

Introspection: Neglected Jazz Figures of the 1950s and early 1960s

New World NW 275

In the contemporary world of platinum albums and music stations that have adopted limited programming (such as choosing from the Top Forty), even the most acclaimed jazz geniuses—the Armstrongs, Ellingtons, and Parkers—are neglected in terms of the amount of their music that gets heard. Acknowledgment by critics and historians works against neglect, of course, but is no guarantee that a musician will be heard either, just as a few records issued under someone's name are not truly synonymous with attention.

In this album we are concerned with musicians who have found it difficult—occasionally impossible—to record and publicly perform their own music. These six men, who by no means exhaust the legion of the neglected, are linked by the individuality and high quality of their conceptions, as well as by the tenaciousness of their struggle to maintain those conceptions in a world that at best has remained indifferent. Such perseverance in a hostile environment suggests the familiar melodramatic narrative of the suffering artist, and indeed these men have endured a disproportionate share of misfortunes and horrors. That four of the six are now dead indicates the severity of the struggle; the enduring strength of their music, however, is proof that none of these artists was ultimately defeated.

Selecting the fifties and sixties as the focus for our investigation is hardly mandatory, for we might look back to earlier years and consider such players as Joe Smith (1902-1937), the supremely lyrical trumpeter who contributed so much to the music of Bessie Smith and Fletcher Henderson; or Dick Wilson (1911-1941), the promising tenor saxophonist featured with Andy Kirk's *Clouds of Joy*; or Frankie Newton (1906-1954), whose unique muted-trumpet sound was overlooked during the swing era and whose leftist politics contributed to further neglect. The list could go on, but the period of our concern here, which spans the bebop innovations of the forties and the freer techniques of the sixties avant-garde, is especially rich in the under appreciated.

The forties abounded in promising lives cut short. Two of the era's most important innovators, guitarist Charlie Christian (born 1919) and bassist Jimmy Blanton (born 1921), died in 1942, with tuberculosis the official cause of death in each case. The paucity of recordings each left (Christian with Benny Goodman and in some Harlem jam sessions; Blanton with Duke Ellington) added to the difficulties others would have documenting their achievements. Other significant and even lesser-known casualties of the forties include Fred Beckett (1917-1945), the pioneering modern trombonist killed in the military, and trumpeters Sonny Berman (1914-1947) and Freddie Webster (1917-1947). The last two died of heroin overdoses, victims of the habit that would continue to haunt jazz for years. As if to sum up the decade's destructions, tuberculosis and heroin claimed influential trumpeter Theodore "Fats" Navarro in 1950.

The proliferation of these tragedies in the fifties sets the context for the present album, but it by no means tells the entire story. Beyond all the waste and despair remarkable music was being made, and the circumstances that created the neglect also contributed to the directions the musicians pursued.

Primarily, there was the musical foundation offered by the leading bebop players, which can be sampled on New World Records NW 271, *Bebop*. The music of Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and the others on that album, plus Dan Morgenstern's comprehensive liner essay, are highly recommended prerequisites to a full appreciation of the music here. Bebop had introduced new complexity in melody, harmony, and rhythm, greater emphasis on speedy articulation and technical dexterity, and even a redefinition of the way certain instruments should sound (vibrato among horn players was in decline) and others should function within the ensemble (the changing responsibilities of bassists and drummers). Among the younger players and their followers there was also a new insistence on approaching the music as serious art rather than disposable entertainment. More chances would be taken and fewer accommodations made, which guaranteed neglect from a public less than dedicated to art in general and the art of black America in particular.

Two general comments about the relationship of the music in this album to bebop: The distance of the present performances from the first bebop recordings should help dispel the notion that modern-jazz musicians were intent on denying or destroying the jazz tradition. These men were drawing from the total jazz heritage (as were the players on *Bebop*), which becomes clear when listening to a solo by Herbie Nichols, Serge Chaloff, or Jaki Byard but can also be detected in Elmo Hope's writing, Booker Little's tonal richness, and Steve Lacy's efforts to reclaim the soprano saxophone as a viable jazz instrument.

