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NATIONAL JAZZ
MAGAZINE

**GEORGE BENSON
ON TOUR!**



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...Lloyd Swanton

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ROBERT SUSZ
- STEVE LACY
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AUSTRALIAN JAZZ AND BLUES

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John Shand

Administrative Assistant

Rachel Walker

Graphic Design

Maria Elizabeth

Contributors

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Peter Jordan • Gail Brennan

Michele Morgan • Edward Primrose

Tony Wellington • Tony Peri

Jill Morris • Elisa Valli • Phil Marks,

Gavin Mcleod • Dick Hughes • Clive Lochner

Queensland

Barry Ralph

ACT

Peter Gelling • Rod Andrew

Victoria

Adrian Jackson

South Australia

David Sly

Western Australia

Garry Lee • Max R. Harris

Tasmania

Steve Robertson

New Zealand

Graham Reid • Blind Mango Chutney

Advertising Consultants

Clive Lochner • George Moussa

Operations Manager

Anthony Alaga

Public Relations Manager

Jackie Lee

Circulation and Distribution Manager

Wally Wrightman

Advertising Manager

Eddie McIntosh

Administration & Finance Manager

Owen Gan

Managing Director

Prasad Menon

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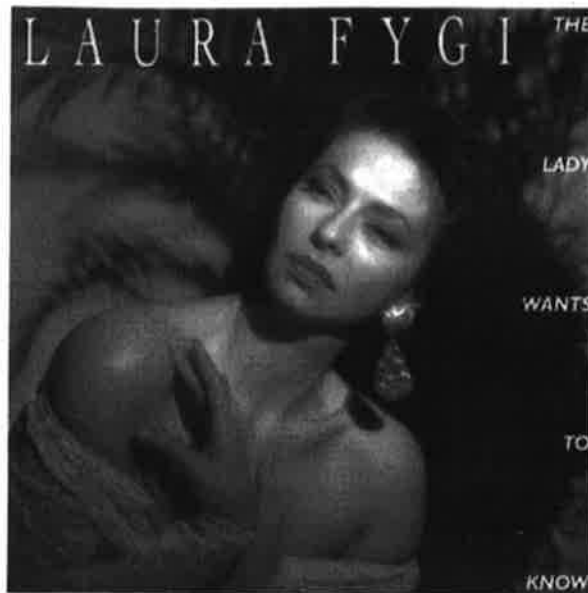
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BENSON

Platinum Man *by Peter Jordan*

With 30 million albums sold, George Benson is the platinum man of jazz-pop, the undisputed king of crossover. While some jazz aficionados continue to rue his loss to more serious music, Benson continues to delight fans around the world with the sound of his mellifluous voice and sweet guitar.

It all began when George won a singing contest at the age of four. At eight, he was busking with a ukelele, and two years later, he was something of a child-star for RCA.

But Benson really made his name playing in Jack McDuff's band in the early 60s, and went on to record with Freddie Hubbard, Jaki Byard, Miles Davis before releasing a string of funk-infused and, increasingly, commercially-inspired records for A&M and CTI in the '70s.

Benson then moved to Warner Brothers - a partnership that proved an immediate success: his debut album for the label, *Breezin'*, sold more than six million copies and earned three Grammy awards.

Before beginning his December tour of Australia, George Benson spoke to Peter Jordan from his New Jersey home.

JaB: You developed your reputation as a guitarist. How did the singing come about?

GB: Actually, I was a singer first. As a little boy I made records for RCA when it was the biggest [record] company in the world. I recorded singles when 45s were just coming on the market and it was the guitar that came later. Even though I have played

since I was nine years old, I was a singer long before that. My mother was a singer and she used to sing all the time, so I inherited that.

JaB: You've been compared to Nat King Cole: you both were known initially as instrumentalists and later found a larger audience as singers. Is that a valid comparison, do you think?

GB: It is on one hand, but Nat Cole...there is no comparison. Because of the era he came up in there was nobody else crossing over like that. He was one of a kind. People just ate his records up. There is a similarity, but in my mind, I never compare anyone with Nat Cole. He was my mentor and I think by him showing me what could be done I never gave up, and I did find an audience for my music.

JaB: Speaking of role models, how significant was Wes Montgomery in your development as a musician?

GB: He influenced me the way Charlie Christian influenced him. Charlie Christian being from the Benny Goodman Band way back in the late thirties and early forties. I met Montgomery when I was a young man and he gave me a lot of encouragement and I took his career to heart and saw how he dealt with people and what kind of music they were accepting from him. So I kind of incorporated that attitude into what I did.

JaB: So he gave you more than advice on questions of musicianship?

GB: Oh yeah. He was a very, very humble kind of fellow. Although he was always considered the best as long as I knew him - from about 1961 on until the time of his death [1968] - he was considered the top jazz guitar player in the world. Later he became a pop guitarist and I loved him from day one. But I never saw any instrumentalist enjoy

that kind of popularity and success and still remain what he was to people. He came across as an average, everyday fellow.

JaB: The *Breezin'* album was, I suppose, a major turning point in your career. It was the first platinum record produced by a jazz musician. How do you look back on that period now? Were you astounded by your success?

GB: Very much so. No-one imagined that a jazz musician could turn up a platinum album. So many people had come over the 500-thousand, 600-thousand, 700-thousand mark, but no-one had reached that million mark. When we did reach that first million mark, which I was so elated by, the record company said to themselves: "Well, if we sold one [million] we probably can do two". So they went for it, and when we got to two, they said the same thing. Now we're up over eight million copies and still going strong.

JaB: Did that success give you a greater degree of control of your career; allow to make the choices that otherwise would have been made by your record company?

GB: Not necessarily. The record company or anybody that had anything to do with that would say: "Hey, I'm the one who made it happen". So I still had to fight for my own ideas and I did for a few years, too. I fought like crazy. Unfortunately, you win enemies when you do that. Trying to fight for what you believe in and trying to convince others that it's the right way to go when they see things from a different point of view. That's very natural.

JaB: I remember reading somewhere that you said you could make the best jazz album in the world and it would probably sit on the shelf, unreleased. Have you actually recorded things that haven't been released?

GB: Well, I've done that too, but I was talking about in general. Look at all those great musicians that are walking the streets that've made records that are worthy of hearing, but they just don't get heard. I think the problem is the jazz musicians really don't sell the music- jazz - they sell *themselves*. To find an audience, I think you have to put something on that record that people want to hear. But first you've got to get to the disc jockeys and convince them it's worthy of playing: will it fit into their format? Can they play that record and convince people that it's supposed to be on their show. So it's quite a problem, but I've proven over the years that it can be dealt with, with up to thirty million records sold or more. So I don't know how many jazz musicians can make that claim today.

JaB: You were offered a spot in Miles Davis's band in the late 60's. Do you ever regret not taking up that opportunity?

GB: I did for a long time, but Miles and I were friends for years. Every time I talked to him, he had a great feeling for what I did. He always asked me about my theories: what do I think about when I play. He said: "Hey, man, I've been able to figure out where you're coming from harmonically, but I really like what you're doing. What kind of theories are you putting forth when you play?" Then he would explain to me his concepts, which were very, very simply based.

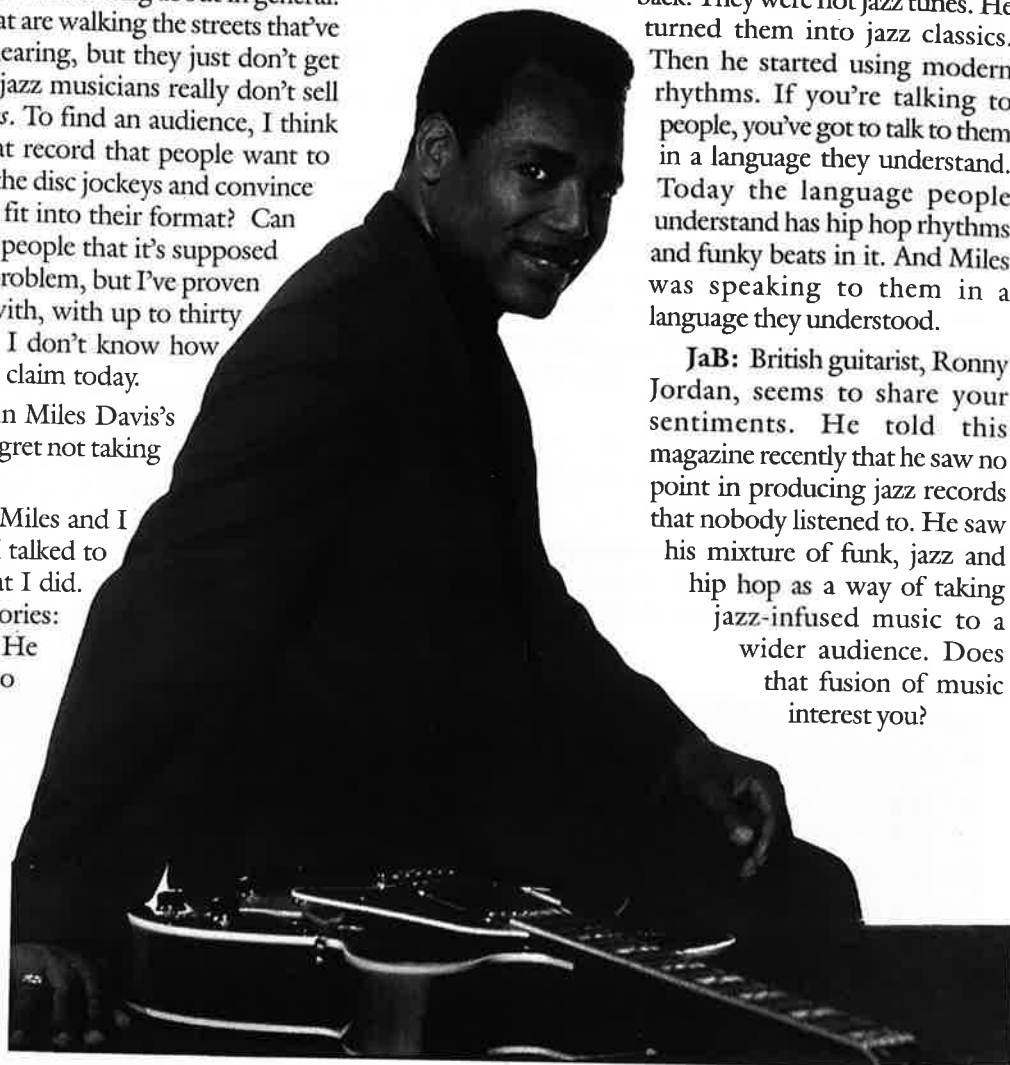
But when you hear Miles, he plays few notes, but they're very complex in their mark-up and they say a lot. He seems to pick the exact right ones to paint a beautiful picture. Mine is just the opposite: I play a lot of notes to accomplish what I want to say. So he had great respect for me, so when I found out that he loved me, I stopped regretting the fact that I didn't join him.

JaB: You played on one track on the *Miles in the Sky* album [1968]. Did you enjoy the experience?

GB: It was quite a date. There were a lot of things that were happening politically between Miles and his record company. He walked out on the record date twice, then on the third day I refused to come, because I said: "I don't want to take your money, Miles". He said: "Man, we're gonna record, come on down." So we came down and finally etched out that one tune. It was exciting, but I don't think I was ready for it then. But Miles loved it, he loved it alot.

JaB: What do you think of Miles' approach to popular songs?

GB: People think it's a big thing that he recorded one of Cindy Lauper's songs [*Time After Time*]. That's not a big deal. Miles Davis recorded pop tunes way



back. They were not jazz tunes. He turned them into jazz classics. Then he started using modern rhythms. If you're talking to people, you've got to talk to them in a language they understand. Today the language people understand has hip hop rhythms and funky beats in it. And Miles was speaking to them in a language they understood.

JaB: British guitarist, Ronny Jordan, seems to share your sentiments. He told this magazine recently that he saw no point in producing jazz records that nobody listened to. He saw his mixture of funk, jazz and hip hop as a way of taking jazz-infused music to a wider audience. Does that fusion of music interest you?

Look at all those great musicians that are walking the streets that've made records that are worthy of hearing, but they just don't get heard. I think the problem is the jazz musicians really don't sell the music, jazz, they sell themselves.

George Benson plays his own signature range of Ibanez guitars with D'Addario strings. He uses a Polytone 104 amplifier in the recording studio and a Fender Twin amp when performing.

GB: Oh definitely. If you listen to my earlier albums, we didn't have hip hop, but we certainly included the funk. I would love to find some songs that would lend themselves to that kind of thing. Ronny's found a nice little groove with that; he's got a nice feel for that [amalgam of styles] because he's a man of this time. So it's very natural for him to think that way and he does a great job. I enjoy him very much.

JaB: What else have you heard recently that has made an impression?

GB: Amazing thing, I don't really listen just for tunes, I listen for harmony. I'm looking for something new in the approach that a musician may take. That interests me more because I know what an approach can do. It can set up a groove for anything. Once people like the approach then you can record *Mary Had A Little Lamb* and they'll love it. □

Remember FUN, the thing you had in your late teens? The ingredients were sex, drugs, alcohol and, of course, music.

Some music we associate with fun in a nostalgic way: the songs that were current during those first shy-and-eager forays with the pants off, or when you smoked your first joint, or threw up copious quantities of some vile, teenage booze confection. Other music actually radiates its own sense of fun: Louis Armstrong, early Beatles, early Frank Zappa, chunks of Lester Bowie, Eric Satie and Jon Rose all spring to mind.

And The Catholics. They present pure aural fun, seemingly unadulterated by arty or commercial considerations. Theirs is music to smile and dance to.

On stage, The Catholics spend a lot of time smiling - at each other and at the merrily dancing audience. But if you just want to listen, you can delight in the fact that this is

"My dad, who was a non-professional violinist, bought them to muck around on. One of them was brought up to scratch for me to play. The other one was pretty much unusable. My dad bought it off this guy who not only dropped it down some stairs, but then fell into it!"

At this stage, Lloyd's only contact with jazz was a much admired Ellington record of his father's, with *Black and Tan Fantasy* on one side, and *Mood Indigo* on the other. Some school friends were aware of Dave Brubeck, but it was the virtuoso rock guitarists like Jeff Beck who really fired his imagination. John McLaughlin was then only one step away, which paved the way for Mingus and Miles Davis.

"I definitely had this perception that the bass player got a better share of the limelight in the jazz idiom," he said, which led him to apply to do Jazz Studies at the New South Wales Conservatorium. "I think they needed bass players in the course, because I could barely play a 12-bar blues. I could read music on the bass - I'd played in theatre musicals at school, and in some orchestras - but I didn't know a great deal about the idiom at all. It's kind of scary to turn up on the first day, and

Fun Music Rules - No 'K'!

exceptionally well-made fun, with Lloyd Swanton on basses, Dave Brewer, guitar, Sandy Evans, saxes, James Greening, trombone, Toby Hall, drums, Michel Rose, pedal steel guitar, and Fabian Hevia on percussion.

But what stands out is how *different* it is. I mean, *pedal steel*? Happily, there is no label for this infectious conglomeration of jazz, latin, afro, reggae, country and blues. The common denominator, other than the effervescence of all the players, is the man who put it all together and who writes most of the songs, Lloyd Swanton.

Born in Sydney in 1960, Swanton was glued to the pop charts by the age of nine, falling in love with such hits as *Born to be Wild* and *Maggie May*. It was a period of his childhood that he recalled with affection, as we chatted on the terrace of a bar overlooking Bondi Beach.

"Then I got side-tracked," he explained, "and wasn't into music until my mid-teens, when I got into heavy metal: Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin and the like. My best friend bought an electric guitar, so I said I'd get a bass guitar, not really knowing what a bass guitar even was. I think I had observed it had four strings, not six. Then, around sixteen or seventeen, I realised there were two double basses at home."

This, I observed, rather contrasts the Swanton household with your average family home...

there's Chris Abrahams, Dale Barlow and James Morrison, none of whom I'd ever heard of, but I could hear that they certainly knew how to play their instruments."

Together with pianist Abrahams, saxophonist Barlow and drummer Andrew Gander, Swanton formed the band that catapulted the four of them to prominence fifteen years ago: the Benders. They may not have broken much new ground musically, but they did offer a kick in the pants to the local jazz scene with their youth, exuberance, ambition and dedication.

"We approached the band like a rock band in terms of our loyalty. We never used fill-ins unless it was a last-minute disaster. This was at a time when the freelance mentality was very strong

It's not as if just by putting together this weird combination of instruments you'll create a whole new style of music, but by putting the same old combination together, you're really limiting your chances of coming up with anything new.



The catholics (l to r): Sandy Evans, Toby Hall, Michel Rose, Swanton, Dave Brewer, ex-percussionist Sammila Sithole, James Greening

LLOYD SWANTON, high priest of The catholics, confesses all to John Shand.

LLOYD SWANTON'S EQUIPMENT

"I use a Gallien-Krueger 400RB bass head, with a Hartke Transporter 4 x 10" speaker box. My double bass is a Thibbouville-Lamy, French, about 120 years old, with gut strings on the G & D, Corelli on the A & E. I use a Fishman transducer and a Crown microphone, and mix the signals with a Fishman Bass Blender - the best thing since sliced bread! I play an Ibanez Roadstar II bass guitar with a two octave neck. It's a bright red colour, which doesn't exist in the catalogue, so I don't know what the story is. I use Yamaha roundwound strings, as dead as possible - the last set were on for about six years!"

in the jazz scene. But we had grown up under the rock and pop idea that a band sticks together. We rehearsed very, very intensely. 'We're going to be stars' was the approach."

Would they play together again? "No," snapped Swanton, before laughing at his own vehemence. "Absolutely not. Not only were there some real personality clashes, but also, musically speaking, it doesn't make any sense. And I wouldn't want to do it out of nostalgia. That doesn't interest me in the least.

"I have nothing but pride for what we did at the time, but I think we'd make a mockery of it to do it again. It might surprise people, but I actually see the Necks as what the Benders should have evolved into. I was the first one to pull out of the Benders, and I think it was partly that I wanted to get more into the area the Necks are doing, and it obviously wasn't going to happen with that line-up. So, after a bit of a cooling-off and a think, I got together with Chris, because I knew that he was probably the most like-minded in the Benders. And Tony [Buck, drums] turned out to be the perfect third person. We didn't need a quartet.

Despite the fact Buck currently resides in Amsterdam, the Necks continue to be the number one priority for all three members.

"I would say the band I feel I'm doing the most profound thing with is the Necks, with The catholics close behind. The catholics' music is something I'm very proud of, but I don't think we're trying to turn people on their heads as much as the Necks. Putting together that combination of musicians has brought about an actual style of music which it is hard to find many stylistic precedents for. It's not that often that you come up with a whole style of music just by the combination of people in it. Terms like hypnotic or minimalist have been used, but none of them really distinguish the Necks from other music that would be described like that. I had frequently found [with other bands] that I enjoyed the fade-out on the vamp more than the hoary old standard. So why not just play endings? Play one chord."

Though his number two priority, The catholics certainly consume more of his time, and are a more visible presence on the music scene. In the middle of the year they completed a tour of Canada that took in 25 shows in 13 days in eight cities. Their burgeoning popularity reflects the broad appeal of their unique blend of music.

"It really does reflect my taste," said Swanton, "and my own ideas about how to put a band and a piece of music together. Like a lot of freelance jazz players, I'd played in various combinations in different styles of music, and found it very exciting. It was my idea to bring together all these things that I was enjoying, and see if it worked.

"I'm finding out lots about it as I go along. I try to draw from a whole new genre with each piece of music I write. The instrumentation defines the sound to a great extent. I couldn't get across the ideas so effectively if I had alto saxophone, piano, bass and drums. It's not as if just by putting together this weird combination of instruments you'll create a whole new style of music, but by putting the same old combination together, you're really limiting your chances of coming up with anything new. That's why the quartet format I mentioned is one of the last things I'd think of if I was trying to make a fresh statement, because it's just such a narrow tonal range."

"I really like the ambiguity of instrumental music. I love the way you can hint at moods. What I would have is a singer who sings three or four songs a night, and basically just causes havoc in the band-room the rest of the time..."

The catholics' particular array of instruments and players helps the band to work on two levels. Firstly, it allows for authenticity of sounds from particular genres, and secondly, when an instrument is used in a context not normally associated with it, it throws a whole new light on that music.

Swanton agreed. "We can pare down to two horns, bass and drums, and it sounds like a jazz group. You bring in percussion, and it starts to sound a little less specific to that genre. You bring in Dave [Brewer] playing Buddy Guy and funk and soul idioms on the guitar, and it's really pushing it out. Then you bring in an instrument like the pedal steel, which is not central to that tradition in any shape or form, and you're really giving yourself a lot of room to move in."

Talk of room to move made me curious as to what extent Swanton wanted The catholics to be treated as a dance band. "I like people to think that they can do anything they want to. We have a flexible repertoire. If it turns out that the dancing has more or less taken over the night, then we'll just play the totally jumpy end of the repertoire. But if it's a sit-down audience, or a combination, then we'll do some 'cerebral' is not a word that leaps to mind with The catholics - but stuff that is not so physically inclined. I love people dancing. It's a real instant communication."

The other way of instantly communicating with the wider audience is to have a singer. Swanton is keen on the idea, but does not want the whole repertoire to be vocal.

"I really like the ambiguity of instrumental music. I love the way you can hint at moods. What I would have is a singer who sings three or four songs a night, and basically just causes havoc in the band-room the rest of the time... If it does come about, it will probably be someone who can sing well and happens to play an instrument I can use. My first instinct would be a percussionist, because I would very much like to increase the percussive element even further."

Other than the Benders, the band that probably established Swanton's reputation as one of our premiere bassists was the Bernie McGann Trio, which he has been a member of for some 13 years.

