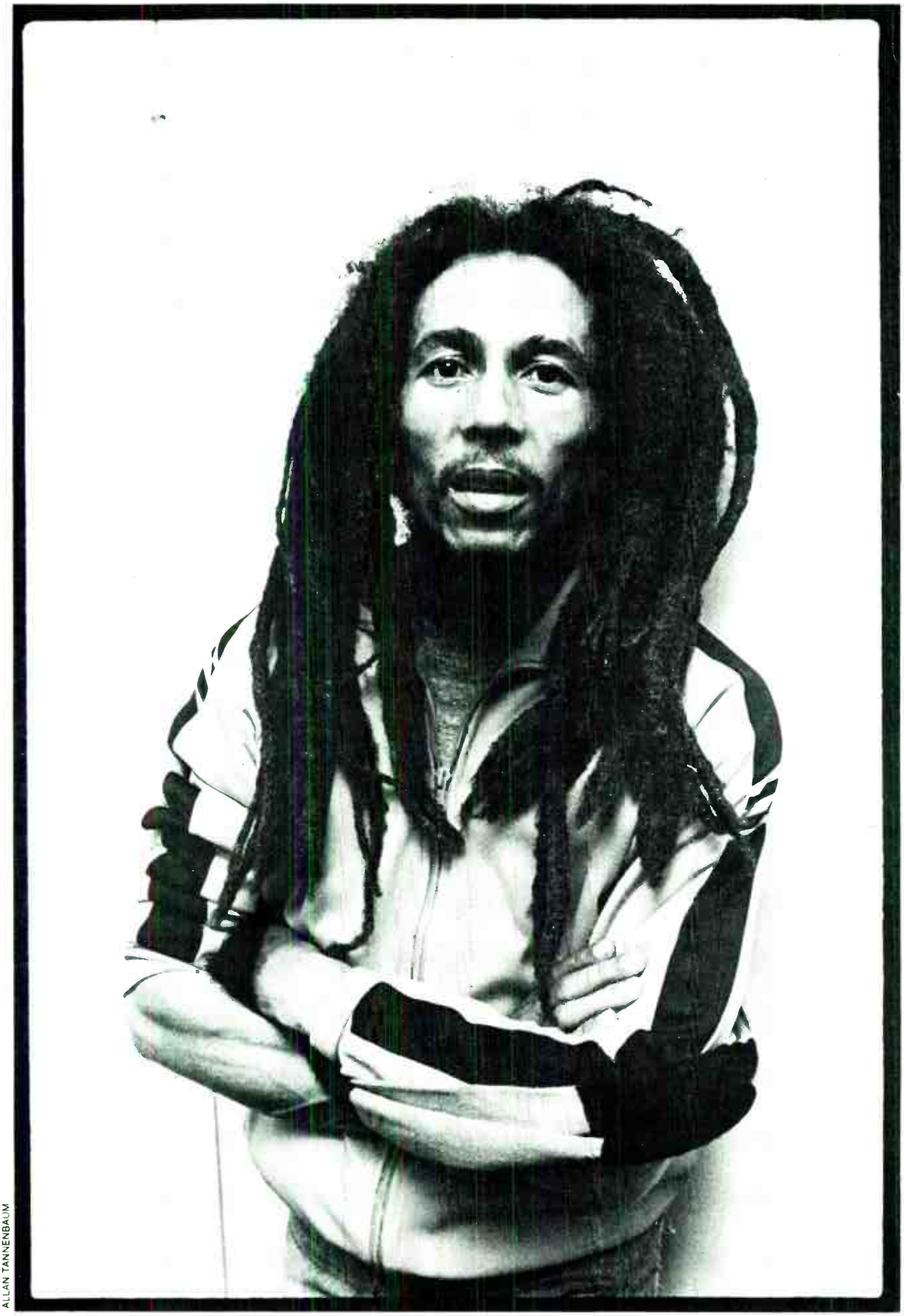
On a hot Tuesday afternoon last November in Babylon, L.A. style, with dry Santa Ana winds blowing past the West Hollywood condos and high-rises, Bob Marley and the Wailers prepared for a soundcheck at the Roxy nightclub on Sunset Strip. The show that night was a special benefit for the Sugar Ray Robinson Foundation and the only small club date for Marley and his band on a tour supporting their latest album, *Survival*. Most of the players sported swollen berets, which hold their dreadlocks. They maintain their locks according to a very literal reading of Old Testament precepts (any good Rastafarian is expected to read one chapter of the Bible per day). As the musicians plugged in and warmed up, the listener could see and hear why this is arguably the best, and certainly the most popular reggae band in the world.

Al Anderson,the American-born lead guitarist, is plucking away in the lobby on his cordless guitar. Drummer Carlton Barrett steps behind his kit onstage, while his brother Aston "Family Man" Barrett adjusts the tone settings on his amp and bass guitar to get the unique and deeply vibrant bass sound that is so crucial to reggae. This rhythm section has anchored the Wailers' sound since the 60's, when Peter Tosh, Bunny Livingstone and Marley fronted the group as a vocal trio. Also onstage are: Alvin "Seeco" Patterson, the extraordinary percussionist who first instructed Marley in reggae/African rhythms; organist-keyboard player Tyrone Downey, another long-time Wailer and often a keen spokesman for the music and Rastafarianism; English-born Junior Marvin on stinging lead guitar; and horn players from the group Zap Pow. Later, the vocal trio I-Threes (Rita Marley, Judy Mowatt, and Marcia Griffiths) join in with their precise back-up harmonies.

As the musicians begin to fall into a coherent groove, Marley takes the stage, wearing a massive beret, knitted in the Ethiopian colors of red, green and gold, entwined with silver thread. The band starts to play "Lively Up Yourself," the song's slightly menacing instrumental track contrasting his bubbly lyrics: "Don't be no drag, lively up yourself, 'cause reggae is another bag." Less than a dozen people are in the Roxy audience during that afternoon soundcheck, but all eyes are riveted on the singer as he slides into his plaintive vocal on "Is This Love," which curls through the air, rich and silky. Bob sings just a word or two from each line, always on the off beat: "Is this ..... is this ....," a lingering guitar solo, then "...love I been feeling?"

The band continued jamming for three hours, with musicians changing instruments and friends sitting in, but if you hadn't been looking for the changes you'd have never known. A friend of mine, who as a former Island Records promo man was privy to many Wailers' sessions back in Jamaica a few years ago said that it was the closest thing he had ever heard to a Hope Road session in Kingston. The Wailers played everything from the new album as well as "Running Away" from *Kaya* and a long, 20-minute version of a new number, "Redemption Song." Then it was back into "Zimbabwe," with Bob singing the whole chorus of this modern African liberation song except for the title word: "Mash it up in a ..... I and I ....."

In a very real sense, Robert Nesta Marley has come to represent more than just reggae, Rasta and Jamaica to most of the Western and Third Worlds today. He winningly combines innate musical genius, strong religious beliefs, a hard-core but realistic political overview, and let's face it, magnetic good looks and charisma. And the more one listens, the more one also realizes that his music and message come from beyond, from a total spiritual inspiration. He moves onstage with the complete willingness to be a vehicle, to be carried back and forth across the stage in rhythmic, entrancing frenzy, as if governed by



ALLAN TANNENBAUM

EBET ROBERTS

Christianity came to Jamaica via nonconformist denominations, whose spirited services complemented the already strong African cults: ritualized singing, dancing, spirit possession, healing and speaking in tongues were the meeting ground for both. The above was at the Sunsplash Festival last year, Marley's first appearance in Jamaica in several years.

an inner light aimed at outwardly spreading the Rasta message.

And yet, Marley's position today is paradoxical. As his worldwide stature has grown along with a natural ability to act the star or stage — so has he fallen in the eyes of some Jamaicans, who see a creeping Babylonian influence in his moves. Marley is still a young man in his mid-30's, and his life and times are already the epitome of the reggae story and its entwining with Rastafarianism. Ultimately, the dilemmas and triumphs that face Marley are the same ones facing reggae music today. And to really understand the situation, an outsider needs to know something about Jamaica's past.

The entire modern history of the island, even in the context of the Caribbean world, is one of brutality. The Spaniards, who first colonized Jamaica in the 1500's, completely exterminated the island's original native Arawak Indian inhabitants. When the English took over in 1655, the African slaves that Spanish soldiers and missionaries had brought still worshipped their Ashanti god, Nyankopong. The British imported slaves with a vengeance over the next 200 years, but made no attempt to establish the Church of England among these Africans. Unlike America, where many slaves became the extended family property of Southern landowners, absentee plantation owners in England, via their managers in Jamaica, used slaves to work their huge sugar plantations, die, and be replaced by new ones. Naturally, slave rebellion caught on quickly, and one group, the Maroons, escaped to the island's remote and denser interior mountains, where they successfully evaded and ambushed British soldiers. Led by a brilliant and charismatic guerrila-style fighter named Cujo, the Maroons actually obtained a permanent peace treaty with the British in 1739, giving them their own land to farm (much of the best ganja is still grown in these hills). Unfortunately, this treaty also provided that the Maroons would viciously aid the British in rounding up and subduing runaway plantation slaves, which laid the groundwork for future struggles and hatred between black Jamaicans on the island.

So, the average Jamaican's background and deep roots have always combined constant exploitation with an abiding connection to his or her African roots. Ethiopianism had early on been connected with the Baptist Church in Jamaica, and Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey popularized a Back-to-Africa movement all over the Western hemisphere during the 1920's. In the 30's, an Ethiopian tribal prince named Ras Tafari — great grandson of King Saheka Selassie of Snoa — was crowned Negus, or head, or Ethiopia; he also called himself "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" with the name Haile Selassie (Might of the Trinity). This African claimed direct descendance from the line of King Solomon. Many Jamaicans also saw the man as having divine status, and almost immediately, the Rastafarian movement arose from the ranks of former Garveyites. Throughout the 40's and 50's, the group established autonomous communes around the countryside and in towns, ritualized Ganja smoking, grew dreadlocks (based on their reading of Scripture commandments), and evolved a lifestyle. the Rastas' contempt for the lingering English colonial presence made for periodic police raids and arrests, but by the mid-60's, the government had recognized the movement's growth and staying power, and the Rastafarian movement became an accepted reality in Jamaica. Rituals and meetings occur regularly, with the most important ones called the Nyabingi (an East African term for a cult that resisted colonialism in the late 19th century) or "grounation" ceremonies. These occur a couple of times a year, lasting sometimes a week, and feature prayer, feasting, expert drumming and dancing, and of course, plenty of herb-smoking, which is seen as "a smoother of mental imbalances and as a meditative influence", (from *The Rastafarians*, by Leonard Barrett, Beacon Press). Rastas eat largely vegetarian and natural food and have their own dialect, they usually substitute "I" for all other pronouns like "me" and "you," as well as for other words: health food, for instance, is "ital," derived from "total." Rastas began to get more politically involved in the 60's (they will figure heavily in upcoming elections). More and more, too, Jamaicans recognize Rastas as a peaceable, positive force in their country, which now has a modified Socialist government under Prime Minister Michael Manley.

The Rastafarians included music in their program right from the start. As Leonard Barrett writes in his book, *The Rastafarians*: "Rastafarian music reflects the cultists' perception of the society. The downbeat of the drummer symbolizes the death of the oppressive society but it is answered by the *Akete* drummers with a lighter upbeat, a resurrection of the society through the power of Ras Tafari. This is not the music of adoration but the music of invocation; it is a call to Africa .... The powerful often kills, even though in the wrong. The powerless sings. This is true of the blues of the American Blacks and has become true of the Jamaican Rastafarians."

Bob Marley grew up in rural St. Ann, Jamaica, the son of a local Jamaican woman and a retired British Army major, whom Marley has only seen twice in his life. The young Marley went to Kingston at 14, and lived in its ghetto, Trench Town. His early singing idols were American R&B stars like Brook Benton, heard on radio stations out of New Orleans. In the early 60's, his musical mentors were singer-songwriter Joe Higgs, who schooled him in arrangement and harmony, and Seeco Patterson, who showed him the traditional

Nyabingi rhythms and is still a Wailer today.

takes an even bouncier and brighter horn-oriented approach to the trio format. Perhaps the most polished and potent vocal group to come out of Jamaica in awhile is the Wailing Souls' *Wild Suspense* (Mango/Island). This unit has been together since 1965, and it shows, as the trade-off and interplay between lead voices and harmony sparkles throughout this LP ("Bredda Gravilicious," which was a hit single in Jamaica, is especially catchy).

Jamaicans don't have heroes, though, in the Western sense. This is partly because most individual Jamaicans consider themselves stars, and partly because, Marley aside, the trappings of stardom on the island just aren't as obvious or overblown as in America or Europe. And finally, Jamaicans are simply suspicious of "stardom," even irrationally so. One elequent cab driver explained it as he drove me to the Marley concert in Montego: "He's a star now, so he sings shit music... but he *is* a prophet."

Perhaps these mixed emotions help explain why some of the most influential personalities in contemporary reggae lead exemplary Rastafarian lives. Bunny Livingstone Wailer (whose *Blackheart Man* is a classic record and a great example of strict reggae lyrics) only deserts his mountain abode for recording sessions, refusing to tour. Winston Rodney, also known as Burning Spear, owns a general store/nursery in rural St. Ann and stays home to tend his garden. His utterly ethereal voice has made Burning Spear albums among the most evocative and powerful in reggae. A just-released anthology, *Harder Than The Best*, should be a part of any serious listener's reggae collection. For many of these non-heroes of Jamaican reggae, to live a consistent Rastafarian life is the only answer, not promoting their music in Babylon.

Thus, the irony facing Marley is that the more politically aware and conscious he's gotten outside Jamaica, the more he's faced hostility at home. And yet, no one but Marley could have engineered the temporary peace treaty at the One Love Peace Concert. I spent some hours one evening recently with Marley watching a film of him on stage with the political leaders Manley and Seaga at that concert. In an unguarded moment, Marley turned to me and said: "If I was a Jamaican, a true Jamaican, like if it was my rasclot country, I would have killed those two, Manley and Seaga, on stage there. I and I know that they would have killed me, too... I know this, but only without them will there be room for change, to break the stranglehold." This was a tragic reflection on the ultimate failure of that Peace Treaty, since the violence in Jamaica is now worse than ever. I wondered if Bob felt, when he had Manley and Seaga onstage with him, that they were trying to use him just to get votes...

MARLEY: No. Them never want to come. We send for them, tell them and they have fe come.

DOWNEY: We CANNOT beg them to come.

MARLEY: We no beg them to come.

DOWNEY: No, we demand.

MARLEY: Tell them, the man from both sides say, 'Go, go on 'pon de stage' fe show the people themselves, y'know, live and hold on together. The war... the war is between God people.

DOWNEY: The leaders will fight each other, but the people are fighting the war. The people aren't against each other really, it 's the leaders saying 'I don't like that guy, he's enemy, but the people... I mean everyone who's in it together, 'I grew up with you, but just because of politics I have to stop being friends with you.'

MARLEY: I want a man who stand up out there and look 'pon it different from a man with violence in him.

MUS.: At the Peace Concert, it seemed as if peace had finally come to Jamaica. Was that, then, a false peace?

MARLEY: As far as the peace... society set up themselves that the youth and youth must get a thing there called frustrating or fignting 'gainst one another. Now, WE say we will fight WITH the youth, let the youth come together. So, you have all these other forces who a-try to get them fight, because if them come together, then them will know themselves.

DOWNEY: We take them right up to the door of peace.

MARLEY: You know what I mean, because everyone guilty now. When peace come, everyone... him see what they are going.

DOWNEY: But still some war a-going on. If it's not physical, it's psychological. You can take a donkey to the water, but you can't make him drink, y'know? We bring it right up to them, the leaders, and say 'Peace, we want peace,' but it is up to them to really bring about peace.

MARLEY: One God, One Aim, One Destiny, and that will overcome all things. Personally, see, if them no deal with Rastafari, me no see the solution. Love, love is the answer. You see, love. Love is God. That is the solution for what going on. Only God can solve it.

Whenever our conversation got into the specifics of Rasta philosphy, Marley would usually defer to other members of his entourage, like Mikey Dread, who would embark on lengthy discourses of Rasta religious doctrine and variations. I at one point mentioned to Bob that Peter Tosh said last summer he's writing a song called "Here We Are Together Again" for Bob and Bunny to sing with him. When asked if such an occurrence could bring the three together again, Marley replied, "Well, sure... as long as we a-deal with the same t'ing. I will deal with same t'ing. But then, it was different, a different road... not on the same road back then."

And what about reggae's position in America? Certainly Marley is a visible personality here, but he's by no means a chart-topper. Last year, the Jamaican reggae-jazz-funk band, Third World, scored higher than Marley in American singles charts with a cover version of the old O'Jays tune, "Now That We Found Love." Ironically, reggae may now eventually reach its largest young, white American audience via England. In much the same way that British musicians like John Mayall, the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton and even early Led Zeppelin introduced many American kids to authentic blues artists in the 60's, so punk and a recent British ska revival recently introduced Jamaican music to the American airwaves. The Specials,

When Marley sings in a perfectly dreamy voice, "Slave driver, catch a fire so you can get burned," the message is all the more icy for its lush presentation. While the Twelve Tribes see him as a true prophet, the stricter cults consider him a "folly boy."

PETER SIMON

Madness and the Selector — called 2-Tone bands in England — are now topping the British charts with an infectious and dance-charged brand of heavied-up ska and rockers music. Two of these groups include both young English and Jamaican musicians, and the Specials have enlisted trombonist extraordinaire Rico Rodriguez as a regular bandmember. Rodriguez was a star in the first 60's wave of ska-mania, and his warm tone and solo fills add luster to the Specials' wonderful single, "A Message to You, Rudie." (However, if the listener is looking for a brilliantly wild dose of the original item, Mango-Island has just released a compilation of ska classics called *Intensified!: Original Ska* 1962-66.) Furthermore, contemporary reggae singles regularly make the pop charts in England, and several talented English-Jamaican artists have emerged lately. Steel Pulse, a strong vocal-instrumental group originated near Birmingham, and have toured with Marley in Europe, as well as opened for several punk and post-punk rock bands in England. The band's second LP on Island, *Tribute To The Martyrs*, is a hard-edged blend of reggae and soul, with lyrics that mix rasta leanings and strong political conscience. In more of a pop vein, Jamaican-born Dennis Brown, who often records and performs in England, has one of the most arresting and lovely voices in reggae. All his albums are musical delights. And finally, the young poet-author Lynton Kwesi Johnson has emerged quite recently as an important Jamaican voice in England. Although not a Rastafarian, Johnson's grass-roots realism and powerful vernacular recitations on his *Forces of Victory*, backed by a crisp and chugging reggae unit, establish him as a compelling and original voice.

Several English rock bands with strong reggae influences, notably the Clash and the Police, have begun to succeed in America. The Clash really can't be pinned down as just reggae-influenced, to frame their material, as Elvis Costello has done on occasion. The Police, on the other hand, are basing their entire sound on a kind of rock-reggae fusion, and are currently the most popular new group in England. Significantly, this skanking power-trio tried to bring Steel Pulse with them as an opening act on their recent U.S. tour, although unfortunately the latter band couldn't get the necessary working papers and green cards together in time for the concerts. Most importantly, the Police have actually made a dent in the monolith of American FM radio, and if the band's success and airplay continues, stateside ears may soon be ready for healthier doses of the real thing.

In '65, Marley formed a vocal group with childhood friend Bunny Livingstone and a young streetsinger named Peter MacIntosh (now Tosh). As the Wailing Wailers, they recorded several hit singles during the late ska/rude boy period in Jamaican pop.This music, reggae's immediate predecessor, sounds a little like calypso with a heavier backbeat, featuring jazzy and riffing horns. 1967 found Marley living with his mother in Wilmington, Delaware, working at a Chrysler plant and writing songs. He returned to Jamaica and in '69 reformed the band, this time bringing in the awesome Barrett Brothers as the band's rhythm section (they had already established themselves as studio aces in Kingston). As Family Man Barrett says in Stephen Davis' excellent book, *Reggae Bloodlines*: "The Wailers was the best vocal group anywhere in Jamaica, and I group (the Upsetters) was the best little backing band, so we seh, 'Why don't we come together and mosh up the world.'"

This was the group, then, that emerged from Kingston's tin-shack studios, working with producers like Sir Coxson Dodd and King Tubby. When this decisive version of the Wailers band formed, working with producer Lee Perry, the studio scene in Jamaica had advanced to the point where some multi-tracking was possible, and overall technical capabilities had improved. At the same time, in the summer of 1966, a fierce heatwave hit Jamaica and the people didn't want to dance quite so fast in the hot sun. So the music actually relaxed a bit, and the beat began to approach what we now know as reggae. The word itself has no commonly accepted derivation, although Peter Tosh has said it means "king's music," presumably from the Latin "rex, regina."

In 1972, Chris Blackwell of Island Records, who came from a wealthy white Jamaican landowning family, signed the Wailers to the European label. He had a credible track record in Jamaican music, having produced Millie Small's "My Boy Lollipop" in the early 60's, ska's first international hit. The first Wailers Island LP, *Catch A Fire*, featured Marley and Tosh, as principal songwriters, with Marley singing lead. Smooth, rockish guitar overdubs were laid on the album's tracks in London by English session players, and the bass lines were lightened in the mix to appeal to young American and European audiences. *Catch A Fire* and its followup, *Burnin'*, along with extensive touring, broke Marley and the Wailers as international recording stars, especially after Eric Clapton's cover version of "I Shot The Sheriff" hit No. 1 worldwide. Song after masterfully-constructed song contrasts sweet melodies with both sad and brutal lyrics. The basic reggae rhythm formula keeps ska's half-time feeling, but adds the trademark "skanking" guitar riff — "chinka" — on each upbeat. Smooth as the reggae groove is, it's also a music of percussive 16th notes patterns and figures. One listen to the song "Exodus," the album's title-track, shows just how far Marley can take this kind of rhythmic mania when he wants to drive a point home. The song's pulse literally sounds like a mass migration of people. Above it all Marley's tenor firmly at the helm, floats like wreaths of smoke. The implied tension between the incantatory melodies and churn-rhythms underneath is the heart of reggae, a tension that perfectly sums up the Rasta/Jamaican/Third World paradox in purely musical terms. On his early masterpiece "Slave Driver," Marley sings in a perfectly dreamy voice "Slave driver ..... Catch a fire, so you can get burned....." and the message is all the more icy for its lush melodic presentation and tapping rhythmic underlay.

But as Marley gained popularity worldwide and became an international star, Livingstone and Tosh balked at the grueling demands of constant touring, and in 1974, both left the group. Their departure also signalled a deeper rift and differing attitudes toward Rasta philosophy. Marley continued, relegating the remaining Wailers to backup band and adding the I-Threes, which include his wife, Rita. His albums since then have gained in technical polish, and except for *Kaya*, which was almost entirely made up of love songs and odes to ganja, they've kept their unique edge. At the same time his artistic prowess grew, Marley's viewpoint broadened, understandably, beyond Jamaica. Sitting in his dressing room last fall before a San Diego concert, journalists asked Marley if he thought his message was getting through. "Well," he said, "I don't know who is to say if the message is getting through, but I always get to the people who come, y'know. Yes, get to the people." He laughed to himself as he repeated the last line and the irony that "getting to the people" is the culminating point, where the spiritual message and comercial ambition coincide.