A more unexpected revelation may be the influence of Thelonious Monk, which touched all the album's featured musicians except Chaloff. Charlie Parker (1920-1955), second to none in the depth of his passion, virtuosity, and command of improvisation, is properly acknowledged the primary shaper of the music that immediately followed his death, but Monk's influence may in time be seen as equally critical. Monk's composing and piano playing reveal harmonic and rhythmic thinking as advanced as any of the period, but his greater use of space and of thematically related material in his writing and solos introduced a less obvious virtuosity and a promise of escape from bebop techniques that were quickly becoming conventions. The neglect that Monk suffered for many years indicated that, whatever the aesthetic rewards of following his example, the pursuit would be hazardous.

The economic situation of even the most cautious jazz musician was tenuous during these years. Big bands, which provided jobs (whatever their limitations for the creative soloist), never recovered from the draft, the recording ban, and the gas rationing of World War II. Tastes in popular music were shifting to band singers and eventually to rock 'n' roll. The rising overhead required to keep big bands together and traveling meant that only the most established units would survive, and these generally relied on proven formulas that left little room for creativity.

Outlets for bands were disappearing as the American entertainment industry suffered a massive relocation. Several factors altered the country's nightlife, from the exodus to the suburbs to the phenomenon of television. Vaudeville, stage shows, and nightclubs with floor shows, all of which provided work for players and writers that might help subsidize their less marketable creations, faded into memory. Radio, which played a major role in creating the swing era through broadcasts from hotels and ballrooms, lost much of its audience to TV, yet the new medium found instrumental musical entertainment less interesting than more visual forms. As radio evolved into the disseminator of recorded popular music, little room was made for black pop acts or jazz players. There were compensating job opportunities for some musicians in the studio orchestras of television networks and of record companies; but in a country that had just begun to grapple with the notion that separate is not equal, the studios were "going slow" on integration. In any event, musicians like those on the present album tended to look on secure but sterile studio work as an unacceptable alternative; they were dedicated to pursuing their own muse, which limited them to two primary outlets. Bebop's complexities and the attitudes of many players had necessitated a shift from dancing to listening, and the small club had replaced the ballroom or dance hall. Concerts were also becoming popular, though the concert stage was only open to well-established names with a sufficient following; struggling newcomers and unheralded veterans were left to work the bars and coffeehouses. While some of these clubs have assumed legendary proportions, many had very brief existences, and all offered working conditions less than conducive to good health and a long life. Manhattan's thriving Fifty-second Street club scene of the mid-forties had quickly diffused and died, with activity moving around the corner to Broadway before relocating in Greenwich Village. By 1965, when I first visited New York, clubs like the Royal Roost, the Open Door, Café Bohemia, the Jazz Gallery, and Birdland were memories, and the newest "in" club, Slug's Saloon (which became a legend itself before closing in the seventies), was on the Lower East Side.

The other major outlet for creative musicians was the long-playing album, a product of the advancing recording technology that also gave us high fidelity and stereo. In 1945, when Charlie Parker made his first recordings as a leader, records were ten-inch, 78-rpm affairs that only held three minutes of music on a side. The introduction of the slower speed, which allowed ten minutes a side on a ten-inch record, was a significant step in the early fifties, but it took the twelve-inch disc, which holds twenty minutes a side, to truly change the practice of jazz recording. Soloists who liked to take several improvised choruses in clubs (another departure from the big-band period) could now do so in the studio as well.

Thus came the era of the "blowing session," where small compatible groups (most frequently quintets) would gather in a recording studio and blow on familiar chord changes (those of the blues and "I Got Rhythm" were the most popular) and familiar ballads. Independent companies began signing musicians, guaranteeing a growing nucleus of session players. Recording activity was so extensive that engineer Rudy Van Gelder had three independent companies (Savoy, Prestige, Blue Note) each using his studio one day a week.

Iconoclastic musicians more concerned with new conceptions than with standard formats were often excluded from the blowing dates: they weren't easily assimilated into the pickup combos, and it usually took the other musicians too long to learn the mavericks' unusual compositions. Many of those who did work blowing sessions found the situation exploitative, though a few producers from the period (Alfred Lion at Blue Note, Orrin Keepnews at Riverside, Don Schlitten a bit later at Prestige) were known for their integrity and fought to document the work of many neglected players.