"I really liked the way Bernie played the first time I heard him, so it was a great privilege to work so much with him. He's much more identified with the tradition than I would ever be, and yet he can't help sounding like he does. The only person I can really hear an influence of is Sonny Rollins."

Beyond McGann's trio, Swanton is currently involved in Clarion Fracture Zone, and has recently been regular bassist with Mike Nock, Jeremy Sawkins and Alison O'Carroll. Nonetheless, he can go for three weeks at a stretch without a single gig. "I think people assume that if you're running your own band you're playing with them all the time. But if they actually looked at a gig-guide, they'd see that's not the case."

Swanton's view of Australia's place in the wider world of jazz is refreshing: "I think we should see ourselves as a little eddy off to the side of the mainstream, where all these amazing things can develop, informed by the rest of the world, but more or less unmolested by it. There's a freshness here that you just can't deny. A few people here are wise enough to see that there's no great tradition that they should be obliged to pay allegiance to. I love the Black jazz tradition. My preference is from Charlie Parker onwards - that's really the music that I fell in love with when I started listening to jazz. But I don't get a great thrill out of achieving an authenticity of style. And let's face it, how many foreign jazz musicians have gone to the jazz mecca, New York, and really made it? You can name Joe Zawinul, John McLaughlin, Dave Holland... Basically, you've got to be American and Black, and that's just the way it works out.

"It seems so much easier to work on home turf with musicians that you can relate to, who understand your own personal approach to things, your laconic Australian wit [laughs]. I get really tired of having to explain myself when I'm working with people from a whole different background. I almost have to speak in baby talk sometimes with American musicians when they come here - not the way I'm accustomed to bantering with my friends."

While someone like Dewey Redman can repay the hassles, Lloyd's experience with James Carter definitely did not. He found the young American saxophonist prone to excessive stereotyping of who was the "star", and of the role of the rhythm section, which appeared to Swanton to amount to little more than slave labour, as Carter played interminable solos. "I don't want to sound ungrateful to the people who came to hear it, or the people who brought him out, but it was far removed from my idea of playing music."

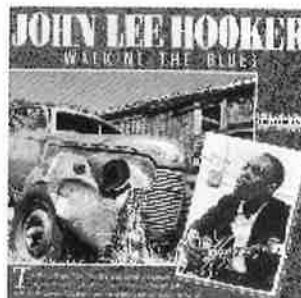


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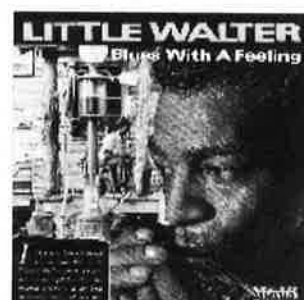
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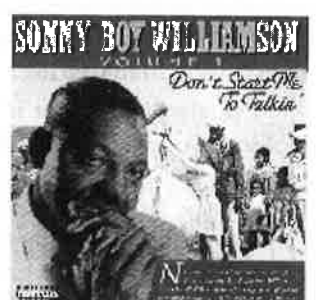
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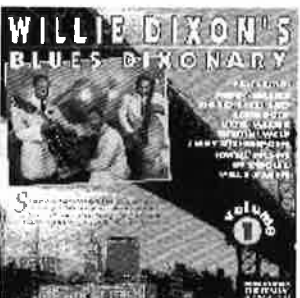
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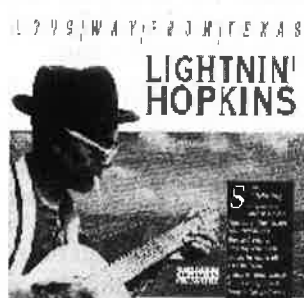
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Favourite bass players? All the great names came tumbling out, with Charlie Haden on top as a soloist. Jackie Orszaczky and Doug Williams received warm accolades, before Lloyd moved on to his special interest in bass players who write and produce, including such diverse figures as Sam Jones, Mingus, Bill Laswell, Marcus Miller and Robbie Shakespeare.

"I've always felt that it's really unhealthy as an artist to idolise anyone, because I think that, by definition, idolising someone is saying you'll never be as good as them. Though I'd never be so arrogant as to say I'm going to be as good as Ray Brown, I'm certainly not going to say that I won't be as good. You might as well give up if you're going to say that. I think a lot of people have given up all ready by putting those people up so high - they put themselves down so low."

For the future, The Catholics have return invitations to many of the festivals they played at in Canada. The albums are close to being released in Europe, which should lead to a tour there, as well.

"The other place I'd really like to tackle is Japan. I think the band would go down particularly well there, and I think Japan makes a lot of sense for Australian performers to try for: it's just so much easier to get to than most of the other places that we play."

"The other place I'd really like to tackle is Japan. I think the band would go down particularly well there, and I think Japan makes a lot of sense for Australian performers to try for: it's just so much easier to get to than most of the other places that we play."

Touring has been expensive, both because of the size of the band and Lloyd's desire to "do everything properly". He has ploughed most of his money into such tours and the albums.

"A lot of people doing things for themselves have been scared off too early in the piece. They think, 'Oh, I can't find \$4,000 to do an album'. But if you really want to do an album, you find it. You've got to be serious. There's a certain amount of investment involved. The Catholics and the Necks are my two best chances to actually make some money, eventually, which is a really rare thing to do with jazz records. So that'd be nice." □

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CONTINENTAL DRIFT

*'CONTINENTAL' ROBERT SUSZ of THE
MIGHTY REAPERS
spins some yarns to John Shand*



'Continental' Robert Susz is one of those interviewees people like me dream about. You start to say, "What about the period when...?" and before you get much further, he's off on another story, spiced with his unusual blend of self-effacing shyness and candid jocularly. Scene: A verandah high above a street within spitting distance of Kings Cross. Take it away, Robert...

"When I moved to Melbourne, I joined this skin-head band. I was the only one who wasn't a skin-head. The band had to stop when the guitarist cut his fingers in a fight. He broke a bottle to stab someone, and cut his fingers up, so he couldn't play. It was a pretty horrible band, anyway. It did Lobby Lloyd and the Coloured Balls covers."

Readers unfamiliar with the Coloured Balls might imagine a bunch of maximum security prisoners from Long Bay being given rock'n'roll instruments and told to express their innermost feelings, with the volume turned up to 11.

Back to Mr Susz. Right back, to a baby born in Hungary during the mid-fifties turmoil that culminated in the Soviet invasion of that country. At the age of two he was whisked off to Sydney by his parents, where, some years down the track, there was the first "pretty horrible" band at high school, doing Rolling Stones covers and the like.

The aforementioned Melbourne sojourn was to attend art school. By 1976, Robert was back in Sydney, and the "pretty horrible" bands finally ended with r'n'b outfit, the Rugcutters. The Dynamic Hepnotics followed, firing up at a time when the inner-city suburb of Balmain was a haven for such bands as the Foreday Riders, Junior and the Goldtops and the Hawaiian Housewreckers.

"When we started, we just played corner pubs, taking whatever gigs we could get. Then we joined a rock agency, and had to fill out this questionnaire which asked what size PA we had. We said, 'Medium!'"

Great hilarity. The PA in question consisted of two columns such as a singing guitarist might use in a wine bar. I used to hire it off Robert for the princely some of \$5 per night. Not the sort of thing that requires a pantechicon and four roadies.

Back to the story...

"The first gig they gave us was at the Sundowner Hotel - this huge bloody gig. I think we were booked from 8 till 12, and we showed up about 7.15. All the bouncers and everyone were waiting for us out the front, panicking and asking where the truck was. I said, 'There's still 45 minutes. Here's the PA.'"

"The disco was a double 4-way [a very large PA], and the DJ said he'd shut it down when we wanted to do a sound-check. We only had two mikes. I went 'Check' into one, and that was it. It went alright. There were only about ten people in the whole place, so you didn't really need a big PA."

I have never known a band to work harder than the Dynamic Hepnotics did. Developing a strong following in Melbourne and Brisbane as well as Sydney, they traipsed up and down the coast non-stop for the next half-dozen years.

"We got a bit burnt out by that. The band was about to break up before we had the hit single. Everyone was getting a bit fed up endlessly going round in circles. We had a few little records out, but nothing ever got played on the radio except on Triple J. Then we put *Soul Kind of Feeling* out, and for some reason Triple M put it on rotation. It started selling, so all the other stations started playing it, and it just snowballed.

"The timing of it was a bit of a pity, because a couple of years earlier everyone was having a much better time, and it was sounding better. It would have been good to have had it then. The only other place it was released was New Zealand, where it went to number two. We went there, and I lost my voice half way through the tour. It's the only time I've lost my voice - on our only overseas trip!"

That line-up, which had included the peerless Robert Souter (now with Slim Dusty) on drums, promptly broke up, and was replaced by what Susz thought was the best version of the band, which included Dave Brewer (guitar), Lloyd Swanton

(bass), Duncan Archibald (drums), Sammila Sithole (percussion), Mark Simmonds (sax), Chris Pascoe (keyboards), and a succession of trumpet players including Miroslav Bukovsky and Peter Bishop.

"Peter was this young guy who thought he was joining this huge pop band. He was disappointed, I think [laughs]."

That version of the band was killed off by an "horrific tour to Cairns and back of all one-night stands". But by this time the Mighty Reapers were already in existence. Susz and Dave Brewer had formed the second band to have something fun to do on nights off from the Hepnotics, who had become progressively "poppier", and were tied to playing big venues with big PAs, and the "rock" type sound. It was also a chance to slip out of the rut of having to play the same old songs night after night to an audience that demanded them. The Reapers were a step back to the sanctuary of corner pubs in the Balmain area; a step back to the blues.

Though Robert would like more than the maximum of two to three gigs a week the band currently plays, he acknowledges that this helps keep the project fresh and fun. While he and Brewer have penned all the originals to date - mostly separately - moves are afoot to do more collaborative work among more of the band.

On stage, Robert is very much the focal point, with his zany, soulful, vocals and his powerful harmonica. However, he claims this is as near as he gets to being the boss, except when something goes wrong, and the band are asked who the leader is...

The new CD, *Trouble People*, is their second for Tim Dunn's adventurous Rufus label. Susz met the Reverend Dunn through being one of the bands that played at his Paddington church on Saturday afternoons - "He was like the booker for the church!"

Previously there had been a cassette (*You Got To Reap*) and a live CD with Big Jay McNeely on ABC records. "It came out quite well," Susz recalled, "which was surprising because there was a horrible squealing through the PA which they managed to block out. And Big Jay had no foldback for most of the night on his horn. It was amazing how he could still play."

"He was interested in releasing it in Germany. He does a lot of work in Europe, and he's got this little label he puts stuff out through. But the ABC didn't want to do it for some reason. It was already recorded and they'd have made some money. It's weird."

Big Jay McNeely is one of a long list of overseas acts the Reapers have been booked to back. "I think most of the people we play with are used to playing with pick-up bands, and I imagine they would have played with some horrible ones. Most of them were quite happy to play with us, I think - I hope!"

I'm sure they were. □

Susz and guitarist Dave Brewer:
rare empathy



'CONTINENTAL' ROBERT SUSZ'S EQUIPMENT

"The harmonicas are mainly Hohner 10-hole diatonic ones. I've also been playing some cheaper Chinese ones. I play a bit of chromatic, but not very well."

"I use a Shure Green Bullet microphone, through an amp called a Peavey Juice, which is the only one I've ever had. It's a hybrid of valves and transistors, but sounds like a valve amp. It's blown up a few times, but I've always managed to get it repaired. Playing straight through a PA is too clean and, when it's loud, too harsh."

Solar Activity

Story by Clive Lochner



(l to r): Damon Wilson, Carolyn Shine, Stephen Cummins, Eli Barel, Suzanne Wyllie

The name Solar conjures up images of warmth and strength - a sense of the essential elements. Young Sydney band Solar blend the essential elements of free and mainstream jazz to produce some excellent jazz funk songs. With sold out live shows and an album release in early '95, Solar looks set for a bright future.

I asked keyboard player Caroline Shine and drummer Damon Wilson how the varied influences of Solar are reflected in the bands material.

"I suppose the band is about putting out interesting music in the most listenable form. For us that means sophisticated without being complicated," explains drummer, Damon. "Solar is really a hybrid band of diverse musicians, and I guess that's part of our strength in that we've ended up mixing our styles, in particular jazz and funk."

Solar was first formed under the name Splattitude in mid '93. It was a humble beginning according to Carolyn, that soon gained momentum as musicians began to gather around founding member and bassist, Eli Barel. In the last year, Solar has created a live following that recently packed The Basement in Sydney to capacity on their inaugural gig at the club.

"That gig was very important for us" says Damon "because we saw that people really started listening and absorbing. Maybe there's a swing away from rock 'n' roll towards new areas of music - new textures and different approaches."

"But never underestimate the power of danceability!" adds Carolyn.

Solar boasts an impressive line-up which includes vocalist Suzanne Wyllie, whose recent solo release on ABC records has been acclaimed by jazz critic, Jim McLeod, as: "The best Australian jazz vocal album". That's quite a rap for a singer who, at 24 years of age has only just begun her career. The rest of the band have come from various jazz and funk backgrounds. The result is a band that shines.

"We'd all been kicking around in different musical situations for a while, doing sessions and gigs, but it was when we came together that the songs really started to flow." says Carolyn.

With an album recorded, the band is busy mixing the songs with seasoned engineer, Jeremy Allom (Incognito, Chaka Khan) while managing to continue their live shows in Sydney. Later this year, Solar will tour interstate. Says Damon: "I think the album is the best thing we've done. We can't wait to release it so we can start recording the next album!"

The next album! Already?

"Sure, we've got more songs than we can keep up with. We plan to write a lot more, too. We are going to release a lot of music just wait and see!"

With an attitude as positive as this, I would predict that, like the sun, Solar will be around for a long time to come. □

Gail Brennan spoke to the first modern master of the soprano saxophone.

There are still only a relative handful of renowned soprano saxophone players in jazz, and they include, appropriately enough, three women: our own Sandy Evans, America's Jane Ira Bloom and Canada's Jane Bunnett. When Steve Lacy took the instrument up there was only one widely recognised master, and that was Sydney Bechet. "I heard him playing *The Mooche* when I was 16, and I was smitten," Lacy told me. "He was the father and the king. I heard him and I heard my voice, I heard my call. So I somehow procured the instrument, knowing nothing about it, really."

Doubling on soprano and clarinet, Lacy got to play with many of the masters of swing and of Chicago and New Orleans jazz, including Red Allen, Zutty Singleton, Dicky Wells, Rex Stewart, Pops Foster, Joe Sullivan, Bobby Hackett, Max Kaminsky, Jimmy McPartland and Pee Wee Russell. With that background, Lacy could be doing

Straight Horn Lacy Sheds A Skin

very well today on the mainstream circuit, along with such accomplished and creative repertory players as Scott Hamilton and Kenny Davern, both of whom are much younger than he. But two things happened. First, he decided to specialise on the difficult soprano, against the advice of colleagues who told him he wouldn't get any work (and he didn't, for a while). Second, he met Cecil Taylor, who told him that music was moving and he'd better get his notebook out.

So it was that Lacy forged probably the first modern style on soprano saxophone. It was this unique sound and style that inspired John Coltrane to play the straight horn. Coltrane's approach was as different to Lacy's as Lacy's was to Bechet. As Roy Eldridge stands between Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie, so does Lacy stand between Bechet and Coltrane. But he is no more a "transitional" player than Eldridge was. He is a complete concept in its own right.

If you go back to mid to late 1950s albums made with Cecil Taylor or under his own name (*Jazz Advance* on Blue



"When something is new, it's exciting for a minority. When it matures, many more people can appreciate it." - Steve Lacy

Note and *Reflections* on Prestige are recommended) you will hear him deploying bright but subtly inflected notes - some of them deliberately dulled to a kind of muskyness - in a way that starts off sounding almost neutral but builds in excitement through an even increase in volume and complexity. At first his solos have the fascination of jigsaw pieces dropping rapidly into place, but in no time intellect and senses are simultaneously dazzled. It is hard to imagine that contemporary saxophone players, such as Kenny Garrett and Steve Coleman, have not been influenced in some way. Later recordings show a more overtly emotional and dramatic approach. Elements of folk song and even cabaret entered his music, with moving and surreal effects.

For more than 20 years, Lacy has lived in France, where he has led the same band on the European, Japanese and American concert circuit. Coming to Australia alone was something he described as "a great adventure for me. I don't usually do this kind of thing - it's like shedding a skin - but I've been very impressed by recent recordings of Australian jazz."

Because Lacy was part of an avant garde and has carved a unique place for himself, he is seen by a certain muddle-headed faction as an enemy of the jazz tradition. Yet few have as much knowledge of and respect for the tradition. "It was Cecil Taylor who took me by the hand to see Thelonious Monk," he told me. "Monk was then the avant garde. I saw him become a star without compromising his music one mote or one note. And the same with Cecil Taylor. Because of my study of his music, Monk added me to his quartet at the Jazz Gallery. Yes, the quartet with Charles Rouse. He didn't need me, but he felt I needed to complete my studies.

"Cecil's music contained within it Monk, Ellington, Bud Powell, Stravinsky, Bartok - all very naturally. We explored Ellington together. You see, Ellington was avant garde too, and so was Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. Some people were outraged by their music. They didn't seek to conform to the rules. They invented the music, and it was unheard of. The tradition is made up of music that was unheard of.

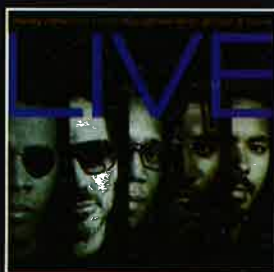
"Today we have reboppers breeding like rabbits, but that is no different to

the New Orleans revival that I was part of. Some will go on to create a music that is unheard of. Bebop was also unheard of. Our music is accessible, especially to the young, because it is now an old wine. There is no more problem in communicating. I am 60 years old now. When something is new, it's exciting for a minority. When it matures, many more people can appreciate it. Ours is slow food as opposed to fast food." □

Steve Lacy has played a French Selmer Super Action Series Number One for the past 12 years. He has a custom made Otto Link 12 mouthpiece which he uses with a very soft Marca one and a halfreed from the South of France, "where the stuff grows wild." He has recently completed a book called Finding on the technical resources of the soprano.

new jazz

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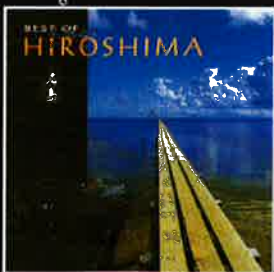


STANLEY CLARKE "LIVE AT THE GREEK"

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Who dropped the acid into jazz?

Acid jazz music is fast gaining momentum in Australia. Acid Jazz Records, an English label, have just opened an Australian office and are out and about looking for fresh new talent in Australia while giving us a taste of their fine catalogue of overseas artists.

The Acid Jazz label was formed in 1988 by Eddie Piller and Gilles Peterson. They coined the phrase acid jazz at a time when the clubs in downtown Soho were full of acid house music, so why not some acid jazz music clubs?

Piller, Peterson and another London DJ, Chris Bangs saw a space in the music for an alternative groove; they released *Frederick lies still* by Galliano and acid jazz was born.

So what is acid jazz? Mark Lovett, head of Acid Jazz records new Australian office in Sydney said, "To define the acid jazz sound would be difficult. It carries so many influences from old and new. Bits and pieces from jazz, funk, rock, soul and reggae. In reality the term acid jazz better reflects style and attitude. Improvisation is the roots of jazz. Reworking classic sounds and techniques into contemporary settings is what acid jazz is about.

"Acid jazz has brought people back to jazz clubs, to hear the classics and new artists like Galliano, the Brand New Heavies, Mother Earth, Corduroy and Night Trains. There are so many talented artists who need to be heard and seen. They are out there writing and playing live. Acid jazz is waking people up to great musicians who fit into the acid jazz groove, and who are worth a second look."

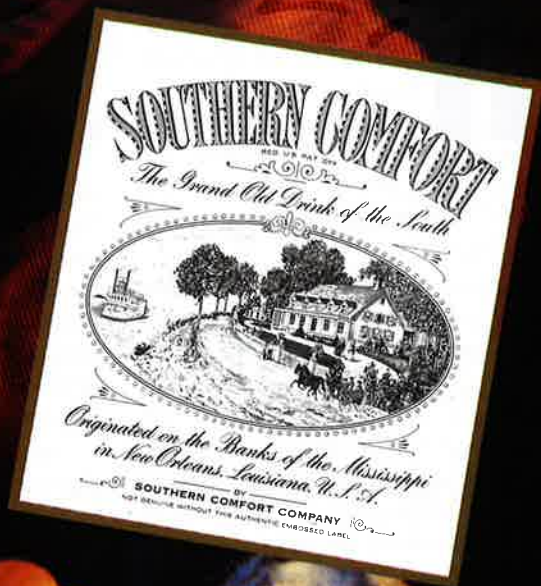
Shock records in Melbourne distribute and promote the acid jazz label throughout Australia. This year has seen the release of *Jesse* by Mother Earth, Night Train's LP *Sleazeball*, and their EP *Hold Out*, the Harvey Averne Barrio Band LP and the various artists LP *Totally Wired Eleven*. The rest of 1994 looks promising with a new EP from the James Taylor Quartet, Corduroy, Mother Earth, Brand New Heavies, Snowboy and the Latin Section, Vibraphonic, Double Vision and Manasseh.

Of interest to Aussie acidists will be the planned release of *Totally Wired Australia*, an LP to feature Australian artists only. Says Mark, "There are lots of local bands into some form of funky rock, jazz and soul. Acid jazz means so many things around the world: from Italian house to Swedish jazz. Australia has and will develop its own sounds."