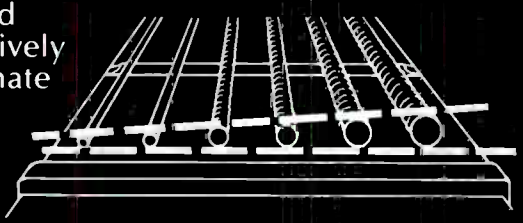
As a man who is part black and part white, with experience in both cultures, Marley now sees his vocation on a larger scale as reggae ambassador to the western world. At the United Nations two years ago, he was given a Third World Peace Medal by Senegal, on behalf of all African nations, and he made a little-publicized goodwill trip to Africa just over a year ago. A few months ago he played in Gabon, his first-ever African performance. In Chicago earlier this year, students and faculty at the Progressive Arts Center, a predominantly black arts college, christened Marley *Osahene*, the "redeemer," and Marley has recalled the event as "the most inspirational moment of my life." It may have been a very diplomatic remark to make in America, but some Rastas in Jamaica cite this sort of action as evidence that Marley is aiming to become pretender to Haile Selassie's

continued on page 86

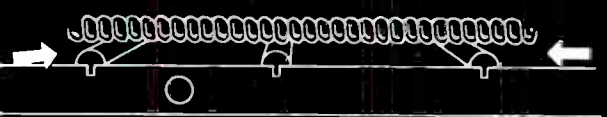
It's really very simple.

With Equa strings on your guitar, you'll play easier and faster.

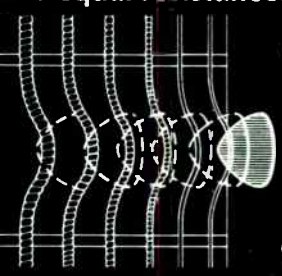
Because Equa strings are equalized. They all vibrate in the same plane. No single string will be lower than the other, which should effectively eliminate fret buzz.



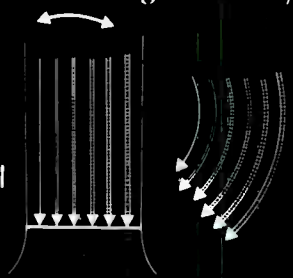
So they offer the lowest possible playing action. Because they can be adjusted to sit closer to the frets. And that makes them easier to play.



And equal resistance. Since Equa offers uniform resistance, "bending" chords is no longer a chore. And you can play faster. Neither your fingers, nor your pick, will get hung up on an uneven string.



That means neck twist is no longer a worry. Uneven pull on guitar strings sometimes causes the neck to twist out of shape. Equa balanced strings will help you avoid that problem.



And even the package is better. New Equa strings are packed in an unusually large package. This means they are coiled less tightly and therefore, suffer less distortion. And so, the strings maintain a longer playing life.

They're from Gibson, of course. Gibson quality is built into every Equa string. That's 85 years of tradition. The genuine Gibson Equa string. Very simple. And very special.

Gibson

Gibson Accessories • A Division of Norlin Industries
7373 N. Cicero Ave. • Lincolnwood, IL 60646

My first encounter with Sun Ra was the following, from a record review: "Sun Ra transduces the big band into the Space Age by way of ancient Egyptian mythology," Oh. And there was this quote from Ra: "My music paints pictures of infinity." Okay with me. I picked up a Sun Ra album as a $3 cutout. It contained a fire-breathing Farfisa organ solo that made me think of dozens of half-formed metaphors. Overwhelmed, I played it for some friends. "Fuckin' *wow*, huh?" I exclaimed. They giggled nervously, except for one guy who'd heard of Ra and just kept muttering, "And he doesn't use drugs! He's got, like, 100 albums out! He's so far out he's too far in!" My first live Sun Ra show was at New York's Beacon Theatre, which seats 3,000. There were twenty-five people in the audience and twenty-four on stage, including Ra, who rose through an onstage trapdoor in luminous thrift-store attire playing wildly on a three-tiered organ with a glowing, multi-colored orb on top. (I think he was *playing my song*! Or, as George Clinton remarked about Ra in these very pages: "This boy is definitely out there to lunch. Same place I eat at.") I next saw him a year later in a tiny Boston club; I remember the waitresses bitching all night that nobody was buying drinks. The audience was too hypnotized by the high-spirited, low-budget Mardi Gras from outer space going on all around them.

Of course, trying to describe the Sun Ra experience is a little like giving someone an off-the-cuff explication of *Moby Dick* (it's a whale of a show, ha ha) — can't really be done. But of course it has to be attempted. The Arkestra consists of eight reeds, three brass, four percussionists, two trap drummers, acoustic bass, electric bass, two electric guitars, two vibraphonists, a singer, and several dancers who fling themselves across the stage and through the aisles as if possessed. The kaleidoscopic, far-flung paces Sun Ra puts the band through include: throbbing African grooves; flagwaving big band swing (written by Ra, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Tadd Dameron and others); boogie-woogie; voodoo drum rituals; blood-curdling freeform catharses; electronic explorations; brazen Watusi breakdowns and full-blooded High Life marches; hard and free bop; simmering stately Congo processionals scored for high-pitched flutes over deep swelling reeds, brass and dense percussion; enticing ditties like "They say that you're a pleasant sort, When you catch vibrations from an asteroid," and space-age manifestos like "Astro black mythology, Astro timeless immortality, Astro thought in mystic sound ... The universe is in my voice, the universe speaks through this song"; Afro/Eurasian tone poems with six flautists marching through the audience; and timelessly simple, catchy call-and-response chants like "We travel the spaceways, From planet to planet," and "Space is the place." Ra orchestrates the march of time through the *folk* continuum that runs from Africa to the field hollers of the plantations, from revival meetings to New Orleans, from swing to bop and beyond. You could say the Arkestra is a "Territory band," its territory the cosmos itself.

I was in the Tin Palace recently talking to drummer/writer Stanley Crouch, who books the best jazz in town into that cozy Bowery bar. I told him I was working on a story on Sun Ra. "Yeah?" he replied. "That's good. Of course, there's nothing really *new* you can write about Sun Ra, but he needs to be written about as much as anybody. You gotta get people out to *hear* what he's doing." Well put. There *is* a well-worn standard rap on Sun Ra — I've already given you some of it — that includes the mention of his twenty-four-year-long career as an uncompromising bandleader and visionary, pioneer of collective improvisation, atonality, electronics, African polyrhythmics and multimedia presentation in a big band format. He is a mystery shrouded in an enigma, and in talking about all he has done it's hard not to fall into listmaking. There's the list that includes some of the musicians who have passed through his band: Pharoah Sanders, Marion Brown, Pat Patrick, Julian Priester, Charles Davis, James Spaulding, Ronnie Boykins, Clifford Jarvis and of course the great tenorist, John Gilmore, who influenced even Coltrane (look it up). But lists will only take you so far. As *Esquire* put it when they included Ra in their Hot 100 over ten years ago: "Sun Ra — everybody drops his name, nobody owns his records." In spite of all his accomplishments he is still in danger of being taken for granted (although in Europe he sells out sports stadiums — that's fifteen to twenty thousand people at a clip, this is how he supports that large band).

He lives in Philadelphia, and he's listed right there in the phone book — "Ra, Sun" — and you could call him anytime to rap. Sun Ra doesn't just talk — he *purrs*, in a beguiling, delicate drawl. He loves to talk. Thing is, he's as easy to pin down in conversation as it is to nail a drop of quicksilver to a board. You ask him for a blade of grass, he gives you a whole meadow to mow. He is equal parts of old sage and precocious child: young at heart, wise in time. Trying to get a fix on his personal history proved especially frustrating. "You can't ask me to be specific about time," he told me. "Me and time never got along so good, we just sort of ignore each other. Well, my home planet is Saturn. You just might call me a troubleshooter for the Cosmos, sent here by the Creator of the Omniverse. It used to be the Universe, but you see it's graduated. Omni relates to *all*, not just one, not Uni. You gotta get past oneness, at least get to twoness. The you get *attuned* the right way, 'cos you got the at-two-en-ment. Music is the omniversal language, you see, and you need that on this planet. Musicians are in the harmony department, and this planet's in complete *dis*harmony. You got one country over in the B.C. times, one in 500 A.D., one in 1500, one in modern times and so on. So when I say planet Earth is out of time, I mean it. Now what I'm offering can harmonize this planet — it's a world music, an omniversal music. People are just like stringed instruments: your muscles, tissues, nerves, fibers, they all like strings, so you just gotta get tuned up the right way, change your tune. The proper music can do that. That's why I'm dealing with *sound* music, for sound minds and bodies. But it's even beyond that. I'm dealing with myth, magic, things you people passed by, things of great value. It's above and beyond life and death, beyond your so-called reality. What can life offer you but death? You gotta judge the tree by its fruit. You walk down skid row, you see the fruits of life. Now, I'm not of this planet; the truth about this planet is a bad truth, it's *sad*. The truth can't save you now. You gotta turn back to ancient wisdom, dreams, myth. There's magic in myth. It's not just about life or death, it's about immeasureable equations, continuation of *being*."

About Ra's personal past, there is little gospel and much apocrypha. It is generally assumed that he was born in 1915 in Birmingham, Alabama, under the name of Herman "Sonny" Blount. He told me that Blount was just one of his family names — "I called myself Sonny Lee for awhile" — and that Sun Ra has been his name since he arrived here. He acknowledges that a birth certificate with the 1915 date was found, but won't verify its validity. Various band members all agreed that he is "ageless," and so, in our spiritual aspect, are we all. Did Sun Ra's gradual discovery of his spiritual nature lead him to disavow all his links with an earthly past, declare himself heaven-born, not of this earth? If so, his music proclaims its own earthly lineage: even though he became famous for playing "space music," his roots in black traditions are deep. In fact Ra's repertoire, from Jelly Roll Morton's "King Porter Stomp" to his own "Space is the Place," from African percus-

Sun Ra with long-time Arkestra members Marshall Allan, tenorist John Gilmore and vocalist June Tyson. ALLAN TANNENBAUM

SUN RA

Sun Ra is best described as a mystery shrouded in an enigma. He's made over 100 records and you've probably never even heard one. He sells out huge sports stadiums in Europe but barely fills clubs in the States. For 25 years he's toured and recorded with a big band that includes the likes of altoist Marshall Allen, tenor giant John Gilmore and vocalist June Tyson (shown above). His music stretches from gospel tent shows through immaculate Fletcher Henderson swing to beyond the avant-garde. He says he's from Saturn; don't laugh till you're sure. See and hear this man and his music. Now.

By Michael Shore

sion to the most extreme avant-gardism, is one of the great living libraries of that tradition we have, and if the Art Ensemble of Chicago had not come up with the rubric of *Great Black Music, Ancient to the Future*, Sun Ra might have had to come up with it himself. His own life embodies more of that tradition than most men's: he played with a host of forgotten territory, vaudeville and society bands from high school on. Later he went to Nashville, playing with more big bands, backing gospel singers on the radio, working with R&B singers like Wynonie Harris, teaching young rockers-to-be. Eventually he landed in Chicago and played piano for Fletcher Henderson's band in the late Forties. After Henderson left town, Ra stuck around, arranging for a number of bands until he got the Arkestra together and released his first album in 1956. Those albums show Sun Ra to be one of the handful of musicians of the period, like Mingus, bent on expanding the orchestral jazz vocabulary of the day. Sometimes lumberingly primitive, sometimes strikingly prophetic, he began carving out a body of work uniquely his own, assembling around him a group of musicians, many of whom remain with him to this day, and making of his mixed earthly and cosmic heritage a single body of lore. The myth had begun.

He told me tall tales of the prodigal feats of his youth: coming home on his tenth birthday to find a piano ("an arrival day gift from my mother") and playing it without ever having had a lesson; transcribing music off records to the amazement of his high school teachers, who then gave him their band and let him teach classes; writing arrangements for Henderson's band and for Coleman Hawkins (he jammed with Hawkins and Stuff Smith on Chicago's North Side) that they couldn't play — "It takes a special musician to play my music, you gotta have the right feeling for it." All in all, just another kid from outer space, like Clark Kent, growing up in twentieth century America.

Ra remembers listening to jazz — "something about it was just *it*" — all his life; being kicked out of social clubs as a child and listening in from outside the door; realizing his lifelong dream by playing with Henderson, always Ra's favorite. "He had a special kind of swing nobody else could capture, and he proved to be a lovely gentleman, utterly unselfish and pure in heart." To this day, some of Henderson's book remains in the Arkestra's, as does, in some form, every musical tradition he has passed through, heard, imagined or invented. For this reason if no other, his current use of funk rhythms seems particularly natural to him, and not at all some attempt to work a commonly profitable vein in a down market. If Sun Ra and George Clinton are out to lunch at the same eatery, it's not because they want to be seen there but because they have some of the same tastes.

Have a look at the Arkestra and see how much sense it makes. This January's appearance at the Bottom Line in New York is now on view: Ra plays a hyperspace riff on his Yamaha organ (it is adorned with images of hometown Saturn), twisting the full band into the involuted phantom chart of "Shadow World," composed by Ra in 1960. He takes an incendiary, acrobatic organ solo and then three baritone saxophonists rise from their chairs and advance on the audience, wailing in brain-frying atonal outrage. Ra joins in from the stage with some Saturn V liftoff sounds from his Mini-Moog. As the baritonists return to the stage past the whirling dancers, and the noise level begins to get unbearable, Ra cuts it off completely with a sudden wave of his arm. In the stunned, three-second silence that follows, tenor sax giant John Gilmore, Ra's main man and featured soloist for twenty-four years, taps his foot four times and — *jumping Jupiter* — we're in the home of Happy Feet as the band lights in to a rat-a-tat rendition of Fletcher Henderson's stomping swing-era chestnut, "Yeah Man." The crowd, till now bewitched, possibly bothered and definitely bewildered, moves on to bedazzled as Gilmore plays clarinet like Bechet serenading the bayou moon; reeds and brass shout hallelujah, Gilmore goes back to tenor, sounds like Coleman Hawkins and the whole thing stops on a dime.

Standing ovation. Ra rises from his organ (something from a roller-rink on Saturn's outer ring on this tune), smiles, takes a little showbiz bow and takes the band into another Henderson treasure, "Big John Special — (a model for the Basie riff system, which in fact Henderson *gave* to Basie when the latter first came east without his own book). Then Henderson's "Shanghai Shuffle" and "Christopher Columbus." Ellington's obscure "Slippery Horn" (a feature for Danny Thompson's

Sun Ra Discography

Take a deep breath because Ra does have at least 100 LPs out (mostly on his own independent Saturn Research label); we're going to cover a lot of ground as quickly as possible here. The first Sun Ra LPs to buy are the ones that offer the widest breadth of material, and they are: *Nothing Is* (ESP), a mid-60's live date with Ra's best rhythm section ever (Ronnie Boykins and Clifford Jarvis) and some of Gilmore's smokingest recorded solos; *Live at Montreux* (Inner City, 2 LPs), with the only known recorded Ra version of "A Train" and lots more celestial/terrestrial phenomena; *Space Is The Place* (Blue Thumb; out of print, worth your last few bucks if you see it), featuring the Venusian trance/funk of the title cut; *Unity* (Horo, 2 LPs), loaded with faithful-yet-mutated swing classics; there's also a heart-stopping, sanctified "My Favorite Things" and Ra's own phantasmagorical "Halloween"; and *Other Side of The Sun* (Sweet Earth) — cleanly produced, lovingly packaged, accessible.

To investigate Ra's early days, when the Arkestra moved fluidly and fluently between bop and swing (with a number of exotic stops in between), check *Sun Song* and *Sound of Joy* (Delmark), *Angels & Demons At Play, Jazz In Silhouette, Super-Sonic Sounds*, and *The Nubians of Plutonia* (all on Saturn, rereleased on Impulse). *The Magic City* (Saturn/Impulse) is indispensable for Ra's early 60's "interplanetary phase," with boldly scored, bleakly atmospheric free-/chamber musings that presaged the radical Black neoclassicism of the AACM; *Heliocentric Worlds Vols. 1 & 2* (ESP), *Cosmic Tones For Mental Therapy* and *Secrets of The Sun* (both Saturn) are also worthwhile. While Ra's legendary series of outer-limits Monday nights at Slug's in the late 60's were sadly never recorded, *It's After The End of The World* (MPS), from a 1970 German festival date, is a stunning document of this "intergalactic" period, which was freewheeling and scintillating, as well as occasionally harrowing. Ra's most supercolossal organ solo ever is on *Atlantis* (Saturn/Impulse), and for a strong dose of Ra sermonizing over hypnotic Afro-grooves and atonal caterwauls, try *The Antique Blacks* (Saturn), recorded live at the Great Pyramid in Egypt and imbued with suitable power. Ra's warm, aquatic fusion of funk, bop, swing and shuffle can be heard on *Lanquidity* (Philly Jazz), *Sleeping Beauty* and *On Jupiter* (both Saturn); the latter features his funk/dub/swing ass-kicker "UFO," which cuts the funk in slices juicy enough to do Dr. Funkenstein proud.

Outside the Arkestra: Ra's solo piano discs (two on IAI, and Saturn's *Monorails and Satellites*) are wonderful; no matter how hysterically heterogeneous his stylistic flights of fancy, he's always gracefully poised. There's a lovely piano trio, *God Is More Than Love Can Ever Be!* (Saturn), and a few quartets: *Other Voices, Other Blues* (Horo, 2 LPs) has heroically driving modalities; *New Steps* (Horo, 2 LPs) and *Omniverse* (Saturn) are more introverted and oblique; all provide rare and invaluable glimpses of Ra, Gilmore and Ray in cozier settings. Finally, there's a marvelous, deep dark duet with vibraphonist Walt Dickerson, *Visions* (SteepleChase). Most decent record stores should have a few of these; otherwise, write Saturn Research, Box 7124, Chicago, Illinois, 60607. Special thanks to Richard Wilkerson and the Rutgers College Institute of Jazz Studies, New Brunswick, N.J.

baritone sax) follows, then "Take The A Train," which hurtles by like . . . well, like a runaway subway headed for the moon. Gilmore's tenor solo leaps, his tone and attack by turns savage, cunning, lyrical, and exultant. Jelly Roll Morton's "King Porter Stomp" segues into hard-riffing versions of Cole Porter's "The Way You Look Tonight" and Kalmar-Ruby's "Three Little Words" — even this Tin Pan Alley fodder swings. Tadd Dameron's sweetly stepping "Lady Bird" is taken for a whirl, featuring Michael Ray's irrepressible trumpet. Ray's the kind

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

of player who raises the energy level in a room every time he puts his horn to his lips. The audience is full of smiling faces now. Eventually, Ra takes the Arkestra into a series of chants: he leads, they respond, the audience claps along. Ra then leads the band in a parade through the club, the antiphonal rhythms getting more and more powerful; people in the audience are singing along now. Little by little, spectators are joining the line snaking around the periphery of the room. I check my watch: 2:30 a.m. I write a few notes, and when I look back up about 40 or 50 audience members are in the line; most of the band has snuck out and are by the bar, watching as Ra — dressed in multi-hued, glitter-spangled capes, a robe decorated with images of Saturn, the sun, and shooting stars, a silver turban topped with a leopard-skin *yarmulke* crowning him (a radio antenna sticks up from the back of his head) — leads the call-and-response chant, which goes like this: *"Hit that jive Jack, Put it in your pocket till I get back, I'm going to outer space as fast as I can, I ain't got time to shake your hand."* The celebration ends with Sun Ra doing a can-can through the aisles, an audience member on each arm. He takes them to their seats, marches backstage, and it's over.

With those two chants, Ra *gives up the funk*, something I've never seen the Art Ensemble do. Sun Ra's got *soul*. That's where the P-Funk connection comes back in: like Clinton, Sun Ra endeavors to make myth real, open to all, universal. Sun Ra's raw material isn't just the history of jazz that's at his fingertips: there are also myth, magic, the numinous, and above all, *fun*, which comes out of the great folk lineage of travelling medicine tent shows, vaudeville and the circus. Ra places an unprecedented premium on audience involvement. Just in time for the jaded, post-everything, pre-Apocalypse 80's, Sun Ra give us something we can wonder at, and more music than you're likely to find at any other concert available to the paying public. Another relevant Ra quote: *"Where human eyes have never seen, Where human beings have never been, I build a world of abstract dreams, And I wait for you."*

The Arkestra is a singular unit. Its members may sport some outrageous garb, but it's no more colorful and surreal than the musical pallette they employ. Some critics have accused them of being "sloppy and unrehearsed," a judgment due more to the rhythm section, not as crackling tight as it ought to be these days, than to the band as a whole. The Arkestra generates the bustling collective roar that Ra wants it to, over a dense carpet of rhythm. Night after night, the Arkestra wends its way seamlessly through a vast and ever-changing repertoire without ever having music stands and only occasionally having to glance at the sheets stashed under the seats. The first time I spoke to Ra, after a particularly enchanting extravaganza at New York's tiny Squat Theatre last fall, I had to know: how do they do it? Without the music, and with only an occasional verbal cue, how do they know what comes next? "They don't *know*," he replies, a gleam in his eyes, "and in the future they'll know even less. They gotta use the other half of their brain, their intuition. They know what they gotta do: get on my spiritual level and get their cues that way. And if they concentratin' it sounds fine. If not . . ."

The band often doesn't know what's coming next, and, says Ra, "in the future they'll know even less. They've got to use the other half of their brain, their intuition. They know what they have to do: get on my spiritual level and get their cues that way."

Tenorist John Gilmore's been with Ra for 20 years: "Ra's a master, man. The whole time I've been with him there's never been a dull moment, just constant creation, challenge and joy."

But you rehearse the band, right? "Of course. Sometimes for 12 or 14 hours a day, straight through. Like, when we first started doing "Yeah Man," I *hadda* rehearse 'em on that. And then I didn't call the tune until almost a year later. They hadda be *there* when I called it. I like 'em to play it from *memory* rather than from music right in front of 'em; that way they gotta rely more on their feelings, their intuition. They gotta work harder, put more of themselves into it. That way, even the written, arranged ensembles sound like solos. That way, the band never sounds complacent. Something that's *perfect* is something that's *finished*, and if it sounds finished, it doesn't have any spontaneity left, and then it isn't jazz. That's how I keep that feeling of swing in there — the true feeling of jazz." Amazing indeed: the band plays literally all "head" charts, no doubt ensuring their rough-hewn, only-as-tight-as-it-needs-to-be brand of swing. Sun Ra accents the *spirit*, not the letter, of swing law. True, this uniquely disciplined, intuitive arranging technique means that if the band's not on, they *can* sound sloppy; but as their gigs in New York have taken on a gratifying frequency, they've become tight enough to please all but the most determinedly joyless, knee-jerk academics in the house.