Even the sympathetic producers could not help but benefit from a situation that allowed so much talent to be had so inexpensively. Drug addiction, though hardly exclusive to the jazz community, had disastrous effects on the entire generation of jazz musicians. Tenor player Hank Mobley summarized the situation when, during an interview, critic John Litweiler played one of Mobley's Blue Note recordings: "Five of the six of us were out to lunch. That's why they got Herbie Hancock; they always wanted one man in the band who was cool."

Of the six musicians featured here, two— Serge Chaloff and Elmo Hope—were destroyed by drug addiction; but this doesn't mean that the others did not encounter drug-related problems, for in a community of addicts he who is cool is the outsider. "It seems," pianist Herbie Nichols (1919- 1963) once lamented to A. B. Spellman, "like you've either got to be an Uncle Tom or a drug addict to make it in jazz, and I'm not either one. Too many people allow themselves this affectation. Play a role. That's no good."

For many critics and listeners, Nichols has assumed the status of archetypal neglected figure. In a career that spanned a quarter century, Nichols' recordings under his own name add up to four tracks for Hi-Lo in 1952, one twelve- and two ten-inch Blue Note albums in 1955-56, and a Bethlehem 3 album in 1957. For most of his career Nichols had to take jobs where he found them, mostly in his native New York but occasionally up and down the East Coast and west to Cleveland or Milwaukee. He would play cabaret arrangements, mambos, rock 'n' roll, and a lot of traditional jazz; only rarely did he work behind a modern soloist, and employers who would hire him to play his own music were almost nonexistent. Had it not been for Spellman, Nichols might be totally forgotten, although renewed interest in his work has brought his Blue Note and Bethlehem recordings back into circulation.

An early jammer at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem, where much of the first bebop experimentation took place, and one of Monk's first champions, Nichols was labeled too advanced by the businessmen, though we now hear how he maintained much of Teddy Wilson's grace among his unpredictable, angular lines. His solos often take surprising tangents, and his unusually structured compositions portray vivid images, but his greatest concern was always rhythmic. "I like to compose for the drums, to integrate the drums into the melody," he wrote in a set of liner notes. "I'm always sufficiently transported to new spiritual heights whenever I think of the beauties of any tuned drum."

While his fascination with percussion made Nichols a serious student of African music, he also retained great respect for European forms and looked critically on those jazz musicians who did not read music. His stated goal was to blend European and Afro- American forms into a single modern expression; but no one was interested, and when this gentle, erudite man died of leukemia almost no one noticed.

In a sense Elmo Hope (1923-1967) fared better than Nichols—he made a dozen recordings under his own name and worked with such leading horn players as Clifford Brown, Sonny Rollins, and John Coltrane— but his drug problem, coupled with limited public recognition, made his final years equally fruitless. Like Nichols, Hope grew up in Harlem and was able to participate in bebop's formative stages; his boyhood friend and fellow student was Bud Powell. After a few years of rhythm-and-blues work, Hope began making jazz recordings in 1953, but since he had been convicted on a drug charge he could not obtain the cabaret card required at that time for work in New York nightclubs.

In need of work and a healthier environment, Hope moved to California in 1957. His music flowered during the next years, and his two greatest recordings were made for HiFi Jazz (now available on Contemporary). But the continued lack of recognition took its toll. In 1961 he chided California musicians for their inability to play his music: "The fellows out here," he told John Tynan, "need to do a little more exploring. They should delve more into creativity instead of playing the same old blues..." Later that year Hope returned to New York, where he had a few more chances to record before his physical condition deteriorated to the point where he could no longer perform.

Among modern pianists, Hope achieved the most interesting synthesis of Powell's linearity and Monk's density, though his friendship with the former led several critics to label him simply a Powell disciple. In reality, questions of influence were more complex. "Everyone learned from each other by just playing," pianist Bob Bunyan has observed. "Bud had the powerful attack, and Elmo got into some intricate harmonies." It is clear that Hope sounded less like Powell and more innovative after moving to California. Critic Lawrence Kart described Hope's music from the period as "a dark, ambiguous totem... perhaps a roadside shrine to some forgotten god or a rune that will lead its translator to an abandoned treasure."