With anything new you need a following. Acid jazz music is making inroads on the Australian music scene and waking a new generation to the world of jazz. Mind you don't miss the groove train. □

Clive Lochner

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THE WORLD

AT HER FEET *CATHY HARLEY unravels her life and her future for John Shand*

"How did the world begin?" Down the phone-line, the question comes out of nowhere about as completely as the world itself must have once done. I pause. Is this a joke? "We were just talking about it," explains Cathy. I tell her I'll illuminate her when we meet for the interview.

I wonder whether the bebop pianist I had heard with Craig Scott's dream band, Improviso, is more likely to be a Christian Fundamentalist, a Big Bang Theorist, or an Existentialist. Does her involvement with such diverse projects as Senegalese party-animals Bu-Baca or Jackie Orszaczky's omnipotent Grandmasters hold any clues?

I enter a garage converted into a bed-sit. An old drum-kit, an older upright piano and a newer double-bass are the main furnishings. Cathy Harley is finishing off with a student when I arrive. I deduce this from the direction the money changes hands - otherwise she could just as easily have been having a friend over for a blow.

I decline freshly squeezed orange juice, but willingly accept the ensuing verbal outpouring. I immediately understand why, other than her sensational piano playing, Harley has so quickly become so much in demand. (After all, there has never been a shortage of good pianists in Australia.) The secret is that Cathy simply oozes optimism and enthusiasm. If her ardour were ultraviolet, you could get dangerously sunburnt from it. The older, slightly - dare I say it - jaded players must simply bask in the warmth of her positivism. If there is an elfin quality about her, there is also a burning intensity when she fixes you with her gaze.

"When I was three, I used to spend hours at the piano creating different

colours and sounds. I used to love where it took me. I didn't know what I was playing, but I knew it took me somewhere."

To retreat from the figurative, it took her through a childhood of classical study, shared with the more strenuous pastimes of surfing and netball (up to State level). "In many ways the surfing trained me for the jazz scene: spending hours and hours round guys. I love surfing; it's the ultimate motion sport. That's where surfing and playing music are very similar, cos of that forward motion. It's a great feeling.

"Not that I'm into any of this stuff, but my mum said that when I was a little kid she went to a fortune-teller who said that I would be successful in a man's world. Between the jazz scene and surfing, I've always dealt in a man's world."

Self-consciously aware that I am a male speaking, I express surprise that, given the ever-growing ranks of women in the professional music scene, Cathy's perspective should be one of the old divisions and inequalities still being the order of the day.

"It is a man's world," she states vehemently. "I mean, all the bands I'm in are all guys. There's *something* happening. Not that the girls I know want to be in all-girl bands. Basically, when you're really strong in yourself and you really work at your art, it doesn't matter in the end. Lisa Parrott's a strong woman; Nicki Parrott's a strong woman; Jann Rutherford's a strong woman. You've got to be. There's nothing wrong with that."

Amen.

It's hard to believe that Cathy only started playing jazz four years ago. "So much has happened in four years, Suddenly I've got this itching desire to

learn all the instruments, and study composing and maths."

Coping with the cold sweat that for 30 years I have broken out in when people mention maths, I drag Ms Harley back to the original point.

"The first person I heard was Jimmy Smith. I just loved his sound. Then I heard Oscar Peterson. The next thing I heard was Monk, and that made me go, 'Alright! There's something happening here I don't know about.' And then it just steam-rolled from there."

Steam-rolled is right. Harley scooted through the Jazz Studies course at the NSW Conservatorium, came second (to Jann Rutherford) in the piano competition at the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz, and immediately fell in with many of this country's best players. Of course, from her perspective, the process did not seem quite so straightforward.

"In a way, my downfall was that my musical emphasis had been so much on technique that there wasn't any ears or heart there. I'd been taught to be a piano player, not a musician."

As was Lloyd Swanton's experience (*see separate story*) she was accepted into the Conservatorium with little knowledge of jazz. "I think they see something in you of the ability to organize musical thoughts quickly. They give you an opportunity. Maybe they take a punt on the fact that they see you really want to do it. My heart certainly loves music. It all boils down to you doing the work, anyway."

The opportunities have kept on coming, with a series of established bands and players calling on her to contribute her svelte touch on the keyboard. Jackie Orszaczky's fabulous *Family Love* album contains two pithy, sinuous piano features from Harley.



Yes, that's Cathy Harley with her piano, bass and drums.

Music is to do with reminding humans not to get too stuck in the physical world. You know when you hear some music, it can make you speechless, or it can affect you in ways that remind you that there are things other than just physical existence.

"What I call genius is the ability to focus on one thing; to let go of everything else you would really like to think about. I see music as really linked to thoughts. The sort of thoughts you're thinking [when playing] resonate in other people. So it is my responsibility as a musician to get my life in as much order as possible."

"When I first met Jackie, Chris [Abrahams, keyboards] was away, and he gave me an opportunity which planted big seeds. I've got lots to thank Jackie for, because he helped me loosen up. He pulled me up in many ways, and opened doors for me. I did this gig the other night with Lily Dior [vocals] Hamish [Stuart, drums], Arne [Hanna, guitar, and Orszaczky]. The groove those guys were playing was so wicked, and I realised the reason was because they were so still. They weren't frantic or uptight or frazzled. It's like they were really trusting themselves, and they could lay down this awesome groove. I'm not saying Jackie doesn't get angry, but you hardly see him freak out about things, and I figure that has a lot to do with his grooving ability."

Orszaczky's *Tractor Mind*, which Harley had played with him live, struck a chord with the pianist. When she was asked to record it, she already knew exactly what she wanted to do with the solo space, as was the case with *Lights Off*; they were songs she loved.

Craig Scott snapped her up to play piano in Improviso, a band whose other members have been playing for at least twenty years longer than Harley: Alan Turnbull, Warwick Alder and Graeme Lyall.

"Craig gave me an opportunity because he saw something in me, and knew that if I was given enough time, it would

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start to flower. That allowed me to gather more confidence, and to realise that if I can do certain things, the band could fly higher. I know that some nights the band might not go up to the next level because of me, and if I tried something new, then it could go up. What I'm trying to say is that I'm taking responsibility for my part of it. There's a lot of potential in that band."

The band that presents Harley's talents to the largest audience is certainly Bu-Baca, whose high octane brew of traditional Senegalese music and western funk has the toes twitching of the dance brigade. Harley's commitment is such that she is even learning Olif, the language of the other members.

"I want to learn it," she explains, "because I'll really be in the band, then. Also it will give me their rhythms - their language is so linked to the rhythms. They've got a totally different culture and concept of music, and I'm just so glad to be in it. It's a really good experience to be playing all this stuff to a huge jumping, dancing crowd. It's got this fantastic groove behind it, and is just what the doctor ordered."

Composing is now a major focus in Harley's life. Saxophonist Dale Barlow suggested she compose a tune a day, and she has taken him at his word, writing for most of the projects she has an involvement in, including singer Kate Swadling's forthcoming CD, Improviso and her own outfits. This lies behind her desire to be fluent on as many instruments as possible. She already takes gigs on double-bass as well composing on it. Drums, African hand-drums, saxophones and vocals are just around the corner.

The whole process of making music is something Cathy clearly thinks about a great deal. "To me, music is to do with reminding humans not to get too stuck in the physical world. You know when you hear some music, it can make you speechless, or it can affect you in ways that remind you that there are things other than just physical existence.

"What I call genius is the ability to focus on one thing; to let go of everything else you would really like to think about. I see music as really linked to thoughts. The sort of thoughts you're thinking [when playing] resonate in other people. So it is my responsibility as a musician to get my life in as much order as possible."

Cathy, along with Sean Wayland, is also behind a newly set up piano collective, which intends to run a venue in Sydney with a quality grand piano courtesy of Kawai: an instrument all the members could relish playing in the context of all-too-often having to deal with sub-standard or poorly maintained pianos. Seemingly all the country's leading pianists have endorsed the project, and if anyone has the drive to get it all off the ground, I suspect it is Cathy Harley. Watch this space for further developments.

Interview over, it is not until I am back out in my car that I realise we never got around to sorting out how the world began. Lucky, really, because I would hate to have disappointed her with my Little Bang Theory. But that's another story...

Cathy Harley will record her debut CD for ABC Records in February, and can be seen at the Woollahra Hotel on Sunday nights in December, with Bernie McGann, Craig Scott and Alan Turnbull.



JIMMY SMITH



Adrian Jackson tried to talk organ with Jimmy Smith, "The World's Greatest Jazz Organist" (that's what it says on his letterhead and no-one has ever argued with him).

Over the years, Jimmy Smith has built up a reputation as a great musician: *the* innovator of the Hammond organ, an exceptionally exciting performer whose music combines jazz virtuosity and inventiveness with the emotional impact and simplicity of the blues.

He has also developed a reputation as a "difficult" interviewee, a reputation confirmed by my first attempt at interviewing him. No sooner had he come on the line than Smith announced, "No I'm not ready. Call me back in an hour." It was a command, not a request.

Of course, I couldn't just call him back, as his promoter had organised a schedule of telephone interviews through the day. I heard that he cancelled a couple of other interviews, while one journalist who spoke to him complained that he had tried to terminate the interview after four minutes, and simply refused to discuss his music (as well as calling her "girly").

We tried again a couple of days later, and Jimmy was in different mood. He was more interested in having a laugh, and maybe testing me out, than in talking about his music. But at least he talked.

JS: You know I've been doin' all these interviews, they got 'em all and booked in, they won't even give me time to go to the bathroom! What you want to ask me about?

JaB: To start with, your last album, *Sum Serious Blues* [on Milestone].

JS: You heard that one? That was with the arrangements by Johnny Pate, and I made my debut as a vocalist on there.

JaB: Yeah. it sounded like you had a good time on that one.

JS: Oh, we had a lot of fun in the studio, man. We had us some collard greens, some blackeyed peas, some pigfeet, some cornbread - you know, soul food. You know about soul food?

JaB: Yeah. Who cooked all of that?



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People know my playin', man.
They know when I'm happy and
when I'm not happy. It comes
out in my playing.

JS: My wife, she cooks all the food. In fact, she went to Joe Williams' record session with some apple cobbler. You know about that one? It's like apple pie, you put the crust on top, with cinnamon on top. It's good, man, really tasty. Add the milk, the man just go crazy, he sat down at the table and go crazy eatin' all them cobbler. Only thing with the milk, will make you go runny-runny! [laughs] Oh-oh, get out of the way!

JaB: Whose idea was it for you to sing on the album [on *Hurry Change, If You're Comin'*]?

JS: I think it was my wife's idea. I wanted to try it out. Sounds pretty good - to me it sounds pretty good, first time with a ballad, you know. I'm normally doin' [vocals on blues like] *Mojo* and *Hoochie Coochie Man*.

People know my playin', man. They know when I'm happy and when I'm not happy. It comes out in my playing. If I had an argument with my wife or something' you'll hear it in my playin', somewhere in there you'll hear it. [He launches into some manic, rapid-fire scat singing]. When you hear those notes comin' right at you real fast, you'll know I'm mad!

Now what else you want to ask me? Come on, man, you're not very good!

JaB: Thanks. That technique where you play the bass lines on the pedals, were you the first to do that?

JS: Hell no, Wild Bill Davis, the man that told me it would take me a long time to learn the organ [Smith, famously, proved him wrong], he was playin' the pedals before. I really learned from him. It's a long story, man. Ask me about something else!



JaB: How much time do you spend on the road these days?

JS: Don't even talk to me about the road, or how much time I spend on the road! I'm 65, man.

JaB: What do you do when you're not on the road, then?

JS: I play golf, and I'm gonna get back into bowling, and I'm gonna try to get back into flying. I used to fly, yeah. I flew 310 Cessnas, and 180s, 150s, 172s, small craft. I can fly! Once you learn, you don't forget. When I was keepin' up with my lessons, I was doin' figure-8s, power-on stalls, power-off stalls, stuff like that. That's exciting, when you cut the motor off [he imitates the sound of an engine cutting out, a plane diving, then the engine kicking back into life]. I like that excitement! If the engine don't come on, you're in trouble, your ass in trouble, say bye-bye (Laughs).

Now, what else do you have written down to ask me? You run out of material already?

JaB: Do you have any favourites out of all the albums you've made?

JS: Favourite albums? No, just this new one I've done on Blue Note, with (guitarist) Kenny Burrell and Jimmie Smith - another Jimmie Smith - plays drums. It's called *The Master*; it's just out in Japan, it's not out in the States yet.

JaB: What can you tell me about that one?

JS: What do you mean? Ain't nothin' to tell you about an album! I don't know why interviewers always ask what can I

tell them about an album! "What did you do?" You go into the studio and you play! What else can I tell you? I've recorded eighty albums already, so what can I tell you about all those albums? You go in there, they turn the tape on, and you play. We did some old stuff, and a new thing by Kenny Burrell, and an original thing, I don't even know what the hell the name is.

Now if we had a lot of fun, like back in the Oliver Nelson days, you know, where the guys are jokin' in the studio, I could tell you about that. When you got three guys playin', they're just playin'! There's nothing to tell you about it. There's no hahahaha, none of that.

You just wait till I get a hold of you, I'm gonna get into you, tear you up, boy! I don't know why all you kids ask me the same questions! Why don't you want to know about my health. "You're 65. Are you short of wind? Are you still breathin'?" (Laughs).

JaB: Well, you don't sound like you're short of wind!

JS: Oh man, you laughin' now, but wait till I get my hands on you! I'm gonna make a mess of you, boy! (Laughs).

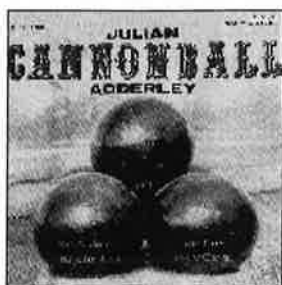
[I think he's just kidding.] □

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Outward Bound

Andrew Firth talks to David Sly

Andrew Firth plays the life out of his reed instruments each time he takes to the stage. The force of his effusive personality and virtuosic flair, particularly on the clarinet, has seen the 27-year-old Adelaide musician compared favourably with such players as James Morrison, and made him popular with audiences. Curiously, it has also cast him adrift from the contemporary clique of young jazz players.

Rather than be perturbed by this exclusion, Firth remains adamant that he is heading in the right direction, giving life to the music in his heart rather than being influenced by trends or fashions.



Firth flying on clarinet...



... and alto

"I don't want to be talked about as being hip, I want to be entertaining," Firth says. "I'm not cool, I'm not hip. I want to move away from the strict jazz stereotype of the '90s. I can plan any style but what I want is to play music that people enjoy."

Firth talks tough about his art and ideas of jazz as entertainment, but admits that he is wrestling with how to best forge his own identity in jazz. Having established a playing reputation from winning the Ricky May Encouragement Award in 1988 performing at Japan's Monterey Jazz Festival and releasing two self-financed CDs - *Let there Be Firth* and *Fresh Starts* - Firth says he is now in a period of flux. His decision to leave Australia in November to establish a new working base in England underscores his season of change.

"I have people that inspire me but I've learned that it's no use trying to copy their genius. Every player has got to find what their own gifts are, and travel will help me do that," Firth says.

Firth's move represents a significant gamble. He intends to study arranging and orchestrations with John Dankworth, play with Kenny Ball, stage his own profile gigs and forge a path of work for himself through Europe. However, he has no record company support, and figures he has funds to sustain him for three months if no significant work or contract offers come his way. And if that happens, Firth says he'll return to Australia, to earn enough money to go back and try again.

"Hopefully I'll be doing enough to get me on the path," Firth says. "I'm going over there to struggle, but it's an investment in my future."

Firth's decision to travel was forged with advice from his mentors - most notably Don Burrows and James Morrison - and the encouragement of star players he has toured with, including Wynton Marsalis and B.B. King. Firth says he needed such guidance because he has been plagued by doubt. He had even cast aside the clarinet two years ago, steering his energy instead to the soprano saxophone after being seduced by the fresh sound and overwhelming success enjoyed by Kenny G. Don Burrows guided Firth back, writing him a letter of encouragement which said: "When playing the saxophone comes to a dead end for you, come back to the clarinet". Within a year, Firth did just that, appreciating the instrument with greater maturity - and understanding where its unique sound belongs.

"The clarinet is too much of a lady to be in the streets," Firth says. "It doesn't fit the sleazy US street sound that is fashionable. Swing is the essential element in what I'm trying to find. It has the beat and the joy of life to its sound which makes it stand out from everything else."

Firth has styled a sound which isn't built around trying to impress people with technical trickery despite his prowess. He's already tried that line but says it was too shallow and confining. "Just showing off with technique is not getting me to where I want to be," Firth says, "Technique is like alcohol. A little of it is great but once you have too much, you lose judgement and get yourself into trouble. You end up sacrificing your

Andrew Firth's Equipment

Andrew plays Selmer clarinets and Selmer Mk II Super Actron 80 alto and tenor saxophones. His soprano is Con curved model. He uses Vandoren A2 crystal mouthpieces on the clarinet; Meyer metal on the soprano and tenor; Claude Lakey on the alto. The reeds are Vandoren 2 1/2 strength on all instruments.

musicality. I've seen guys turn into technoholics, when they move right away from the music. I find that very sad."

Despite his allegiances toward more traditional jazz stylists and swing, Firth still sees himself as a talent with a fresh view.

"I'm not an old-school player. I'm a young, impetuous music hothead. It's just that I'm not so much trying to break new ground - more trying to make an impact. I'm quite prepared to polarise an audience, to do something that I want and believe in. I could do that cutting edge, intrinsic stuff and be seen as hip. I know that but I'd rather be sure of who I am and be true to that notion."

He stopped, reflected on what he just said and shook his head with a weary smile.

"Putting it that way, perhaps you're right. Perhaps I do have an old man's head on a young man's shoulders." □

"I don't want to be talked about as being hip, I want to be entertaining, I'm not cool, I'm not hip. I want to move away from the strict jazz stereotype of the '90s. I can plan any style, but what I want is to play music that people enjoy."

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Dear Jab,

Many thanks to John Shand for his interview with pianist Bobby Gebert.

This article motivated me to reinvestigate Bobby's material from my El Rocco and ABC tapes.

The "El Rocco" tapes clearly place David Levy as the first pianist to publicly perform 'free' jazz in Sydney. Bobby and several developing young Australian stylists, including Bernie McGann, were also becoming involved in this creative extension of the jazz idiom; without the retensionism of imbedded swing style mannerisms being heard amongst most established musicians attempting to perform this new style. John Sangster's ABC Studio 226 recording (produced by Joe Cramey), *Collective Improvisation for Jazz Trio*, definitively places Bobby as an early protagonist in this area of jazz. His only available work on record from the era appears to have been in John Sangster's section of the long out-of-point collector's items, *Jazz Australia*. A later duo recording of standards with bassist Bruce Cale at this same Surry Hills studio was indicative of what the buying public would have to wait three decades to add to their CD collection. Yet, even now, do we have the opportunity to hear this "master" pianist in solo, duo or trio format at interstate clubs and festivals?

A tape that is long lost from my collection is the original Studio 226 superbly recorded Charlie Munro Quartet's *Eastern Horizons Suite*. ABC radio, hopefully, still has all of producer Joe Cramey's tapes in storage. A grant from the Australia Council should be made for a "Mosaic" style remastered box set of *The Joe Cramey Years* as it would make a remarkable documented compilation of two exciting decades; a "Pandoras Box" of all that was positive in Australian jazz from an era when, being rarely accepted as part of our cultural heritage, jazz was totally self-supporting.

An equally important milestone in our jazz history was the Craig Benjamin Big Band, with interactive narration by Gail Brennan, in a remarkable two night stand at Sydney's Basement. These two nights - probably in the late '70s - showed the band had been welded into an explosive world class unit worthy of Monday nights at the Village Vanguard in NYC, by this young reed player/composer, whose arranging for those Basement nights breathed texture, intensity and fire and equal of the great painters.

Jazz has always been an interactive art form; a combination of player and listener, and we are now witnessing an attempt to extend that fact. Do not let any of us with dedicated involvement in jazz as an art form doubt the media and recorded performance direction over the next decade. Already it is possible, with the correct domestic 486 hardware and software equipment (did I forget money?) to pull up *America On Line* (free) through Internet (pay), and with the relevant entry code, access the entire Washington Smithsonian Institute collection of original Duke Ellington manuscripts. The forthcoming Vincent Herring CD ROM release (Digital Domain) will not only play on our normal home compact player, but also have a limited interactive component for listeners with personal computers. We must all take the time and discipline to understand, if not operate, this technology.

Most important of all, let us not forget the well-spring of our chosen art form: the musician and the club owner. Let our moral and financial support start with them.

Trevor Graham

AUDIO ADVICE

by Gary Sellers

Audio Gear

The trouble is: which audio gear?

Ordinary stereo can be bought in any Woolworth's, KMart or Retravision, and it proliferates! From cheap plastic Ghetto-blasters to Micro-Midi-systems, it seems that more than half of the people are settling for sub-\$1500 all-in-ones. This is another way of saying: "The way my music sounds and lasts is worth no more to me than about three weeks' pay."

Pity, that.

It means that they can not do very much with the midi system - like, for example, add other speakers, or exchange a component- and will get very little by way of sonic definition. Not ideal at all, when the very short life-expectancy combines with the near-zero resale value. The makers have no hesitation in calling these terrible little brutes "hi-fi" or "audio"...

(Fact: no true audio system is ever made by the one manufacturer!)

If you can find your local hi-fi specialist, you will hear a very different thing indeed. If s/he is worth his salt - there are about six or so in Sydney who are - then s/he will have good advice in the selection and matching of components and cabling chosen from a variety of manufacturers. (This may displease some equipment and cable importers who want it all for themselves, but hey!) The end result is a system that does what the midi-fi cannot do. Put ample power behind good speakers, to effectively reproduce the MUSIC!