For further corroboration, I spoke with John Gilmore. "Yeah, it's all true," the lanky tenorist laughed, "and that's why a lot of cats are always leaving the band. They just can't cut Ra's methods. Everyone thinks it's a joke, but it's so serious. Ra's a master, man, you learn so much from him every minute he's around. That's why I'll never leave him. The whole time I been with him there's never been a dull moment, just constant creation, challenge and joy. And it's always a gas, you know?" Aside from Gilmore and Ray, other longtime treasures in the trove include Marshall Allen, whose alto sax convulsions are a searing, bluesy testimony; June Tyson, who full-bodied voice coos and caresses; James Jackson, with his juju tattoos on the Ancient Egyptian Infinity Drum (an enormous log with hieroglyphic inscriptions) and his bassoon, flute and oboe; and of course Ra himself. He is simply untouchable on organ, whether it's Jimmy-Smith-on-acid or free-form fire and brimstone. On piano, he is an audacious, sometimes mischievous stylist. For example, he'll take "Over the Rainbow" (doubtless

continued on page 66

JANE WINSOR

THE BEAR

CHAPTER IV

By Rafi Zabor

We first met the Bear in chapter one, confined to a mute and inglorious public life of street dancing, and communicating only with his friend Jones. Then he picked up his alto, put on a raincoat and jammed at the Tin Palace with Lester Bowie and Steve McCall. After picking up a review in the papers and breaking with the street act once and for all, he has finally decided to go public as a musician.

By the time the tour got under way the worst of the summer heat was gone, and that first night autumn blew in on a black wind down Fifth Avenue, where the Bear and his band unpacked their gear from a dark green van, menaced by flying newspaper and wind-driven ash. Eager to be off the street as quickly as possible, the Bear picked up both halves of the Fender Rhodes piano like two valises and hurried them into Beefsteak Charlie's, then disappeared into a dark, highbacked booth while Jones and the rhythm section rigged up a curtain to cover the show window at the front of the club. The Bear felt ready to deal with an audience but he did not want to be observed from the street. Everyone was telling the Bear to relax but he was still worried about the police.

Finished with the curtain, Jones joined him in the booth while the rhythm section set up their axes. A waitress came by and Jones ordered two cognacs.

"Naw," said the Bear to the waitress, "make mine draft beer. Whatever import you've got."

"Sure," said the waitress, smiling at him and trying to get a better look under his hat.

Making an effort to be sociable, the Bear took it off, ruffled the fur on top of his head and smiled up at her. "Hi," he said. "You've heard about me all week and you wanted to see if it was true, right?"

"Right," she said.

"It's true," he said, "and I've changed my mind, I'll take the cognac. Make it a Remy and give me the beer as a chaser. But I need a very big snifter." Making another effort, he patted his snout and smiled again. "Cold nose, warm heart," he added.

"Jesus, Jones," said the Bear when she had gone away, "how many people am I gonna have to deal with tonight? I'm not used to this."

"That's what I like about you," Jones told him, "you're not too tough to be shy."

The bear curled a lip at him, disclosing sharp canines and incisors. "And where did they get all this turn-of-the-century crap?" he complained, gesturing at the ornamental woodwork, fake studded leather cushions, wrought-iron gaslamps and dim period paintings. "What am I supposed to do, play cakewalks to match? Did we come to the right place?"

"Restaurant consciousness is heavily into reproductions these days, I can't help that," said Jones. "I'm glad you're in such a good mood." He craned his head momentarily out of the booth. "Cummins just came in."

"Thank God for that," the Bear said.

Bob Cummins slid into the booth alongside Jones. "Hi fellas," he said.

"Hiya Bob," said the Bear. He liked Cummins, and much to his surprise had trusted the man immediately upon meeting him the week before. Cummins was a gentle-featured man around forty, face framed in curly brown hair going grey and a beard. He owned India Navigation, for which record company the Bear was supposed to record later in the tour.

"How's it going?" Cummins asked him.

"Oh great," said the Bear. "I feel like bolting out of my seat and ditching my axe in a sewer but otherwise everything's just peachy. Cummins," he said more seriously, "are you sure that's the best rhythm section we could get? They've been busting my ass in rehearsal, they hardly talked to me on the way over here, plus they don't play that good. What's going on here anyway?"

"They're young and nervous," Cummins lied.

"And I'm big and hairy. So what?"

Cummins considered for a moment, then went on. "First of all the Musician's Union's heard about you and they don't like it. They've yelled at a lot of people, asked a lot of questions and filed suit against Circus Performers International, who have't got the slightest idea what they're talking about."

"And," the Bear prompted, sensing Cummins' unwillingness to go on.

"And there's some flack around town among musicians about you being a novelty act and a ripoff, and there are a few people I called that don't want to work with you."

"Oh," said the Bear. "That's swell. That's great. Makes me feel really good to be here. I enjoy feeling guilty. What would I do all day without guilt, I don't like what they have on TV. So I'm taking bread out of people's mouths, is that it?"

"You've got to understand," Cummins explained, "that, aside from not knowing you or having heard you, most of these musicians lead a very marginal kind of existence and make a very marginal kind of living."

"I *know* about marginal living, Bob," the Bear said in a surly voice. "What about our friends?"

"They're all on tour with their regular bands and we can't afford Holland and DeJohnette."

"Are you still my buddy?" the Bear wondered. "Do you still want to record me?"

"I'll be happy to have you in the catalogue, Bear. I like your work and you might just sell enough records to get me out of

my law practice and into the record business full time."

"Us novelty acts tries real hard," the Bear assured him.

"You know, somebody from Warner Brothers called me yesterday and wanted to know if you were for real. If you wanted to make some money you could probably work something out with them."

The Bear looked levelly across the table at Cummins. "I want to be a musician, not a famous freak of nature. That's why I'm dealing with you."

"I didn't mean to offend," Cummins said.

The waitress brought the drinks and the Bear raised his glass. "On the other hand, do you think they'd let me record with Yosemite Sam?"

The first set, as the Bear would later maintain, was an irremediable disaster, however much Cummins and Jones would assure him that he had turned it around. It had begun with the Bear standing in front of the quarter-full house (votive candles in colored glass and plastic fishnets on every table), stomping off "Straight No Chaser" and the band coming in behind him at a markedly slower pace. Then, because he had no experience of playing lounges, he ran into the acoustic double bind of all stageless rooms: he could hear either the rhythm section or himself, but never both at once. To top it off, his employees were acting up on him again. The drummer, a hotshot kid with Turkish cymbals hung so high he could hardly reach them, started cracking out loud, irrelevant breaks and figures, interrupting the Bear virtually every time he tried to get something more than just another phrase off the ground. The pianist kicked in a little later with some intrusive and inappropriate chording and opened three consecutive choruses with fake modulations that made it look as if the Bear had landed himself in the wrong key. The bassist behaved, but he wasn't that good to begin with. The Bear looked back and snarled fiercely over his shoulder at them; the drummer paled and dropped a couple of beats, the pianist laid out and looked away. Thanks a lot, the Bear thought. I need you guys like another fur coat.

What galled him most was that he played so much better than they did. It wasn't as if they were razzing an incompetent. Looking out at the unimpressed house and remembering the Kansas City story about a contemptuous Jo Jones throwing his cymbal at the feet of the teenage Charlie Parker, the Bear decided almost wearily to do what he had done in rehearsal and try to turn the show around. Here we go gentlemen. This way out.

First thing he did was start dismantling the tune. He played a series of violent lower-register honks, then some angry, disordered runs as fast as he possibly could. There went the tempo: the rhythm section was forced to break ranks and play free. The time splintered like boxwood and the home key collided smartly with two or three others, motivic fragments flying off at the edges like (it occured to him) electrons. Gone fission, he thought. Divide and conquer. With the rhythm section cut out from under him, he started slow, then began a long deliberate accelerando that they had to pick up on or look foolish, and took it up to a tempo they could not manage in style. He played a few furious choruses with more fire than they could muster, then turned around and played a vile twelve bars straight at the band. He lowered his sax, showed his teeth and walked off the stand. The audience applauded as if it had been wonderful. The rhythm section granted him a wary and uninspired professionalism for the remainder of the set.

"I don't understand," he complained to Cummins and Jones afterwards in the booth. "I've tried to talk with them, be a buddy and like that, but it's always the same. Bob, you gotta help me out, you've gotta find me some other people to play with. Razzing the novice may be the oldest ritual in the book but I've had it with these guys, it's enough."

"I'll see what I can do," Cummins promised.

"I mean how many of these tours do you think I'm gonna do? This is it and then I vanish," the Bear continued, then noticed that there was a woman standing beside the booth, waiting for a break in the conversation. "Excuse me?" he asked her.

"*Sybil*," Cummins greeted her, half rising. "Join us. Sit down."

The only empty seat was the one next to the Bear and Sybil looked dubious. "You're perfectly safe," he assured her. "Twas beauty killed the Beast."

She sat down next to him, shook his paw, smiled and made shaky but deliberate eye contact. "I'm Sybil Bailey," she introduced herself. "Bob's law partner."

"Yes I've heard of you," said the Bear, and sized her up as attractive, intelligent and very frightened. "Hello."

She had dark hair, regular features, a clear unworried forehead and greenish eyes. She looked across the table and said, "Hi Ray."

Ray? Who's Ray? the Bear almost asked aloud, but then remembered that it was Jones' first name.

Jones and Sybil touched hands across the table and the Bear felt a stab of his own loneliness. Jones had been telling him about Sybil, how happy he was to have met her, how maybe they were going to get something going ... The Bear was brushed, then saturated by the memory of a slender woman with a cameo face, large eyes into which, it seemed, he was always falling, and long wheat-colored hair. Iris had been a biochemist friend of Jones' left him from his college days, and after the bear he had won in a card game began talking a blue streak and developing a musical gift of surprising proportions, Jones called her in to test the animal. Astonishment loves company even more than misery, and craves lots of reassurance.

Jones still had some of the family money then, and lived in a capacious East Side apartment. Iris came there, listened to the Bear's family lore and over the weeks ran what tests she could on him without taking him to the lab — EKG, cell samples, blood, urine, semen (the Bear had refused to masturbate but he did allow the leavings of a wet dream to be placed upon a slide). Soon Iris was hanging out at the apartment, staying for dinner and sitting up talking with the Bear late into the night, the radio on, the ashtray filling and Jones trying to sleep in the next room, bothered by the sound of their laughter. What had emerged from the inquiry was not a pat quotidian answer to explain the Bear away but an intimacy that surprised the Bear and Iris both, and as it deepened, as the correspondences between them multiplied and wove them closer to each other, they found that the obvious next step in their union was one they were too shocked or surprised to take. Iris in particular was pained and confused — while she was not *attracted* to the Bear, thank God, she had fallen in love with him and didn't know what to do about it — and the Bear, with a delicacy of feeling left him from cubhood, would have done anything, been anyone, to take away her discomfort. He began suggesting that she stay away from him, not come to see him again, go away more or less forever. They were allowed their season of bewilderment and then, without understanding exactly how or why, they were separated from each other, like swimmers in opposing and indifferent currents, goodbye. Although since then the Bear had slept with three she-bears (one in the woods and two rented from the circus for a night) and too many human prostitutes, and although between him and Iris there had been everything but, finally, physical union, she remained the only woman he had ever loved. That was the last stone laid on his heart and the sharp final edge whetted on the grudge he held against the world: he had never been able to complete the circuit of his love. Unused and suppressed for so long, that capacity for love was not what it had been. Weaker certainly. Grown morbid like as not. Iris was receding from him, not only into the past but into a world of sensibility he could hardly even visit anymore. What he had left was the insufficient substitute of art. The last he had heard of Iris, she had gotten married, had two kids and moved to Kansas City.

Someone had spoken to him. "What?" the Bear said, and collected himself back from memory and regret to find himself still at the table and still the only bear in the house. He tried to feel happy for Jones' good fortune, but when he went back

onstand for the next set all he wanted to play were ballads, and his beloved saxophone seemed to him the cruel and sinister instrument of his own undoing. *Vita brevis*, he thought, *ars nada, nada, nada.*

A few days later the Bear came into some good fortune of his own. Billy Hart, who had recently left his long stay with Stan Getz, was picking up every available gig and record date to keep his family afloat now that he was off a steady salary. He had agreed, Cummins told the Bear on the phone, to do the bulk of the Bear's clubdates and be on hand for the recording sessions. In addition, he would bring the rest of a rhythm section with him — Scott Lee on bass and Armen Donelian on piano — and although a hefty chunk of the Bear's tour bread would go to pay for them he was ready to part with it. The first night he played with them he felt sure that the expenditure was more than justified. Ideas surprised him coming out of his horn, he began again to touch on the deeper pleasures of playing and felt the stirring of fresh creativity, the uncoiling of new energy in his belly, chest and limbs.

They did a round of unadvertised gigs in the city, letting enough word of mouth go out to half-fill the nightclubs. The Bear thought himself an inconsistent player, but Hart and the rest of the section kept assuring him that he was doing fine. They took a weekend trip in two rented vans to play New Haven and Boston. The Bear enjoyed the Boston gig more than any other he had played so far. It was at a place called Michael's, near the conservatories and Symphony Hall, and he found the bandstand ringed by bright and eager faces turned upwards towards him, smiling and nodding yes while he played. They had come in fair numbers to hear the advertised rhythm section, but after the first set they must have telephoned their friends: by eleven thirty the place was full; there were even some people sitting crosslegged on the dusty wooden floor around the bandstand.

Between sets he was besieged by questions — up until now he had hidden himself in the backs of clubs, in booths and dark corners, but in Michael's there was no room. They asked him not about what was a bear doing playing alto but where did he pick this or that lick up, did he do deep-breathing exercises and if so what were they, what kind of reed did he use, what did he think of Anthony Braxton and had he done anything special to adapt his mouthpiece. The Bear was unused to coping with so much acceptance and felt desperately awkward, bulky and out of place. He tried to be friendly, but seldom had he been so aware of his own physical size: his fugitive impulse to run for the door made him realize that acting it out would injure a couple of dozen friendlies and break a lot of chairs.

On the late ride back to New York, he sat up in the front seat of the van occasionally woofing out the window like a St. Bernard at the passing cars. Jones, who had accepted gift cigarettes at Michael's by the handful, giggled to himself and drove more unpredictably that usual. "Who would have believed it, man," he said finally, at about 4 A.M., when the highway traffic had virtually disappeared, "a few months ago that it would come to this."

"Uh huh," said the Bear, dully.

"You having trouble coping?" Jones asked him.

"I don't feel with it all the time. It's getting better but sometimes I feel seriously out of phase."

"Jesus, Bear. You ought to get stoned more."

"I don't like smoke," the Bear told him.

Jones waved his arms for a moment before resuming his grip on the wheel. "This is the stuff of legend we're doing here, riding out of the night in vans and playing music at unannounced gigs in dark and midnight America. You ought to be participating, Bear. It's all about *you*. This is what you *wanted*."

"You're probably right," the Bear admitted. "I'm just slow to adjust. It's been a big change very fast."

"I wonder if the Indians in these parts had a myth about Participating Bear, the van-riding saxophonist of the American dream ... The audience is just starting to latch onto you, you know. I sense a groundswell out there. I intuit recognitions ... Jazz people, they're such outsiders you're the kind of mythology they can relate to. You're a dream figure, you're their little secret. I think they're beginning to catch on."

"That's not exactly what I had in mind," said the Bear. "All I wanted was to play some music and go home. ... Maybe I'm really best as a contemplative. you know? Sitting back from it all and , um, dreaming about it."

"We're all contemplatives," Jones assured him, "only we found out we couldn't pay the bills. So you want to go back to the apartment and frustration and the act? You amaze me, you really do. Nostalgia for hell on earth."

"I know," said the Bear. "I'm a crank and a complainer. I get everything I've wanted handed to me on a platter and all I do is criticize the silver plating. I'm a schmuck."

"You're doing fine," said Jones.

"That's what everybody tells me," said the Bear, "but I dunno. I mean, is this what I really wanted? I don't recognize it at all."

"Cummins wants to record as soon as possible. He wants to try live two nights next week and if that doesn't work out he's got the studio on tap. I already know you're too good for this world, Bear. What is it now, you're too good for art?"

"How come," the Bear asked Jones, "it used to be that whatever was wrong with my life was the world's fault and now it's apparently mine?"

"Parallax," said Jones. 'You're becoming a star."

The Bear leaned forward into the van's front window and looked up, squinting, at the sky. "The Great Bear," he said. "Look."

"Can you see it?" Jones asked him.

"Dim the dashboard lights."

"How about this ...." Jones switched off the headlights. The highway appeared before them, pearled by the quarter moon, and then, when their eyes had adjusted, the massive, patient night emerged, high and filled with stars.

"Wow," said the Bear.

"There without you all the time, world without end." Jones switched the headlights back on.

The Bear settled back into his seat and closed his eyes, trying to feel, in the rushing forward motion of his life, the stars that framed his bones, and in his own large body the true geography of light, the larger peace he knew he lived in but could not entirely find. Why did it have to be such a damn guessing game, he asked himself. Why do we walk in such darkness when the truth is right there, when we're made of it? He failed, for the moment, to understand why ignorance should exist at all, why there should not be only complete realization, perfect peace. He recalled the taste of his timeless self from his handful of meetings with it and savored its repose on the other side of strife, beyond the wheel of life and death. O freedom over me, he thought. Before I'll be a slave I'll be buried in my grave, and go home to my Lord and be free. "I've been thinking about archetypes," he confessed to Jones, by way of opening up a conversation.

"Great," Jones replied. "Have a ball but don't get spacey. While you were checking out Ursa Major I saw Orion's Belt. One big fucking hunter, man. Keep one eye on your archetype and the other on your ass."

The Bear pondered a moment. "Point taken," he said.

Whatever Jones' conceptual handle on the Way of Heaven, the Bear decided that the man was right about the way the tour was working out. Two nights later at Sweet Basil (the curtain pressed back into service for the front window of this converted drugstore), on the last clubdate before two nights of live recording at the Tin Palace, he looked out at the audience over the top of an original blues and noticed fewer sensation-seekers in the house and more real listeners. There were even a couple of people, journalists probably, taking notes while he played (though he was obscurely bothered by the plainness of their shoes). It was a shame he felt so unready to record. Not that he was playing badly or that the music wasn't working out,

continued on page 78

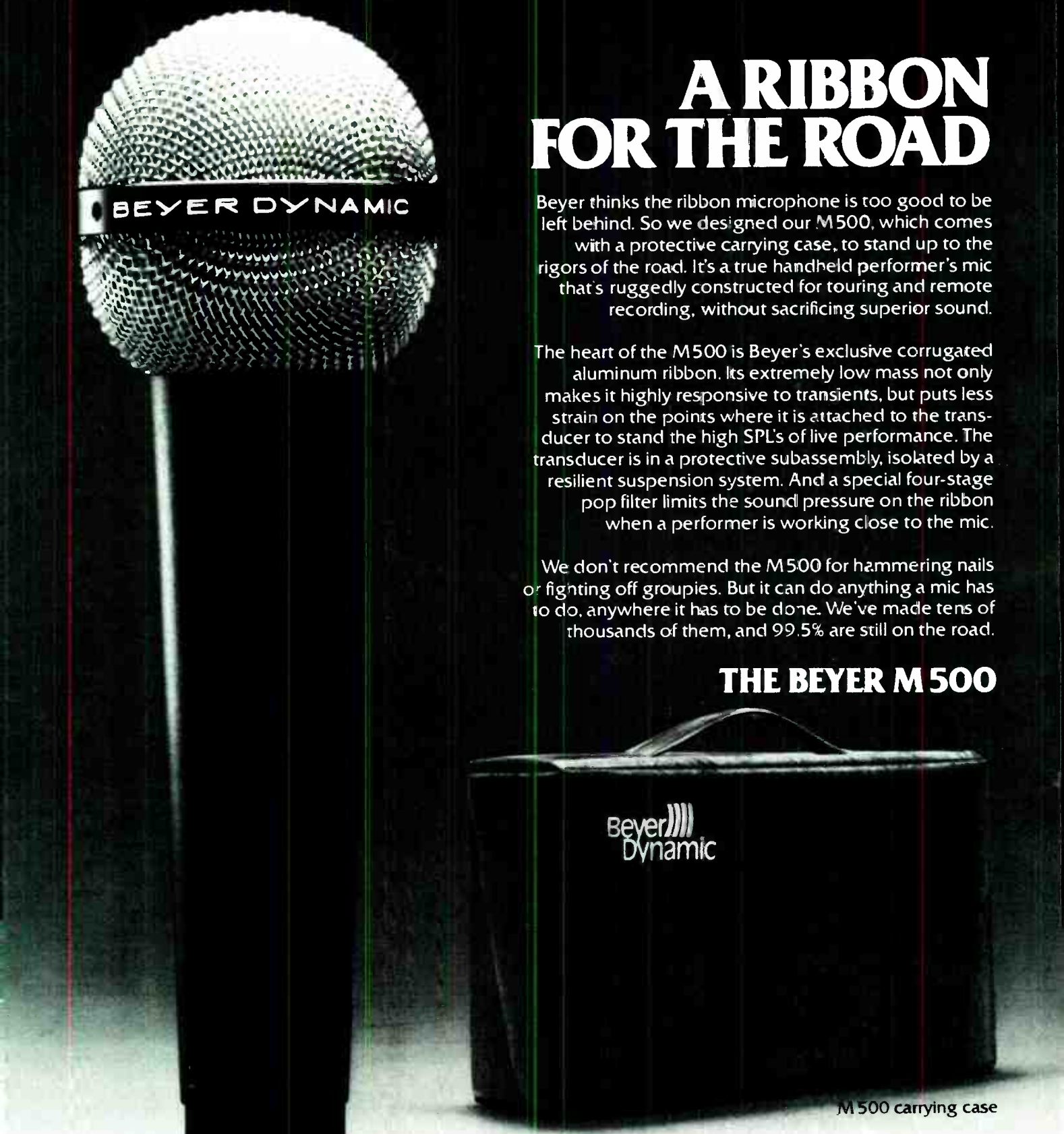
A RIBBON FOR THE ROAD

Beyer thinks the ribbon microphone is too good to be left behind. So we designed our M500, which comes with a protective carrying case, to stand up to the rigors of the road. It's a true handheld performer's mic that's ruggedly constructed for touring and remote recording, without sacrificing superior sound.

The heart of the M500 is Beyer's exclusive corrugated aluminum ribbon. Its extremely low mass not only makes it highly responsive to transients, but puts less strain on the points where it is attached to the transducer to stand the high SPL's of live performance. The transducer is in a protective subassembly, isolated by a resilient suspension system. And a special four-stage pop filter limits the sound pressure on the ribbon when a performer is working close to the mic.

We don't recommend the M500 for hammering nails or fighting off groupies. But it can do anything a mic has to do, anywhere it has to be done. We've made tens of thousands of them, and 99.5% are still on the road.

THE BEYER M500



M500 carrying case

Beyer Dynamic

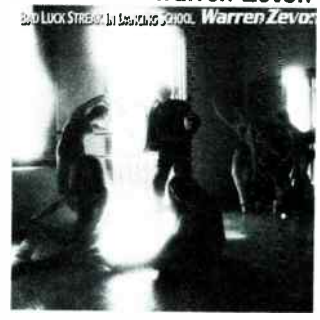
BURNS AUDIOTRONICS, INC.
5-05 Burns Avenue, Hicksville, NY 11801 • (516) 935-8000
In Canada, H. Roy Gray, Ltd.