Short of dropping out altogether and taking a daytime job (the Post Office assumed the significance of purgatory for many bebop players), one way to combat the dangers of the jazz life was simply to stay out of New York, a strategy that makes recognition harder to achieve but prolongs one's life expectancy. This was the plan of composer, pianist, and alto and tenor saxophonist John Arthur Byard, Jr. (born 1922). "I decided to go to New York around 1944 or '45," Jaki recalls. "I'd hang around Fifty-second Street. Musically a lot was going on, but otherwise there were typical things that go on all the time, and I just didn't dig it. So I came back to Boston," where the Massachusetts native had been working and studying. He did not reappear on the national jazz scene until Maynard Ferguson hired him to play piano and do some writing for the Ferguson big band in 1959.

While professionally better equipped than most to confront the rigors of the jazz life and buoyed by an eccentric sense of humor, Byard preferred to develop his music in a local setting. An uncommon number of the finest Boston musicians had also remained at home (as opposed to cities like Detroit and Philadelphia, which fed a steady stream of new talent to New York throughout the fifties), so Byard enjoyed a fertile environment. Visiting musicians spread word of his piano prowess, and he also found outlets for his arranging and tenor playing in trumpeter Herb Pomeroy's band.

Byard's style is kaleidoscopic. Everything from the most basic barrelhouse and stride to abstract cross rhythms and atonality finds its way into his compositions and piano solos, which are by turns witty and intense. This breadth has made his playing invaluable to such leaders as Charles Mingus and the late Eric Dolphy, but there has been little demand for Byard's own music. Currently he is back in Boston, teaching at the New England Conservatory of Music and performing with such groups as his big band The Apollo Stompers.

Serge Chaloff (1923-1957) was also in Boston during the fifties, but it was too late for him to escape those "typical things" Byard found in New York. Chaloff had taught himself baritone saxophone after studying piano and clarinet, and played the large horn in various big bands beginning in 1939. In 1945 he heard Charlie Parker, which led him to develop the light, fleet style that was an integral characteristic of Woody Herman's Second Herd. After joining Herman in 1947, Chaloff became quite popular and won several magazine polls, but heroin shattered his career. Following a brief 1950 stint in Count Basie's group, he returned to Boston for the conclusion of what he once described as "nine years of living hell." He had finally sought treatment for his addiction in the period before the recording on this album, but by that time he had a cancer that eventually led to spinal paralysis.

Chaloff was the product of an extraordinary musical family: his father had been pianist with the Boston Symphony, and his mother Margaret (who died in 1977) is a legend in her own right. Numerous jazz pianists studied with her, including Jaki Byard and Richard Twardzik (1921-1955; another Bostonian and heroin victim), and such luminaries as Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock reportedly consulted her when in Boston.

Serge brought the cumbersome baritone sax into the modern era and added a depth of expression that surpassed the polished approach of pioneer Harry Carney. Chaloff possessed great speed and a variety of tonal qualities; but it is his passion, reflective no doubt of his painful adult years, that truly sets him apart from others who played the big horn during the period. As French critic Jean Dumas-Delage has noted, Parker was important to Chaloff for his emotional example as well as for his specific techniques.

At the other end of the saxophone spectrum is the soprano, which, through the work of New Orleans pioneer Sidney Bechet (1897-1959), had become stereotyped as a Dixieland instrument. Steve Lacy (born 1934 in New York) set out to remedy this by playing soprano sax in a modern context. During the fifties he received exposure with several important leaders (Cecil Taylor, Gil Evans, Monk), but his achievement was quickly eclipsed when John Coltrane took up the soprano as a second instrument in 1960.

An article Lacy wrote in 1961 suggests the problems his instrument presented. "Certain portions of the soprano's range are intrinsically out of tune with the rest of the horn. All instruments have 'bad' notes but the soprano has whole segments of such notes." Bechet's solution, the use of a wide vibrato, "is stylistically distasteful to many musicians. . . . If one wants the power of, say, a Bechet without the vibrato, one must humor each note, bending it to the desired pitch."

While meeting these technical challenges, Lacy was also developing an improvisational style that drew inspiration from Monk's prescription to keep the original melody in mind when creating a solo. In this area Lacy may be Monk's star pupil, and he carried the approach further in a piano-less quartet that played only Monk compositions and stayed together, despite sparse work from 1961-64. Since 1965 Lacy has spent most of his time in Europe, where he has adopted freer forms and techniques. He still plays soprano exclusively and has given several unaccompanied recitals in recent years.