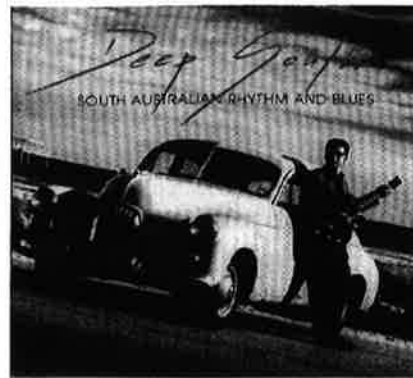
The more serious and dedicated audio companies specialise in the main product lines, like electronics, loudspeakers, or turntables.

* The all-in-one makers try to compete, but lack the finesse of the more dedicated specialists. They may have only a few products here and there in the "audiophile" arena, if any.

A whole bunch of amplifiers of similar price were compared by an eminently qualified panel (*What Hi Fi UK*), with the likes of Denon, Kenwood, Marantz, JVC and Rotel among others. (The Aiwa and Dual were very ordinary...)

The ultimate winner of exhausting testing of the eight amps? ROTEL. Wider effective dynamic range, better control of speakers, able to handle higher volumes without "lumping" and distorting the sound, longest warranty. (Runners-up: Kenwood and Marantz). The '94 equivalent of it sells here for \$399 and goes by the prosaic name of RA930. A truly superior product, which takes on - and wins against - much dearer ones. It is also very important to consider *the combination* of the components. It is always a combination you are listening to.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Recent funding decisions in relation to jazz have created much debate. The award of an Australian Artists Creative Fellowship to Don Burrows has been seen as further evidence of a commonly held perspective that Mr Burrows equals Australian jazz, and Australian jazz equals Mr Burrows. JaB does not imply that Mr Burrows is unworthy, but simply that the advisory panel (which included no one from the jazz community) may have been ill-informed about the jazz scene.

Then the enormous slice of the funding cake of the Music Committee of the Australian Councils Performing Arts Board that has been devoured by the Australian Art Orchestra has raised even more eyebrows. The size of the grant (\$45,000) is, in itself, unremarkable. It is as a proportion of the total going to jazz that the decision has upset many people.

At the very least, these outcomes suggest that the Federal Government and the Australia Council should pay more heed to the recommendations of the National Jazz Alliance, which pressed for greater consultation and recognition of "the distinctive character of jazz activity".

On a brighter note, we welcome Jim Mcleod as regular host of a "blindfold" column called *Out of Sight*, and we welcome two regular New Zealand contributors: Graham Reid and Blind Mango Chutney.

John Shand

The Rotel amp distinguishes itself by sounding in command of even with the more difficult-to-drive speakers. This is an area where even the more highly regarded of the amplifiers fail, being at their best only when driving exceptionally clean, efficient loudspeakers (amps like Kenwood, Mission Cyrus and Pioneer A400, all of which demand extremely agreeable peripherals.) Several new products are emerging and taking their rightful place in the market. Fuller reviews will be given to them soon. SPENDOR and TDL from England, MBQuart and DUAL from Germany will all be examined in the next issue... Watch this space!

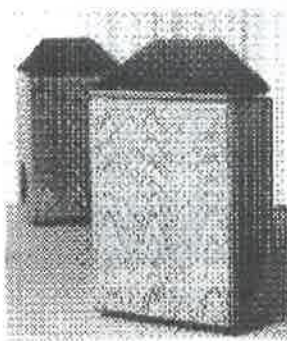
BONUS TIME: If you have read this far, there is a reward: Bring this article with you (to Hi Fi Junction Bondi Jct. 02 389 4000), ask to audition a pair of Acoustic Research Series 2) and get a free JAZZIZ compilation "gold" CD of some 15 top jazz selections

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* Turntables: Calling all vinyl people! A most impressive new arrival is PROJECT of Austria. Two models are offered, very well crafted and inexpensive from \$399. As an introductory special, Ortofon's OM10 Cartridge (value \$109) is include free.

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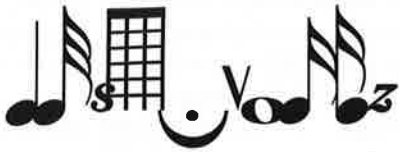
The Shahinians' patented bass design means that they reproduce deep bass with the true sound of the instrument, not just low notes. Also, unlike many high priced speakers, they will play at realistic levels without strain or compression and without losing the tonal qualities of the music.

Shahinian speakers have received accolades from both music lovers and the hi fi press. There are 5 models to choose from – ranging from just under \$2,000 to \$22,000 a pair. If you'd like to hear more, bring a couple of your favourite discs and we'll be delighted to demonstrate them to you.

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GETTING STARTED WITH COMPUTER MUSIC

Computer music applications now available bring practical studies of improvisation, composition and arrangements on the home or school computer within reach of many students. And for the professional, they add new dimensions to composition and performance.

The ubiquitous computer is playing an increasingly important role in music and music education as in most other aspects of living and learning. By linking an electronic keyboard to a computer it is possible to enter and store a sequence of 'sounds' in the computer memory in the same way as you key-in letters to form words and sentences.

The recorded sound sequence may be played back through a sound system, and displayed on the computer screen in standard music notation for editing and enhancement by additions, deletions or modifications to change the harmony, the melodic line or the rhythm. Different tracks can be recorded to add different voices to an arrangement. And part or all of a single track or the whole composition can be played at any stage to test the effects of editing on 'the performance'.

And once you are satisfied with the result, you can print out the track you have laid down, or the various parts of an arrangement, as sheet music using the printer normally attached to the computer.

Computer music systems can help musicians to explore new ideas in various ways. For example, you can play and record in real time with a selected accompaniment (preset accompaniments are available on diskette or you can develop your own). Or you can play at a slow speed to give you thinking time for improvising then play back the recorded sequence at a faster speed. The digital electronic record and playback system enables you to adjust the speed of the sound sequence without affecting the pitch.

Or you can lay down several tracks for the parts of different instruments then play them back separately, or together as an arrangement. And you can transpose the whole arrangement to a different key by a couple of key strokes on the computer keyboard.

General MIDI

The interaction between an electronic keyboard and a computer is made possible by the conversion of sounds into digital information in a form which can be handled by the

computer. The music industry standard General MIDI protocol (MIDI = Musical Instrument Digital Interface) was designed to enable musical equipment from different manufacturers communicate with each other and with computers using a common language.

This standard General MIDI system is now a common feature of electronic keyboards. It allows 28 note polyphony (up to 28 notes may be played at the same time), supports 16 MIDI channels (16 parts may be played simultaneously) and provides 128 preset sounds (the performer has 128 instrument voices to choose from). Some manufacturers have developed systems with expanded features which are based on and compatible with General MIDI.

System Requirements

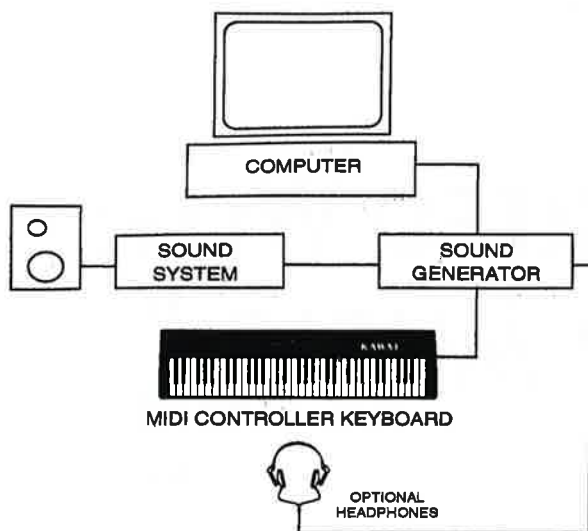
Like all computer systems there are several options which makes it all very confusing to those of us who are not computer buffs. Your options will depend on the equipment you already have, the sound quality you want to listen to, and, of course, your budget.

The following information may help you understand some of the technical jargon you will meet when you set out to buy components for your computer music system.

A system consists of 'hardware' components and 'software', the computer program which manages the collection, display, editing, and playback and printout of the sequence of sounds you have recorded. Software also includes diskettes with pre-recorded accompaniments you can play with and include in your compositions.

Hardware is comprised of a MIDI keyboard, a computer (and printer), a MIDI interface (to link the keyboard to the computer), a sound generator and a sound system. What makes it confusing is that these items may be built into one another. For example, a sound generator module may include the MIDI interface.

Keyboard: Any General MIDI keyboard including a digital piano or electronic keyboard, or a mute (dumb) MIDI controller keyboard used to produce sound from an external sound generator. Some small mute keyboards such as the Kawai Datacat are now produced especially for computer music applications.



Computer: IBM compatible or Macintosh systems are preferable because of the greater range and sophistication of software available. Your computer must be compatible with the software you wish to use. Some software for IBM compatible computers operates under Windows 3.1 which has larger memory requirements than other applications.

MIDI Interface: An electronic unit which converts the signal from a MIDI keyboard into a suitable format for processing by the computer. This may be a separate unit linked to the keyboard and computer by cables; or a circuit board fitted into an expansion slot in the computer; or it may be built-in either to the keyboard or the sound generator.

Sound Generator: Sound synthesiser or tone generator which produces electronic signals in response to MIDI inputs. Sounds are heard by playing the output through headphones, or through an amplifier and speaker system.

The simplest sound generator is a 'sound card' such as the Sound Blaster commonly used to add audio outputs to computer games. A sound card is an electronic circuit board which is inserted in an expansion slot of the computer. External sound generator modules have been used for some time with synthesisers. They can produce authentic instrument and better quality sounds for the discerning listener. These are linked by cables to the computer (to a serial port) and to the sound system respectively.

Sound System: Headphones or an amplifier/speaker system (the family stereo) to convert the electronic outputs into sounds.

Note that if your keyboard has built-in speakers and a MIDI IN jack as well as a MIDI OUT jack, the sound generator and sound system functions may be provided by the keyboard itself... but check with your dealer.

Software: A number of music software (music sequencer) programs are available for both IBM compatible and Macintosh computer systems. Some specialist computer software dealers are now offering a range of music software and will be able to provide advice on the software best suited to the applications you have in mind. Of course, the more sophisticated the software the higher the cost. Check the computer specifications given to make sure the software will run on your computer.

And how much does it cost?

According to Rupert Hyde, Product Manager with Kawai Australia, "If you already have a suitable computer you can put together a simple system comprised of a mini keyboard such as the Kawai Datacat as the MIDI controller, a 'sound card' and 'MIDI interface' installed in the computer and software from about \$700. Or a mini keyboard with the Kawai LX external sound module which includes a built-in MIDI interface and bundled software would cost about \$1,100. These costs are for basic software only but this will get you well along the learning path".

Happy computing/composing. ☐

Ron Knight

Educational Videos

DAVID JONES

New Rhythm Grooves

Musos Publication Music Video

Don't make the mistake of assuming that this is only of interest to drummers. Jones' approach has relevance for players of other instruments. He talks on posture, breathing, health, practice, and even suggests a nifty affirmation for all artists.

The rhythmic ideas being pushed here will be of interest to most musicians and composers. From behind the kit, Jones talks to the camera, and demonstrates different polyrhythmic possibilities in odd time signatures, ably assisted by the ubiquitous Adam Armstrong on bass.

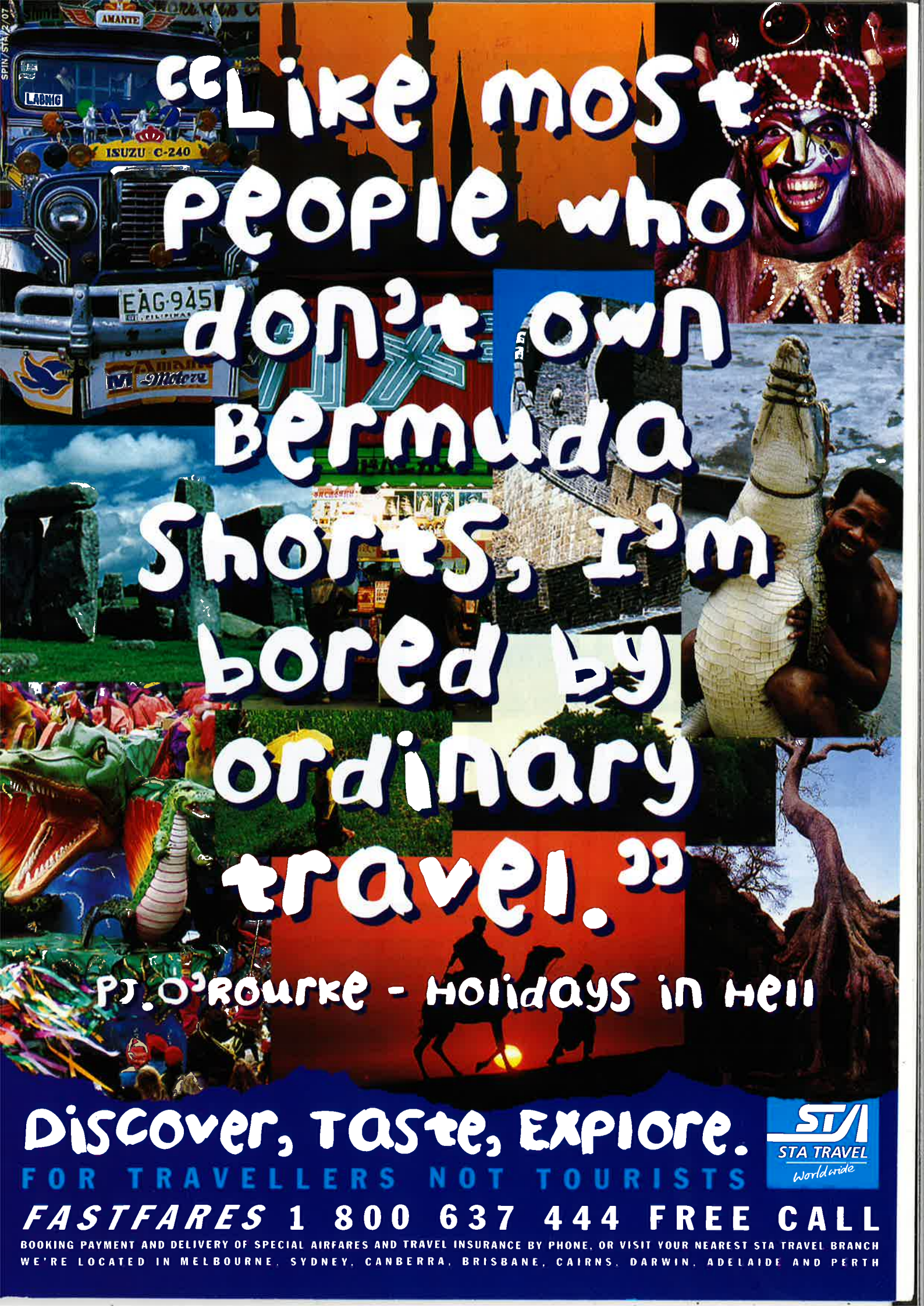
Though the programme presupposes rhythmic literacy, the use of a divided-up live audience to clap out the pulse and the accents certainly softens the complexities.

For drummers, the camera-work allows excellent insight into how Jones operates. The sound, however, is typical TV. Other quibbles include the notation of particular grooves being displayed for less time than this sluggish viewer needed to take them in. Perhaps the producers banked on us using our pause buttons.

If you are a drummer and a Jones fan, it's a must. If you want to enter a new world of polyrhythmic possibilities, this is the door.

John Shand





“Like most
 people who
 don't own
 Bermuda
 shorts, I'm
 bored by
 ordinary
 travel.”

PT. O'Rourke - HOLIDAYS IN HELL

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Psycho Zydeco's Cajun cookin' in the Corso



Geoff Achrsn's Big Machine belts out the blues



The Ocean Front Stage attracted vast crowds



Barb from the Bordellos belts out some r & b



Australian Creole in the Corso Amphitheatre: (l to r) Craig Walters, Guy Strazzullo, Keith Manning, Steve Hunter.



(above) Ignatius Jones announces the result of the subscription draw sponsored by STA TRAVEL, and (below) George Panicolaou receives his STA Travel voucher from John Shand



Feelhive's Justin Dowling

Hunter Valley



Jazz in the Vines: who said this music ain't popular?



Suzanne Wyllie in action at the Hunter Valley

Out Of Sight

Jim Mcleod conducts a
blindfold test with...



BOB BERTLES

As well as being something of a game, having musicians identify performances and personnel on recordings in a "blindfold" test can be very revealing of their influences and thinking.

Bob Bertles was one of the first jazz musicians I got to know. That was back when he was earning money in Johnny O'Keefe's band and simultaneously, earning a reputation as a powerful jazz musician encouraged by ABC jazz producer Joe Cramey, pianist Bryce Rohde and many others.

He was a founder member of Ten Part Invention and has written for that group as well as being a major soloist with them.

So, with records out of sight to Bob, we met to listen, enjoy and ponder some jazz records - mostly with a saxophone featured.

1. *The Apple Jump*, Count Basie Band. Composer: Count Basie; arranger: Andy Gibson; soloists: Basie, piano; Harry

Edison, trumpet; Lester Young, tenor saxophone. Recorded New York, 6th November, 1939.

BOB: At first I thought that reed section might have been the Artie Shaw band. It had that sort of four saxophone sound that arranger Jerry Gray used to get with Shaw's reed section. But then the solo and Lester Young gave it away. It's got to be the Basie band. I don't know the track or the title but it was like an up version of *Tin Roof Blues*.

Lester and the Basie Band. 5 stars. It's kind of silly when it takes the soloist to give away the band. Lester was one of the fathers of all tenor sax players. I suppose there were three - with Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster and Lester Young. Lester went the other way from Hawkins and Webster who had a more robust, big tenor sound. Lester went sort of cooler. Funnily enough he influenced me as an alto player. He was such a lyrical player, and by the time I got around to playing tenor I'd gone through so many other tenor player influences.

But Lester I'd been hearing since about the same time I first heard Bird (Charlie Parker) - when I was 12 or 13. I think Lester also influenced Bird's alto playing. Like Dexter Gordon, Lester Young's choice of notes is so good. They don't know how to play a bad one. Paul Desmond was like that, too.

2. *Kelly Blue*, Cannonball Adderley Orchestra. Composer & pianist: Wynton Kelly; arranger: Ernie Wilkins; soloist: Cannonball Adderley, alto saxophone.

BOB: Well 5 stars straight off for Cannonball Adderley. There was no way he was going to slip past me. You can't say anything bad about Cannonball. He's such a happy player. It's just like, "Here I am!". He's a big jolly man and he plays that way. No one else can get that sound.

The piano player I couldn't get a handle on but sounded like a very laid back, subdued Oscar Peterson.

I've never heard this particular big group recording. I can hear tuba and flutes. It could be a Gil Evans arrangement but it sounds more West-Coast-ish. At first, on the "head", I thought it sounded like Shorty Rogers, but then that nice controlled piano solo; then Cannonball changed the whole scene when he came in.

LATER...

Oh, *Kelly Blue*. Wynton Kelly. I should know that song but I haven't played it for a long time.

3. *Oo-De!* Harry "Sweets" Edison, trumpet & Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, tenor saxophone. Recorded New York, 18th April, 1962.

BOB: I'll have to go with Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis on tenor saxophone. The trumpet player's got me. I know as soon as you tell me, it'll sharpen my ears. I thought it might be Clark Terry but it isn't ... Ruby Braff? If it is "Lockjaw" it wouldn't, by rights, be Braff. But it's "Lockjaw", I'm sure of that.

LATER...

Harry "Sweets" Edison. Well, the things I've heard of Harry have been more "boppish". I haven't heard him in a long while with that laid back feel.

Four stars. Players like Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis are the giants. There wouldn't be the Coltranes or the Breckers if those guys hadn't been there first.

4. *Let's Fall In Love*, Gerry Mulligan, tenor saxophone; Stan Getz, baritone saxophone. Recorded 12th October, 1957.

BOB: Definitely Gerry Mulligan and Stan Getz, but Getz playing baritone and Mulligan playing tenor. It sounded like Mulligan and Getz in the "head". Then I thought, hang on, the phrasing on the baritone doesn't sound like Mulligan, it sounds like Getz phrasing. I seemed to remember, in the dim dark past that they did do an album where they swapped instruments.

I'd give that 3 1/2 for novelty. I'm not, as you know, a Mulligan fan but I love Getz. 5 stars for Getz and 2 for Mulligan, so that makes about 3 1/2, right?

5. *Soft Lights and Sweet Music*, Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. Arranger: Mike Abene; soloists: Ralph Lalama, tenor saxophone; Glenn Drewes, trumpet; Mel Lewis, drums. Recorded "live" at the Village Vanguard, New York, 11-15th February, 1988.

BOB: I think it was the Mel Lewis Band. It's one of those charts that you dread every time you go to a big band

rehearsal... hope they won't throw a chart like that at you first off... that ensemble, trumpet and alto seemed to go on forever.

The tenor player had me confused. At first I thought maybe Eddie Daniels when he used to play tenor. But I'd say it'd probably be Joe Lovano, although it didn't really sound like Joe. It sounded like someone more influenced by Dexter Gordon.

At first I thought it was going to be Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry because it was just bass, drums, alto and trumpet unison. Could be Ornette on a good day, but then the big band came in and you can hear the Village Vanguard.

Five stars because it's Mel and the band. I don't know the song.

JIM: Yes you do. It's Irving Berlin's *Soft Lights and Sweet Music*.