RECORD REVIEWS

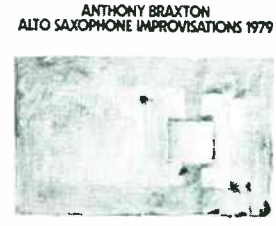
The Clash

Ornette Coleman

Warren Zevon



Anthony Braxton



The Clash

London Calling, Epic 36328.

Critics sometimes exhibit a disturbing tendency to reserve their highest accolades for music that is more interesting to write about than listen to. We figure our parents didn't send us to good schools for nothing — we've spent years honing and refining our intellects into fine-tuned analytical devices suited to dissecting conceptual and structural puzzles. The trouble with this approach is that the true nature of music — its essence — does not yield itself to mental analysis. For this, other more comprehensive perceptions must be engaged — perceptions that are active in all of us but which rarely attain a high degree of refinement in our culture. The present movement among critics to canonize the Clash seems symptomatic; here's a group that's turned out two albums of politically commited three chord rock — impressive in its intensity, yet musically rather uninspired. The vocals are often shrill and strident, the melodies thin and uncontoured, the playing generally undistinguished. In short, there's none of the indispensable magic rock has always dared us to believe in. (This has nothing to do with the complexity of the music; the Sex Pistols, Dylan, and the Who all managed to break through to a higher plateau of creativity with only three chords.)

What the Clash do have to offer is a refreshingly straightforward and comprehensive *Weltanschauung* — a witheringly intense vision of the socio-political verities of our time that strikes a chord in those of us weaned on the fervent activism of the 60's; as critic Robert Christgau reportedly noted, it's not so much our youth as our rebellion that we wish to cling to. Even on this level their work suffers in comparison to the Olympians with whom they're often compared. Their terse social commentaries are more on the order of observations than revelations — acerbic polemics that lack the ironic self awareness of Johnny Rotten, or the shamanistic illuminations of mid-period Dylan. They tend to externalize and thereby artificially isolate themselves from the evils they perceive, unlike artists of more substantial creative vision and power whose own souls become the crucibles in which the essential forces of good and evil, growth and decay, truth and falsehood struggle and are transformed. To paraphrase W.B. Yeats: out of arguments with others we make rhetoric — out of the arguments with ourselves, poetry. If there's one thing we all should have learned by now, it's that solving the problems of our institutions and relationships necessitates that we first tackle the flaws in human nature that cause these social ills.

This brings us to *London Calling* — a significant evolutionary step for the Clash in terms of both musical sophisitication and philosophical maturity. The songs, once little more than jerrybuilt vehicles for righteous indignation and frustration, have become art forms in their own right that boast distinctive, engaging melodies and relatively sophisticated chord structures. In addition, their world view has expanded and matured to the extent of offering some positive solutions to the burning dilemmas so graphically articulated in their work to date — solutions that, like the Taoist sexual outlook advocated in "Lover's Rock," recognize the necessity of perfecting the microcosm in order to transform the macrocosm. As constructive (and instructive) as all this is, it still lacks the power of great art to transcend and illuminate. That's a road the Clash have yet to travel: a mythic route that reportedly runs under the Berlin Wall and eventually peters out somewhere in the swamps of Jersey. Both Highway 61 and Coastal Route 9 intersect it, but there's no point trying to find it on a map. You've got to learn the directions by heart. — *Vic Garbarini*

Ornette Coleman/Charlie Haden

Soapsuds, Soapsuds, Artists House AH 6 **James Blood (Ulmer)**

Tales of Captain Black, Artists House AH 7

Charlie Haden's duet recordings for Horizon (now being cut out of the catalogue, so grab them fast if you haven't already) were much appreciated but left me hungry for more Coleman-Haden communions. *Soapsuds* does more than merely quench my appetite: it is clearly one of Ornette Coleman's very best recordings, and that's saying a lot. Back on tenor saxophone for the first time on record since 1961's *Ornette on Tour*, Coleman brings forth a full, clear and wholly distinctive sound on the instrument, capturing a warm and tender earthiness not always present in his alto work. Haden is, as usual for this remarkably consistent musician, a master of rich, expressive, lyrical bass playing, and it is fascinating to hear how quickly and orchestrally he adapts his lines to Coleman's frequent and unpredictable harmonic divagations. Haden has effortlessly dominated every other duet partner he's played with on record, but Coleman's work is so emotionally direct that he makes the date his own, using small variations of tempo and pitch to striking expressive effect. He is,

simply, a master musician, whose every note can be something to treasure. The compositions — almost ballads, in the tradition of "Lonely Woman" — are stunning in their lyric artistry and developmental logic, ideal vehicles for the duo's thematic improvisations, free tempo changes and Coleman's abstract blues sensibility. The "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" theme comes off without being overtly sardonic, and Haden's introspective "Human Being" is a pensive beauty with the stature of his earlier "Song for Che." Even Coleman's trumpet work on "Some Day" is stronger than usual.

Captain Black, a collaboration between Coleman and his former student James Blood Ulmer, is similar in concept to Coleman's electric band, Prime Time: a funky backbone over which layers of polyrhythm, counterpoint and avant-garde improvisations are developed. Each tune has been kept from exceeding five minutes but there are no hit singles here. The album constitutes a creative answer to the fusion dilemma, and despite a bizarre mix that consigns Ornette Coleman's alto to the background and Denardo Coleman's eccentric drumming to the fore, it might still manage to reach a relatively large audience under the brave new banner of Punk Jazz. Ulmer has a unique, gritty, and exciting guitar conception, but on this album his complex harmolodic compositions come off even better. Some of them come at you like trains in the night; others hover like the moon over the city: strong stuff. Coleman's alto is hot and impassioned when you can hear it, Jamaladeen Tacuma has come up with a fascinating adaptation of Coleman's alto style for the electric bass, but it is Denardo Coleman's drumming that you hear most clearly of all, and that is not all to the good. His style is either the result of a completely new perspective or he is simply not cutting it. You decide. Fortunately, Tacuma's thrusting, melodic basslines keep the rhythm powerful and alive. To these ears, this phase of Coleman's music tends to obscure some of the subtleties of his art, substituting raw power for detail and finesse. So, if you disliked *Dancing in Your Head*, don't touch *Captain Black*. And if you live and breathe, don't miss *Soapsuds, Soapsuds*. — *Cliff Tinder*

Warren Zevon
Bad Luck Streak In Dancing School, Asylum.

Linda Ronstadt
Mad Love, Asylum.

The English novelist Arnold Bennett, describing the craft of writing, noted that the artist should cherish the faculty of "seeing like a baby or a lunatic ... Crudely, simply, artlessly ..." Warren Zevon, whose songs are composed as much at the Smith-Corona as they are at the Steinway, observes life with the detachment of the lunatic and the confusion of the infant. His music breathes anomaly — life on the edge as lived by those in the middle. Each of his taut, imaginal tunes blurs the line between pragmatism and the melodrama of violence while etching an almost jolly portrait of incontinence and estrangement.

The fanciful lovers, dreamers and night-stalkers of this new album, the eagerly-awaited followup to 1978's *Excitable Boy*, are caught in a perennial Catch-22: they survive by competing, but self-destruct by competing too well. Bill Lee, the loose-lipped major league pitcher and Zevon crony, serves as the apple-pie metaphor. In a song titled simply "Bill Lee," the first-person narrator explains, "You're supposed to sit on your ass and nod at stupid things/Man, that's hard to do/and if you don't, they'll screw you." Thus, he who plays to win becomes an outcast, whether he plays major league baseball, fights Commies in Nicaragua ("Jungle Work"), lives in a cage ("Gorilla, You're A Desperado") or prowls the streets for fresh thrills ("Wild Age"). In "Jeannie Needs A Shooter," co-written by Bruce Springsteen, the protagonist yearns for a damsel who sets his veins on fire. Riding to an assignation, he is shot down from behind by her father. He lies there, unknowing, dazed, like a character out of James Cain. Or, as Archie Bunker said, every time the world changes, you get another kick in the ass.

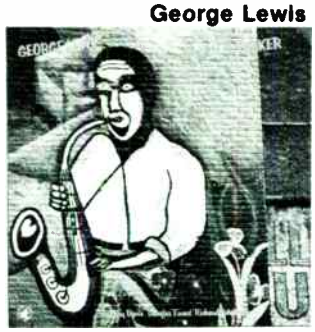
Zevon's burly but limited baritone, and the rock-ribbed rhythm section (bassist Lee Sklar and drummer Rick Marotta) perfectly delineate the territory of this American *guignol*. The band, featuring Joe Walsh and Waddy Wachtel on guitars, moves gracefully from Sousaphonic blare ("Jungle Work"), through ersatz Beach Boys ("A Certain Girl") to back-lot western ("Jeannie"). Harmonists Linda Ronstadt, Glenn Frey. Don Henley and J.D. Souther return for another swig of the wine of disillustionment, but *Bad Luck Streak* is strictly Zevon's nightmare: life as a crooked poker game. The desperado gorilla in the song finds himself "shackled to a platinum chain." I guess there s no Catch-22 like your own.

Linda Ronstadt has also released a new album. It's called *Mad Love* because that's one of the songs on it. The album has a little red-white-and-blue rock & roll and some stabs at the new wave, but it is an undistinguished and perfunctory effort.

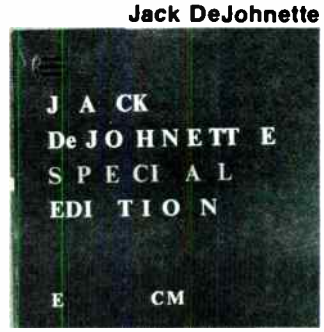
Ronstadt's true gifts — her ability to fuse pop and country elements and her sparkling soprano — are not sufficient to carry the weight of her claim to rock royalty. The harder-edged songs invariably come off the worst. Ray Conniff could not have given less punch to Elvis Costello's "Girl Talk." Whereas Warren Zevon worked his way up from Boone's Farm commercials, Linda Ronstadt appears to be headed for Madison Avenue. Bye for now, kid. — *Mark Mehler*

Donna Summer

George Lewis



Jack DeJohnette



Linda Ronstadt

Elvis Costello
Get Happy, Columbia JC 36347.

Get Happy is Elvis Costello's fourth record and, like each of his albums since the initial *My Aim is True*, it sounds like a distinct departure from its predecessors. Produced in Holland by long-time collaborator Nick Lowe, *Get Happy* crams ten songs onto each side and, on the first few hearings at least, they seem more or less indistinguishable from one another, none much longer than three minutes, most well under. The flat, mono-like 60's effects both distance and frustrate the listener. You have to strain to catch Costello's lyrics, garbled and spat out as usual, but the album does reward devoted listening: gradually organ riffs, then words, whole phrases and finally entire songs will begin to take shape for you.

Costello is once again exploring the checks and bounces of human relationships — you must sacrifice something to get something, and every action has its reaction. This theme runs throughout the album as Elvis compares love to, variously, a car, a hi-fi, standing up, cashing a check, and used motel matches. His

punning and ironic wordplay is marvelous, delineating a soul caught in basic human, emotional conflicts, with humor and often with stunning metaphorical conceit.

The seemingly one-dimensional production gradually blossoms, with Steve Naive's keyboards creating a distinct atmosphere for each tune. Whether it's Tamla-inspired piano runs, roller-rink organ or honking mid-60's America garageband Farfisa, Naive's work is a touchstone for the listener even when the rest of the song doesn't quite kick in . . . which doesn't happen too often on this finally prodigious album. Despite the few fragments that haven't quite coalesced, for this listener, into full-blown tunes, and the 60's one-upsmanship and nostalgia implicit in much of the production, *Get Happy* is, along with Pil's *Metal Box* and the Clash's *London Calling* (with apologies to Vic Garbarini), the best rock 'n' roll this young decade has yet offered, and a clean sweep for the English. — *Roy Trakin*

ANTHONY BRAXTON

Alto Saxophone Improvisations 1979, Arista A2L 8602.

Bravo to Braxton, who demonstrates real growth in his mastery of the unaccompanied solo format in this two-record set. While this collection may not prove to be Braxton's last recorded statement from the Seventies (the sessions here were held in November '78 and July '79), it is only fitting that, at the decade's close, one of the period's most ubiquitous musicians has released such a successful and wholly personal album.

My last in-person encounter with Braxton occurred just over a year ago, in two nights of solo alto playing in a club. At the time, I sensed a greater warmth and more natural sense of progression in Braxton's unaccompanied performances; part of this resulted from incorporating standard material amidst his own compositions, while I also guessed that the intimate performing experience was crucial. Well, there are conventional "tunes" in this collection — three of the 13 tracks — but in place of spotlights and cramped tables we have graphic illustrations and lengthy stretches of Braxtonian prose. Still, the music works.

"Red Top," "Along Came Betty" and "Giant Steps" are the familiar pieces here, and though Braxton does not rigidly adhere to the harmonic structures he succeeds admirably in retaining the essence of the material. "Red Top" is the most remarkable in this regard, an elegant and totally idiomatic statement from a player who is hardly known for his blues sensitivity.

The originals are performed with an assurance that underscores Braxton's familiarity with unaccompanied performance. The album is subtitled *Language Music 1967*, a reference, no doubt, to the point at which he began developing the solo mode that he describes at great length in typically lugubrious prose. (The exegesis on "conceptual grafting" in the liner notes is far more rambling and unnecessarily convoluted than the performances.) Braxton has chosen to explore a variety of primary musical concepts (slap tonguing, staccato, whole tone scales, intervallic shifts, etc.) as a basis for building a performance, rather than more traditional melodies. Secondary controls such as tempo, volume and varied phrase patterns allow each core idea to be extended and developed; in this regard Braxton's growing command of dynamics is especially valuable.

An unprecedented degree of sensitivity informs these potentially dry and theoretical concepts. Each piece develops naturally, with little obvious attention to pre-established rules. While the music is undeniably ordered, and a certain degree of rigidity remains (why are so many of the originals developed in *three* sections?), the new humanism heard in Braxton's alto enlivens the structures. You can even make out a person in Bonnie Weltin's cover painting (unlike the usual abstracts that grace Braxton's albums) — a perfectly complementary touch for the music inside. — *Bob Blumenthal*

Arthur Blythe

In the Tradition, Columbia JC 36300

George Lewis

Homage to Charles Parker, Black Saint 0029

Don't let the treble-happy mix spoil Blythe's marvelous record for you. Here's an owner's manual: first, cut the

Four ways to get someone in the music business to listen to your song.

The Sure Way is the 1980 American Song Festival®

Instead of going to ridiculous lengths to get a music business heavy to hear your songs, enter them in our Seventh Annual Songwriting Competition. We'll GUARANTEE each song will be heard by a MINIMUM OF THREE MUSIC PROS...publishers, producers, music executives, recording artists...THE PEOPLE YOU WANT LISTENING TO YOUR SONGS!

All you need is a song. You don't have to be able to write out the music, just make a simple home demo. There are categories for all types of music and amateurs NEVER compete with professionals. PLUS, YOU RETAIN ALL RIGHTS TO YOUR SONGS!

In our first six years, OVER HALF A MILLION DOLLARS has been awarded. Even more important, winning songs have been recorded by such superstars as BARBRA STREISAND, BARRY MANILOW, THE JEFFERSON STARSHIP, HANK WILLIAMS, JR., HALL & OATES, JOHNNY MATHIS, FREDDIE FENDER, RAY CHARLES and EDDIE RABBIT, to name a few. For five years in a row, Grand Prize winning singer/songwriters have recorded their winning songs for these major record companies: ASYLUM, WARNER BROS., A & M, MERCURY and PORTRAIT.

FOR LYRICISTS: We'll also have the exciting LYRIC COMPETITION 7, designed especially for your unique talents.

If you want doors to open, advance your career and build that all important "track record"...

THIS COULD BE THE BREAK YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!

YES, I am interested in receiving FREE information about the 1980 American Song Festival and Lyric Competition 7.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Mail to: **The American Song Festival**
5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

Or call: **(213) 464-8193**

A presentation of Sterling Recreation Organization.

treble back. If you don't, Blythe, whose tone is high and clear to begin with, will drill a hole in your ear. This will also help put Steve McCall's cymbals in better perspective. Since Fred Hopkins' bass is only fugitively audible, you will have to punch the loudness button and boost the bass; it won't bring him in completely but it will put some bottom on the sound. Sorry, there's really nothing you can do to reclaim Stanley Cowell's piano. Those without hefty woofers in the house may be fresh out of luck. What? You want to hear about the music? Well, the album's full of the stuff that makes jazz great. There's lots of brave, open-hearted playing from Blythe and invigorating support from the rhythm section. Blythe's range and command of his instrument would be something to marvel at in themselves did he not put them such exuberant uses, taking a tremendous solo on "Jitterbug Waltz" and making "In a Sentimental Mood" his own with great cries of song despite the remembered presence of Coltrane and Hodges. "Caravan" and "Naima" are the other two standards; Blythe also contributes two bluesy originals. Steve McCall has developed a powerful and perfect sprawl, crossing every bar line in sight and coming out solidly on One every time. Cowell doesn't get to solo enough, but you know he's there. Hopkins, because of the recording, sounds like any good bassist but not entirely like himself. Too bad. The album was kept short for the sake of the recorded sound and the sound was forfeited somewhere on the mixing board. We could have used more of this music. I always want a little more from Blythe that I wind up getting, as if he suggests a greater expressive range than he is actually able to fill, but that ain't bad. Any artist who opens up such exhilarating possibilities is all right with me.

That two records reconsidering the jazz tradition should come out in the same month, be this good and resemble each other so little says volumes about that tradition's vitality and resources. George Lewis, the most lucid of musicians, generally takes a more distanced view of the jazz past than Blythe. His new album offers two long compositions. "Blues," to these ears, never quite lives up to the promise of its opening and Douglas Ewart's languid bass clarinet solo. Only about half the group improvisation in the middle works as well as it ought to, and Richard Teitlebaum's adenoidal siren effects do a lot to spoil the ending despite remarkable playing from Lewis and good if unusually restrained support from Anthony Davis. Maybe the piece would satisfy me if the title composition were not so much better. Lewis has been working his way toward a masterpiece for some time now and "Homage to Charles Parker" seems to be the closest he has gotten yet (his two pieces on last year's Black Saint duo set with Ewart ought not to be missed either). It opens with long, low sounds from synthesizer and miked cymbals, and although half the piece will go by before the entrance of melody, interest is held and sustained by small variations of pitch and timbre. Tonality appears, and shortly after it a lyrical alto solo from Ewart, a shorter offering from Davis and a virtuoso trombone exposition from Lewis, who takes the piece to its breaking point and its conclusion. "Homage" could have been precious, pretentious or merely pretty — both pieces on the album, incidentally, are tonal and melodic — but instead it casts its spell from square one and doesn't let go until it's over. It's a remarkable piece of music to which I have returned again and again; I still feel awakened and amazed. Along with *Soapsuds, Soapsuds*, probably the most essential listening of the season. — *Rafi Zabor*

Donna Summer

On The Radio — Donna Summer's Greatest Hits, I & II (Casablanca).

Casablanca keeps finding different ways to repackage Donna Summer's Greatest Hits, so, depending on the state of your collection, this double-album set, being sold as both one and two LP's, may be more or less redundant. Included are most of Donna's hits: "I Feel Love," "Last Dance," "MacArthur Park," "Hot Stuff," "Bad Girls," "Dim All The Lights," "Sunset People," "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)" and "On The Radio," in both long and short versions. The album does serve to spotlight the revolutionary production scheme which has catapulted Summer to the top of the pop music biz. Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellote smother the Summer sensuality in an air-tight vacuum of clicks, beeps, whirrs and zaps, setting up a classic dichotomy of woman vs. machine. It is to Donna's credit that she manages to transcend the electronic strait-jacket and still elicit emotions. Gone is the "Love To Love You" cliche of the larger-than-life Black Female Sex Object and in its place is a surprisingly human, achingly real flesh-and-blood person.

This LP, perhaps her last for Casablanca, is an excellent starting point for the Donna Summer novice, though the fool-proof formula wears a bit thin here and there. While Summer's vocals dramatize the element of free will in Moroder's otherwise mechanistic universe, whenever the elaborate backdrop disappears and she's left on her own, a disturbing void of chic alienation is uncovered; but it is merely skirted over and never fully explored.

With her last two singles, the duet with Barbra Streisand, "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)" and "On The Radio," Donna Summer has proven she is more than just a facelss disco diva; she is one of our premier pop song stylists. Hopefully, she will continue to be

ROAD TOUGH? PROVE IT.

It's six long feet to the floor. What will happen when our great sound hits bottom? How long will it still sound great? We had to find out. So we picked an ATM41 Dynamic and an ATM91 Fixed-Charge Condenser out of stock, tested them, and started in.

Each was dropped seven times on its side from six feet onto the office floor. Nothing much was happening. So we repeated the series, this time dropping each microphone on its nose. Seven times from six feet. Still no problems. They looked good and sounded good, but *we* were getting tired.

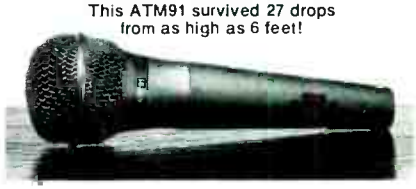
So we moved to an unyeilding slate floor. Here it took three more drops on its side from six feet, and three more on its nose from four feet to finally affect the ATM41. A truly remarkable record!

But what about our ATM91 Fixed-Charge Condenser? It should have given up long before a dynamic. But quite the contrary! The ATM91 withstood four side drops onto slate from six feet, three drops right on the nose from four feet, and another six drops on the nose from *six* feet and still tested OK for sound! Granted it looked anything but new, but it *still performed*.

Our little test left us arm-weary but convinced that the ATM Series microphones could easily earn their "Road Tough" name in the field. That's the testing which really counts. Try us.

Part of the secret of ATM toughness is this 3-layer windscreen. An outer heavy wire, a finer wire screen just inside, and an inner layer of woven bronze. All soldered to each other and to a solid brass ring. There's nothing else like it on any microphone.

This ATM91 survived 27 drops from as high as 6 feet!



audio-technica.

INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY

AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC., Dept.40ML 33 Shiawassee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313

more than just a cog in a machine, no matter how well-oiled and seductive that machine may be. — *Roy Trakin*

DEXTER GORDON

Great Encounters, Columbia JC 35978.

Michael Cuscuna, who's produced all of Dexter Gordon's Columbia albums, said this about the saxophonist in his notes to the first of them (*Homecoming*): "Of all the people of his generation, Dexter has stayed youngest. He is the most modern player to have come out of that period. He influenced Rollins and Coltrane and then, when they became more advanced, he learned from them. He's still learning and still growing." Which is exactly what this new album illustrates: Gordon evolving as a player irrespective of eras, yet so fluent he can draw on anyone when the spirit and occasion move him. With its varied (live and studio) settings and guest stars (principally Johnny Griffin and the late Eddie Jefferson) only underlining this flexibility, *Great Encounters* is arguably the most vibrant Gordon on Columbia to date.