The last featured artist, trumpeter Booker Little (1938-1961), in a way is the most tragic, for he had less time to develop his skills, and the uremia that caused his death seems gratuitous amid the surrounding alcohol and drug induced waste. Little was from Memphis, another good town for young jazz talent in the fifties. From 1955 to 1958 he studied trumpet, piano, theory, composition, and orchestration at the Chicago Conservatory. Drummer Max Roach, (born 1925), the bebop innovator who had previously teamed with the prematurely doomed trumpet wizard Clifford Brown (1930-1956), met nineteen-year-old Little in Chicago and gave him his first opportunity to record. Soon thereafter, Little quit school, briefly joined Roach's band, and moved to New York, where he played with John Coltrane and pianist Mal Waldron, among others. In 1960 he rejoined Roach and began a series of collaborations with reedman Eric Dolphy (1928-1964), which led to a two week job at New York's Five Spot for their cooperative quintet in July, 1961.

An interview given to critic Robert Levin shortly before Little's death reveals an aesthetic closely related to Monk's

I don't hear any note as being wrong....There's more emotion that can be expressed by the notes that are played flat....In my own work I'm particularly interested in the possibilities of dissonance. If it's a consonant sound it's going to sound smaller. The more dissonance the bigger the sound....I'm interested in putting sounds against sounds and I'm also interested in freedom also. But I have respect for form.

The six musicians featured here hardly exhaust the list of neglected figures of the fifties and sixties. We might also chosen the above mentioned Richard Twardzik, or such Charles Mingus associates as trumpeter Gene (aka Clarence) Shaw and trombonist Jimmy Knipper, or tenor saxophonists Lucky Thompson and Booker Ervin., or vibraharpist Walt Dickerson, or numerous others. Yet Herbie Nichols, Elmo Hope, Jaki Byard, Serge Chaloff, Steve Lacy, and Booker Little are representative and will, we hope, encourage the listener to delve further into the less familiar music of the period. We must not view influence on others as the ultimate validation of a player's worth, for jazz is primarily a music of self-expression. On that basis the men heard here must be regarded as masters.

Side One

Band 1

'S Wonderful (George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin)

Herbie Nichols Quartet: Herbie Nichols, piano; unknown, guitar; Chocolate Williams, bass; Shadow Wilson, drums.
Recorded April, 1952, in New York. Originally issued on Hi-Lo 1403 (mx # HL314).

This is from Nichols' first recording session under his own name, an impromptu date with no rehearsals, which also produced two original blues ("Nichols and Dimes," "Who's Blues") and a lost version of "Cherokee." Chocolate Williams is best remembered for jamming in Harlem with Art Tatum. Rossiere "Shadow" Wilson (1919-1959) had previously worked with Earl Hines, Count Basie, Illinois Jacquet, and Erroll Garner and would play in the 1957 Monk quartet that featured Coltrane.

Nichols seems to have had a fondness for Gershwin, whose "Mine" is the only nonoriginal on the pianist's Blue Note recordings. Surprisingly, "'S Wonderful" has something of an Erroll Garner feeling, due to the chomping rhythm guitar. The pianist sends crooked fragments sprawling through his theme chorus, then begins the improvisation close to the melody before pursuing more daring tangents. There is a marvelous balance of modern (dense harmonies, irregular rhythmic accents) and traditional (including even a few hints of stride piano) elements. The melodic reductionism of the final bridge could pass for a Monk solo.

Band 2

Into the Orbit (Elmo Hope)

Curtis Counce Quintet: Rolf Ericson, trumpet; Harold Land, tenor saxophone; Elmo Hope, piano; Curtis Counce, bass; Frank Butler, drums. *Recorded April, 1958, in Los Angeles. Originally issued on Dooto DTL-247 (no mx #).*

Curtis Counce (1926-1963) had led a quintet since 1956; the band had made three previous albums for Contemporary, with Carl Perkins (1928-1958), another heroin victim, on piano. Rolf Ericson (born 1922 in Sweden) spent the better part of two decades in this country working with big bands. Harold Land (born 1928) had made his mark in the Clifford Brown/Max Roach Quintet before returning to California. Both Land and Frank Butler (born 1928) are still active in Los Angeles, and both could qualify as neglected figures themselves.