[BOTH LAUGH]

BOB: Mel was a great drummer in a big band or a small group. He always played the same; he was loose. It was the same way Stewie Speer played... like he was sitting in an arm chair and just hitting the stick on the cymbal, hardly moving. But when the figure... WHOOM, it was there.

6. *George of Harts*, Music Maker All Stars, 1957. Composer: Dave Owens, tenor Saxophone; Don Burrows, baritone saxophone; Ken Brentnall, trumpet; John Bamford, trombone; Frank Smith, alto saxophone; Terry Wilkinson, piano; Freddy Logan, bass; Ron Webber, drums; unlisted flute player, probably Mal Cunningham? Recorded Sydney, presumably 1957.

[While listening to this Bob's face suddenly lit up, "This is Australian," he said.]

BOB: The alto player I found initially hard to pick. I thought it was very early Paul Desmond and maybe the early Dave Brubeck Octet.

The first one I got was the tenor player, Dave Owens. Then the baritone player I picked as Don Burrows, so I went back and it had to be Frank Smith on alto... very rarely recorded. It might have been Mal Cunningham on flute. The trumpet player... there were a couple of really good ones at that time. The piano player was Terry Wilkinson, I think. The bass might have been Freddy Logan and the drums Ron Webber.

I'd have to give that five stars.

LATER...

Kenny Brentnall. Wow! I wasn't thinking of him but I always loved his playing.

7. *Reincarnation of a Lovebird*, Lee Konitz, soprano saxophone; Gil Evans, piano. Composer, Charlie Mingus. Recorded Green Street, New York, 11-12 January, 1980.

BOB: Those saxophone and piano duets can be hard to pick. But that's definitely Lee Konitz, to me the greatest living improviser. It's probably Peggy Stern on piano. Lee playing soprano not alto threw me for a couple of bars but he always sounds like Lee Konitz. That's what I love about him. He never falls into any mould or run. He always sounds fresh but unmistakably Konitz. 10 out of 5.

LATER...

I didn't think of Gil Evans. I'm not familiar with him as a piano player. It always surprises me when I do hear him.

□

CHIVE'S

Partying is part of the great Australian summer: eating, drinking, talking, substance abuse, dancing, flirting, advanced flirting, further conversations, more food, more substances, drinking, dancing and highly advanced flirting. And at any party you will find music. Humankind love a celebration. Music is a progressive celebration: from tapping sticks, to digital synthesisers. The sounds have changed and the beats are rearranged, yet we feel the music just the same way, in our souls. Souls connected to hips. The music happens, the hips swing, we're dancing and next thing you know it's a party.

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If you want your music live, the pubs, clubs and nightspots are full of great artists. Jazz funkists should keep an eye and/or ear open for bands like Nude, Boots, Banana, Solar, D.I.G., Trout Fishing in Quebec, Jacky Orszaczky's Grandmasters. If you like a large spoonful of blues on your funky jazz, catch up with Sugarbone, a brand new band around town, worth a listen. If home listening is the order of the day the Grandmasters, DIG and the Trouts all have new releases in the stores now.

If the blues is your thing, there's a hot new CD coming out from Mal Eastick thru Exile Records, and of course the new one from The Mighty Reapers,..... also keep an eye for something from Texan blues outfit Storyville. This band features Stevie Ray Vaughan's Rhythm section from

Double Trouble. Chris Layton and Tommy Shannon have teamed up with guitarist David Grissom from the John Mellencamp Band and singer Malford Milligan. Look out for a tour or album from these guys. Also worth a look is new Sydney blues band Lantern, fronted by captivating singer/guitarist Tim Duguid, a man who really knows how to be different, both musically and visually.

From funk blues to acapella from around the world. Topping the bill at the basement on 17th of October were Australian acapella group Arramaieda, four very talented women who could sing the pants off anyone. From South Africa came Valanga Khosa, Valanga combines his smooth voice with body percussion (some call this a musical form of masocism) and the thumb piano or kalimba. Also on the bill was Tibetan singer Yungchen Lhamo. This man can sing; his voice resonates like a bell. Sometimes it's as if he is ten people singing all at once. Here is a man who really does have an exquisite and ethereal vibe. Let us not forget Sylvia Encheva, formerly with Les Voix Mystere de Bulgare, another woman



Banana - slightly bent

Enjoy the music this summer, take it easy on the roads and keep your hips loose for a big year in 1995.

with a fine voice and captivating personality. Hope they do another tour soon. If they do, don't miss it. Or Angelique Kidjo if she returns. Another fantastic performer. Worth buying her latest for a listen, wonderful songs delivered by a charismatic woman with a beautiful smile and a tight backing band.

Back to the music of summer. If you need to know where to go for the best in crossover styles try the following venues. In Sydney, Kinselas at Taylor Square, Harbourside Brasserie at The Rocks. Mr. Goodbar on Oxford Street in Darlinghurst, the Bridge Hotel at Balmain and the Basement. There's The Sydney Festival & Carnivale which runs from December through January at locations all over Sydney. Byron Bay '95 should be a goer, with forty different and varied acts over four days from January 4th.

The big thing in Queensland will be the Maleny Folk Festival at Woodford just north of Brisbane. This one is held over the new year, and features many brilliant performers from a huge range of styles. In Brisbane check out the Brisbane Jazz Club or The Music Arts Club in the city The Zoo or Rick's cafe at Fortitude Valley. Louis Ferrads at Milton or Gavin's Studio Cafe in Paddington. In Cairns its Gypsy's D's, Green's Basement, - Johno's Blues Bar or The Crown Hotel. Townsville has The Australian Hotel and Mackay has The Austral Hotel.

In Melbourne its Bennet's Lane in the city, Chinta Ria in Carlton, The Ritz in St. Kilda or The Continental Cafe at Prahran. If you like a bit of hippy music, try the Down to Earth Festival at Moama on Murray River from the 28th December till Jan 2nd.

Canberra has The Southern Cross Club & Asylum, in the city centre.

Adelaide party people go to The Mecca, The Creole Room, The Cargo Club or The Adelaide Fringe Club all of which are in the city.

In the wild west Perth people frequent The Hyde Park Hotel, Iguana's Bar, Inglewood Hotel, O'Connors Tavern.

Tasmanians can leap into some crossover styles at Hadley's Hotel, The Cafe Who, The New Sydney Hotel, The Globe Hotel and Nonie's Jazz Cellar in Hobart. In Launceston The Royal Oak Hotel, and at Burnie The Town House.

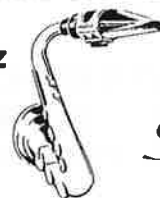
Finally, the Northern Territory has Araluen Arts Centre and Club Muso in Alice Springs while Darwin's party hard jazz crew frequent The Beaufort Hotel Lobby Bar and Scott's Tavern Restaurant.

Enjoy the music this summer, take it easy on the roads and keep your hips loose for a big year in 1995. □

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Book Review

JAZZ AND BLUES CATALOGUE Edition 2

Edited by Graham Langley

Music Master; Retail Entertainment Data Publishing



I fear for the minds that compile these sort of things. I suppose that even if they do send themselves round the twist, it has been in the cause of doing the rest of us a favour.

With the addition of *Blues* to the title since the first edition, this is now a fairly comprehensive list of recordings in both spheres. I say "fairly"

for two reasons. Blessed with my own version of a troubled mind, I immediately looked for omissions, and in no time at all found the Soft Machine was missing, together with its members and spin-offs.

Then there is the almost complete absence of the Australian jazz scene on record, except for the odd item that found an OS release.

Nonetheless, if you want a thorough list for working out which Mingus albums you haven't got, or whatever, this will do the job handsomely.

John Shand

**"WISHING ON THE MOON" THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF BILLIE HOLIDAY**

Donald Clarke

Penguin Books Australia Ltd.

This is a welcome release and the first major work on the legendary singer. Clarke is well credentialed, being the editor of the highly regarded *Penguin Encyclopedia Of Popular Music*.

The story of Lady Day is recalled here in unprecedented detail. The music, the musicians and her world are the heart of the work.

Clarke is most effusive about his subject. Holiday is forever portrayed as a victim and there is endless vindication for her lapses - both personal and professional.

In evaluating Holiday's recordings Clarke's objectivity is in question. In regards to her early Columbia recordings, Clarke suggests "that it is music made in heaven". The Commodore records "are all classics" the Decca series "are amongst the best Pop records". Holiday's Verve recordings are at best variable, however according to the author - "the Verve records are all beautiful".

Considering the emphasis that is placed on her recordings the absence of a discography is a mystery.

Clarke is a protector of Holiday's musicality. It is indeed a pity that he does not protect her dignity. There are copious, needless accounts of her sexuality, drug abuse and self destruction.

Wishing on the moon is definitive but is not without flaws.

Barry Ralph

Anytime for Practice

The last issue of JaB contained an article on the merits of modern digital pianos that now sound and feel almost as good as a quality acoustic piano. A particular advantage is being able to practice at any time without disturbing your family, or the neighbours.

To meet the needs of the purists who believe only an acoustic piano action is good enough, Kawai has just released new acoustic piano which includes a built-in digital piano. By moving a switch, the piano hammers are prevented from hitting the strings, so the pianist can practice at anytime with headphones on, listening to digitally-produced sound. Naturally, the piano always feels like an acoustic piano. And in addition to peaceful practice it offers a wide range of electronic features including MIDI.

The name of this new piano? Anytime!

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STATE of PLAY

PERTH.....

STEVE TALLIS

Fat Bellies Cafe

Steve Tallis has paid his dues: 30 years of music, including busking on the streets of Paris, London and New York. Special guest of artists from Bob Dylan to Ricki Lee Jones, and leader of avant garde group Steve Tallis and Zombi Party, he is quite at home in a solo setting.

Tallis lives his music with songs such as the jazzy *Parachute*, and *New York City Blues*, in which he relates his past life and the musical haunts of Perth: "The Stoned Crow ... What The Heck Discotek ... The Sandgroper ..." *Misquotes*, by Steve, was born out of the constant misquotes by the Perth media regarding his life and music.

This was followed by his new song *Love is a Precious Thing* "...take your hand off my mojo, baby".

Tallis gives a fresh interpretation of songs by Leadbelly, Tom Waits, Tim Buckley, the Rolling Stones, et al.

Tallis' musical strength lies in the power of his lyrics, and the musicianship of his guitar playing which can be once rhythmical, sensitive, melodic and driving. There are Latin influences reminiscent of Feliciano combined with the blues feel of Muddy Waters and Leadbelly.

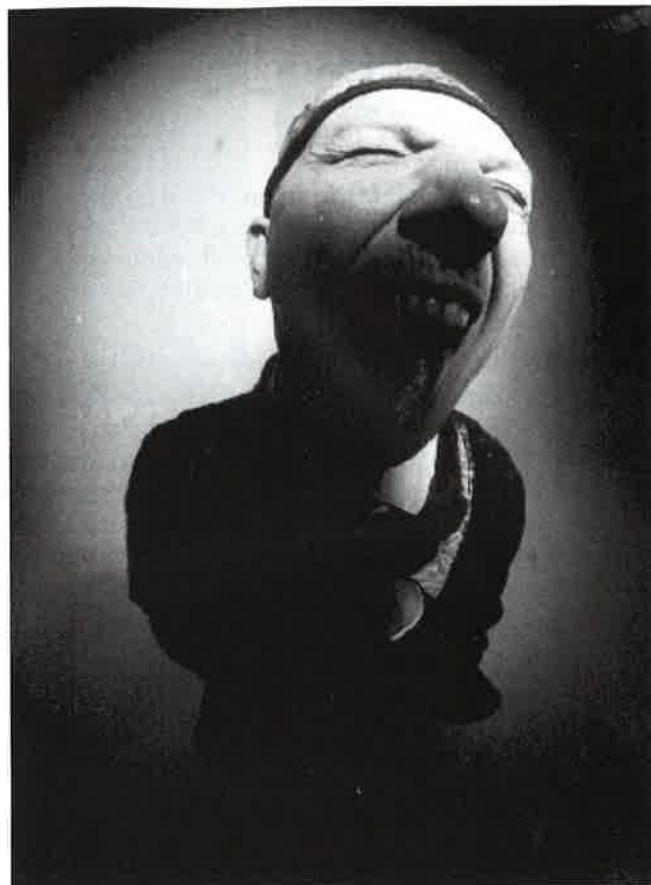
Steve's vocal style, though not consciously imitative sounds somewhere in between that of Frank Zappa and Bob Dylan. The venue was packed to hear this talented man.

Max R. Harris

Playback Shuffle Nonet Hyde Park Hotel

The Playback Shuffle Nonet, under the leadership of bassist Murray Wilkins, takes its name from the title track of the recent CD release, *The Playback Shuffle* (Request Records RQCD 1503). This recording, however, features pianist, Vaslay Jelonek now living in New York, tenor saxophonist, John Mackey now residing in Sydney, and drummer, Chris Tarr now studying at the University of North Texas. Wilkins has put a virtually new band together, consisting of some of Perth's finest players, with a mix of experience and youth. With Wilkins in the rhythm section is the outstanding ex-New Zealand drummer, Frank Gibson Jr and guitarist, Ray Walker. The experience of these players surfaced throughout the evening, with Walker's judicious use of guitar effects in comping and soloing providing an unusual backdrop for this pianoless group featuring five front line players plus a vocalist.

The concert united trombonist, Jordan Murray and tenor saxophonist, Jamie Oehlers, who have both been on scholarships at Berklee, where in June they were invited to lead the Berklee jazz ensemble at a festival in New York organised by Dave Liebman. Their solo contributions throughout the evening were outstanding. Murray's lyricism on trombone gets stronger at each hearing.



Damien Maughan, at 18 years of age, is the best jazz trumpeter Western Australia has yet produced. His maturity, intonation and development of ideas within a solo mark him as a major jazz musician of the future.

Alto saxophonist and flautist Paul Millard is one of the country's pre-eminent section leaders in the big band setting. His experience was used to good effect with the five horns, including Rachel Oldmeadows on baritone sax. The horn section was very tight considering this was the band's first performance.

Vocalist Roz Pearson has contributed lyrics to the originals, which she delivered with an experienced sense of rhythm and good intonation. Similarly her treatment of the Monk tunes *Ask Me Now* and *Round Midnight* showed a maturity and understanding of jazz vocals in the bebop tradition.

Wilkins' five part horn writing is new venture for him and whether on his own originals or the Monk and Gillespie tunes he shows an understanding of how to enhance the melody or a soloist utilising restraint and economy, plus an appropriate array of dynamics.

Gary Lee

KAWAI

ADELAIDE.....

Carl Orr The Office

Carl Orr turned a simple homecoming gig into an unexpected celebration. The guitarist came back to Adelaide from his new home of Sydney, keen to show off a new album but without his usual band. Instead, he called on old Adelaide friends to perform with him - and the calculated gamble worked a treat.

Orr chose his players wisely. For a unit which enjoyed only minimal rehearsal, it played with great sympathy and understanding of Orr's work. The discreet guitarist was given ample space to breathe within rich atmospheric arrangements, peeling off pretty, flowing melodic lines with his fast finger work on the fretboard.

Of equal importance were the contributions of his supporting players. Taken out of their usual band roles and given a more responsible task to drive the music, electric bass player Vito Portolesi (a member of veteran Sydney r & b unit The Mighty Reapers) and Duncan Archibald (a stalwart of the Adelaide r & b scene) were unobtrusive yet powerful as they maintained a tidy funk pulse.

Even more impressive was Paul White on Hammond organ, piano and synthesizer, peppering his frequent solos with great colour, variety and melody. His reputation continues to grow with every outing. Orr appeared comfortable and in control as the unit cruised through material from his third album, *Mean It*, with the balance of musical strength and beauty on *Miles of Miles*, *Still Life* and *Gil Evans* capturing the poise which Orr delivers so surely on disc.

David Sly

Jeff Lang

Oriental Hotel, Northside Blues Club

The launch of a first album from a fresh-faced young bluesman may seem ominous but Jeff Lang is a seasoned talent with the ability to create his own unique niche in music. He is an unaccompanied acoustic guitarist, specialising in bottleneck technique, whose album *Ravenswood* (recorded at Mixmasters Studio in the Adelaide Hills) has a sweet, pastoral sound and the clean ring of fine playing. What's more, he translates the clarity and purity of this sound easily on to the stage, mixing technique with a deal of showmanship which gets crowds whooping.

Only 23 years old, Lang has already eked something of a journeyman existence: born in Geelong, now living in Sydney, and a staple of the touring circuit since the age of 17, having performed with Matt Taylor's Chain and shared the stage with Albert Collins. The flavour of his experience shines through in a live context, with his picking stamped by a more lusty, fiery flourish and his voice magnified with booming timbre.

Decidedly an entertainer, Lang makes a fist of his one-man show, building a rhythm through stamping on an amplified wood box and dazzling listeners with lighting-paced licks. However, he is equally at home caressing a slow blues, such as *Carry a Torch For Me*, showing maturity beyond his tender years. As the disc and live performance cover two quite different and accomplished musical temperaments in complementary manner. Lang now deserves accreditation in the big league of Australian blues players.

David Sly



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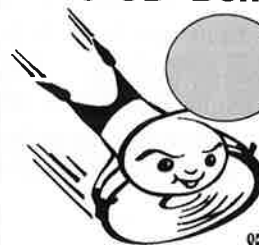
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HOBART.....

Dan Barrett with the Ian Pearce Quartet Westside Hotel

If jazz has an equivalent to the uplifting creations of Bach, Handel and Vivaldi, then it is the compositions and arrangements of its New Orleans, Harlem and Kansas City masters. Lumped under the generic title of classic jazz, the Oliver, Morton, Ellington and Moten tunes can be butchered by well-meaning but uninspired trad bands who view the music as easy toe-tapping stuff for the masses.

But done well, classic jazz becomes a pure joy, as touring American brassman Dan Barrett emphatically displayed in the sympathetic company of Hobart pianist Ian Pearce and his quartet recently.

First set highlights included a sizzling interpretation of *Cake Walkin' Babies From Home*, with Dan's clipped cornet phrases; and a sublime *Creole Love Call*, Dan's muted trombone blending

gorgeously with the intensely blue chalumeau clarinet of an inspired Paul Martin. The seldom-heard Eddie Condon ballad *Whenever There's Love* featured some pretty piano from Ian and a mellow Barrett 'bone.

I love the sound of a tenor sax and trombone together and my only complaint about this concert is we didn't hear the pairing often enough. *Linger Awhile* cooked (Ian in rollicking form), and *Moten Swing* proved Paul has been listening to Eddie Miller lately.

The night's highlight, though, was a loving tribute to Jack Teagarden as Dan took on *Stars fell On Alabama* and made it into a rich yet melancholy statement, full of breathy notes suggesting lost loves. Ian and Paul's contributions were equally luscious. Throughout the night the three had able support from drummer Mike Colrain and bassist Ken Martin. Do this again, guys. Soon.

Steve Robertson

South Street Band Cafe Who?

Take some funk, add jazz overtones, mix with hip-hop and out comes acid.

That's the formula which is proving a winner for Hobart's five month-old South Street Band, a quintet of young musicians who are bringing the national craze for acid jazz to the ears of an ever-increasing number of Tasmanians.

It's late Saturday night at the trendy Cafe Who? and the Combo is cooking on some high energy post-bop classics. *Dig, Move* and *So What* are especially tasty, with bassist Janita Foley very much out front. Their two funkier originals, *Bollocks* and *Fishnets Stockings* get the 1a.m. crowd up and dancing.

"My greatest influence is Miles Davis," says trumpeter Paul Smith. "I'd always wanted to be in a jazz band, and my experience with the Northwest Coast Wind Symphony, plus some clinics from Sydney trumpeter Tom Baker, gave me the motivation to take up jazz last year."

After a couple of early line-up changes, this co-op band now has Paul on trumpet, Damian Hills on alto sax, Randall Muir at the piano, Jeremy Sibson on drums and Janita Foley on bass.

Acid jazz groups they obviously admire include Ute, Us Three and Groove Collective. Their repertoire is expanding all the time, and Paul and Damian have started doing vocals in response to audience demands.

Steve Robertson



Trumpeter Paul Smith of South Street Band idolised Miles Davis



CANBERRA.....

Dan Barrett and Tom Baker with the Bob Barnard All Stars Southern Cross Club

From Tom Bakers Selman tenor sax (circa 1934, with its English "Roc" old fashioned plastic mouthpiece) to the pristine trombone of Don Barrett and the equally brilliant cornet of Bob Barnard, this front line had what it takes to cast off the Canberra winter chills. It was backed by the mischievous Len Barnard with his fulsome drive from the skins, Chris Tapperell's melody - plus from the Yamaha grand and Wally Wickham's warm double bass.

Highlights included a raunchy cornet trio (Tom, Bob and Dan) on *That's A Plenty*, Eddy Condon's *Wherever There is Love There Is You and I*, when Dan's supremely sensitive notes were

The Mighty Reapers Tilley's

Tilleys have had many fine blues and r & b acts over the years, both national and international, but none better than The Mighty Reapers.

The crowd was enthusiastic right from the first song. The band's material covered a range of styles, from traditional Chicago blues like *Strange Things Happening* through to funky r & b such as their own *Waiting For a Miracle*, with a good helping of B.B.King, Sonny Boy Williamson and James Brown along the way. The Mighty Reapers have a good repertoire of originals now, and played many songs from their recently released album *Trouble People*, as well as the earlier *The Mighty Reapers*.

Every member of the band is a top class musician. Although they draw on a variety of influences, the band always retains a strong identity of it's own, whether playing their own songs or highly original arrangements of other people. As well as the high quality of the music, singer Robert Susz really knows how to work the crowd, often turning a song into a medley to keep them dancing and at other times introducing an intense slow blues at just the right moment. Each band member was well show-cased with lots of great solos and excellent interaction. Even though there were six musicians on stage, the sound was never cluttered and the new percussionist Fabian Hevia added extra drive and interest with his choice of instruments and tasteful playing.