This is especially true of side one: two live tracks from the 1978 concert reuniting a recently-returned-from-Europe Griffin with Dexter at Carnegie Hall. On the Ammons & Stitt trademark "Blues Up and Down," a high-speed performance climaxing in battling eights, fours and twos, Gordon's opening solo is based on long, drawn out, near-honking lines (which Griffin counters with a solo more filled with melodic ideas); yet, on his own slightly less quick "Cake" (formerly "Cheesecake"), Gordon uses an opposite strategy, with a very long solo so full of playfulness (the usual quote from "Laura," and a few others), melodic invention, and structural perspective he can barely keep pace with himself. (Shrewdly, Griffin again takes the opposite tack, casting a purer bebop spell.)

On side two there are two other Dexter Gordons. On the Jefferson showcases, "Diggin' In" and "It's Only a Paper Moon," also featuring Woody Shaw and Curtis Fuller, he cedes the spotlight to the singer (who was in excellent form) only to surge into his solos with the extra energy of a pent-up force. After saying his piece he finally, impressively, recedes. Gordon the master ballad player is also featured. He reshapes "Ruby, My Dear" without a wasted note and with a complete mastery of phrasing, dynamics and ideas.

In sum, Dexter Gordon meets himself on *Great Encounters* just a surely as he meets his *simpatico* guests. It makes for an archetypal album. The only better way to hear Gordon's music right now would be to catch him in a club. — *Michael Rozek*

Jack DeJohnette

Special Edition, ECM-1-1152.

Jack DeJohnette seems to have become the finest drumming bandleader since Art Blakey, and this new record featuring one of his several current bands is impressive on several counts, DeJohnette's writing and arranging not least among them. First up is his original, "One For Eric," which actually sounds more like one for Ornette until the fast tempo cuts out from under it and David Murray begins his strikingly Dolphic bass clarinet solo. One of DeJohnette's greatest successes with this band is the use he has made of Murray: the young lion has grown all the more powerful for being disciplined, and although Murray never gets to cut loose on this album as he has done with the band in person, he does get to do some characteristically incendiary work. When the tempo moves back into a fast four, Arthur Blythe takes over on alto. Blythe can play anything, in any band, anywhere: here, he's less florid and more dissonant than on his own *In the Tradition*, and if at first he seems a bit intimidated by the studio atmosphere he gets to light a few flares by solo's end. DeJohnette follows with a typically dazzling statement. Bassist/cellist Peter Warren is the fourth man in the band, and his deep, powerful section work is much more effective than DeJohnette's usual man, Eddie Gomez, would have been in this context.

The rest of the album, briefly: "Zoot Suite" is an endearing original by the leader that embodies K.C. swing and an elegy both; Coltrane's "Central Park West" is stunningly arranged for a string quartet of alto, tenor, melodica and cello; a tight version of Coltrane's "India" features a fine Murray solo in the Dolphy spot, soaring Blythe, and DeJohnette playing piano for the head; "Journey to the Twin Planet" is the least effective of DeJohnette's tunes but everyone blows the roof off it, all at once. The recorded sound is simply too cold for the music, and while Manfred Eicher may have surpassed Rudy Van Gelder in clarity, there's a lot of feeling missing here. No apologies needed for the music, though; this is a terrific album. — *V. Gaits*

Michael Jackson, *Off The Wall*, (Epic). This multi-platinum phenomenon opens up with two killer dance cuts, each of which was a number one single: the irresistible "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough" and the silk smooth "Rock With You." Quincy Jones is the producer and he has provided Jackson with a jewelled setting that once again proves that commercial Soul can be not only smooth but sophisticated too. There's one slight problem, though, and that's Michael himself, whose almost painful shyness causes him to submerge his personality at every turn. On the McCartney-penned "Girlfriend," Michael inexplicably mimics Paulie, while on the Stevie Wonder composition, "I Can't Help It," Jackson's croon is almost a carbon copy of the Plant-man's. So, while this album marks an important renaissance

for pop/soul, Michael Jackson has yet to establish an identity separate from its indisputedly superior material and innovative production. — *roy trakin*

Eddie Daniels, *Morning Thunder*, Columbia NJC 36290. What!? A clarinet crossover album? Yep, and it's pretty good, and could have been excellent had Daniels not used the Yamaha clarinet, which gets an unnaturally thin sound, almost piercing in the upper register, failing to relay much of the instrument's usual warmth. That aside, and many won't notice, Daniels cooks his tail off on a pair of Latin-flavored vehicles, a couple of sultry ballads that have long, rolling statements from the leader, and even a pair of funk tunes, though the clarinet seems unsuited for this style. Overall, the date is quite successful, because there's something about a clarinet sound that is enchanting or else all those folks wouldn't have stood at Benny Goodman's and Artie Shaw's feet many years ago. With the right ax, Daniels could do the same. — *zan stewart*

Chuck Mangione — *Fun and Games* (A&M SP3715). The opening track, "Give it All You Got," was commissioned by ABC Sports as a theme for the recent Winter Olympic Games. Unfortunately, the spirit of the Olympics is lacking in the fundamental approach to what some might prefer to call Jazzak, a quarter-tone to minor third above Muzak. Mangione sounds lackluster and uncertain compared to his sidemen, who do what they can in this uninspiring context. The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat are not here. This record never enters the arena, opting instead for the marketplace and the stands. — *Peter Giron*

Leo Smith — *Spirit Catcher*, Nessa N-19. An intriguing, but not totally satisfying album by the underrated trumpeter/composer. Coming from the more austere, formalist branch of the AACM, Smith is in constant search of new structural perspectives for improvisation and composition. But, in achieving this, at times his music can be emotionally detached and unconvincing — my main gripes with the extended work, "Images." The second side is more inviting, featuring a very thoughtful piece for harps and trumpet and the impressive solos on the more traditionally structured title tune. There is some good music here and for me it blossoms with every hearing. — *Cliff Tinder.*

Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers — *Reflections In Blue*, Timeless/Muse TI 317. Buhaina hasn't lost a step, his Messengers (Ponomarev, Watson, Schnitter, Irwin, Williams) are players to match and talented writers (I love it: Watson and Williams' tunes bring back descending chord progressions, perfect setups for burning solos), plus side two gives you "My Foolish Heart," "My One and Only Love" and an Ellington medley. What more can I say? — *Michael Rozek.*

Steve Howe — *The Steve Howe Album*, Atlantic SD 19243. Howe creates some unassuming pseudo-Baroque classical music on the last three tracks of this album. The remainder of the record is a monument to rock-star complacency, so glutted with overdubbed guitars and divergent genres as to be almost unlistenable. Howe's technical reach frequenly exceeds his grasp. Sixteenth note runs degenerate into clacky pick noises, tempi are broken by licks too complex to fit into the beat. Evidently too many gold records and poll victories have destroyed this man's ability to listen to his own work. — *Chris Doering*

The Undertones, Sire. The Undertones are five boys from Belfast with an irresistible gift for concise, hook-laden pop tunes that feature snarling direct-inject guitar hooks and the curiously bleating voice of Feargal Sharkey. Sharkey shouts out lyrics like "I wanna hold her, wanna hold her tight, get teenage kicks right through the night." The Undertones aren't remembering the hoary old cliche of the acne-scarred teenager-in-love in a rock-and-roll world; they're living it, and in the process proving that the aching cliches have some truth to them. The Undertones communicate this truth without guile, without gush, and with the kind of heartfelt intensity and tautly reined pop sense that makes for great rock and roll. You'd have to have tin ears and a heart of stone not to be affected by an album this good. — *Michael Shore*

Walter Bishop, *Hot House*, Muse MR 5183. Bishop revisits the mainstream of modern jazz, with bop tunes laid down alongside standards of elegance and beauty. On trio tunes such as "Sophisticated Lady" and "All God's Children Got Rhythm," he shows a harmonic expertise that encompasses music from Bud Powell to McCoy Tyner while remaining personal, and a most commanding technique. On the quintet tracks, trumpeter Bill Hardman and tenorist Junior Cook both play with the vigor of teenagers and the wisdom of the seasoned vets they are. On Bird's "My Little Suede Shoes," the trumpeter selects frothy notes expertly, using Al Foster's drumming as a fulcrum for motion, while Denzil Best's "Move" finds Cook's 8-bar phrases swaying gutsily. Sam Jones is his usual excellent self on bass. — *z.s.*

James Brown — *People* (Polydor PD-1-6258). *People* is not what you'd call an auspicious entry into a new decade; in fact, *Jam 1980's* from a few years back serves that purpose far better than this watered-down product. Producer Brad Shapiro — who also worked on last year's *Original Disco Man*, a similarly erratic, slicked-up effort — wrote most of the tunes here, and James not even one. Shapiro will try anything, from *pro forma* calls-to-arms ("Let The Funk Flow," "Don't Stop The Funk"), execrable, cliche-ridden baggage like "Stone Cold Drag," and a pleasant but forgettable ballad like "Regrets." While Brown's voice preaches as vociferously as ever, he sounds like he's at his wits end, and most of his raps here come across forced. Side two gets a decent groove going, but there's nothing here that strikes the perfect AOR/Disco/JBs funk balance of the classic "Too Funky In Here" from *Original Disco Man*. Even legends have their off days, and though this isn't James Brown's first, let's hope this seminal figure gets back on the good foot soon and proves he can still cut it. — *Michael Shore*

Roy Eldridge, *Little Jazz*, Inner City IC 7002. This 50's date cut in Paris has a sextet with Zoot Sims on one side, and a dazzling quartet with master drummer Kenny Clarke on the other. Eldridge, always a giant, the logical step between Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie, is superb, only a little past his 1940's peak. But maturity has its strong points, too. "Easter Parade" has the Harmon mute in place, lending a cozy glow to Roy's pin-point articulation that is sent forth with power to spare. "Wild Driver" is aggressive "Little Jazz," Roy zinging up to that clear high range he's famous for and phrasing it perfectly. Clarke, a percussion genius with a magical array of timbres, adds immeasurably to the music, coaxing sighs out of sock cymbals and whelps out of rides. Sims is a dark Lester Young, and pianist Gerry Wiggins a coherent modernist. — *z.s.*

Buck Clayton, *Passport To Paradise*, Inner City IC 7009. *Paradise* was recorded in 1961 in Paris, with Buck and Sir Charles Thompson, composer of "Robbin's Nest," the featured players. Like Roy Eldridge, Buck possesses a buzzingly brassy tone, utilizing a wide vibrato with a gutsy savoir-faire, and he always keeps the melody in mind. He swings like Willie Mays, but after that many years with Count Basie, you'd keep swinging, too. The fare, most with Clayton on Harmon or cup mute, con-

sists of standards and ballads, and the performances are exquisite specimens of later Swing Era jazz. Particularly moving are Clayton's treatments of "I Cover The Waterfront" and "I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues," while the uptempo kudos go to "I Cried For You," with its bouncy verve. — *z.s.*

John Lee/Gerry Brown — *Chasers* (Columbia NJC 36212). Though jazz-rock diehards will probably dig this music, it's just too dated for my taste. The efforts of the musicians seem sincere, but the territory has been covered by the likes of Stanley Clarke and George Duke years ago. The playing is status quo, the recording too thick for Lee's muffled bass tone and the bulk of the material relies on overworked riffs. It don't rock, don't feel like jazz, what is it? I don't know, but the title track could be used for the theme of Tom Snyder's *Tomorrow* show. Ten years of jazz-rock for this? — *p.g.*

David Sanborn — *Hideaway,* Warner Brothers BSK 3379. As interior decoration this record is perfect. Sanborn noodles around the blues scale with all the commitment of a keypunch operator, never quite defining a melody or developing a solo. Around his meandering alto, arrangements appear, briefly tingle the ears and fade on a politely funky vamp, leaving no impression at all. Michael Colina's production rips off George Clinton for dual bass lines, contrapuntal rhythm guitars and multiple keyboards, but bleaches the funk with a "perfect" recording which isolates each instrument in its own frequency range and stereo placement. This record is the aural equivalent of Perrier water — the perfect mixer for your mellow lifestyle. Like Perrier, it's mildly enjoyable and guaranteed not to offend your taste, but only those responsible for merchandising the music would mistake it for jazz. — *c.d.*

Chico Freeman — *Spirit Sensitive,* India Navigation IN 1405. Staying comfortably within established traditions, especially as they come to us through Coltrane, Freeman's loving and masterful interpretations of ballads are stunning anachronisms. This album immediately brings to mind Coltrane's *Ballads*, and while somewhat less weighty, it offers a very compelling side of Freeman's playing and further proof that he is living up to his much acclaimed potential. Taking mostly well-chosen standards like "Autumn in New York" — what Freeman and Cecil McBee do here is amazing — he displays a gripping command of lyrical ballad playing with a delicate balance of emotional warmth and stimulating ideas. And the rhythm section of McBee, John Hicks and Billy Hart (Don Moye on one cut) play this music like the veterans they are. — *c.t.*

Clifford Brown — *The Paris Collection,* Inner City IC 7001. Side one is big band bebop arranged by altoist Gigi Gryce, and plants its feet firmly on the charming side of corny, a special magic endemic to bebop. (For example, check the minor-key coolness of the progressions in "Brown Skins," classic for the genre.) Brown plays with a lush, orchestral flair — very well engineered, to boot — that echoes his work on *Clifford Brown With Strings.* On side two, six Gryce-Brown sextet tracks are especially worthy for the duo's solos — Gryce' coolly sinuous, Brown's hotter, more idea-ridden. For lovers of Clifford and the era, a must, even with the alternate takes. — *m.r.*

Larry Coryell — *Tributaries,* Arista/Novus AN 3017. Jazz on a flat-top guitar by three fusioneers. Larry Coryell duets with himself, Joe Beck and John Scofield, and leads five trio excursions into the land of, uh, jazz-folk (fazz? jolk?). It's no joke though — the combination of jazz chops and post-bop harmonies with the roots, rhythms and ringing arpeggios to which the folk guitar lends itself yields a music of uncommon beauty. The trio format works better for Coryell than some of his previous ventures in this idiom, providing a fuller, more polyrhythmic background for the solos and some resoundingly rich chordal textures, and making this the most satisfying Coryell album since *Spaces.* — *c.d.*

Bob James/Earl Klugh — *One on One,* Columbia Tappan Zee FC 36241. At this writing, studies have shown that this music would put an elevator to sleep. — *p.g.*

Cabaret *cont. from pg. 30*

way with a crowd, whether extolling the virtues of "hanging out" ("Cafe Society") or giving a dazzling lecture-demonstration on scat singing ("Second Nature").

Of course, once a performer goes outside cabaret, it's very hard to sustain the things that are meaningful in a small room. Bigger audiences make bigger demands, and bigger money gets involved. Then the artist becomes subject to all those rules of the mass-market music industry that are antithetical to the cabaret aesthetic. It's almost impossible to maintain the total artistic control, to deal with the high-pressure demands of commercial success, to withstand the inevitable homogenization process. Singer-songwriters like Peter Allen and Desmond Child have had some success transferring the cabaret sensibility to Broadway (Allen's one-man show *Up in One*) and rock 'n' roll (Child's albums with the female trio Rouge, particularly *Runners in the Night*) Good cabaret singers have more difficulty establishing recording careers because they're so susceptible to inferior material (the curse of Helen Schneider) and misguided production (Sylvia Syms' nemesis), not to mention the whims of the marketplace: gifted Barbara Cook went back to Reno Sweeney after one lovely but neglected album stiffed, while horrendous singer Jane Olivor continues to put out one drecky record after another.

The ones who have it toughest of all are artists who don't fit easily into any existing category. For every act like Manhattan Transfer or Robert Kraft who flourishes outside the comfy confines of cabaret, there's an equally ambitious outfit that flounders (Stormin' Norman and Suzy) or falls apart altogether (Cathy Chamberlain's late, lamented Rag 'n' Roll Revue). With disco and new wave functioning as healthy subcultures apart from the commercial mainstream, it seems a shame that cabaret — with its sophisticated tradition of singers, songs, and songwriters, of conservators and innovators — should be practically an endangered species. M

Sun Ra *cont. from pg. 49*

farther over the rainbow than Judy Garland went) through a pan-idiomatic obstacle course that evokes Cecil Taylor, Ellington, Monk, Tatum and others before cuing in the rhythm section and dropping it in the pocket for some James P. Johnson stride. He can be either an angel or a demon; usually he prefers to be both.

Is he trying to wake this planet up? "Goodness no! I'd never try to rouse something as destructive as man. I wanna calm people down, put 'em in a sort of dream state, between myth and reality. They just gotta learn to use their intuition. Intuition is a survival mechanism, innate knowledge of the proper thing to do. Now you got people acting like savages, you just read the papers or watch the news. There's an old saying that music can soothe the savage beast. But I've seen so much ugliness and stupidity on this planet. I've seen so many wonderful bands passed by: like the Sunset Royals, the Carolina Cotton Pickers, they played for the pure joy of it, just wasn't no place in this world for them . . that's the *real* avant-garde. People here keep making the same mistakes, history repeats itself. It's very boring for me; I've been elsewhere, you see. I'd much rather be on Jupiter, there it's exexpressibly beautiful, splendorous, pure happiness. I can see why they say the word 'jovial' come from Jupiter. I was there just the other day, in what you might call a dream or a vision, but it was just as real as you and I talking right here. You got to learn to *understand* rather than *overstand* your position regarding so-called reality." Would he ever leave this planet, give up on it? "Well, the Creator wants me to be here, he just told me to get myself out there more than ever." He rolled his eyes and chuckled, "but I really wouldn't wanna be caught *dead* on this planet."

One of Ra's more charmingly self-descriptive syntactical puns goes: "Some call me Mr. Ra, some call me mystery." He is Mr. Ree indeed, and one well worth solving. Catch him before the Creator calls him away. Till then, Jupiter's loss is our gain. M

LABSERIES

PLAY MY SOUND... YOU WILL LIKE IT!

Lab Series Amps give you the flexibility. Listen to the professionals.

Like Ronnie Montrose, who says: All I used on my "Gamma I" album was Lab Series. My Lab Series sound is the setting shown above. My pickups are balanced from instrument to instrument to reach uniformity with the settings I use. The most vital parts of Lab Series amps are the midrange controls. You can set the MIDRANGE/FREQUENCY to enhance your playing and achieve a consistency in any place you play . . . from living room to Madison Square Garden. I always boost the MIDRANGE at 2 or 4 to get the tube sound. The FREQUENCY sweep is anywhere from 800 to 3.2KHz, depending on the room size and the PA system. I use the same settings with the HI and LO inputs. The HI is clean, the LO distorted. I don't use the COMPRESSOR unless I'm in a small place, where I limit the peaks coming out. To me, Lab Series has the most flexible sound in amplifiers.

Lab Series. The only name in amplifiers. Take it from the professionals.

Look for Ronnie's new "Gamma I" album on Electra Records

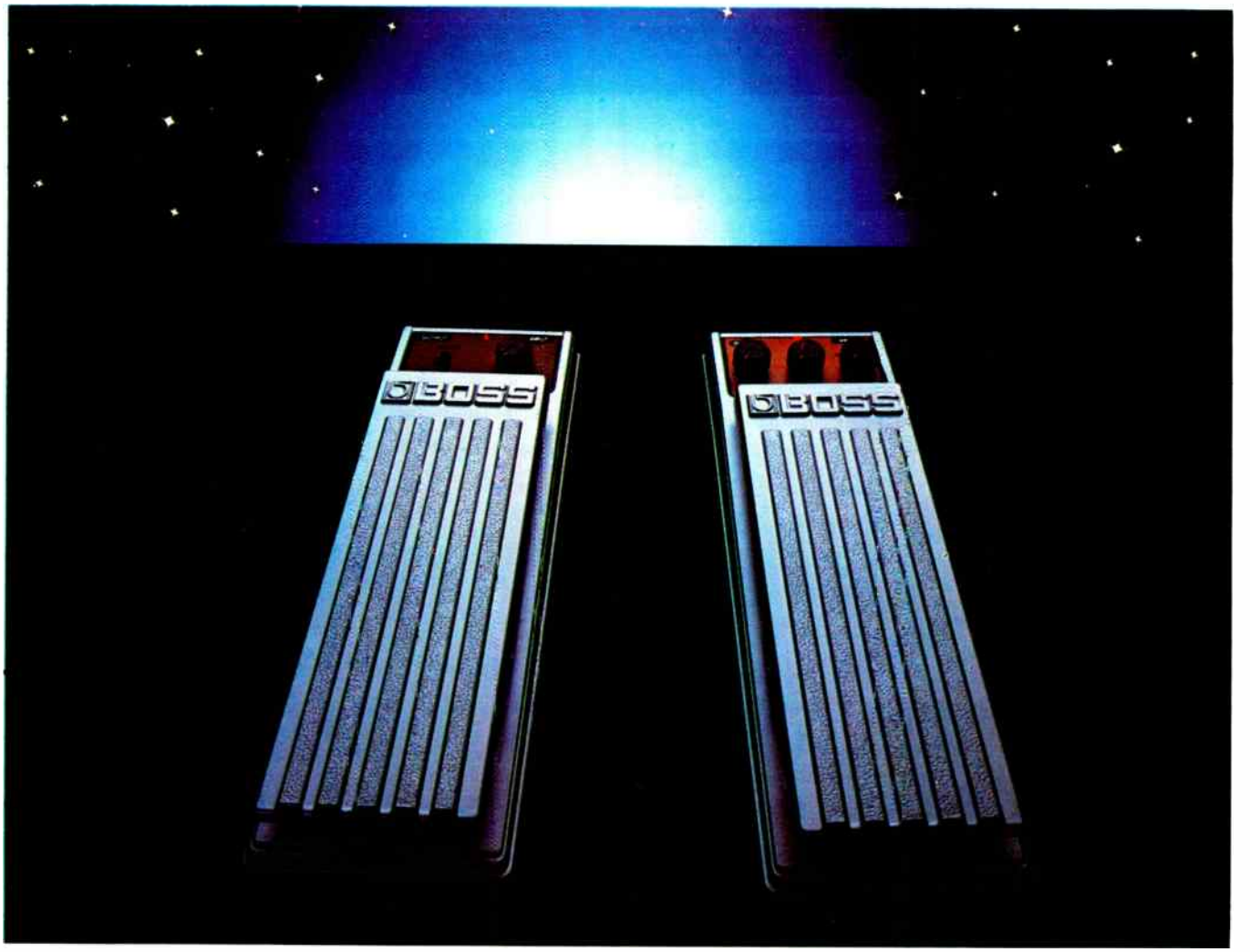
LABSERIES

A product of Gibson

Want to share your favorite Lab Series amps setting with other musicians? Send us a complete description of your favorite setting, along with the type of music you play and why you prefer the sound produced by your Lab Series amp. Your setting may be chosen for future advertising and promotional purposes. Write us at Lab Series Amps, Gibson Division of Norlin Industries, 7373 N. Cicero Ave., Lincolnwood, IL 60646.

Gibson

A division of Norlin Industries, Inc.
In Canada: 51 Nantucket Boulevard, Scarborough, Ont.



Silence Is Silver

Silver is the color of the BOSS Rocker Series—a dramatic new improvement in effects pedal technology.

Since the beginning of the special effects device a rocker pedal has been found to be the most simple and expressive means of adding the effect to a performance. Unfortunately, it has also been the noisest. Gears, cranks, potentiometers are all prone to mechanical stress, wear, and therefore, noise. The answer to this problem is the BOSS Rocker Series.