Elmo Hope spent only a brief time in the Counce band, but he clearly took charge on this and the following track. He was in the habit of recording pieces more than once under different titles, and "Into the Orbit" had appeared on a 1954 Blue Note quintet session as "Low Tide." The punchy eight-bar theme has a rhythmic character reminiscent of Tadd Dameron's "Lady Bird." Fleet lines during Hope's solo recall his closeness to Bud Powell, but there are also angularity and an unstrained blues feeling. Land's sound and ideas are quite personal, and he responds well to Hope's propulsive comping; the tenor's double-timing is especially effective against the steady medium tempo of the rhythm section. Ericson is less successful; his tone is erratic, and his upper register is especially weak. Counce shows in his solo that he could move all over his instrument with ease. The brief introductory figure Hope plays at several points is a nice touch.

Band 3

Race for Space (Elmo Hope)

Same as preceding.

Another Hope composition that had appeared on Blue Note in 1954, when it was titled "Crazy." This is the most boppish piece on the present album, with a melody of characteristically stark contours. Land has another good solo, which he concludes with contrasting simplicity. Hope's chorus employs pregnant pauses and melodic variation rather than the blinding runs of many bop pianists. Both in solo and behind the others, Butler's contribution is central to the success of "Race for Space" and indicates that he may have been the only West Coast drummer of the period able to play on the level of East Coast masters Max Roach, Art Blakey Roy Haynes, and Philly Joe Jones.

Band 4

II, V, I (Jaki Byard)

Jaki Byard, piano.

Recorded 1960 in New York. Candid. Unissued (Candid CJM 8018 and CJS 9018).

Candid Records went out of business before Byard's first album, a solo set, could be released. The pianist became affiliated with Prestige the following year and has produced two later solo collections (Prestige 7686 and Muse 5007).

"II, V, I" refers to the melody's cadential chord progression, a sequence valued in 1960 for its "soulfulness." Byard uses the pattern to offer a brief history of jazz piano, including Fats Waller stride and Art Tatum grand gestures. More modern elements occur at the beginning of the solo, where the right hand spins single lines over infectious lefthand punctuations, and in the hanging ending, which Byard tersely snaps off.

Band 5

Diane's Melody (Jaki Byard)

Same as preceding.

"Diane's Melody" had been recorded before by Boston musicians: alto saxophonist Charlie Mariano cut the piece with Byard a decade earlier, and Serge Chaloff performed a Byard arrangement on the album from which "Body and Soul" (Side Two, Band 1) is taken. Byard would return to the piece in a trio (on Prestige 7550).

Again we are treated to an encyclopedic display that utilizes advanced harmony and structure next to more basic use of tremolo and the sustaining pedal. Byard's touch throughout is in the grand tradition, and he puts great feeling into the lovely piece (written for his daughter), but as always there are humorous moments too. This mix of light and dark moods is one of Byard's most endearing features; we are willing to let him jar us because we know a caress will soon follow.

Band 6

Body and Soul (Johnny Green, Edward Heyman, Robert Sour, and Frank Eyton)

Serge Chaloff Sextet: Herb Pomeroy, trumpet; Boots Mussulli, alto saxophone; Serge Chaloff, baritone saxophone; Ray Santisi, piano; Everett Evans, bass; Jimmy Zitano, drums. *Recorded April 4 or 5, 1955, in Boston. Originally issued on Capitol 6510 (mx # 20631).*

Most of Chaloff's colleagues on this recording, made shortly after the baritonist underwent treatment for his drug addiction, were Boston musicians who never made national reputations; Pomeroy and Santisi, both still active in their home town, are players worthy of national stature. The one participant besides Chaloff with something of a name was Henry "Boots" Mussulli, who had previously been featured with Stan Kenton and Gene Krupa, among others.

Coleman Hawkins recorded the definitive version of "Body and Soul" in 1939, but many critics feel that Chaloff's reading deserves the title of second greatest. By using the entire range of his horn Chaloff is able to generate overpowering emotion, and his opening bottom- to-top leap touches territory that Eric Dolphy would reach six years later (see Side Two, Bands 3 and 4). While the more agitated moments suggest the Charlie Parker influence, there are also calm passages reminiscent of tenor saxophonist Lester Young (1909- 1959) in their oblique lyricism: the phrase before the "Dinah" quote is a direct reference to Young. The other horns only appear briefly at the end, where they pass a phrase among themselves (an unusual occurrence in a ballad performance). When one considers the physical torment Chaloff was in at the time, his "Body and Soul" becomes even more impressive.