The Mighty Reapers are only now getting some of the recognition they deserve. They are far and away the best blues and r & b act in the country. Wherever they're playing, if you get the chance go and see them.

Peter Gelling

a joy to hear. *Blues for an Unknown Gipsy* had Tom's Selman also, (circa 1928) singing beautifully and a dreamy arrangement of *Margie* provided Dan with a further opportunity to impress a most admiring audience.

A punchy up-tempo *Cottontail* concluded the concert, as if to prove that if you're good enough you can still make the horns sing whilst performing with a modern feel. The young musicians in the audience sat bolt upright. Questioned in the dressing room after the show Dan suggested that, "More recent players have given a lot musically and technically, but they have stopped singing through their horns". Well isn't that the truth?

Following this, his first trip to Oz, a return visit of Dan Barrett will be most welcome especially if his good buddy, Tom Baker, accompanies him.

Rod Andrew

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(Subscription form on p. 62)

SYDNEY.....

Manly Jazz Festival

While the Manly Jazz festival may be flawed in all sorts of ways, none of them is sufficient to undermine the extraordinary shot in the arm it gives the whole scene.

For a start, over 500 musicians participated in this, the 18th annual event. That represents a pile of work for our often gig-starved players. Secondly, some 90,000 punters cruised through the festival over the three days, and were exposed to music as diverse as that of Bob Barnard and Guy Strazullo, Geoff Achison and Improviso.

And, most importantly, they lapped it all up. They responded warmly to whatever seemed well-played and well-presented. The cynics might insinuate that the mob lacks powers of discrimination. I suggest it is more a case of people connecting with the expertise and joy inherent in most of the music. With no preconceptions to overcome - with no one having labelled a band "new", "adventurous" or "difficult", the music could reach out to people on its own terms, and be happily absorbed.

My advance expectations that the Friday night concert at the Manly Art Gallery and Museum would be highlight of the festival were disappointed. The Engine Room - Roger Frampton, piano, John Pochee, drums, Steve Elphick, bass -



Dan Barrett: a star-studded band

was joined by virtuoso vibraphonist Daryl Pratt in a performance marred by sound problems from the lively room itself, the PA, and the electronic keyboard. This did not prevent some attractive music being made. Frampton's *Constant Dream* was a drifting waltz with Pochee on brushes. Frampton's solo began with haunting notes left hanging in the air, where Elphick embellished them with vibrato-laden upper-register work.

After an interval, the Freeboppers came scorching to life in trio form: Mark Simmonds on tenor, Elphick again on bass, and Simon Barker on drums. They played a handful of pieces from the *Fire* CD with typical bravura, though I found the length of the solos undermined their substance to a degree, and certainly stretched uninitiated sections of the audience to breaking point.

Saturday dawned sunny and mild, and Barker was already back in action when I arrived, this time with singer Suzanne Wyllie's band. While Wyllie's musical skills are already considerable, she is still finding her feet as a performer. Stand-outs were *Miss Otis Regrets* and a punchy *Hum Drum Blues*, on which Mark Isaacs extracted all the electronic piano was capable of.

Psycho Zydeco had the amphitheatre pumping with echoes of Louisiana. If the grooves were cooking, the vocals only simmered in the sunshine. A boozy pub would be their more natural habitat, as it is for the longeval Foreday Riders, whose Chicago blues seduced the Sydney Road Stage audience.

On the main Oceanfront Stage, altoist Blaine Whittaker proved himself a capable band leader and entertainer, with American pianist John Harkins, bassist, Jonathan Zwartz and drummer Andrew Dickeson. The moody *Amsterdam After Dark* was less affected by wind/PA problems less than the more up-tempo pieces. Along with guitarists Cory Sea and Jim Kelly, the "Mr. Eccentric" of Australian jazz, Joe Lane, guested. Elements of the unsuspecting audience were ill-prepared for Joe's vocal onslaught on *Night in Tunisia*.

Meanwhile, on the Sydney Road Stage, Marie Wilson was caressing ears rather boxing them, charming her way through understated readings of such classics as *I Thought About You* and *My Foolish Heart*.

The openness of the audience was demonstrated by their ready acceptance of the brash blues-rock of Geoff Achison's Big Machine immediately after Ms. Wilson. Achison's raw-voiced laments and howling guitar were convincing, although his band seemed limp on occasion.

The Great Hall of St. Patrick's College hosted the Saturday and Sunday night concerts. A T-shaped auditorium with vaulted wooden ceiling, it made Ian Cooper's Strings of Swing sing sweetly. Violinist Cooper was joined by Natalie Morrison, bass, and Ian Date and Jim Purnell, guitars. Together, they lent an array of standards considerable freshness with their combination of virtuosity, reverence and good humour. Cooper has the gift of teasing melodies in a way that obliges the listener to smile.

They were followed by the Dan Barrett Octet. The US trombonist had assembled a star-studded band that included three Barnards, a Bail, a Taperell, a Lyall and a Stuebe. Len Barnard's ability to galvanise the front line with his swinging decorative devices stood out.



Suzanne Wyllie: considerable musical skills

A wet start to Sunday slowed us down, so that we arrived in time to see Cathy Harley vacate the piano seat with Improviso, to dash off to a Bu-Baca gig (not at the festival). Lyall, Alder, Scott and Turbull sounded mighty, anyway.

Jim Kelly's fusion band, Business As usual, worked well with the big PA and space of the main stage. Dave McRae is one of those rare individuals who can make a synthesizer talk, and with the likes of Chad Wackerman and Ian Bloxsom on stage, it was no wonder the audience was enthralled.

On the Sydney Road Stage, a less acoustic of Ian Cooper's band won the loudest ovation of the weekend, with Chuck Morgan on electric guitar and John Morrison on drums. The latter pair reappeared in Col Nolan's band at the New Brighton Hotel, along with that man Lyall. The incest continued when Pamela Knowles crooned a Brazilian flavoured set with Craig Scott, Andrew Dickeson, Roger Frampton and Graham Jesse.

Back on the main stage, first the r'n'b of Barb and the Bordellos, then the latin fire of Espirito warmed up the crowd, before husky-voiced Renee Geyer came out to face a vast audience. She was ably assisted by a fine band in which veteran Harry Brus shone with his accuracy and feel. Though she was joined by such guests as Dale Barlow, Julian Lee and Dave Ellis, I found the performance largely impersonal and unaffectionate. Of course, it may have been riveting in a club.

A brief sample of Swiss pianist Moncef Genoud's playing at the noisy Media Launch for the festival had not prepared me for what was the festival highlight: his performance at St. Patrick's with Steve Elphick and John Pochee. He was dazzling, lyrical and swinging. On Shorter's *Footprints*, the melody was serenely laid over agitated drums and portentous bass. Playing much of the time with brushes, Pochee was at his most sympathetic and creative, while Elphick showed again that he is a player of rare economy, strength and purpose, all in the cause of emotional directness.

Genoud also accompanied Yusef Komunyakaa, a Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet, who delivered a short piece dedicated to Ellington, called *Twilight Seduction*. While Genoud quoted the maestro, Komunyakaa delivered such lines as "*Faces of women woven into chord structure and crescendo*". Perhaps the sample does not do justice to the whole. You'll have to believe me: this was a class act.

The Don Rader Quintet completed the evening with a sparkling set, in which Rader's *A Yank Down Under* showed off Jason Morphett's ability to sustain prolonged melodic ideas on the soprano. The leader's cornet generated bursts of fire, stoked by a generous tone.

On to the Monday, when the dream-like appeal of Guy Strazzullo's Australian Creole was broken up by a Brazilian in the audience called Josephine, who could contort her pelvis to striking effect.

Tim Hopkins, Mark Isaacs, Cameron Undy and Simon Barker played up a storm in the tea cup of the Sydney Road Stage, while, on the main stage, Bob Barnard was leading a nine-piece band saluting Louis Armstrong with verve and authority.

The finale was a high-energy and showy set by Ignatius Jones and the Sydney Allstar Jazz Orchestra, during which the winner of our STA Travel subscriber competition, George Papanicolaou, brought the house down by explaining that he was descended from the guy who invented the pap-smear. I guess you had to be there.

John Shand



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BRISBANE.....

Bobby Shew and the Northern California Big Band

Brisbane City Travelodge Jazz and Blues Bar

American Trumpet player Bobby Shew is as adept at humour as music. "How do you make a million dollars in jazz?" he asked me. Before I could reply he concluded: "Start off with five million dollars".

Many a promoter would only be slightly amused at this prophecy.

The production values for the evening were most impressive. Bobby Shew backed by the 18 piece Northern California big band featuring altoist Mary Fettig (ex-Kenton, ex-everybody).

Despite the bill, only the seating was full in the Jazz and Blues bar. Fortunately this made little difference to the performances by the musicians.

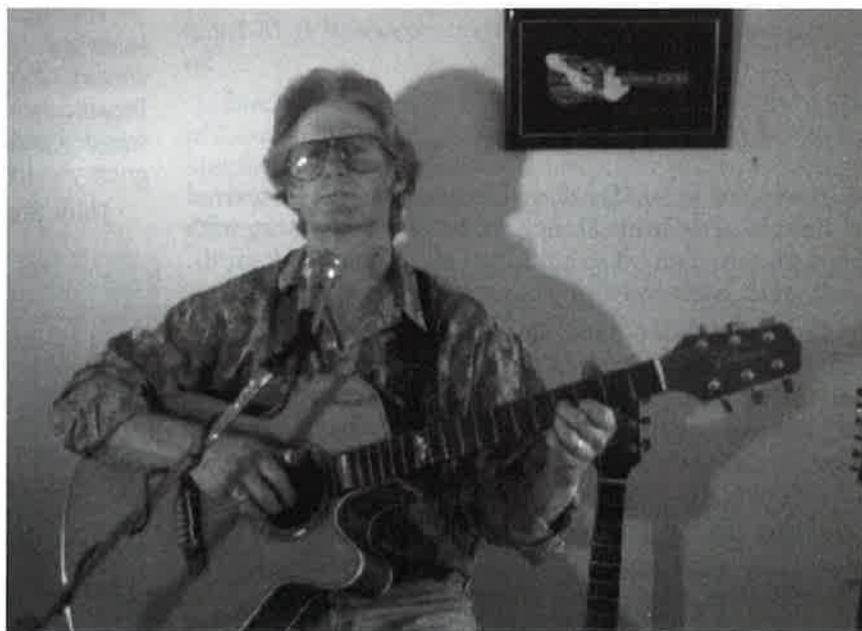
It is always an occasion to hear a live big band. This one was of a high quality. *To Bird with Love* featured Fettig. *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* demonstrated the ensemble quality of the orchestra. The performance also featured a deluge of originals.

Bobby Shew appeared with the rhythm section for a set which featured *Night in Tunisia* and an impromptu blues. Shew is world class, demonstrating range, control, imagination and an unquestionable technique. Mary Fettig loses nothing in comparison.

Shew and Fettig performed *Rhythm-A-Ning* with such vitality that it may have been the highlight of the evening. Shew on trumpet and flugelhorn, backed by the big band, performed a well orchestrated *Body and Soul*.

From a musical point of view the evening had everything; certainly its quality deserved a better patronage.

Phil Manning:
acoustic guitar, a stool - and talent



Phil Manning *Waterloo Hotel*

The Brisbane Blues Festival is now in its third year. A commercial and artistic success. It is a triumph for the organisers and musicians.

The 1994 festival enjoyed a capacity audience which in turn enjoyed the best available local talent.

For a solo performer to follow the amplified and charismatic virtues of Little Fi and the Delta Rhythm Kings is no easy task, particularly when the only obvious stage props available were an acoustic guitar, a stool - and talent.

Phil Manning is one of the most convincing blues solo acts around and he has been around a long time - twenty years in fact. This night at the Waterloo caught him in prime form.

Manning started with his own piece *A.M.* This instrumental demonstrated once again his virtuosity and his blues/country style. *A 1,000 Miles* was his first vocal of the night - bright, breezy and confident. *Finger Tennis* was further evidence of his guitar technique.

The works were not all his own. From Big Bill Broonzy came *Key to the Highway* and the Muddy Waters composition *Can't be Satisfied*.

Manning changed the tuning of his guitar continuously during the set and, in fact, changed his guitar for open slide work on *Tiger* and the final offering, *Jumpin' For Jenny*.

Phil Manning is a rare talent. The audience could ask for no more. The artists to follow would have preferred less.

The festival had reached its first high spot. I hope that it was recorded.

Barry Ralph



MELBOURNE.....

Christine Sullivan, Wilbur Wilde Sante Brasserie, Melbourne

The management of Sante Brasserie have hired three seasoned and versatile talents: pianist Joe Chindamo, bass guitarist Jeremy Alsop and drummer Darryn Farrugia, to work as the house band. They will play from 10pm every night, with guest singers and instrumentalists rotating every few weeks; while another band (also changing over every few weeks) will do the late shift, starting around 1am. Alsop has been appointed musical director for the room, and he has plans to bring in guest artists from interstate or overseas.

For the opening night, three bands were presented: the house trio with singer Christine Sullivan and trumpeter Bobby Venier, Wilbur Wilde's Blowout and the New Tango Quintet.

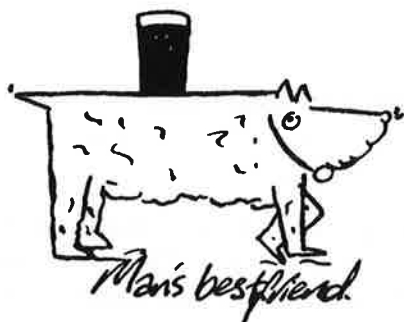
As it happens, Chindamo, Alsop and Farrugia have been Sullivan's first-choice accompanists for some time, so they combined very smoothly with her, playing with a firm but light touch, so that the singer didn't have to strain to be heard. When she did unleash the full power of her voice, it was all the more effective.

Sullivan is more of a stylist than an improviser, tending to set her interpretation of a song, and perhaps adjust that around the edges, rather than doing anything especially adventurous with it. But she has a very attractive, soulful voice, and her versions of the (not-too-heavily) funky *The Other Side of Town* and the romantic ballad *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* were very musical.

Those wanting improvisation would have been satisfied by the contributions of Chindamo and Venier, who fashioned long solos, craftily developed and detailed, as the rhythm section milked the groove.

Wilbur Wilde has been out of circulation, jazz-wise, for several years now. His recent decision to reform Blowout - much the same as before, with trumpeter Scott Tinkler, pianist Mark Fitzgibbon, bass guitarist Craig Newman, and Darryn Farrugia, provides an opportunity to hear some of the better players on the scene, and a reminder that Wilbur himself is a more than credible tenor saxophonist.

As with Sullivan, Wilde sometimes seems reluctant to really extend himself, not straying too far from familiar patterns on material that he is comfortable with. I sometimes wonder whether, beneath the hip, humorous persona, Wilbur is less



confident about his ability that he really ought to be. Here, his tenor sounded hot and strong, with a full-bodied tone and an emphatic, steamrolling attack.

The band played a couple of modal Billy Harper themes, a blues, a bicep-flexing funk number and an old standard, *All of Me*. The last gave the leader an opportunity to sing with affable humour, if no great skill. Throughout the set, the rhythm section was tight and purposeful, while Fitzgibbon and Tinkler made good use of their opportunities to stretch out.

Unfortunately, the late hour prevented me from sticking around to hear guitarist Doug De Vries' New Tango Quintet (with pianist Jex Saarelaht, accordionist George Butrumlis, violinist Dan Bourke and bassist Philip Rex). Previous experience of their original material (inspired by the "tango nuevo" of the late Argentinian composer, Astor Piazzolla) did make it a tough choice.

Sante may not become a focal point for jazz fans and musos, like Bennetts Lane; but even if it doesn't, it certainly can't be bad for the local jazz scene, can it?

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JAZZ WORKSHOP

by Phil Marks (author of *Understanding Chords*)

In my previous article I described a powerful visual technique for learning all twelve major chords. In most traditional theory books the major chord is described as a three note subset of a larger seven note structure called the major scale and the student is encouraged to learn the twelve major scales before progressing to an understanding of chords.

However major scales, unlike major chords, are not easy to visualize. There are no major scales which share the same visual pattern.

An alternative approach to learning the major scales is by first starting with the major chord and then adding the missing notes.

C MAJOR CHORD NOTES

C E G C

C MAJOR SCALE NOTES

C	d	E	f	G	a	c	C
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
T		S		T		S	

S=semitone (the distance between adjacent notes on the keyboard)

T=tone (two semitones)

The notes of any major chord are numbered 1,3,5 & 8 (8 being the octave). Memorize the interval relationships between the chord notes and the adjacent scale notes described above. These relationships apply to any major scale. Try adding the 2,4,6 & 7 to all the major triads and discover your major scales!

Contrary to popular belief, composition often begins not with a melody but with a chord or a sequence of chords. The melody is then derived primarily from notes contained within the accompanying chords. The relationship of the melody to the chord can therefore be described as a number. In the next lesson I will discuss the many advantages associated with thinking of melody notes as numbers. Goodbye for now.

BLUES

WORKSHOP

by Peter Gelling

SET RHYTHM, Part Two

Greetings once again. In the last issue looked at ways of using a set rhythm to develop control over 8th notes when improvising. This time I would like to continue this process with triplets, one of the most common figures found in blues. As with 8th notes, the first thing to do is to practice improvising with constant triplets.

Here is an example.



As before, the next step is to use the triplets on any given beat or beats of the bar. This next rhythm has the triplets on only the first and fourth beats. Be sure to play nothing where rests are indicated.



After you get the hang of triplets and rests, try adding some 8th notes. here is one possibility. As with previous exercises, memorise the rhythm on note before improvising with it.



Here is an example of playing against an A7 chord using this rhythm.



Have fun and experiment; the possibilities are endless. Patience and discipline will always pay off. Next issue I'll demonstrate some other interesting ways to use triplets.

RUSSELL MALONE

Black Butterfly

Columbia CK 53912; Sony Music

Russell Malone, g; Gary Motley, p; Paul Keller, b; Peter Siers, d; Steve Nelson, vbs

Malone's playing doesn't have the punch of his idols, Montgomery and Burrell. However *Black Butterfly* does have its highlights: the title track (by Duke Ellington), *Jingles*, an emotional version of Col Porter's *All Through the Night* that cruises along beautifully, and Malone's own *After The Bath*. This is a very delicate piece written for his infant daughter. By contrast *I Say a Little Prayer* sounds dated and is set to a wimpy kind of drum beat.

Pianist Motley performs well. Malone, however, seems to suffer from the "I've-got-to-play-as-many-notes-as-possible-and-show-what-I-can-do" syndrome. He's so much better on the slower numbers, though he clearly possesses a great technical facility and boundless energy. *Black Butterfly* could well grow on me with repeated listenings.

Elisa Valli

ATMASPHERE

Flying

Tall Poppies TP038; Polygram

David Jones, d, perc; Daryl Pratt, midi vbs, perc; Adam Armstrong, b, el b; Carmen Warrington, v; Don Burrows, fl; Mike Nock, p.

This first release from AtmaSphere is further confirmation of David Jones' stature as a consummate and constantly questing percussionist. Here is no mish-mash of drum-laden density, though rhythmic complexity is often the order of the day. And the players rise to the challenge with such assurance, feel and good-humour that the chasm of self-conscious cleverness is entirely side-stepped.

Festival After Victory is a jubilant gem of a piece, with a feisty electric bass solo from Armstrong, and party-vibes from Pratt. While the latter is exemplary throughout, I mostly prefer his work on the hypnotic pieces.

Carmen Warrington's "vocussion" contributions are unique, and in the case of *Ascending*, entirely beguiling. The jury is still out on the words,

themselves. And Jones? As expected, the playing is consistently masterful. Of more consequence is the way he uses music to communicate his spirit of joy and positivism.

John Shand

STEVIE WISHART

Wish

Tall Poppies TP027

Wishart, vln, hurdy-gurdy, v; Jim Denley, b fl, fl, flax, s; Julian Knowles, samplers, kbd; Rik Rue; tape manipulations; Shane Fahey, acoustic treatments.

Old meets new and both are transformed on this intriguing production. Wishart draws on material and sound colour from medieval and folk musics, and from a rich mix of electronic procedures. Wishart is known as an adventurous contemporary improviser and has worked in a formidable range of electronic and acoustic environments.

This is focussed in *Wish* through the use of violin and hurdy-gurdy in a series of pieces, improvised and composed, with artists including Denley, Rue and Knowles, who collaborate with Wishart on other projects, such as the *Machine for Making Sense*.

The hurdy-gurdy is a medieval instrument which presents a fascinating variety of timbral possibilities. Wishart has explored and multiplied these in her experiments with the instrument and these in turn have helped to inform her free approach to violin in both performance practice and composition.

The mood of much of the material is dark and mysterious, evocative of some strange heavily striated landscape, scored across with the mark of a bow.

Echoes of medieval dance skitter in from time to time. The electronic collaging is subtle and crafted. For sheer inventiveness this CD never flags.

G MEN

Red Dirt Blues

Blues Club Records BCRI04CD

John Stuart, v, slide g, perc; Greg McLain, d, v, perc; Si Crosbie, hca, v, perc; David Crestani, b, v, perc; Jim Bonnefond, v; Rob Workman, org.



These guys have that likeable larrikin aura that always surrounded the Faces and some members of the Rolling Stones. Avoid it like the plague if you like rock posturing, histrionics and cheap virtuosity. On the other hand, if you like warm, feel-good, devil-may-care bluesy rock, have a listen. The songs are well-crafted, the arrangements crisp, the playing up to scratch, and the four-part harmonies an added bonus.