When we set out to develop the Rockers we observed that a pedal with mechanical contacts was a pedal that eventually produced noise; and a pedal that produced noise could not wear the BOSS name. For the Rockers, we chose a system called the Hall Effect. The Hall Effect is a magnetic field variable by the action of the pedal itself. There are no physical contacts whatsoever, so there can be no wear, and no noise.

The first of the two Rockers is the Rocker Wah. The Rocker Wah produces the classic Wah effect with clarity and intensity but also offers some new flexibility as well. A three position Range switch selects the center frequency at which the effect occurs, while the Width control varies the pedal's range.

The second new Rocker is the Rocker Distortion, which presents the most highly usable application of the Distortion effect—performance variation. The Rocker controlled Distortion Level is further contoured by controls for Output Level, Tone and Minimum Distortion Level. A silent switch under the front of the pedal sends the unit's normal 43dB gain up to 62dB for incredible harmonic feedback effects.

The Rockers also incorporate all those features you expect from BOSS: silent switching, LED status indicators, skid pads, battery eliminator jacks. But all of that goes without saying...except in our new BOSS catalog. If you'd like a copy send us a dollar and it's yours. The new color of silence is just the beginning.

BOSS products are designed, manufactured, and distributed by Roland:
RolandCorp US/Los Angeles, California
Roland Corporation (Australia)/Brookvale, NSW
Great West Imports, Ltd /Vancouver, BC Canada
Eroor Jorgensen (UK)/Brentford, Great Britain

BOSS

ROCK SHORT TAKES

Romantic Pretenders come through in a special way, we go to the altar for Abba and nix the Knack.

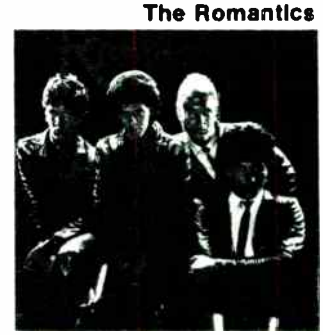
By Vic Garbarini

The Pretenders

ABBA

The Specials

The Romantics



Some of the smaller American independents have adopted the English practice of issuing EP's — scaled down LP's featuring a maximum of two or three songs per side. It's something the majors might also do well to consider on both aesthetic and economic grounds. (A&M did, in fact, put out a specially discounted 4-song Joan Armatrading disc last year.) Looking over this month's crop of records I can't find one release, with the exception of the Pretenders, that wouldn't benefit from being whittled down to 4 or 5 cuts. Small is beautiful and all that.

Pearl Harbor and The Explosions (Warners). We Five meet James Chance. Upbeat pop melodies and smooth vocal harmonies with a light danceable, funk bottom. Could be promising if the spindly rhythm section gets a little grittier; for that they'll have to abandon San Francisco for some funkier clime: a winter in Newark should do the trick. **Wazmo Nariz** — *Things Aren't Right* (I.R.S.). Indeed, not. "Checking Out The Check Out Girl" comes closest to evoking the buoyant lunacy of the first Talking Heads album, though Nariz's bush league David Byrne routine gets old fast. Style without substance. **Bruce Wooley and The Camera Club** (Columbia). Wooley pulls off a much more credible Byrne imitation on "English Garden" before switching to Bowie for the bridge and chorus. (The number to call in Long Island is ...) His rendition of his own "Video Killed The Radio Star" is less slick than the Buggles hit version. That's not necessarily a good thing when you're dealing with novelty pop, but considering the way I'm about to go to the altar for Abba I'd better play it cool this time: Wooley's no-frill's version is decidedly superior. **Abba** — *Abba's Greatest Hits Vol. III* (Atlantic). No, Virginia, this is not the usual kiddy-pap; more like the Mamas and Papas by way of Sibelius. Euro-pop draws heavily on diatonic folk and classical traditions, (especially late 19th Century Romanticism), which is why it often sounds slightly stuffy to American ears weaned on our own more R&B inflected forms. So make an effort to shift your perspective, 'cause these palindromic Swedes create stirring, elegant pop music — brimming with quasi-innocent exuberance and vitality. Songs like "Knowing Me Knowing You," "Take A Chance On Me," and "Dancing Queen" are the closest Europe has come to matching Phil Spector's aural magnificence. Okay okay, so they're not exactly funky; nobody's perfect. I still say these ebullient, sparkling pop confections cut 90% of the stuff on AM radio today. And at least half of what I hear on FM, too.

Willie Nile (Arista). Sings like Forbert, poses like Springsteen, plays like Dylan (strums and flatpicks his Stratocaster a la *Highway 61*). Very pleasant. It's a shame he has nothing to say besides the usual moony prep school romanticisms. When you run with visionaries, it's best to have some visions to deal. **The Romantics** (Nemperor). I hear everyone from Ray Davies to Dave Clark in the Romantics remodeling of the British Invasion sound. Their punkish 4-chord symmetry owes an obvious debt to the early Kinks, whose "She's Got Everything," included here, serves as a blueprint for most of their material. Fun stuff. **Roger Powell** — *Air Pocket* (Bearsville). Like most synthesizer jockeys, Utopia's Powell is no composer. His spacey musings are too shallow to qualify as avant-garde and not tuneful enough to pass as pop. As future-muzak this might make good background music for a Star Trek convention, but I'd have to snort a few Dilithium crystals before I could take it straight. "Emergency Splashdown" is a notable exception. It's surprisingly accomplished fusion in the manner of early U.K., replete with busy Brufordian drumming and incisive soloing. Hopefully it indicates a direction to be followed in the future. **Cliff Richards** — *We Don't Talk Anymore* (E.M.I.) Richards looks and sounds pretty spry for a guy who was the first native Brit rocker to break into the English charts back in 1958. The title cut could pass for the best thing Hall and Oates have done since "She's Gone," with the rest of the album pretty much continuing in the same vein, striking a felicitous balance between Rundgren-styled pop and good old Rock and Roll. **Rick Derringer** — *Guitars and Women* (Blue Sky). Derringer looks and sounds pretty spry for a guy who first broke into the American charts with "Hang on Sloopy" back in the mid-sixties. The cheery "Something Warm" could pass for the best thing Todd Rundgren's done since "Just One Victory." The rest of the album continues in much the same vein, striking a felicitous balance, etc. etc. **American Gigolo — Original Soundtrack** (Polydor). Giorgio Moroder's "Call Me" is driving, full-force rock and roll that pushes Debby Harry in the same way "Hot Stuff" did Donna Summer — demanding that she stretch both emotionally and vocally to meet the challenge. (Which she does.) Cheryl Barnes also does a credible job on "Love and Passion," a Moroderized "My Sharona." The remainder is incidental filler,

continued on page 72

JAZZ

SHORT TAKES

Pianos galore, great white music, a singular stunner from Sarah Vaughan, a good one from the Mingus Dynasty and much more.

By Rafi Zabor

The jazz reviewer's big problem is how to do justice to the monthly embarrassment of riches. The amount of good jazz that comes out is literally amazing, much of it on labels so obscure that a quick review in a magazine is all the publicity they're likely to get. In our continuing effort to serve the music adequately in the available space, we're opting for this jazz comprehensive to buttress the long and short reviews we already have running. Although our first aim is to point out what's good, we'll review a couple of clinkers here and there to let you know we're honest (the format lends itself to snappy one-liners at the expense of the music, but we'll try to confine these to the very rich or at least the financially secure). Where there are categories, the first album listed is best-of-class, but the rest do not follow in exact order of preference (none really exists). Next month we may use three or four authors instead of one. Let us know what you'd like. And yes, the piano records this month really are terrific.

JANE WINSOR

Piano Forte

Andrew Hill, *From California With Love* (Artists House). A less tangled and dissonant Hill than we've heard before and an audio equivalent of the Victorian "good read." Hill rambles lyrically through two sides of solo piano, one piece to a side, with continuous intelligence and a wonderful touch on the instrument. After *Point of Departure* this is the best Hill album I know of. The recording quality and pressing are superb, and if it's density and a trio you want instead of solo leisure, Hill's recent *Nefertiti*, on Inner City, is a good example. **Meade Lux Lewis/Pete Johnson/Albert Ammons**, *Boogie Woogie Trio* (Storyville 4006). Yes it's a great album and no they don't play together except for Johnson and Ammons on "Boogie Woogie Prayer." A good complement to *Boogie Woogie Piano Giants* (Columbia, on which they do play together, *and* back up Big Joe Turner) and a needed addition to the available documentation of this under-adored piano style. **Horace Parlan**, *Blue Parlan*, (Steeplechase 1124). The best Parlan I've ever heard and a completely satisfying trio album. Dannie Richmond's presence on drums has a lot to do with the fact that each tune is dramatically developed to an appropriate climax, Wilbur Little is good on bass and Parlan has grown. I haven't found a "best tune" on the album yet. Nor have I found anything that does not reward repeated listenings. **Walter Norris/Aladar Pege**, *Synchronicity* (Inner City 3028). Speaking of underappreciated pianists, Walter Norris' technical command alone places him in a class with Stanley Cowell (a very small class, still presided over by Art Tatum) and his romanticism ought to be better appreciated in this age of Jarrett. Here he arpeggiates his way brilliantly through four pieces with the virtuoso bassist Pege and if you miss it it's your tough luck. **Jim McNeely**, *The Plot Thickens* (Gatemouth 1001). Never having heard McNeely on a good piano before I didn't realize how fine a pianist he is. John Scofield turns in another exemplary performance on guitar, Jon Burr and Mike Richmond alternate on bass and Billy Hart is habitually superb on drums. McNeely's six originals are also impressive. Worth seeking out (from Gatemouth; 90 Madison Ave., Island Park, NY 11558). **The Great Jazz Trio**, *Milestones* (Inner City 6030). The best GJT album yet, though their finest hour is still the one they spent behind Jackie McLean on *New Wine*. This is the closest rapprochement between the gigantism of Tony Williams and the finesse of Hank Jones. Still, the band's loaded for big game. How about backing up Freddie, Dexter, or especially Wayne? **Galaxy All Stars**, *Live Under the Sky* (Galaxy 95001). The GJT is present here too, with Williams much better live than in the studio and Jones execrably recorded. Red Garland, Richard Davis and Roy Haynes form a second trio, and altoist Sadao Watanabe fronts both of them with good but rote Parkerisms. **Bill Evans Trio**, *I Will Say Goodbye* (Fantasy 9593). Sure you will Bill, but not until Fantasy releases everything you left in the can when you departed the label. It's a fine album though the drums are badly recorded, and why oh why did no one record the trio with Michael Moore and Philly Joe Jones? **Joanne Brackeen**, *Prism* (Choice 1024). Typically intelligent and vigorous playing from Brackeen, supported by Eddie Gomez. **P.S.**: I don't have the album, but I heard a cut of Adam Makowicz's *Winter Flowers* on Hungarian Supraphon and not only does it cut his American album to shreds but it's a lot better than anything I've heard him play live. I assume it's available through Peters International. Try.

Great White Music

I'm prepared to admit the possibility that Oregon really might be the music of the new American pastorale and that we'll all be listening to it when the oil runs out and the nukes are shut down (though I'll still probably prefer Lester Bowie). The Oregonian trios and duets on side one of **Paul McCandless**' *All the Mornings Bring* (Elektra 6E-196) are what you'd expect, but the wind octets on side two are more impressive, and the dark-hued, Coplandian and Moon-

doggish "Sarabande" is a small classic. Hope we get the whole concerto next time. **Oregon**, *Roots in the Sky* (Elektra 6E-224): McCandless' pieces seem the best-written, the Towners generate the best improvs and Walcott is the most international. The music is all perfect and sometimes forgettable, sometimes plain lovely. On the other hand, I find **Ralph Towner**'s *Old Friends, New Friends* (ECM-1-1153) a chilling and unstable mix of Oregono and jazz, and who the hell miked Eddie Gomez' voice? Talk about singalongs. **David Amram**, *Triple Concerto* (Flying Fish GRO-751). Amram shoulda known better, but ambition makes assholes of us all now and then. With its overbusy orchestration, tunes cribbed from "Alfie's Theme," "Take Five," "Walk on the Wild Side" and tons of film scores, the classical/jazzical Triple Concerto sounds like some early Leonard Bernstein outtakes. Impressively bad. But the straight classical "Elegy for Violin and Orchestra," though derivative of Hindemith, Bartok, Prokofiev and Shostakovich (the whole gang), is an accomplished and genuinely affecting piece of music, with a gorgeous violin part. *No More Walls* (Flying Fish GRO-752) features bad jazz and one Middle Eastern piece with good solos from Amram, Pepper Adams, George Mrgdichian and Midhat Serbagi.

Class By Itself

Sarah Vaughan, *I Love Brazil!* (Pablo Today 2312-101). A pop album in the 50s, Sinatra sense of the word, with strings, flutes and Vaughan as great as she has ever been. The Nascimento tunes are the best, especially "Courage," the (translated) lyrics are sometimes hokey, and although I'm by no means a knee-jerk Vaughan fan I've got to admit that she's the best there is. Strings, flutes, guitars. Lush ain't the word. Glorious is more like it. If you're not swept away, consult your doctor.

Newies

Steve Lacy, *Troubles* (Black Saint 0035). Another adroit, funny and banged-up album from Lacy and the gang, and better edited than most of them. Lacy and Steve Potts pair off as abstract and earthy on reeds and the rhythm section is fine. Lacy albums have an appealing, world-beaten atmosphere all their own. Start here if you want a taste. **The New York String Trio**, *First String* (Black Saint 0031.) Let's call it a promising band. Billy Bang, violin; James Emery, guitar; and John Lindberg, bass, are three accomplished and precise players who also write well, but it's not until they break out the *klangfarbenmelodie* on Emery's "Catharsis in Real Time" that I feel they've begun to realize the band's potential. **Tim Berne**, *The Five Year Plan* (Empire 24K). Berne, a smart Hemphillian altoist and composer, has cut a good first album with Vinny Golia's California mob. I enjoy the album generally, but the best thing on it is "N.Y.C. Rites," Berne's concerto for clarinetist John Carter, a better setting for him than even Carter himself has so far devised. **Chico Freeman**, *No Time Left* (Black Saint 0036). Lacks the compositional grace and magic of *Kings of Mali* and the warmth of *Spirit Sensitive*, both on India Navigation, and features some of the fastest playing in recent memory from Freeman, Jay Hoggard, Rick Rozie and Don Moye. **Kalaparusha Maurice McIntyre**, *Peace and Blessings* (Black Saint 0037). A good blowing date from the Chicago reedman and a quartet. It seems to improve with each hearing, and if it gets to terrific I'll let you know next issue.

Straight No Chaser

Waymon Reed, *46th and 8th* (Artists House AH 10). A hugely rewarding album from Reed, a trumpet alumnus of the Basie band with a thick, expressive tone and an ability to spin out long, unpredictable lines into rich, coherent solos. Thad Jones came out of the Basie band too. Like him, Reed is a real contender. **Mingus Dynasty**, *Chair in the Sky* (Elektra 6E-248). Comparisons being odious, I won't compare this with any actual Mingus albums except to say that if you don't have *Mingus at Antibes* or *Cumbia & Jazz Fusion*, to mention only two recent classics, don't buy this instead. On its own this is a fine blowing date, with Joe Farrell copping the horn honors with his best work in years, and the rhythm section of Pullen, Haden and Richmond superb. Band versions of three of the Joni Mitchell collaborations are thoughtfully provided. **John Coltrane**, *The Paris Concert* (Pablo Live 2308 217). John and the Awesomes in a patchily recorded (Elvin overloading his mikes and shattering the sound) concert circa 1962. Of course you've gotta hear it but it's still not revelatory as the bone-shaking life & death Paris concert that turned up on Japanese BYG. And what about the WABC-FM tapes from the Half Note, summer of '65? Any takers out there in recordland? **Derek Smith**, *The Man I Love* (Progressive 7035). It says Derek Smith but my ears tell me it's Scott Hamilton's date. The tenorist is at the peak of his form and George Mraz and Billy Hart are excellent as usual. Smith is okay but these other guys are great. **Jimmy Madison**, *Bumps on a Smooth Surface* (Adelphi 5007). **Rein de Graaff**, *New York Jazz* (Timeless Muse 321). The two most consistently fine albums of several recent ones featuring the undersung Cliffordian trumpeter Tom Harrell. The Madison date features good originals, Larry Schneider and Harold Danko. De Graaff opts for a repertoire of modern jazz classics, the excellent baritonist Ronnie Cuber and the rhythm team of Sam Jones and Louis Hayes. Harell shines on them both. You choose. **Art Pepper**, *Straight Life* (Galaxy 5127). Lacks the vitality of the earlier *Today*, also on Galaxy, but if I were into Pepper I wouldn't want to miss the haunted and haunting version of "Nature Boy" offered here. **Joe Farrell**, *Skate Board Park* (Xanadu 174). If it weren't for his even better work on the Mingus Dynasty album this would be Farrell's best playing in years. Chick Corea sounds like a promising young pianist, and if the rhythm section were a little more adventurous the album would be up to the level of, say, *Moon Germs*. Good to have Farrell back. **Von Freeman**, *Serenade & Blues* (Nessa n-11). A deeply felt and tradition-rich set of readings that will move you to your depths if Freeman is more to your taste than mine. **Dollar Brand**, *Black Lightning* (Chiaroscuro 2005). Great rolling repetitions that have nothing to do with Phil Glass and everything to do with Africa, and one of Brand's best ensemble recordings.

Questions for deep thinkers: how come so many African saxophonists phrase and intone like Roscoe Mitchell? Have a nice day. **Rodney Jones**, *Articulation* (Timeless Muse 323). Not a conspicuously original stylist yet, the 22-year-old Jones is already a hell of a guitarist. A well-programmed date with a well-arranged octet. Best cut? Try "Hard New York Swing," which features some excellent Arthur Blythe. **Joe Venuti**, *Joe in Chicago, 1978* (Flying Fish 077). Delightful Venuti thinly recorded at Curtom's funk studio. Among the accompanying musicians, pianist John Young stands out.

Fused

Despite a new willingness on my part to enjoy and respect fusion, with the exception of *City Dreams* by **David Pritchard** (Inner City, full review next issue), all the albums that came my way were quite bad. I had prepared stinging one-liners for **Bob James/Earl Klugh**, **Flora Purim**, **Herbie Hancock** and **Bob James** and sad words for **Jon Faddis** and **Cedar Walton**, but we don't have room for them. We were always the sweet magazine.

The Closer

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (Flying Fish 099). Not consistently excellent but then it doesn't have to be, with streetsounds between the cuts and one-shot performances from Eubie Blake, Ironing Board Sam, the Mamou Hour Cajun Band, the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra and a typically majestic solo piece from Charles Mingus. I only wish it were a double set. Bye.

Short Takes *cont. from pg. 69*
primarily Giorgio's trademark computer disco musings. As for the film itself: I haven't seen it but I'm damned glad somebody is finally facing up to this sordid business — giggling is a disgusting and rude thing to do while you're having sex — especially when one of the parties is paying for it.

The Specials (Chrysalis). As you've no doubt heard by now, ska is a kind of speeded-up proto-reggae that's all the rage in Albion. These guys, along with Madness and The Selector, have wedded ska's skanking rhythms with punk's primal enthusiasm, yielding an eminently danceable hybrid. (Called *Skunk*?) Actually the Specials are less fusioneers than adroit genre-hoppers, using two lead singers — one black and one white — to divide up the vocal chores depending on which mode they're operating in on any given tune. I tend to favor the New Wavier material — especially "Concrete Jungle" 's pep rally percussion and pumping bass lines — over the Salvation Army chic of the more traditional material, though the skanking rhythms and engagingly out of tune horns on numbers like "Message to You, Rudy" certainly have their charms.

The Pretenders (Sire). The Next Big Thing, Chapter II. Power pop is vacuous, punk is heavy handed. What to do? The Pretenders answer that and other musical questions on their impressive debut, providing a third force that combines the best elements of New Wave and traditional pop. Chrissie Hynde is the key here, she both sings and looks like a bizarre cross between Cher and Patti Smith, blending the alluring sexuality and vocal resonance of the former with the passion (lust?) and charisma of the latter. There's a pervasive intelligence at work here — a cohesive vision that enables the various elements of their sound to be fused into a whole that's more than the sum of its parts. And they're not from L.A.! **The Knack** — *... but The Little Girls Understand*. Doug Fieger may a misogynistic little twerp, but that doesn't alter the fact that "My Sharona" was one of the best singles of the decade. So maybe I should try to ignore their crass image-manipulation and smirking sexism and try to hear this stuff purely as music. O.K. here goes: *... but The Little Girls Understand*, Take 2 — *God*, they're not kidding! Pure pablum. "Baby Talks Dirty" is just "My Sharona" watered down and turned inside out, though I'll admit that it's still better than 90% of what passes for power pop today. "It's You" 's surging chorus sounds great on the radio, but the rest of this stuff makes the Banana Splits seem profound. You might consider investing 5 bucks in this anyway, since you can always take it down to the schoolyard to lure away a few teenyboppers; The Knack would understand. **The Buzzcocks** — *A Different Kind of Tension* (I.R.S.). This is actually pretty much the same kind of tension we saw on last year's model: catchy, Beatle-esque melodies propelled along by staccato Ramonesian power chording. Some of my colleagues swear by this stuff — personally, I feel their buzzing, droning guitar attack lacks dynamic tension and contrast. Interested parties are advised to check out *Singles Going Steady*, a compilation of their British 45's. **Merry Clayton** — *Emotion* (MCA). Clayton achieved instant rock immortality a decade ago with her incendiary vocal performance on "Gimme Shelter" — filling many of us with the hope that she might then go on to become the Aretha of the 70's. All of which makes the slick, homogenized R&B served up here all the more dispiriting. Only on "Let Me Make You Cry A Little Longer" does she deliver much of what the title promises, and even then it's more a stunt-flying display of chops than the real thing. Next time, just let it bleed...

P.S. Caught **The Clash** live right after finishing the review of *London Calling* (pg. 54). In concert, when and if they get focused, they're intense, direct and emotionally compelling — a pure and authentic manifestation of the unitive consciousness behind The New Music. Let's hope they can capture that spirit on vinyl next time. M

COUNTRY MUSIC.

Few musical opportunities offer as much variety as playing for your country in a United States Army band.

An Army band is a parade band. A concert band. A dance band. And various combos and ensembles.

The benefits are right in tune, too.

If you qualify, you'll enter the Army at an advanced pay grade.

You'll attend the School of Music. You'll perform with a first-line professional-quality instrument. You'll have a chance to travel. And a chance to earn up to 30 days vacation the first year.

You'll also have plenty of opportunity to do the only thing that's more fun than watching a parade.

Play in one.

For more information send attached postcard or write: Army Opportunities, P.O. Box 1776, Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10550.

JOIN THE PEOPLE WHO'VE JOINED THE ARMY.

HERBIE HANCOCK

Yet another transformation for the chameleon. His new album sports an impressive array of synthesized sound, typically gorgeous keyboard voicings, a tight groove and a new toy from Mattel.