Side Two

Band 1

Louise (Cecil Taylor)

Steve Lacy Quartet: Steve Lacy, soprano saxophone; Charles Davis, baritone saxophone; John Ore, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

Recorded autumn, 1960 in New York. Originally issued on Candid CJM-8007 and CJS- 9007 (no matrix #)

John Ore (born 1933) was Thelonious Monk's bassist at the time. Roy Haynes (born 1926), another Bostonian, who had worked with Parker, Young, Monk, and Miles Davis, among others, was and is one of the greatest modern drummers. Charles Davis (born 1933) played with a variety of modern groups and can still be heard in New York.

“Louise” is one of Cecil Taylor’s rare thirty-two-bar song-form (AABA) pieces; a version by the composer from the previous year can be heard on Blue Note LA- 458-H2 under the title “Little Lees.” Monk clearly inspired the bridge, and Lacy responds with a very Monkish solo. He plays with the melody rather than discarding it, displacing expected beats and accenting surprising notes. The nasal “Middle Eastern” sound of the soprano sax would shortly become extremely popular among saxophonists. Davis’s baritone solo is more conventional, with Lacy blowing a few background figures (the sign of an involved horn player). Haynes’s solo builds and develops rhythmic ideas; his patented “snap-crackle” sound is a joy.

Band 2

Introspection (Thelonious Monk)

Same as preceding.

After Monk recorded “Introspection” in 1947 (Available on Blue Note LA-579-H2), the piece was quickly forgotten until resurrected by Lacy. It was the neglect of so many Monk compositions, plus their inherent fascinations as frameworks for improvisation, that led Lacy to form his early-sixties quartet. Under Lacy’s lead Davis plays a common Monk bass figure, underscoring the contrast big and little saxophones. A variety of ideas, from floating reflection to across-the-grain triplets, are found in the soprano solo.

Band 3

We Speak (Booker Little)

Booker Little Sextet: Booker Little, trumpet.; Julian Priester, trombone; Eric Dolphy, alto saxophone; Don Friedman, piano; Art Davis, bass; Max Roach, drums and timpani.

Recorded March 17, 1961, in New York. Originally issued on Candid CJM-8027 and CJS-9027 (no matrix #).

Although Little selected the personnel, the resulting sextet is close to Roach’s recording groups at the time. Among those who do not solo, Julian Preister (born 1953) spent 1970-1973 in Herbie Hancock’s sextet before settling in San Francisco; Don Friedman (born 1935), one of the first pianists to show the influence of Bill Evans, continues to work and teach in New York; and Art Davis (born 1934) has pursued a classical and studio career.

“We Speak” impressive for it’s writing and blowing, illustrates Little’s use of dissonance to create a big sound. The complex theme has a sense of melancholy that pervaded much of his music. This feeling is extended in Little’s solo, though there is a trace of hope in his full, bittersweet sound. Little did not waste notes and was absolutely direct in his playing. Dolphy’s alto sax is more impatient, more overtly speechlike. When Little returns for his second solo, Max Roach adds timpani, an instrument he had used in recordings with Monk and his own band. Roach’s own solo, over Davis’s walking bass, is a beautiful example of the drummer’s melodicism, use of space, and impeccable execution.

Band 4

Strength and Sanity (Booker and Little)

Same as preceding, except Ron Carter replaces Art Davis.

Recorded April 4, 1961, in New York. Originally issued on Candid CJM-8027 and CJS-9027 (no matrix #).

An equally stunning example of Little’s concepts. By alternating dissonant and consonant chords, the ensemble seems to expand and contract in mournful sighs, and brief interludes offer patches of light amid the more somber primary mood. Little also reveals a most valuable arranging skill—the ability to write for the sound of the individual performer rather than simply for an instrument. Roach comments imaginatively on the eloquent trumpet solo. Little’s playing creates an atmosphere that only a few gifted few—Miles Davis, Kenny Dorham, and Art Farmer—could match among trumpeters of the time.

Ron Carter (born 1937) would spend several years with Miles Davis before becoming one of the most sought after studio players in New York and the most popular acoustic bass player in the world.