These guys have the feel, even if the hot licks are out to lunch. The lyrics are pleasantly sardonic throwaways. If you like Dr Feelgood, Dave Edmunds or Nick Lowe, this will appeal.

John Shand

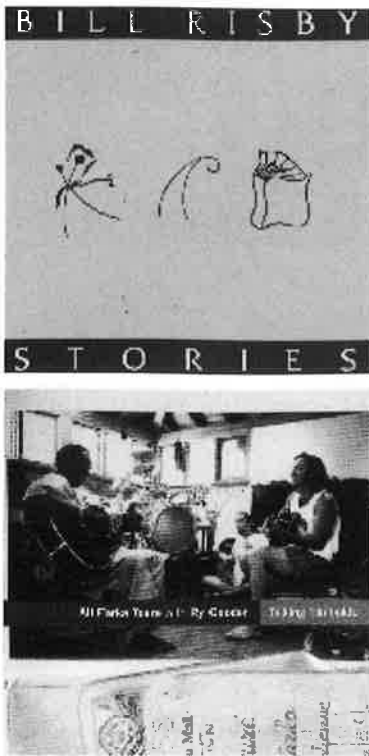
ALI FARKA TOURE

Talking Timbuktu

World Circuit WCD 040; Larrikin

Ali Farka Toure, v, g, ac g, bjo, perc; Ry Cooder, el g, el b, tamboura, perc; John Pattitucci, b; Jim Keltner, d; Gatemouth Brown, viola, g; Hamma Sankere, perc, v; Oumar Toure, perc, v.

Blues historians have often suggested that the blues that evolved in the southern USA could be directly traced back to the



storytelling tradition of the griot on West African cultures. There is no better illustration of this than the music of Malian master musician, Ali Farka Toure. He formed his style quite independently of any outside influences, but the similarities between his singing and guitar playing and those of bluesmen like John Lee Hooker or Lightnin' Hopkins are quite startling.

This set is a collaboration with Ry Cooder, but it most definitely takes place on Ali's turf, with Cooder blending in as if he had been playing this music for years. The songs are all Ali's, and he sings them in eleven west African languages. Nevertheless, you get the picture of what he is singing about, and the music is wonderfully hypnotic and compelling. The other musicians contribute well, too, although I would have welcomed a larger role for Gatemouth Brown. But if you would like a glimpse of the living, breathing roots of the blues, here it is.

Adrian Jackson

URBANATOR
Urbanator

Hip Bop 5 014929 800127; Festival

Michael Urbaniak, el violin, s; Lenny White, d, perc; Al McDowell, Marcus Miller, b; Jon Dryden, kbds; Herbie Hancock, p; Jane Getter, Fred Welsh, g; Michael Brecker, ts; Randy Brecker, Tom

Browne, t, flg; Muckhead, Solid, rap; Bernard Wright, prgrmmg, kbds; Dziko, v; Kenny Garrett, as.

Is there anything inherently wrong with bandwagons? Perhaps not. Michael Urbaniak and company don't think so. They've said to themselves, "I say, these kids with the back-to-front baseball caps are making rather a lot of money doing something we could do better." Or words to that effect, including a number of expletives.

These are hardly new kids on the block: I first encountered the talented Mr Urbaniak nearly 25 years ago on a record called *New Violin Summit*; Lenny White - who here impersonates a machine - made headlines with Miles Davis and Chick Corea; Al McDowell with Ornette. Herbie Hancock, Marcus Miller and the Brecker Brothers lend their names to proceedings, which may find favour in those joints with the flashing lights and expensive drinks. Pardon me, my prejudices are showing.

John Shand

BILL RISBY
Stories

Risby Music WAR 001

Bill Risby, p; Simon Barker, d; Craig Scott, b; Paul Mason, as.

What a find! Previously unfamiliar with Risby, and half-expecting reviewing it to be a chore, I immediately had my ears seduced by a pianist who is better than good.

Eight of the ten compositions are Bill's, and they are all delightful. He lists Egberto Gismonti, Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny and Herbie Hancock among his influences, but they have all been subsumed into a style that is simultaneously lyrical, evocative, passionate, economical and swinging.

The choice of accomplices was sophisticated: Craig Scott, a bassist capable of making each note a warm, round musical statement; and Simon Barker, a drummer whose potential and ability to fulfil that potential continue to expand like the boffins tells us the universe is doing. (How do they know that?)

Most importantly, these guys have ears, because Risby's music is an act of communication. No tricks, no compromises - just the god-sent gift to reach people.

No major company is distributing it - bright, aren't they? - but Birdland and Anthem carry it in Sydney. Elsewhere, try ABC shops, or write to PO Box 493, Hornsby, NSW 2077.

John Shand

JEFF USHER'S JAZZ UNIT.

Usher Plays Monk
GRV 5011-1-2 C.D.

Jeff Usher, p; Andrew McNaughton, t; Elliot Dalglish, as; Jonathan Dimond, tbn; Lach Easton, b; Peter Skelton, d.

This is Jeff Usher's second album and obviously a project which means a great deal to him. The Monk influence has always been evident in his playing.

The Monk standards are all performed with zest and conviction. McNaughton is improving all the time and is fine on *Bemsha Swing*. Dimond is also a strong performer and is well featured on *Teo*. Dalglish is a very individual player. Easton is a versatile veteran and Skelton is highly regarded. The group excels on *I Mean You* and *Evidence*. Usher is featured on solo piano on *Trinkle Tinkle* and *Ruby My Dear*.

Usher has also arranged all the selections and his charts are perceptive and capture Monk's musicality without resorting to imitation.

The albums are not without flaws. *Blue Monk* is a mess while *Brilliant Corners* lacks fire and is much too sombre.

On balance *Usher Plays Monk* is an impressive release featuring a talented leader and the cream of young local jazz talent.

Barry Ralph

SUZANNE WYLLIE
Suzanne Wyllie

ABC Music 479755 2; EMI

Suzanne Wyllie, v; Mark Isaacs, p; Adam Armstrong, b; Andrew Gander, d; Sandy Evans, ss, ts; Tim Van Der Kuil, g; Sue Blake, cello.

Suzanne Wyllie is blessed with a rich, deep, warm voice, like coffee, chocolates and port in front of an open fire. She also assembled a fine band for her first recording: basically the Mark Isaacs Trio of the period (January '94) plus Sandy Evans.

My Favourite Things takes off, with Wyllie bringing the lyric alive, before Evans flies high on soprano. Armstrong and Gander excel throughout, as you would expect.

Wyllie's skills as an arranger are considerable, and, when combined with the passionate lyricism of Isaacs - result in such gems as Horace Silver's *Lonely Woman*, with a swooping, dry-eyed melancholy vocal, and a haunting Isaacs arrangement of *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow*.

It is an auspicious debut. A touch less ingeniousness and a touch more ingenuousness in glorying in her material will do wonders.

John Shand

GEOFF ACHISON BAND

Big Machine
Larrikin GRACD 101

Geoff Achison, v, g, ac g, b; various incl. Keith Nolan, kbds; John Arthur, b; Winston Galea, d; Jackie Gaudion, v; Katherine Daye, v.

After a lengthy stint with Dutch Tilders' band, and more than a little work as an acoustic solo performer, Geoff Achison has taken the plunge and formed his own band. The Geoff Achison Band's style is declared on the opening song, *Hold On To What You got*: it's funky, energetic, and emphasises Achison's gutsy singing as much as it does his brilliant guitar playing. All but two of the songs were written by Achison. A couple of tracks aside, I was expecting, and would have preferred, something a little bluesier; but in all, it's a fairly accomplished debut.

Adrian Jackson

CHARLIE HADEN

Always Say Goodbye
Verve 521 501-2; PolyGram

Charlie Haden, b; Ernie Watts, ts; Alan Broadbent, p; Laranee Marable, d; Stephane Grappelli, v

German social theorist Walter Benjamin said that, "to portray a city, a native must have other, deeper motives - a motive of one who travels into the past instead of into the distance".

Charlie Haden is not a native of Los Angeles; he moved there from a relative backwater in Missouri, attracted to the bright lights and seedy underbelly of the frontier metropolis. *Always Say Goodbye* is in part a look back at the city in the '40s and '50s, and more generally, a unique way for Haden to reflect on aspects of his life.

The most striking aspect of this project is the way in which Haden melds original fragments into the pieces his ensemble - Quartet West - has recorded. So, for example, Coleman Hawkins' tenor saxophone is included in the mix of *My Love and I*; the plaintive voice of Chet Baker is inserted into *Everything Happens to Me* and Duke Ellington's Orchestra, featuring Ray Nance's violin solo is used in *Low Key Lightly*.

The project is no pastiche, but is a brave and evocative personal statement. The playing of Broadbent and Watts, in particular, is a joy. Wholeheartedly recommended.

Peter Jordan

THE CATHOLICS

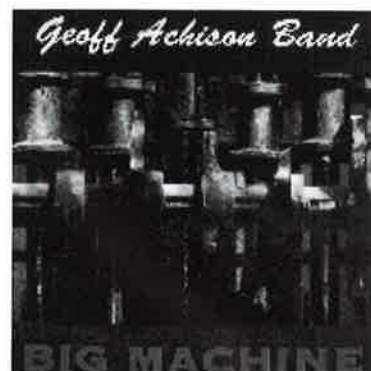
Simple
Rufus RF009

Lloyd Swanton, b, el b; Dave Brewer, g; Sandy Evans, ts, ss; James Greening, tbn; Toby Hall, d, perc; Michel Rose, ped steel g; Sammilla Sithole, perc.

This is the musical equivalent of throwing open the French windows of your seaside-resort on to a balcony overlooking the boundless ocean, and feeling the balmy breeze caress the worry-lines from your face.

Not that that sort of thing happens to me, you understand, but this music is real enough: it has too much raunch, swagger and humour to be anything else. Or, in the case of *Home*, it is simply sublime.

This could have - should have - mass appeal, as in a hit record. And it could do it without so much as



genuflecting to the gods of Vacuumness and Blandness. The songs are treats, the playing sparkling with bonhomie and enthusiasm. Play it when you're sad or angry and it will make you smile. When you're happy, it will have you laughing and dancing.

Forget the resort analogy; this is aural champagne. The good stuff. (Not that I get to drink any.)

John Shand

STEVE HUNTER

Night People
Tall Poppies TPO59; Polygram

Steve Hunter, el b.

This is supposedly a world first: an entire album of nothing but bass guitar. If that sounds excessively eclectic, think again. This is not any old bass guitarist: Steve Hunter is a magician whose mind-boggling technique allows him to do things lesser mortals could not conceive of on his 5-string instrument.

Notice I did not say "solo" bass. Hunter creates considerable variation in style and texture by a judicious use of multi-tracking on some pieces. His forays in the upper register are almost indistinguishable from a singing classical guitar. This must be heard to be believed.

The compositions generally evoke stillness, loneliness, or crystalline



beauty, as suggested by the inclusion of Chick Coreu's timeless *Crystal Silence*. Another of my all-time favourite pieces is also covered: Dave Holland's magnificent *Conference of the Birds*, which works brilliantly in this format.

John Shand

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC

The First Concert
Verve 521 646-2)

Shortly Sherock, t; JJ Johnson, tbn; Illinois Jacquet, Jack McVea, ts; Nat Cole, p; Les Paul, g; Red Callender or Johnny Miller, b; Lee Young, d.

ILLINOIS JACQUET

Flying Home
Verve 521 644-2

Jacquet, ts; with various, incl. Sweets Edison, Roy Eldridge, t; Hank Jones, Carl Perkins, p; Count Basie, Bill Davis, org; J C Heard, Art Blakey, Jo Jones, d.

FLIP PHILLIPS

Flip Wails

Verve 521 645-2

Phillips, ts; with various incl. Howard McGhee, Sweets Edison, Charlie Shavers, t; Bill Harris, tbn; Oscar Peterson, Hank Jones, Dick Hyman, p; Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, d.

Norman Granz built his career

upon the success of *Jazz At The Philharmonic*, which involved all-star troupes travelling across America - and later Europe, then Japan - in the 1950s and '60s, establishing jazz as a profitable concert attraction.

The conventional wisdom is that the JATP format - initially based on the spontaneity and competitiveness of the jam session - was a flawed one. For all the excitement generated, for all the big names involved, the format often boiled down to the lowest common denominator, with drummers thrashing out frantic beats while horn players provided cheap thrills by squealing and screaming as loud, high and fast as they could.

The CD reissue of *Jazz At The Philharmonic: The First Concert* is certainly evidence for the prosecution. Recorded in 1944, at the first major concert that Granz staged (he had previously organised after-hours jam sessions at L.A. clubs), it has some historical significance. Musically, it offers a glimpse of some fine players in action: Nat Cole is in especially good form, playing some fleet, witty solos. But too often, the music is dragged down by the combative, unsubtle contributions of tenor men Illinois Jacquet and Jack McVea, and the frantic thrashing of the drummer.

It is a shame that Illinois Jacquet became tarred with the JATP brush, for when he concentrates on developing his solos in a musical fashion - as he has done throughout the majority of his career, including some splendid records in the last decade or so - he is a first-rate saxophonist. The same applies to his frequent JATP sparring partner, Flip Phillips, who has also been in very fine form on some of his recent recordings.

That Jacquet and Phillips were capable of more than honking and squealing is amply demonstrated by two compilations, accurately subtitled *The Best Of The Verve Years*. In Jacquet's case, that covers 1951-58. The 20 tracks find him playing ballads with a beautifully warm, rhapsodic style (these are concise

statements that were originally recorded as singles), and playing fast and medium-tempo swingers with great drive and vigor. The highlight is *The Kid And The Brute*, where Jacquet locks horns with Ben Webster in an extended chase that finds both men digging deep to generate some genuine excitement.

Nearly as good is *Flip Wails*, which comprises 20 tracks recorded between 1947 and '58. Again, most are hit-and-run efforts, around 2 or 3 minutes in length. Phillips swings beautifully at any tempo; when he needs to raise the temperature, he does it musically, without relying on cheap tricks. And the ballads are minor masterpieces, Flip varying the melody very subtly and affectionately.

Both the Jacquet and Phillips CDs offer generous quantities of music by men who seem to be in danger of being, wrongly, overlooked these days. The booklets, with original David Stone Martin artwork, complete attractive packages.

Adrian Jackson

MEL COOPER

Lomandra

Private release. Tel: (02) 938 2214

Mel Cooper, v; Jonathan Clark, g; Paul Burton, b; Mark Evans, p, org; Steve Westnedge, s; Paul Nicholas, hca; Nalini Scarfe, perc; Brad Skarratt, Alison Skarratt, Margaret Hutton, Liame Porter, Rick Johnson, v, hndclps; Matthew Barnes, hndclps.

Standards from the likes of Bessie Smith and Robert Johnson are intermingled with originals penned by Cooper and guitarist Jonathan Clark, which tend to be a little poppier. The acoustic instrumentation, however, lends them an earthy resonance, with the saxophone of Westnedge standing out.

Cooper has a warm, ripe voice, though it sounds to me like she swallows her words too much. Overall, the production and performances are unbalanced. Given the simplicity of the former, the performances - particularly Cooper's singing - seem not quite raw enough. I suspect that this is a more tame Mel Cooper than one would encounter in the last set of a smoky gig.

John Shand

LAVELLE WHITE

Miss Lavelle

Antone's Records ANT 0031

White, v; Lena Thomas, Lisa Bonner & Claudia Jackson, bckg v; Clarence Holliman, Derek O'Brien, g; Sarah Brown, b; George Rains, d; Riley Osbourn, p, org; James Polk, Reese Wynans, org; Mark Kazanoff, ts, b, hca; John Mills, ts, b; Keith Winking, t; Jon Blondell, b tbn; Randy Zimmerman, Mike Mordecai, tbn.

Do you ever get bored with the same choice of food at home? Go to a restaurant, menu's the same. Want to try something different?

Lavelle White has been cooking in her kitchen long enough to make her a chef de cuisine, majoring in Blues, Gospel and Soul.

Between 1959 and 1964 Lavelle recorded six singles for the Duke Label, both in Houston and New Orleans, mostly featuring her own songs. The Duke sponsored Blues Consolidated Tours allowed her to trade recipes with B.B., Otis, J.B., Aretha and Etta, expanding her culinary repertoire. Lavelle continued to compose more of her own music.

Miss Lavelle is a strong musical statement about a woman and relationships, with soulful, emotive singing from the heart of the gospel and blues tradition.

Gavin Mcleod

RENEE GEYER

Difficult Woman

Larrikin LRJ342 CD

Renee Geyer, v; John Molo, d; Jimmy Haslip, b; Johnny Lee Schell, g; Marty Greb, kbd; Lenny Castro, perc; Alan Johannes, g, sitar; Don Cayman, v, g; Paul Kelly, Julia Tillman Waters, Maxine Waters, Carmen Twilley, v; Patches Stewart, t; Paula Galitano, p.

I've had a soft spot for Renee Geyer since her work with Sun in the early '70s. I've also admired Paul Kelly for some years, rating him one of the best pop song writers that this country has dished up.

It was a great idea for these two to collaborate. For too long, Geyer has been hampered by producers and material that have thrust her into the

most "M" of MOR repertoires. Kelly, who not only produced *Difficult Woman*, but contributed half the songs, has an altogether grittier and more personal approach to music making. He wants people to *feel* things, and Geyer's voice is certainly capable of achieving this.

Geyer can write, too. She penned one of the stand-out tracks: *Just the Thought of You*. There's a Kelly classic here, too: *Sweet Guy*. Perhaps the backings are still a little subdued in the studio style, but at least Geyer gets the chance to emote in her smoky, sensual way on some strong songs.

John Shand

ROOMFUL OF BLUES

Dance All Night

Bullseye Blues CD BB 9555

Sugar Ray Norcia, v, harm; Bob Enos, t; Carl Querfurth, tbn; Greg Piccolo, ts; Doug James, b; Rich Latalille, as; Matt McCabe, p; Chris Vachon, g; Den 'Doc' Grace, b; John Rossi, d.

Roomful Of Blues were one of the first white bands in America to successfully recreate the great sounds of the golden era of r&cb from the 1950s. Now 25 years later they still sport a 10-piece line-up and their enthusiasm and passion for the music of the 1950s remains just as strong.

This new album features frontman Sugar Ray Norcia on vocals and harmonica backed by a fantastic 5-piece horn section. The material covers songs by the likes of Little Milton, Wynonie Harris, B.B King, Jimmy Rushing and Ray Charles, with a couple of originals thrown in the Sugar Ray. Basically the band has gone for that swinging "jump blues" sound and those who like their music the "old way" will love this with honking saxes, rolling piano and some good singing and harp blowing from Sugar Ray.

Tony Peri

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Totally Wired 11

Acidjazz JAZID CD101 Shock JIQ - 3 Mile Island

An explosive release by James Taylor and the boys. Resigned to ACID JAZZ after last year's TOP



40 UK single and album, the JTQ are back with a raw and funk some groove. Forget the past, the future is even better!

A FOREST MIGHTY BLACK

- Fresh In My Mind

Originally appeared on Germany's Compost label out of Munich. A bossa based groove that bumps and grinds its way through four and a half minutes of good times. A party essential.

ALICE CLARK - Never Will I

Stop Loving You

Alice's vocals are sweet and cool. Ernie Wilkins' big brass arrangements so lush that you may want to repeat this track all day. Soul as deep as you like it, then some more.

FREAK POWER - Freakin

Norman Cook and Ashley Slate's new track recorded exclusively for acid jazz. Features the tightest of rhythm sections laying down the beat, with Ashley's righteous trombone.

PLEASURE - Joyous

This is a mighty jazz funk classic. Recording for Fantasy records in the period immediately following Earth, Wind & Fire's massive success, Pleasure grooved in a similar way. *Joyous* is just the greatest wah-wah guitars, loping bass lines and crisp horn riffs. A favourite with club DJ's and break fiends alike.



CD review on p. 53

tone than many of his caustic remixes - but behind those jazz loops, the beats are as hypnotic and irresistible as ever.

MONSIEUR KAMAYATSU FEAT. THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES & J.T.Q. - *Monsieur Taylor's New Brand*

Lifted from Kamayatsu's first Japanese album in ages - this is one of the instrumental cuts featuring the superb band put together for the album sessions. A funky hammond groove provided by Mr. Taylor is backed by The Heavies, proving they are still the ultimate funk rhythm section in the country. The whole thing is then spiced with The Heavies' horns. Fantastic.

SKUNKHOUR - *Do You Like It*

The first fruition of Edward Piller's worldwide band hunt is this popular Australian combo - and their ode to smoking too much. Shunkhour we all know them and we all love them. A Sydney band adequately strutting their stuff on the world stage.

MONDO GROSSO - *Anger*

Excellently fine Japanese stuff from the most happening crew in the land of the rising sun. If you don't know this you should; from the very limited Japanese import LP *Marble*, a truly great slice of modern music remixed here by Norman Cook.

SAMUEL PURDY - *Clever Girl*

Britain's Brighton area, and fronted by Jamiroquai guitarist Gavin Dodds and regular man around the Acid Jazz studio, Barney Hurley. This wild Tower of Power cover is one mother of a groove.

THE QUIET BOYS - *Astral Power*

After a three year sabbatical, The Quiet Boys, still under the guidance of producer Chris Bangs return. This the first fruits of their labours is a gliding excursion with almost house like understones. Watch for the album.

Clive Lochner

BANANA
Groovive
Larrikin CD LRJ 332

Sean Wayland, el p; Simon Ashton, d; Peter Zografakis, g; Cameron Undy, el b; Jason Raiss, Andrew Robson, as; Jason Cooney, ts; Lily Dior, Kristen Cornwall, v.