By Conrad Silvert

Herbie Hancock, chameleon: classical piano student, jazz novice, Iowa College engineering aspirant, Chicago protege of Donald Byrd, composer of Mongo Santamaria hit, young sophisticate in Miles Davis' quintet, film scorer for Michaelangelo Antonioni, breakaway leader of the Mwandishi space band, synthesizer definer of jazz funk, "return" to acoustic jazz with V.S.O.P. and Chick Corea duets, disco experimenter with Vocoder vocalizing, rock & roll guitarist...

ROCK AND ROLL GUITARIST? What the hell is that?

Well, not exactly a guitarist, but it's pretty hard to tell. On his new album, *Monster*, Herbie is playing a Clavitar keyboard through a Mini-Moog and a Boogie amp top, and the result sounds virtually identical to a Stratocaster, feedback whine and all. Listen to the tail of "Saturday Night," where Herbie is trading riffs with Carlos Santana, and be surprised.

On *Monster*, one can still hear Herbie being Herbie, which means beautiful chords and harmony, semi-atonal right hand lines that seem suspended in space for all time, terrific funk chops that groove you to death ... in other words, Herbie playing like the Monster whiz kid of old. But, insists Herbie and his manager/producer for the past ten years, David Rubinson, *Monster* is his most radical departure since *Head Hunters*, the almost-million seller that is now a venerable seven years of age.

I don't completely agree with that analysis, because the sound of Herbie singing disco lyrics through a Vocoder, and the sight of him snaking across the stage with his tush waggling in the wind was a shock and a half. "Feets don't fail me now," indeed.

Herbie's flirtation with crooning was a mixed success, but whatever the outcome, one had to admire his nerve in trying something so challenging. And the way he tells it, it wasn't easy.

We conducted our interview upstairs at the Automatt in San Francisco, a facility (owned by Rubinson) which is, as they say, state of the art. Herbie was seated in a large rattan chair, a little bleary-eyed from having spent umpteen hours at the mixing board that week. But he was absolutely wide awake when I asked him if it felt a little awkward to sing and dance.

"Oh, awkward! I am so shy about moving that I have to almost be drunk to dance at a disco. And on stage, with all those people looking at me? Well, I decided that if I was going to sing, I didn't want to stand there like a statue. If I'm going to do it, I do the whole thing or else shut the fuck up and sit down (laughing). Don't get up there and bullshit — either do it or don't do it. I had to swallow my pride and my discomfort and go out and put everything I had into it. I figured I'd learn eventually if I had it in me. And I learned that I *do* have something there.

"If we never pushed ourselves, we'd never learn how to walk. We'd never leave the womb."

In Europe last year, audience reaction went from night to day. "In a few German cities, we had cups of water thrown onstage, fruit thrown at us, loud whistling and applause *during* the tune, which in Germany means that they hated the music. Not very many people did that, but they were really loud. And we in the band developed strength from that experience. We had to decide whether we wanted to stand up for what we believed. Each concert was a battle. Twice we lost and three times we won.

"In Hamburg we turned the audience around completely, an unbelievable victory. We were a half hour late because the hall had such bad electrical equipment, and the audience thought we were being really rude and disrespectful. They were booing before we played a note, so I walked offstage, waited, came back on, and they were *still* booing. Then I started hiding behind the amplifiers, playing games with them, and pretty soon they started to laugh. Then the band came out, and we were really *on* that night — every tune, the pacing, it was happening. And they ended up giving us a standing ovation.

"Now that was in Germany. In England, it was an opposite situation. The audiences all knew 'You Bet Your Love' because it was a Top Ten hit there. Everybody acted like I was Rod Stewart. The English audience was singing the lyrics. At one dance hall, all the employees were teenageers. Aside from the owners, maybe three people in the whole place were over 18 — and they were 19. The kids knew all the music. I loved it."

For the past few years, Herbie has led something of a dual career. After the success of the first V.S.O.P. concert at the Newport Jazz Festival, he's regularly done projects involving the acoustic piano — more V.S.O.P. concerts and albums, tours and albums with Corea, jazz trio albums for Japan with Ron Carter and Tony Williams, some work with Joni Mitchell ... and he plans to continue this kind of activity right alongside his more commercial stuff.

But Herbie's heart clearly belongs to his vast collection of adult toys — to his synthesizers, keyboard controllers, computers, sequencers, and tape machines. He is fascinated by modules, filters, oscillators, and envelopes. He loves to push those buttons and twist them dials.

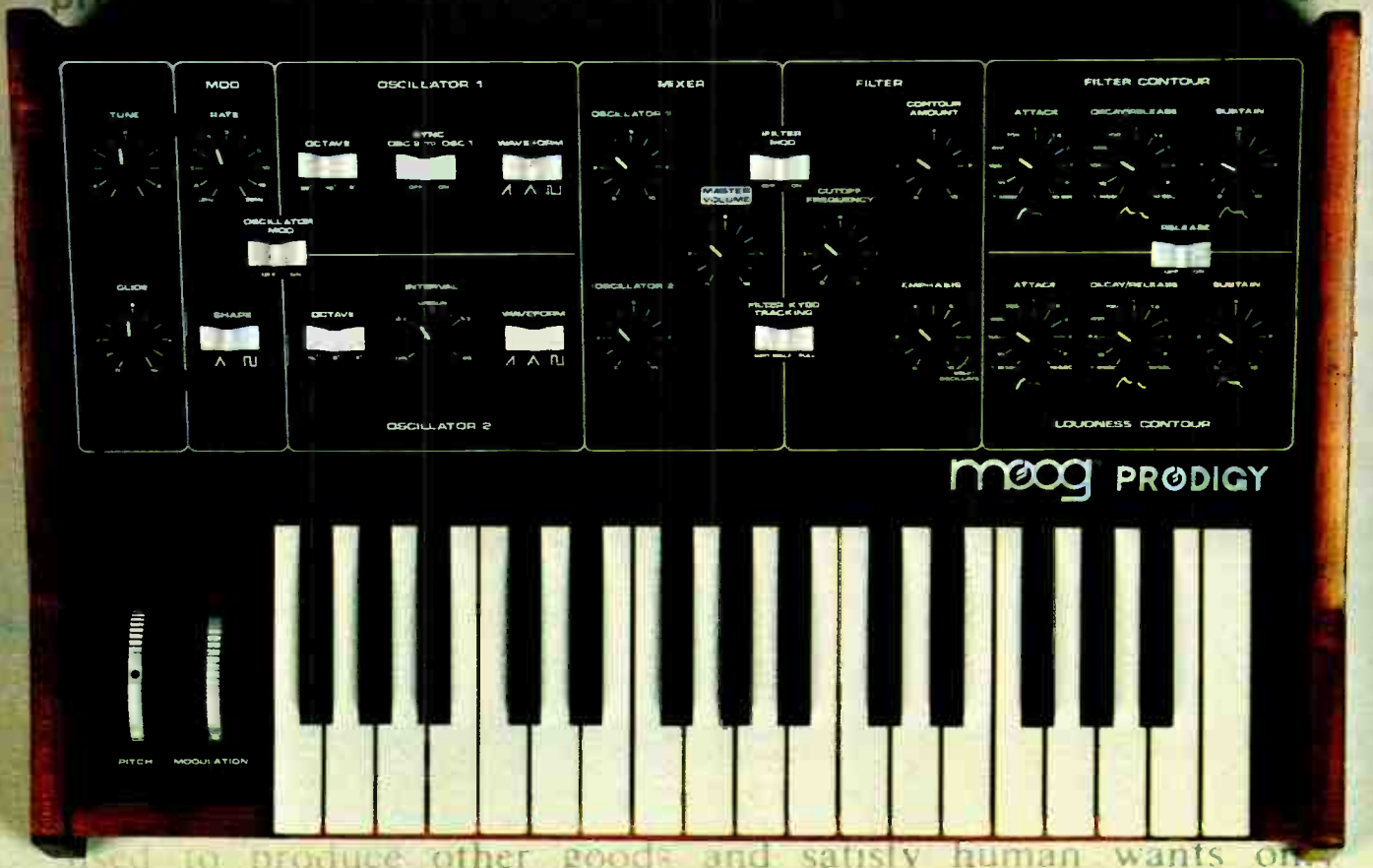
Above all, Herbie loves to explore the limitless tonal possibilities that are becoming available to him through synthesizer programming. His music sensibility has always been that of an impressionist, a colorist who hears shades of sound that are invisible to other musicians. Most of his career, Herbie expressed this through intriguing and beautiful harmonic ideas. His voicings are intuitively gorgeous. As he is learning more and more about synthesized sound, however, and as the technology is progressing to meet his demands, he is increasingly using sound itself as a means of expression.

Herbie's biggest technological breakthrough with *Monster* is his use of the Emu Polyphonic Keyboard. This amazing invention is not a synthesizer in itself, but rather a "controller" through which up to 16 different synthesizer voices can be channeled. The Emu also contains a sequencer with a prodigious memory bank that, like a modern day player piano, can be triggered to automatically play the equivalent of 12 minutes of 16-part harmony or something like five different songs' worth of basslines.

Herbie's sound engineer, Bryan Bell, along with electronics ace John Vieira, have been designing and building the equipment necessary to provide an effective interface between synthesizers made by different manufacturers. Now, through the single Emu keyboard

continued on page 78

prod·i·gy \'präd-ə-jē\ *n, pl* **-gies** [L *prodigium* omen, monster, fr. *pro-, prod-* + *-igium* (akin to *aio* I say) — more at ADAGE] **1 a** : a portentous event : OMEN **b** : something extraordinary or inexplicable **2 a** : an extraordinary, marvelous, or unusual accomplishment, deed, or event **b** : a highly talented child



LISTEN. IT LIVES UP TO ITS NAME.

production control *n* : systematic planning, coordinating, and directing of all manufacturing activities and influences to insure having goods made on time, of adequate quality, and at reasonable cost : [$495] **moog®** 2500 Walden Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14225

Wrap your sound around the Crumar Orchestrator.

Have you ever wondered how strings might sound in one of your songs? Or maybe some funky brass? Piano & Clavichord? Deep, punchier bass?

Well, the Crumar Orchestrator lets you do all that—and more. Completely polyphonic in all functions, the Orchestrator provides endless creative possibilities, from backup melodies to lead lines, with the finest Strings, Brass, Piano on the market.

Get wrapped up in the Crumar Orchestrator. At only $1650, it's the most music producing keyboard you can play.

For a demo record and full product literature, send $1.00 to

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY, INCORPORATED
105 FIFTH AVENUE
GARDEN CITY PARK, N.Y. 11040
(516) 747-7898

Blue Note *cont. from pg. 28*

first (and you have no trouble hearing the bass lines when Paul Chambers plays on Blue Note), but Lion had a gift with drummers. The empathy of Blakey, Van Gelder and Lion allowed the drummer and his horn soloists an equality of impact and a power and tension that defined hard bop. This success was repeated with other percussionists. Philly Joe Jones, for all his great work on Riverside and with Miles Davis, never *sounded* better than when he appeared on such Blue Note dates as *Newk's Time* by Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane's *Blue Train* and Hank Mobley's *Workout* (the last performed on someone else's kit, according to James Isaacs). Later Lion would introduce the astounding Tony Williams, and work extensively with Elvin Jones; and throughout these years there were other less heralded drummers — Pete LaRoca, Billy Higgins, Joe Chambers — who kept the edge on the music.

Lion worked with several of the late Fifties' most influential stylists (Blakey, Coltrane, Rollins, Silver, even Davis and Monk again, however briefly), but he also built a repertory company of soloists who were able to stay with the label and the changing music into the Sixties. Of these early hard boppers, Lee Morgan (trumpet), Jackie McLean (alto), Hank Mobley (tenor) and Sonny Clark (piano) were most memorable; and with the exception of Clark (who died in 1963), all were still Blue Note leaders past the point of Lion's active participation in the label. While Mobley and Clark are rhythmically too subtle to be merely pigeonholed as *hard* boppers, each of these men swings unceasingly, which may explain why they tended to be overlooked. Critics, who are often willing enough to grapple with the technical or structural aspects of a musician, have a harder time verbalizing rhythmic qualities and thus tend to give virtuosos who emphasize swing less credit. Clark, McLean, Mobley and Morgan didn't create the most ingenious phrases, but their tonal and rhythmic presence communicated immediately. And they knew how to work off drummers. (Trumpeter Kenny Dorham, one of the original Messengers, also belongs in this company.)

Horace Silver, who was present at the inception of hard bop and stayed with Blue Note for a quarter-century, epitomized a further key to Blue Note's success, one which became increasingly important as jazz evolved in the Sixties. As composer and leader, Silver made sure that his quintets simultaneously kept the blues at the center of their expression and looked for alternatives to the familiar symmetries of the song form. For all his identification with down-home funk, Silver constantly introduced unexpected changes, exotic rhythms and odd chorus structures into his pieces. This penchant for adding new touches without abandoning the venerable blossomed in the early Sixties in the music Wayne Shorter, Freddie Hubbard, Curtis Fuller and Cedar Walton contributed to the Jazz Messengers, and exploded shortly thereafter on Blue Note albums by Shorter, Hubbard, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, Andrew Hill, Joe Henderson, Bobby Hutcherson, Sam Rivers and an evolved McLean. While Lion was recording Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry and Cecil Taylor by 1966, the majority of Blue Notes from the period tempered exploration with tradition in the manner of the Miles Davis quintet (stocked with Blue Note contract players Shorter, Hancock and Mobley) and the classic John Coltrane quartet (two of whose members, McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones, eventually became Blue Note artists). Lion was not indifferent to the marketplace, and many later albums are marred with transparent attempts at bankable funk, yet listeners who make it through the obligatory soul tune are rewarded with supercharged jazz of uncommon substance. Lee Morgan's *Sidewinder* album is a perfect case in point.

I'm told that when Michael Cuscuna began investigating the Blue Note archives in 1975, he discovered something on the order of 150 previously unreleased sessions, many (like *Consequence* and *A Slice of the Top*) of comparable quality to those released to critical acclaim at the time. Since the Blue Note catalogue has changed ownership with escalating speed since Lion first sold the label to Liberty in 1966, Cuscuna (and, through 1978, Charlie Lourie) has had to scramble to get this material out while the conglomerate decision-makers were accommodating. Most recently, EMI has taken over UA (which owned Blue Note), and permitted Cuscuna to release albums in quantity both here and abroad. (Just prior to last fall's ten American releases, a similar batch of different unissued albums by Shorter, Green, Clark and others appeared in Japan.) While EMI now plans to continue unearthing Blue Note masters on a regular basis — Lou Donaldson and Andrew Hill sets are due shortly — Blue Note freaks like myself will insist that it is equally important to repackage the many classics which have gone out of print. These sessions should find an eager audience, given the current passion for reexamining the tradition. In the meantime, does anybody know where I can find a copy of *Soul Station*?

In addition to the Mobley and McLean albums, the current Blue Note release includes: Lee Morgan, *Sonic Boom*; Grant Green, *Solid*; Dexter Gordon, *Backstairs*; Jimmy Smith, *Confirmation*; Bobby Hutcherson, *Spiral*; Stanley Turrentine, *New Time Shuffle*; Donald Byrd, *Chant*; and Wayne Shorter, *The Soothsayer*. ◼

Deejays *cont. from pg. 22*

are the best among the many deejays who followed Hollywood's lead before establishing their own rapping persona. All of them are either from Harlem or the South Bronx and all are very proud of their inner city roots.

Their raps deal on a street level with the world that surrounds them. Like many a classic blues lyric the rapping deejays celebrate the ribald and raunchy, always with a sense of humor. Carrying the blues metaphor further the bravado that is part of the blues style also runs through the raps of almost every deejay.

The stuff of pop culture makes up a very important part of the rapping deejay's repertoire. The origin of Starski's name is obvious. In "Rapper's Delight" there is a long section devoted to the seduction of Lois Lane in which Superman is characterized as "a fairy" who "flies through the air in his red and blue pantyhose." This kind of pop culture fun and games has been practiced by George Clinton and Bootsy Collins quite successfully for several years now. Raping deejays are also masters of the ever-changing American language of slang. For example, a phrase such as "people in the back, if you're not the whack" is often used by deejays, but means nothing if you don't know what "the whack" means. The best definition possible is that if you don't know what it means you probably are "the whack," or may be even 'whacked' as in "That dude is whacked."

Some of the rappers' imagery mixes slang and pop culture so thickly that it takes some study to understand what's going down. In "Rapper's Delight" the term "Death OJ" is used. In current slang 'death' means something good, while OJ is a reference to a big car. Further study reveals that erstwhile football star and all-around adman O.J. Simpson does Hertz commercials featuring Ford and Lincoln Mercury cars. If we add 'death' to Ford and Lincoln Mercury cars (leaving out any disrespectful references to Pintos) we come up with the "Rapper's Delight" character driving off in a Lincoln Continental. How's that for musicology?

As for the future of rapping, I think it will become a prerequisite for all black club jocks (and many whites) to be fluent in some form of the language. The kids who enjoy rapping now will stay with it as they grow older, just as those in the doo-wop generation still treasure their memories and records. The early rap records will be collector's items, while independent labels will continue to feed the desire for new product. ◼

Bear *cont. from page. 54*

but what he and the rhythm section had going was still a glorified pickup band, and they were just beginning to move into something more fully the Bear's own. He had begun to suspect that he had a shot at being an original — something he had never really anticipated — but the record would be made before the music had a chance to mature. He had always held the naive assumption that once he got started in music he would have things exactly the way he wanted them, but he was learning something new about that every day.

He played a bittersweet little run reminiscent of Jackie McLean and realized, as his eyes swept the darkened nightclub again, that there was one spot in the room he had instinctively been avoiding, toward the rear, at a table partly obscured by a pillar and a hanging plant, where a pale small figure sat holding a cigarette, smoke rising above it in an undisturbed blue thread. It was a woman, and she looked almost familiar in the dimness, but every time he began to make her out something distracted his eyes and mind and he quickly looked away.

Suddenly and without seeing her, he knew that it was Iris. His time faltered badly, he played an egregiously wrong note, shook his head, squinted across the room, still couldn't identify her, tried to play again, it didn't take, he rubbed at his face and waved for Donelian to continue. He wanted it to be her, he didn't want it to be her, he would go backstage and forget about it, he would not go to her table, he felt himself being bound back onto the gain and loss of the earthly wheel and it was not what he wanted. He shook his head furiously to clear it. It was ludicrous that anyone should have such power over his heart.

Apparently he had walked across the room to her table. She stood up, smiled and took his paw as if he had rejoined her after a five minute absence at a party. "I knew it was you when I saw the article in the paper," she told him.

"Iris," he said, a real hotshot with the right word at the right time. Her impact on his heart was immediate, and he realized tht he still loved her, however much life had changed him. "Good God it's you."

"I would have come to see you sooner but you don't advertise your appearances.

"I'm like that," said the Bear, and wondered what to say next. M

— to be continued —

HANCOCK *cont. from pg. 74*

(and through the Prophet keyboard, sitting atop the Emu, and through the Clavitar keyboard, which Herbie slings over his shoulder), Herbie can select a far greater number of sounds simply by "dialing" them on what resembles a touchtone telephone keypad. The ulti-

mate upshot of all this will be the erasure of divisions between different instruments. Herbie's whole collection, in essence, will become a single instrument ... Arps, Oberheims, Moogs, etc. merging in a mega-synthesizer of enormous flexibility and range. It's a technology that logically should be adopted in the near future by other master players such as Josef Zawinul, and the results should be astounding. ■

Punk Jazz *cont. from pg. 40*

backwards, and it may keep on sounding that way. For my money, their best work is their earliest, on the import EP *Datapanik in the Year Zero*, though if you like that you might want to check out their three albums, *The Modern Dance*, *Dub Housing* and *New Picnic Time*.

Almost certainly the most interesting recent experiments at what I like to think of as the real fusion music have occurred in New York City. A lot of people credit the late Television and their leader Tom Verlaine in this department, although for my money Verlaine's guitar playing always sounded more like John Cipollina of old San Francisco acid-hippie band Quicksilver Messenger Service than anybody else. The first real-deal punk-jazz mix I heard around this town came from the recently disbanded Richard Hell and the Voidoids, and mainly from their lead guitarist Robert Quine, a brilliant musician who has somehow figured out a way to combine what Reed was up to in "I Heard Her Call My Name," James Williamson's work on Iggy and the Stooges *Raw Power*, and a heavy dose of the Miles Davis sound that began with *On the Corner* into something genuinely new.

In the past couple of years there have been almost too many experimental bands in New York to keep track of. The one that's gotten the most publicity is the Contortions, led by Ayler/James Brown devotee James Chance, who plays what is, according to your taste, either the most godawful or most interesting new sax around. Certainly at its best his playing, primitive as it is, has an edge and fury that's missing from the recent work of most of the holdover "free" players from the Sixties. Unfortunately, recently he's cut back on his sax work to concentate on perfecting his James Brown imitation, which isn't too convincing. He's released two albums, *Buy Contortions* and *Off-White* under the name James White and the Blacks, the former more interesting than the latter, but the best work by the original Contortions (who were all canned last year, owing to certain unfortunate aspects of Chance's temperament) is still on Brian Eno's 1978 anthology of Lower Manhattan "no-wave" bands, *No New York*. And come to think of it, his sax work has a precursor in James Brown, too: that guy who stood up in the middle of the title cut on Brown's *Super Bad* album and took that horrible raggedy solo which probably got him fired.

The last time I saw Chance he seemed to have paled (no pun intended) considerably, though his new band had a trombone player who was an absolute motherfucker. Later I found out that this was Joseph Bowie, brother of Lester Bowie, and *he* has been leading a somewhat more funk than punk group of his own called Defunkt around the New Wave clubs recently. Also more on the jazz side, though he plays some of the same venues, is the much-publicized James "Blood" Ulmer, a musician who obviously has lots of ideas that in my opinion he hasn't quite worked out to their fullest yet. (Though maybe that's the point with all his stuff.)

More interesting than Chance's current work is Eight Eyed Spy, led by former Teenage Jesus and the Jerks lead singer/guitarist Lydia Lunch. This time she's just singing, and her band, which includes some ex-Contortions, is probably the most interesting group in town right now — certainly they're the closest I've heard to what Beefheart was up to. You can also hear Lydia singing with some entertainly Kenton-like charts behind her on her recent album *Queen of Siam*, which also features several guitar solos by Robert Quine.

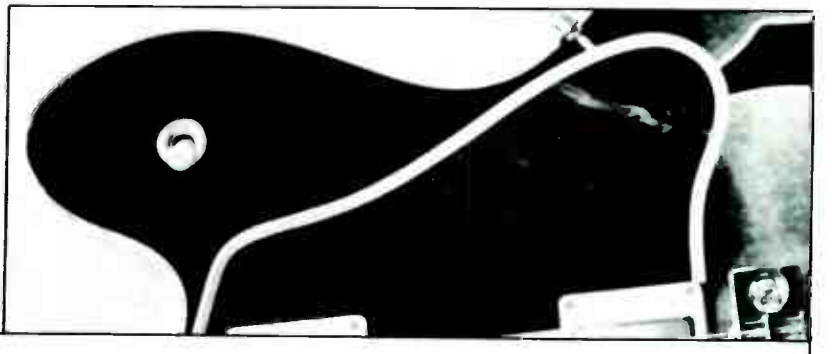
I don't know if Arto Lindsay of D.N.A. and the Lounge Lizards has learned a C chord yet, but I do know that he's listened to "I Heard Her Call My Name," and that D.N.A. (also on *No New York*) carry that particular form of aural sandpaper to new extremes, which is a compliment. The Lounge Lizards, a group also featuring horns, play what they call "fake jazz" — i.e., they don't really know the changes in the traditional sense, but they maintain a beatniky cool that never comes off camp and their instrumental explorations are interesting and refreshingly free of the oppressive solemnity that mires so many experimental groups.