“Of all the hundreds of jazz musicians I’ve known,” Nat Hentoff has written, “Booker had the clearest view of himself and of those with whom he had to deal.” Thus “Strength and Sanity,” Little’s commentary of the jazz life, is a fitting conclusion to this collection. “We need plenty of both,” he said to Hentoff in reference to the title, “and this piece represents a kind of goal.”

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Terlizzi, Roberto. "The Steve Lacy Interview," Coda, Issue 153 (January/February, 1977).
Tynan, John. "Bitter Hope," Down Beat, Vol. 28,1 (January 5, 1961).
Williams, Martin. "Blues for Serge Chaloff," Down Beat, Vol. 35, 10 (May 16,1968).
Williams, Martin (ed.). Jazz Panorama. New York: Crowell-Collier, 1962.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Jaki Byard

- Freedom Together Prestige 7463.
Out Front. Prestige 7397.
There'll Be Some Changes Made. Muse 5007.
Ervin, Booker. The Freedom Book. Prestige 7295.
The Great Concert of Charles Mingus. Prestige 34001.

Serge Chaloff

- Blue Serge. Capitol 11032.
Boston Blow-Up. Capitol 6510.
Brothers and Other Mothers. Savoy 2210.
Berman, Sonny. Beautiful Jewish Music. Onyx 211.
Herman, Woody. Early Autumn. Capitol 11034.
Herman, Woody. The Thundering Herds. Columbia C3L-25.

Elmo Hope

- The All-Star Sessions. Milestone 47037.
The Elmo Hope Trio. Contemporary 7620.
Last Sessions. Inner City 1018.
Counce, Curtis. Exploring the Future. Dooto 247.
Land, Harold. The Fox. Contemporary 7619.

Steve Lacy

- Masters of the Modern Piano. Verve 2514. Tracks with Cecil Taylor.
Reflections. New Jazz 8206.
School Days. Emanem 3316.
Solo. Emanem 301.
Trickles. Black Saint 0008. Italian import.

Booker Little

- Booker Little. Time 52011.
Out Front. Candid 9027.
Victory and Sorrow. Bethlehem 6034.
The Great Concert of Eric Dolphy. Prestige 34002.
Dolphy Eric. Magic. Prestige 24053.
Roach, Max. Percussion Bitter Sweet. Impulse 8.

Herbie Nichols

I Just Love Jazz Piano. Savoy 12100.

Herbie Nichols. Bethlehem 6028.

The Third World. Blue Note BN-LA-485-H2.

Richard Twardzik

The Last Set. Pacific Jazz 37.

Side One

Total time 23:44

1 **'S WONDERFUL** (George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin) 2:45

(publ. New World Music Corp.)

Herbie Nichols Quartet

2 **INTO THE ORBIT** (Elmo Hope) 4:42

(publ. Dootsie Williams Publications)

Curtis Counce Quintet

3 **RACE FOR SPACE** (Elmo Hope) 4:30

(publ. Dootsie Williams Publications)

Curtis Counce Quintet

4 **II, V, I** (Jaki Byard) 2:35

(publ. unknown)

Jaki Byard, piano

5 **DIANE'S MELODY** (Jaki Byard) 5:02

(publ. unknown)

Jaki Byard, piano

6 **BODY AND SOUL** (Johnny Green, Edward Heyman, Robert Sour, and Frank Eyton) 3:50

(publ. Warner Bros. Music, a Division of Warner Bros., Inc.)

Serge Chaloff Sextet

Side Two

Total time 23:55

1 **LOUISE** (Cecil Taylor) 5:21

(publ. Unit Core)

Steve Lacy Quartet

2 **INTROSPECTION** (Thelonious Monk) 5:28

(publ. Embassy Music Corp.)

Steve Lacy Quartet

3 **WE SPEAK** (Booker Little) 6:41

(publ. unknown)

Booker Little Sextet

4 **STRENGTH AND SANITY** (Booker Little) 6:13

(publ. unknown)

Booker Little Sextet

Full discographic information and a complete list of the performers for each selection may be found within the individual discussions of the works in the liner notes.

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NEW WORLD RECORDS

16 Penn Plaza #835

NEW YORK, NY 10001-1820

TEL 212.290-1680 FAX 212.290-1685

Website: www.newworldrecords.org

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