Having gone through some line-up changes since their inception three years ago, Sydney funksters Banana have released their debut CD. Strangely, it leaves me looking forward to their second, because, after repeated listenings, I think this one promises more than it delivers. For me, the stand-out track is *Sun*, but this is the antithesis of the band live. It is a sunny, breezy, light-hearted frolic that brings to mind the late-lamented Canterbury scene in England, which spawned such bands as Caravan and Hatfield and the North.

Most of the other tracks offer less light and shade, as does the band live. Funky dance music is fine, and Banana might end up doing it extremely well: all the parts are in place as far as players are concerned - particularly Wayland and Undy - and Lily Dior has the right larynx. But somehow it seems a bit tame, like a zoo animal that might tear your balls off if it could just get out of the cage.

John Shand

SQUARE WINDOWS - *Theme from the Millennium Falcon*

Square Window are the latest in a wide array of projects in which Andrew Missingham (Raw Stylus, and That's How It Is) has wielded his not inconsiderable skills. *Theme from the Millennium Falcon* swings and moves in ways that you wouldn't countenance.

THE CHILDREN OF JUDDAH - *To the Bone*

Absolutely massively sought after Barrie Sharp production previously only available on a limited 12" run of 1000.

GHOST - *Who me?*

Ghost is nothing more than another pseudonym for the Dog himself. *Who Me* may be of a softer

WHAT DO HIP BOP ALLIGATOR & CONCORD HAVE IN COMMON



3 HOT New CD releases Thru Festival Records



JANICE DEANNE & THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION.
For The Love of Jazz

Janice Deanne, v; Hans Karssemeyer, p; Lothar Schildhorst, vbs,s,cl; Andy Walker, d; Dennis Ashton, b.

The European Connection is a working group that was formed in 1992 for an appearance at the Gold Coast Jazz Action Society.

Recorded at the Queensland University, *For The Love Of Jazz* is an attractive package of 14 standards, most with vocals by Deanne.

The project required two sessions. Bob Barnard was in town and sat in for the first. His presence is felt on *There Will Never Be Another You*. The second session also had reed player Tony Ashby and Guitarist Russell Bayne guesting with the Connection.

Jan Deanne is a strong performer, equally at home with contrasting material such as *Just One Of Those Things* and the always demanding, *God Bless The Child*.

Karssemeyer and Schildhorst are excellent musicians. The latter is superb on tenor, most notably on *A Foggy Day* and *S'Wonderful* which also features Ashby and Bayne's acoustic guitar.

For the *Love of Jazz* contains excellent material, impressive performances and is recommended.

Barry Ralph

BU-BACA DIOP
Stand
Larrikin LRF337

Bu-Baca Diop, v; Craig Walters, ts; James Greening, tbn; Mike Bukovsky, t; Adam Armstrong, b; Chris Sweeny, d; Elhaje N'dong, perc; Malik Diop, talking d; Allan Dargin, didge; Cameron Hanly, kbd; Carl Dimitarga, g; *Blindmans Holiday*, *Adboulaye Lefevre*, *Tamar Diop*, v; *Miles Kuma*, rap, v.

I can feel a success story coming on, like DIG's. Bu-Baca, the band, is a vibrant live act, which already boasts a substantial following. This CD adds sufficient instrumental colours to help compensate for the lack of the

swirling visual presence of the band. Overall, there is probably more to listen to, less to dance to.

I suppose the very aspect that disappoints me is the thing that will ensure their popularity: the simplifying of many of the fascinating Senegalese rhythms to the level of being decoration over a funky back-beat.

Still, Bu-Baca Diop's voice charms with its urgency; the horn lines are infectious; Adam Armstrong's bass is as wonderful as ever; and Malik Diop's talking drum all but steals the show.

John Shand

BIG JOE TURNER
Every Day I Have The Blues
Pablo/OJC D26775; Festival

Joe Turner, v; Sonny Stitt, ts, as; Pee Wee Crayton, g; J.D. Nicholson, p; Charles Norris, b; *Washington Rucker*, d
Life Ain't Easy Pablo OJC D 26952; Festival

Big Joe Turner, v; Roy Eldridge, t; Al Gray, tbn; Lee Allen, ts; Jimmy Robbins, org; Thomas Gadson, g; Ray Brown, b; Earl Palmer, d.

The idea of teaming archetypal Kansas City blues shouter, Big Joe Turner, with a band including bebop saxophonist Sonny Stitt and blues guitarist Pee Wee Crayton looks good on paper. But in practice, the 1975 session presented on *Everyday...was a fizzer*. Big Joe sounds listless, Stitt disinterested, and Crayton's work is sloppy. Big Joe made some great albums for Pablo in the twilight of his career, but this wasn't one of them. For completists only.

Life Ain't Easy, from '74, is much closer to the mark. Big Joe is thrown together with some veteran jazzmen (Brown, Eldridge, Grey) and New Orleans r & b legends, Lee Allen and Earl Palmer. The session is a little ragged, and certainly could have been improved with a little preparation; but there is still much to enjoy in tracks like the seemingly ad-libbed title track, or one of Big Joe's favorite double entendre songs, *Plant Your Garden*, the big man singing with unhurried certainty and effortless power.

Adrian Jackson



CD review on p. 58

THE NECKS
Aquatic

Fish of Milk FOM 0002; Shock

Chris Abrahams, p, org; Lloyd Swanton, b, el b; Tony Buck, d, perc; Stevie Wishart, hurdy-gurdy.

Lloyd Swanton is right. The Necks sure as hell don't sound like anyone else. This music has as much to do with early Pink Floyd, the German synthesizer bands, Robert Wyatt and Brian Eno, as it does with anything to predate it in the world of jazz (*In a Silent Way*, maybe?).

As programme music, this really is an aural undersea world, particularly due to the exotic, slightly weird, and more and more delightfully idiosyncratic piano playing of Abrahams. His Hammond drifts dreamily like a giant fish, swimming around for a while before letting the shoals of piano notes come rippling and twisting once more. The rhythm session generates the current in which all this happens, blowing spacially on a repeated riff, that intensifies and metamorphoses ever so slowly.

In two long parts, I find *Aquatic* 2 less focused, until an extraordinary period when Wishart's hurdy-gurdy is unleashed on an unsuspecting underwater environment, I suspect with devastating consequences.

One of the year's best, it is also beautifully recorded.

John Shand

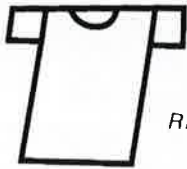
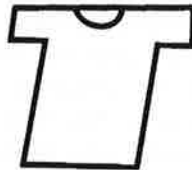
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NIGEL WESTLAKE

Onomatopoeia

Tall Poppies TP047

The title work from Nigel Westlake's CD *Onomatopoeia* is arguably one the composer's best and best known works. I feel attracted to works that seem to offer possibilities rather than appearing to be the first and last word. This work makes clever use of a bass clarinet fed through a foot operated delay device which can, at any time, record short musical fragments then play them back in loop fashion, thus freeing the player to add other material on top. The trick is to be able to match tempo with the delay time so that the repeating fragments can be musically integrated. Not a new technique, but here it gives musical dividends. A lot of techniques are put to good use (circular breathing, multi-phonic, slap tongue and flutter tongue mentioned in the accompanying notes). There is an improvisational character to the work which helps put it into a wonderfully indefinable position (forget ya categories!).

Despite the occasional tendency to drift into a type of sophisticated muzak, the other works on the CD cover a broad range of composition techniques with a mixture of acoustic instruments, multi tracking, synthesised and sampled sounds, all displaying a superbly confident compositional skill. They are all played with a uniformly high standard by some of Sydney's best musicians.

Edward Primrose

PAUL McNAMARA

Point Of No Return

Rufus RF008; Polygram

Paul McNamara, piano; Craig Walters, ts, ss; Ashley Turner, b; Martin Highland, d.

This album, which reeks of thoughtfulness and intelligence, is a timely reminder that McNamara is a force to be reckoned with. The line-up has been skilfully assembled: this is very much a *band*, with the whole somehow transcending the sum of the four (excellent) parts. It seems he has settled upon three colleagues who share his vision of placing the music ahead of displays of personal prowess.

The still-underrated Craig Walters creates impassioned solos built on logic and space, like beautiful buildings. Highland's dynamic control is a joy to hear (in a jazz-scene cursed with too many drummers being too noisy too often), and the blossoming Ashley Turner has a glorious sound reminiscent of Miroslav Vitous.

McNamara is the architect. He deftly weaves the instruments of his little orchestra in and out of proceedings, ever maintaining freshness and surprise. His poise and precision lend the freer improvisations a "composed" feel, while his writing is bracing and vibrant. Hats off to Tim Dunn yet again.

John Shand

JERRY GRANELLI

Another Place

vera Bra/VMG VBr 2130 2

Jane Ira Bloom, ss; Julian Priester, tbn; David Friedman, vbs, mar; Anthony Cox, b; Jerry Granelli, d, perc.

In a somewhat ECM-ish vein, and similarly recorded at Studio Bauer, Ludwigsburg, comes this quintet headed by drummer Jerry Granelli. Sparse, intricate, immaculately crafted, though at times perhaps a shade too academic, contemporary jazz. By academic I mean rather more considered than impassioned, occasioning at times a triumph of style over feel.

Irving Berlin's lilting *What'll I Do* and a Bill Frisell tune *Hello Nellie* are the only tracks not penned by band members.

Naturally, ex-hard bopper Julian Priester puts in a sterling performance on trombone. But Jane Ira Bloom is the real star of the show. Bloom's soprano sound has an appealing clarity of tone, coupled with a technique which allows slipping and sliding, bending of notes, producing seamless runs, and blowing simultaneous harmonies. And all of this technical trickery is performed in-context, without a hint of affectation.

Worth a listen.

Tony Wellington



BILLIE HOLIDAY, ELLA FITZGERALD, LENA HORNE, SARAH VAUGHAN

Billie Ella Lena Sarah

Columbia CK 5738; Sony Music

Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, Sarah Vaughan, v; plus various incl: Buck Clayton, Harry Edison, Miles Davis, Roy Eldridge, t; Lester Young, Ben Webster, ts; Teddy Wilson, p; Freddie Green, g; Walter Page, b; Jo Jones, Cozy Cole, JC Heard, d.

This compilation was originally issued in 1956, minus Sarah Vaughan. It grew and evolved until the current offering was released on vinyl in 1980.

The use of a cliché like "classic recordings" is unavoidable here. Included are such gems as Billie singing *What A Little Moonlight can Do* from her first-ever session in 1935, when she was all of 20 years old, and Sarah's *Nice Work If You Can Get It* from 1950 with George Treadwell's All-Stars, including a young Miles Davis playing an elegant solo.

The programming is good, with the four singers both contrasting and complimenting. Fans will have this material covered, but it is a great sampler for new ears.

John Shand



BOBBY GEBERT TRIO

The Sculptor

ABC Music 4797572; EMI

Bobby Gebert, p; Jonathon Zwartz, b; Andrew Dickeson, d.

Although Zwartz and Dickeson are a most elegantly swinging rhythm section, the track that immediately nailed my ears to the side of my head was the solo piano excursion. Gebert sculpts aural grace and delicacy from Billy Strayhorn's exquisite *Lotus Blossom*.

This is not to disparage the trio work. Gebert's *Waltz For Helen* (his wife) is enchanting, with Zwartz cuckolding the leader via his romantic bass. Dickeson, who plays one of the most beautifully tuned kits in the country, is characteristically precise, economical, swinging and melodic. He and Gebert have developed a rhythmic rapport that is crisp and effortless.

Monk and Ellington are among the featured composers, along with three originals. The title track is a geometric puzzle of feels and tempi that has grown on me with successive listenings, to the point where it's my current favourite.

No surprises from this first-ever album from one of our piano masters. For some reason, Bobby seems to polarise opinion in the jazz community. He gets my vote every time.

John Shand

THE GWYN ASHTON BAND

Feel the Heat

Upbeat Records GACD6969; Shock

Gwyn Ashton, v, g, mand, hca; Geoff Brown, b; Rick Tredrea, d; Colin Mack, hca; Adam Quaipe, org.

After stints with Stevie Wright, Swanee and Dutch Tilders, Gwyn Ashton has released a CD of gritty guitar-based blues-rock. Bigger on raunch than subtlety, this is music for the VB drinking set.

Ashton's ability to rip out some hot licks is undeniable. His singing and song-writing also hold some appeal, with material that lurks somewhere between Gary Moore and Rose Tattoo, though I must say that giving us the complete lyrics on the cover was a luxury we could have foregone.

Better, by far, to make your ears do the aural equivalent of squinting at the words, and just lap up the bourbon-soaked guitar, while the rhythm section boxes you around the head. It's not all thumping and squealing, however. There is some pleasant acoustic work on *Bad Luck Blues*.

John Shand

TINSLEY ELLIS

Storm Warning

Alligator Records thru Festival

Tinsley Ellis, g, v, maracas; Oliver Wood, g, back up v; Derek Trucks, slide g; James Fersuson, b; Stuart Grimes' d; Albey Scuoll, hca; Count M'Butu, perc; Chuck Leavell, org, p

Tinsley Ellis' new release *Storm Warning* is a kick-arse sample of Ellis' hot guitar and emotive vocals. A fine example of southern blues, rock, New Orleans funk and r & b. "Every track is a gem to behold."

Ellis tags himself a blues-playing rock and roller. His influences are they Ardbi.RDS, the Rolling Stones and the Animals: bands who were rooted in the classic blues of Howling Wolf, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, and Willie Dixon.

Tinsley Ellis is to the blues what Mozart was to the classics - a legend.

His fifth album *Stormwarning* will see him enter the blues hall of fame.

Clive Lochner

CD REVIEWS

TOUR TALK

1995 currently holds promises of the following tours: The New Jungle Orchestra, John Schofield, Stan Tracey, Billy Cobham, Blossom Dearie, Harry Connick Jr, McCoy Tyner, Lee Konitz, Jan Garbarek, Ornette Coleman, Betty Carter. Don't hold your breath on all of them, but watch this space...

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Connection

Farewell to the Young Lions

**Auckland City Art Gallery
Auditorium, Auckland**

The "young lions" being farewelled at this concert in the annual Art Gallery series - who must have cringed at the expectations the concert billing raised - were guitarist Greg Tuohey, bassist Matt Penman and tenor player Jason Jones, all of whom are now safely in the net of the Berklee School of Music in Boston, struggling to survive on the scholarships they won to that illustrious college of jazz.

By general critical consensus these young players have made a good mark in Auckland. Their playing - both live and on the *Urbanism* album (Ode) they left behind - is solid enough, if lacking in adventure. All three favour the swinging neo-bop style, but it has always been to their credit that rather than recycle tired standards (a feature of the mainstream Art Gallery series), they write their own material. And pretty good it is, too.

Bassist Penman crafts the best tunes - the title track of that sole album is a witty gem allowing of plenty room to move, and his *Strange Gods* at the concert was the high point; a flinty tune that sensibly set up opportunities for extended, fiery interplay. Elsewhere, guitarist Tuohey displayed the kind of chops that one expects from a '90s player barely out of his teens; he is grounded in the old school style but hauls things up to date with some John Scofield fractures and, driven by drummer Tony

Hopkins (father of Tim), he showed what he could be capable of.

Jones peeled off some funk in *Necessary Evil*, and overall the afternoon concert proved that these young lions were at least prepared to roar. When they come back from the Big Apple jungle, a bit bruised perhaps, but doubtless invigorated, they will growl with the best.

Graham Reid

Shayn Wills

**Java Jive Cafe Ponsonby,
Auckland.**

Preserving a policy of live music every night of the week, from late until much later, has been a tradition at Java Jive. Monday is customarily blues jam night, an appropriate choice for ending one week and starting the next. Shayn Wills is Java's resident bluesman, replacing Maori soul man Sonny Day, who had previously held court at this basement venue.

Wills is a young bluesman, reported to be injecting some youthful enthusiasm into Auckland's live blues scene. A couple of days previously I had caught the tail end of Wills' solo set supporting American soul renaissance man, Ted Hawkins. A tough act to open for, Hawkins is without peer as a soul/blues artist, and on this occasion, unfortunately for Wills, erased memories of all but his own stunning performance.

So this was to be my first real acquaintance with the music of Shayn

Wills. This time Wills' guitar and harmonica was accompanied by bass and drums, the trio laying down a generic shuffle beat rendering much of the material as indistinguishable, save for the lyrics. A pity really, as Wills displayed on a set of classic covers - *T-Bone Shuffle*, *Wang Dang Doodle*, *Killing Floor*, among them - a command of the required licks, but fell down in the dynamics of delivery.

He is a young performer in an idiom that treasures age, wisdom and experience. He's payin' dues, working out his own relationship with this venerable art form. Judging from my two brief glimpses to date, Wills is well equipped with the basics of blues performances - the guitar licks, ragged harp blowing and pleasantly understated vocals. It's just a matter of cultivating the right instincts, and that, I suspect is exactly what the young man is doing on blues jam night at Java Jive. One to keep on eye on for the future.

Blind Mango Chutney

One World Living Arkestra

Galaxy Theatre, Auckland

African-American composer/bassist Harold Anderson is the musical director of the One World Living Arkestra. He has become a mildly controversial figure in the Auckland jazz scene, largely for the claims he makes for himself and his music, which seem unproven because he plays so seldom, and when he does, they are low key performances in off-beat venues such as suburban restaurants. His

ambitious *Sun Jewel* concert, a six part conceptual piece grandly subtitled *Celebrating the Collision of the Comet With Jupiter and the Art of Sun Ra*, offered him an opportunity for him to reveal his hand and followed his '93 salute to Miles Davis.

But the jury is still out, however. To paraphrase Dr Johnson, in free jazz it may not have been done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.

By choosing to work with young, often technically unimpressive musicians, bassist Anderson did a disservice to the music of Coltrane and Sun Ra which was infiltrated into his original material and that of trumpeter Kingsley Melhuish.

At its best, the music touched a simple soul-jazz and primal-percussive groove of impressive energy, but the lack of anything more than superficial interplay between the musicians (many from backgrounds such as classical or rock musics which place little premium on improvisation) made for some frustration as the opportunities for genuine exploration and excitement went begging. That said, however, the two concerts were much appreciated by the audiences on both nights, for the sheer conceit of the elaborate and ambitious production, which included poetry (by African-American writer Lewis Scott) and offered young players a rare chance to explore their own parameters.

Free jazz and conceptual work such as this *Sun Jewel* concert are rare beasts, and for some there was doubtless the thrill of the new. For others who have passed this way before, there was at least pleasure in seeing a new generation take on the challenge and, if not come through the fire unscathed, at least not be burned by the experience.

Graham Reid



I've never found it a problem getting to grips with the All Blacks.



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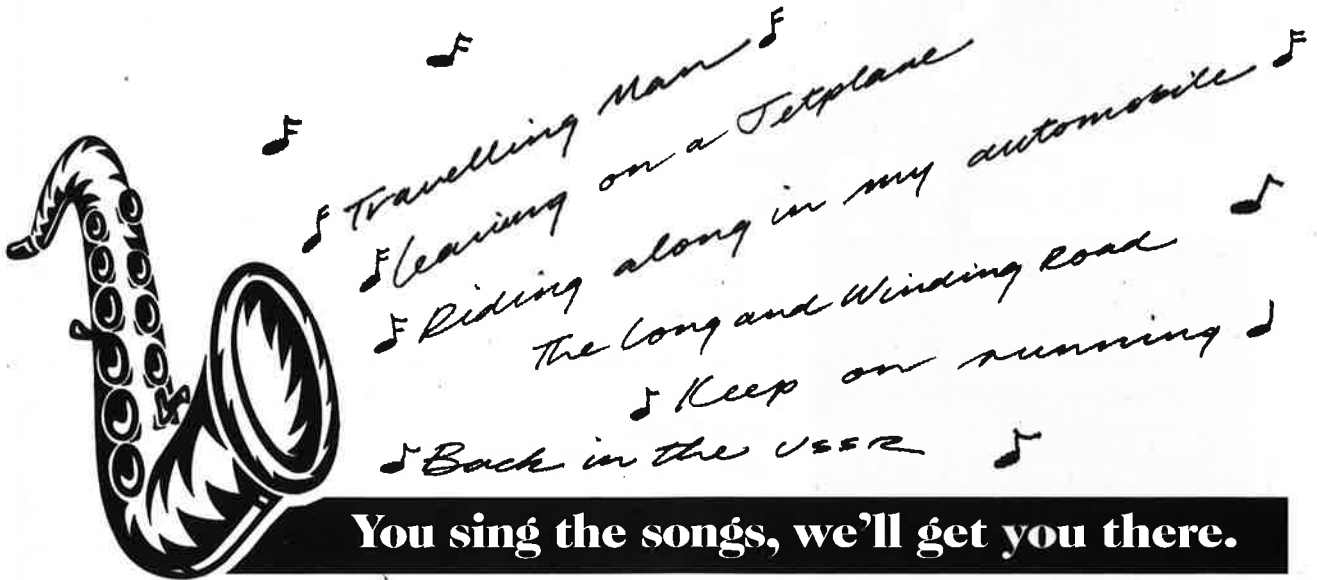
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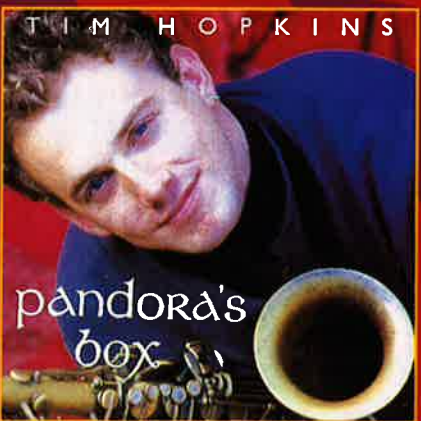
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