There are more new bands of this ilk forming as I write these words, and where all this will end up is anybody's guess. Me, I keep nursing this suspicion that since almost nothing new has been going on in the American popular arts in general for a good while and a nostalgia-addicted nation keeps cannibalizing its own past (*cf. Grease* etc.), free jazz just might be the next big mass produced, promoted and consumed musical fad. I have distinct mixed feelings about that, but as far as I'm concerned almost *anything* is better than the kind of fusion music we've been served endless courses of the past few years. And I do know that from Frank Zappa to Pere Ubu is not so vast a step, that experimental music has never been more alive than at the beginning of the Eighties, and that if I were you I'd waste no time in getting the hell out there and checking all this stuff out. ■

STUDIO

GUITAR/JOHN AMARAL

REFERENCE RECORDINGS



Time is a very important shaping force in music. One example of this is that it is usually easy to recognize a melody from its rhythmic component. To demonstrate this, tap the rhythms to some well-known tunes for a friend, then play the melodies in all quarter notes. See if he or she can guess the tunes.

Additional cogent proof can be obtained by paying careful attention to the time feels of your favorite players. Everyone's time feel is as unique as his signature. Time is the primary element in the emotional transmission a player induces in his or her listeners. Developing your own time sense is of primary importance. Guitarists often have difficulty playing with good time because they are usually self-taught late starters. Wind players often develop good time early because of the impossible to avoid relationship between breathing and emotions. Guitarists and all instrumentalists, even if they *think* that they have a good time, can benefit from time development techniques using a metronome. The metronome can be thought of as a drummer's high-hat cymbal.

Besides being a repeatable reference for determination of tempos, a metronome is invaluable for improving your time sense. A metronome is a stable reference to which you can compare your internal "clock" as you play. As you become more proficient with time, use the metronome on fewer beats so that you are relying less on the metronome and more on yourself. For example:

1. On every beat.
2. On every other beat.
3. On every four beats. Etc.

Work on the ability to have the metronome beat at any consistent place in the bar. In general:

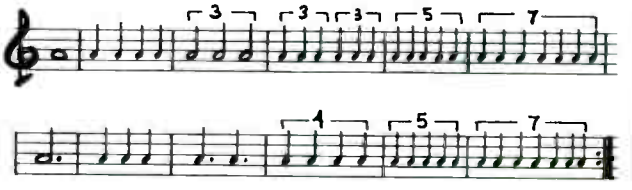
1. 4/4 Rock, Latin, Classical (straight eighths) = metronome beating one and three.
2. 4/4 Swing (jazz eighths) = metronome beating two and four.

Straight eighths means that the underlying eighth note pulse is perfectly even, with strong accents coming on the beat. *Jazz eighths* means that the underlying eighth note pulse is even and off beat eighth notes are accented. Listening to particular players is the only way I know to understand this concept. Listen to Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Bill Evans, Wes Montgomery, John Coltrane, Joe Pass, etc.

Change tempos often. Play very fast and very slow. Be aware of internal rhythms and rhythms in the outside world.

What to look for in a metronome:
1. Each beat should be perfectly regular. You should not be able to detect a difference in sound from beat to beat.
2. It should not noticeably change speed.
3. It should sound natural and not harsh. Ideally, the tone should be regulatable. Electromechanical metronomes sound more natural because they have mechanical pulse sources.
4. It should be loud but have a means of volume control.
5. It should be portable and preferably independent of A.C.
6. It should have a wide range, especially in the lower part of its range.
7. Accuracy should not be a function of battery life.

This month's exercise is very helpful for developing a time sense which is precise and immediately accesible to you. Start with the metronome beating on 1 of each bar, later try putting it on 1 and 3 or 2 and 4. You will be surprised how much this exercise will help your awareness of time. For more helpful time development exercises, see my book *Guitar Jazz-Rock Improvising.*



NEXT MONTH: Lick Development — Part I

If you play guitar...

Suggested List Price: **$550.**

that's not all you can play.

YOU CAN GET OVER 2000 NEW SOUNDS WITH YOUR GUITAR USING THE NEW KORG X-911 GUITAR SYNTHESIZER

Imagine creating today's incredible synthesizer effects with your guitar. Or turning your guitar into a totally different instrument (for example, a flute, fuzz guitar, electric bass, violin, tuba or trumpet.)

The X-911 Guitar Synthesizer is designed specifically as a *performance* instrument—to enhance, not interfere with your playing style. Just plug in your guitar, (no special pick-ups or drilling required) and with the touch of a button, you can select from a wide range of separately adjustable instrument and synthesizer sounds, or *mix* them together *instantly.*

Even if you thought you could make a guitar do "anything"—with the X-911, you can make it do a whole lot more!

Send **$1.00** for Demo Tape to:
Unicord 89 FROST STREET, WESTBURY, NY 11590

KORG ***puts synthesizers within reach.***

STUDIO

CONTEMPORARY HARMONY/RON DELP

ARRANGING: HARMONIZING A MELODY

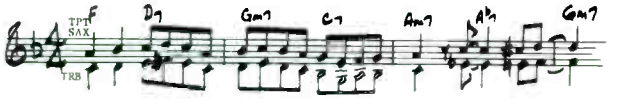
Last time we covered the most basic two-horn arranging concept: voicings in 3rds and 6ths. 3rds and 6ths are also the most basic forms for three horns. Though more complete harmony is possible with three horns, it will still be difficult to produce a true 'band sound', which (usually) requires four part harmony.

With three horns there are three primary possibilities:

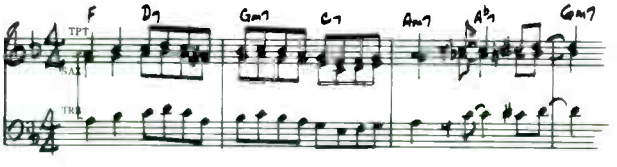
1) unison and octave unison
2) concerted voicings (also called 'block style')
3) independent parts

Unison is obvious — two or all three horns play the same line in unison and/or octave unison. *Concerted voicings* means one horn plays the melody line while the other two follow it in harmony. I'll get to independent parts later.

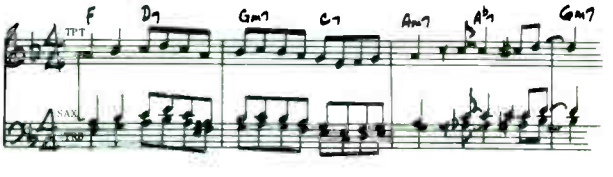
There are a few different things you can do in the concerted style. One is putting two horns on the melody (for strength) with the other harmonized in 3rds and/or 6ths. In this example, Tpt. and Sax play the melody in unison, with Trombone playing the line a 6th below:



For a fatter sound (range permitting) you could use Tpt. on the melody, Sax in harmony a 3rd or 6th below, and Trb. doubling the melody an octave lower:



A third idea, giving more weight on the bottom, would be to put Tpt. on the melody, Sax on melody an octave lower, and Trb. in harmony a 3rd or 6th below that.

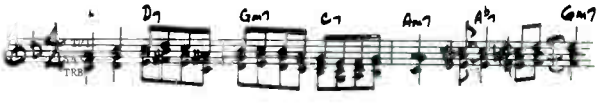


Realize that Sax and Tpt. could exchange parts, providing the line you choose for each instrument is within that instrument's range. In fact, these ideas will work for any combination of horns — trumpets, saxes, trombones, etc. Sometimes the playing range of the instruments you use will rule out the use of one or another technique.

Also remember that just because you might have three horns available doesn't mean that all three have to blow at the same time. Variety comes from using various combinations of horns and harmonization ideas. Unfortunately, the only way you will ever learn that is to do some writing so that you learn the sound of each device and instrument grouping.

The simplest concerted technique for three-part harmony is this: put one horn on the melody with another harmonized in 6ths. Then insert the third horn between the two lines, playing either a 3rd or *4th* below the melody. The outside two horns form a consonant interval (6ths) and the inner horn can move between 3rds and 4ths. This option in the inner voice means that you can get a more full chord quality sound at times.

In the following example, Tpt. and Trb. play in 6ths; Sax is inserted between them consistently in 3rds. It works:



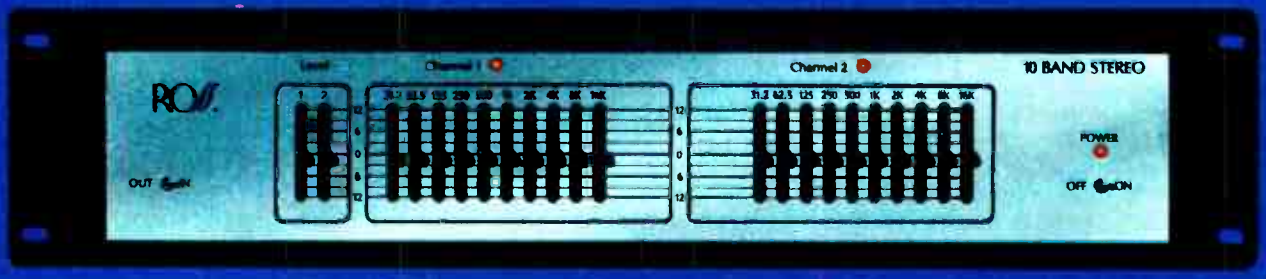
If you will check the last bar on the A*b*7 chord you see that the root is played by the sax. It moves chromatically to A under the C# (remember: that is a chromatic passing situation). I have the option there of using the note a 4th below the A*b* and A , which would be G*b* and G♮. G*b* is the 7th of A*b*7 and would give stronger chord sound than the root. G on A7 is the 7th, too. Again, stronger chord sound. I could move the G to A on the G*m*7 chord which would work (A is the 9th on G*m*7). But B*b* is a chord tone and would provide a fuller chord sound. Take a look:

These three-horn ideas work not only in a three-horn band, but are also used within a larger group — for example, for three saxes within a nine-horn band. I'll cover more next time.

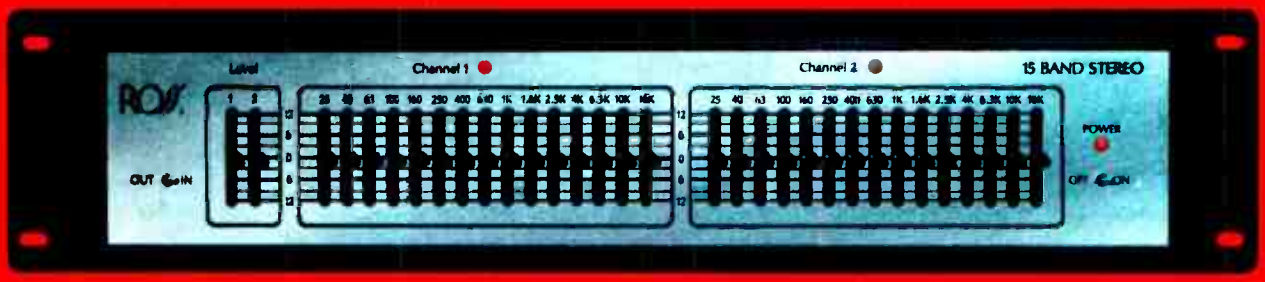
ROSS

MADE IN U.S.A.

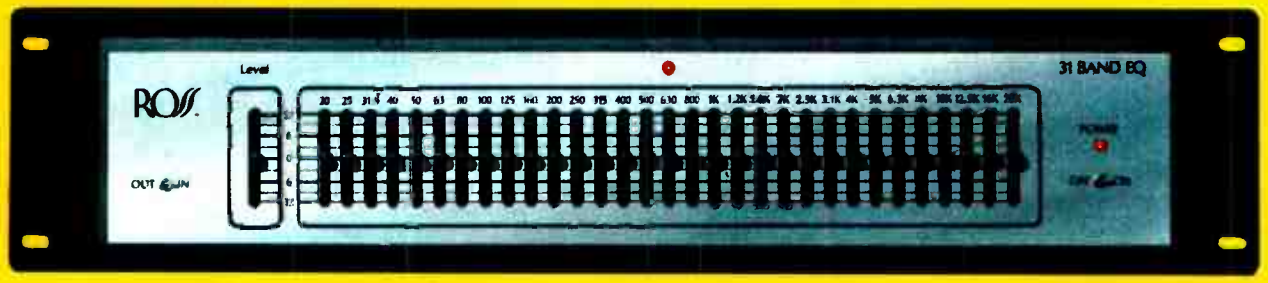
Keas Electronics, Inc.
210 W. Main
Chanute, Kansas 66720



$239.95



$289.95



$299.95

best buys

Latin Percussion has developed the Everything Rack to properly manage the playing and placement of percussion accessories. The basic rack kit comes with one rack into which can be inserted the 21" x ⅜" diameter rod for attaching to a cymbal stand or the LP 332 Bongo stand along with three wood block holders and three special pins for holding cowbells, etc. A special accessory holder for hanging items such as triangles is also available. $33.00. LP, 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026.

DOD Electronics has introduced its Phasor 490, a four stage regeneration phasing unit with up to 720 degrees of phase shift producing all of the classic phasing effects along with colorful regeneration. The speed control covers a wide range from 100 ms to 9 seconds while the regeneration control is variable from 0 to 100% producing standard phasing or a strong regeneration phasing. DOD, 2950 S. 242 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115.

Korg introduces the X911, a monophonic guitar synthesizer with pre-programmed pre-set control and separate variability for each pre-set function. This synthesizer has eleven mixable voices, each user-variable and it includes an advanced design pitch to voltage converter with excellent tracking accuracy and pitch stability; envelope follower functions; VCO with two sub-octaves and the eleven mixable voices, each separately articulated. Other features include footswitch operated portamento, infinite sustain, variable interval and synthesizer cancel functions. It also allows direct "fuzz" and processed guitar sounds to be produced for polyphonic effects. Unicord, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590.

Roland announces its expansion into the area of Powered PA Mixers with the introduction of the Roland PA 80 and the PA 150. Shown is the PA 150, an 8-input/2-output audio control center that delivers a clean 75 watts rms per channel into 4 ohms and accepts signals from mics, instruments, signal processors and tape recorders. The PA 150 has a 9 band graphic equalizer for each output channel and XLR input jacks. Each input channel has a combination On/Off Effect Selector switch that, when activated sends a portion of the signal to either the Echo Effect Buss or to the Reverb Effect Buss (built-in spring reverb). Both the 80 and the 150 are designed so they can be combined with another mixer and feature Record Out jacks, stereo headphone jacks and LEDs. Roland Corp US, 2401 Saybrook Ave., L.A., Cal. 90040.

KING Musical Insts. has just introduced its new trombone line for 1980. The most visible new feature is the specially designed "gold brass" bell with a higher percentage of copper in its design to produce a warmer, darker sound. This special "gold brass" also offers better projection for the instrument. Other features included in the line are the famous King slides. Straightened by hand, not machine, the tubes run a true parallel. One-piece inside and outside drawn nickel silver slide tubes provide smooth action. Valves are honed to such high tolerances that leakage is eliminated. King Insts., 33999 Curtis Blvd., Eastlake, Ohio 44094.

After a concentrated bout of comparison shopping for our own office system, we at *Musician* have found the **Polk Audio** Monitor speakers so vastly superior to the competition in their price range we felt we had to pass the information along. The Polks use a fluid-coupled 10" passive radiator to handle deep bass, 6½" drivers to take the mid-bass and mid-range, and a crystal clear soft-dome tweeter. The design produces a remarkably well integrated and coherent sound that adapts itself ideally to all kinds of music. The Model 10's, at $500 a pair, have two mid-drivers, a large bookshelf cabinet and produce the kind of open, uncolored, perfectly imaged sound we thought began at twice the price and required huge amounts of amplification. The Polk 10's will benefit from state-of-the-art electronics, but sound quite magnificent with a good mid-powered, popular brand receiver. The Model 7 (pictured), in a smaller cabinet and with one driver, has a tighter, punchier sound than the 10 and the same uncolored presentation. At $360 a pair, they make the popular speakers in that price range seem dim, colored, boxy, unmusical and just plain insufficient. If you're shopping for stereo, our advice is not to buy speakers until you've heard the Polks. (If you can't find a local retailer who has them, write Polk Audio, 1205 South Carey St., Baltimore, MD 21230.)

Delaying Tactics

When you need a clean delay of up to 330 ms. the DOD 680 Analog Delay is for you. No tapes or mechanical problems, ever! Only 100% solid state reliability, utilizing CCD technology. The DOD 680 is ideal for instrument, mono PA or stereo PA by using the dual mix controls and output jacks. And more good news, the DOD 680 Analog Delay is only $189.95 list!

DOD ELECTRONICS CORPORATION, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, 84115

Reggae *cont. from pg. 46*

position as the "living God."

Marley belongs to the Twelve Tribes Rasta group, which originated in the early 60's with a new commitment to social and political perspectives. The group's popularity rose, of course, with Marley's success, but he is also sympathetic toward the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Nyabingi Rasta group is the strictest, and was the only real Rasta organization until the 60's. When the original Wailers disbanded, the whole religious debate heated up, Marley being a member of the Twelve Tribes and Tosh and Bunny Wailer leaning toward the Nyabingi beliefs and the Rastafarian Movement Association, yet another sub-sect. To Jamaican "Nyah Men," as they're called, one of Marley's main transgressions is that he is too willing to meet Babylon on its own terms, to act the star, to be accessible. But his acceptance of the *Osahene* title in Chicago was, they feel, the ultimate mistake and ran contrary to the basic tenets of the Nyah beliefs. Only Ras Tafari, Haile Selassie I, can be addressed in terms which refer to a living God. To these Rastas, Marley is only a prophet in Babylon, telling Babylon what it wants to hear, in its own language.

The Twelve Tribes Rastas, Marley's own group, see him as a true prophet, while the Nyabingis and other stricter cults consider him a false Rasta, a "folly boy." Among rank and file Jamaicans, Marley is, of course, influential. If he ran for office in the next Jamaican election, few doubt that he'd get 80% of the vote. It was Marley who created the situation in January of 1978 in which a peace treaty could be effected (under the auspices of the Twelve Tribes Organization) between rivalling factions of the two major political parties involved in bloody street warfare. The One Love Peace Concert in the mid-70's, brought the opposing political leaders — Prime Minister Manley and Jamaican Labour Party leader Edward Seaga — up on stage in a gesture of unity. And following a botched assassination attempt on Marley in 1976 before the Smile Jamaica Concert, and a period of self-preserving exile, Marley headlined the Reggae Sunsplash concert in Montego Bay last summer.

On another level, Marley's superstar status only exists in Babylon. In Jamaica today, rapping DJ's, whose "toasting" raps over hypnotically bass-heavy soundtracks, are among the most popular musical performers. Harmony groups are also still big stuff on the island. The Abyssinians and Israel Vibrations both sport near-heavenly trio harmonies, featuring unbelievably evocative falsettoes. Several vocal groups have excellent new albums available in the States. The Mighty Diamonds' *Deeper Roots* (Virgin Intl.) album features this trio's traditional but very solid harmonies and basically upbeat Rasta message, all done with a pleasing pop quality that never subtracts from their basic mainstream reggae approach. Culture's *International Herb* (Virgin Intl.), as the album title suggests,

So, ever so slowly, reggae is taking a foothold in the U.S. The white American audience will probably need to identify with some major star or band, perhaps from England, before it makes the connection back to reggae's roots. Conversely, the black American currently prefers slicker production and material than reggae's funk now offers. Thus, it will probably never be an apparently overnight sensation like disco or new wave, but is less likely to be a mere passing fancy, because it is an indigenous music (to Jamaicans) with deep-rooted traditions. Articles on reggae's heightening impact have appeared in American music trade magazines this year (notably *Billboard*), and in early February the first International Reggae Forum took place in Los Angeles. Reggae radio programming is still scant here, but improving. In L.A. and San Francisco, community stations program the music, and New York's WLIB-AM features Caribbean music seven days a week, with a "strictly rocker and dub" segment each day. Several clubs in New York have recorded DJ music, dub-style, as well as regular showcases for some fine local reggae bands like Monyaka, Jah Mallah, and the very talented singer Max Romeo.

But no matter what problems face reggae and Bob Marley in Babylon or at home, he continues fashioning, to these ears, the most original and moving reggae music ever played. Just listen to the magnificently concise introduction on "Africa Unite" from *Survival*. In a few bars of chanting and simple melody, Marley and the Wailers manage to imply the entire African-Jamaican/Third World connection in history, painting vibrational pictures that are worth a thousand words. And heard live, his music's total healing, cathartic experience is simply awesome. Marley's eloquence is still in his music, reggae music, rebel music. As his wife Rita said to me after that soundcheck in L.A. last November, "I know that this is the music that His Majesty is well pleased of, because He loves music, let's face it. We were taught in the Bible that 'singers and players of instruments shall be there,' so we know that the music is a representation of the people to God. 'Cause God listens to music .... if you're singing, God's listening ...." M

Jem Records, a mail-order company and distributor, regularly imports reggae albums from Jamaica and Europe. For a copy of their extensive catalog, which includes more than reggae imports, send $2.00 to Import Record Service, P.O. Box 343, South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080. (201) 241-6604.

"Carnegie Hall it isn't, but it's payin' for my Zildjians."

Steve Arnold

You name it, Steve Arnold has played it. The Catskills. Club dates. Casuals. The Ukranian Labor Society.

And through it all, his Zildjians have helped him be the best musician he can possibly be under whatever crazy circumstances he's had to perform.

Take Steve's 14-inch Zildjian New Beat Hi Hats – the most versatile Hi Hats Zildjian has ever made. Extremely fast response, powerful projection, and pinpoint definition make them an excellent cymbal for almost every type of music from moderately heavy concert rock to light jazz in a small room.

Steve Arnold's Zildjians give him more sounds to work with than any other make. That's because we mix our own alloy from virgin metals using a formula that's been a Zildjian family secret for over 350 years. Then we put them through a unique 23-step rolling and lathing process.

That's why most drummers in the world agree that the 130-plus Zildjian cymbals are the most expressive instruments you can buy in a cymbal department.

And why drummers everywhere, in every field of music, at every level of proficiency, play more Zildjian cymbals than all others put together.

Including Steve Arnold, who, if you've got a gig coming up and you lose your drummer at the last minute, is available.

The full-color, no-holds-barred Zildjian catalog will make you more knowledgeable about cymbals, and help you decide which Zildjians are right for you. It's yours free from Avedis Zildjian Company, P.O. Box 198, Accord, MA 02018.

Zildjian

AVEDIS ZILDJIAN CO.

The only serious choice.

Avedis Zildjian Company, Cymbal Makers Since 1623, Longwater Drive, Norwell, Mass. 02061 USA