

# record REVIEWS

## SPOTLIGHT REVIEW

### DUKE ELLINGTON

LATIN AMERICAN SUITE—Fantasy 8419—*Ocupaca; Chico Cuadrado; Eque; Tina; The Sleeping Lady and the Giant Who Watches Over Her; Latin American Sunshine; Brasilliance.*

Personnel: Willie Cook, Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, trumpets; Chuck Connors, Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper; Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Ellington, piano; Jeff Castleman, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. (Recorded Nov. 5, 1968.) On track 4: Ellington, Victor Gaskin, Paul Kondziela, basses, Jones only; recorded Jan. 7, 1970.

Rating: ★★★★★

Of the recent—and most welcome—trio of new Ellington releases, this is the one. His greatest work since *Far East Suite*, it is destined to take a place among his masterpieces.

It is our good fortune that Ellington has the foresight (and means) to record new works when he feels they are ready. It took four years for this suite to find its way to public release, but it was *there*, produced, as the liner credit reads, “by Mr. Ellington.” Perhaps because it was produced by its creator and not some dial-twisting executive, the music sounds absolutely right and positively gorgeous. The most opulent sound in big band annals comes through with all its warmth, natural balance and ambiance intact.

The Ellington sound alone is often enough to seduce the ear. Today, we have the most proficient and clever of musicians and engineers, but none have managed to duplicate this sound—or rather, fountain of sounds. Perhaps because it is a living sound, a sound produced by an organism, the organism Ellington has called his instrument.

It is an instrument which finds itself in constant flux, even though it changes less rapidly than its surviving counterparts. Here, in 1968, it was in peak condition—the reeds still fabulously attuned to each other (no small credit to new man Harold Ashby), the brasses solid in the trombone department and holding up in the trumpets. Willie Cook's sensitive phrasing making itself felt. The rhythm section always takes care of business. Had Ellington had to wait until some record company fancied it, *Latin American Suite* might never have been recorded, or recorded without the special natural resources with which in mind it was created.

We might not, then, have heard Johnny Hodges enhance this music in his incomparable way. Or the microphones might not have encountered Paul Gonsalves in such superb form as he demonstrates here, or found the piano player in such a playing mood. Ellington knows how to seize the day, thankfully.

One could say much about this wonderful music, about its design and execution, its intent and content, its colors and textures. But these things will surely be said, and said well, by those who now and in future years will study and elucidate the music of the masters of the 20th Century.

For now, let us just say: Listen! Listen and 20 □ down beat

Records are reviewed by Mike Bourne, Bill Cole, Gary Giddins, Wayne Jones, Larry Kart, Peter Keepnews, Joe H. Klee, Michael Levin, John Litweiler, Terry Martin, John McDonough, Dan Morgenstern, Bobby Neisen, Don Neisen, Bob Porter, Doug Ramsey, Larry Ridley, Roger Riggins, Robert Rusch, James P. Schaffer, Joe Shulman, George Harvey Siders, Will Smith, Jim Szantor, Eric Vogel, and Pete Welding.

Ratings are: ★★★★★ excellent, ★★★★ very good, ★★★ good, ★★ fair, ★ poor.

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hear the sounds of this great musical organism, and of the individual voices, the very special voices, of which it is made up. Listen to some really contemporary music—music by which our children's children will judge our age and perhaps not find it entirely wanting in the creation of lasting beauty. Listen and learn to love.

—morgenstern



### CANNONBALL ADDERLY PRESENTS

SOUL OF THE BIBLE—Capitol SAAB 11120: *In The Beginning; Yield; Obeah; Fun In The Church; The Eternal Walk; Krukma; Gone; Behold; Psalm 24; Make Your Own Temple; Taj; Psalm 54; Amani; Space Spiritual.*

Personnel: Nat Adderly, cornet; Cannonball Adderly, alto, soprano saxes; George Duke, Nat Adderly Jr., piano, electric piano; Walter Booker, bass; Francisco Centeno, electric piano; Walter Booker, bass; Francisco Centeno, electric bass; Roy McCurdy, drums; Airtio Moreira, Mayuto, Octavio and King Erison, percussion; Rick Holmes, narrator; Fleming Williams, Arthur Charma, Olga James, Stephanie Spruill, voices.

Rating: ★★★★★ ½

In the beginning was the word. And ever since, the word was revealed, various composers have been attempting to set it to music all the way from the mystic monks whose chants were set down by St. Gregory to Weber and Rice.

So why shouldn't Cannonball and Nat Adderly, and Nat Jr., David Axelrod, George Duke, Walter Booker, Francisco Centeno and Chick Corea have their fling at it? They work both with words and without, and sometimes it works better without, because often words only serve to box composer, listener and performer into existing structures and misconceptions. Words could not add to Cannon's exuberant *Obeah*, yet they are necessary for the *Fun In The Church* which follows. Cannon switches to soprano for *The Eternal Walk*, again establishing his firm command of the horn. Not quite so lovely is the electric piano on the same piece, not specified by Duke or Nat Jr.; the instrument produces more distortion than music. This makes Duke's acoustic piano the more welcome on *Krukma*.

Booker's background for *Psalm 24* is a lovely solo for bowed bass with acoustic piano accompaniment. It is clearly one of the highlights of the album, and so is the setting for *Psalm 54* jointly credited to Cannon and Chick Corea. The most impressive segment, however, is *Amani*, featuring the vocalese of composer Olga James.

That's the gospel according to the Adderleys. Some people will feel that it isn't “religious” enough or “theologically unsound” but such folks probably wouldn't dig the music anyway. It's a nice touch that Nat Jr. and his classmate at the High School of Music and

Art, Francisco Centeno, are on the recording. Perhaps it could be called nepotism, but maybe it's just a natural desire for an Adderley dynasty.

—klee

### FREDDIE HUBBARD

SKY DIVE—CTI 6018: *Povo; In A Mist; The Godfather; Sky Dive.*

Personnel: Hubbard, trumpet; Marvin Stamm, Alan Rubin, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Garnett Brown, Wayne Andre, Paul Falise, trombones; Tony Price, tuba; Hubbert Laws, flutes; Phil Bodner, George Marge, Wally Kane, Romeo Penque, flutes, reeds; Keith Jarrett, acoustic & electric piano; George Benson, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Billy Cobham, drums; Airtio, Ray Barretto, percussion; Don Sebesky, arranger, conductor.

Rating: ★★★★★

*In a Mist* is a masterpiece, featuring Hubbard's glowing horn in a woodwindy setting beautifully crafted by Sebesky. Bix Beiderbecke's 1927 composition (for piano, not trumpet) retains its haunting essence, and Bix' love for whole-tone scales gives it a “contemporary” flavor. It is the most challenging material for Hubbard on this set (I doubt that the other pieces, *Godfather* in particular, will survive for 45 years) and he rises to it; his lovely rubato statements at beginning and end are reason enough to hear this album.

The rest isn't bad at all, but more conventional. There is fine Hubbard throughout (he has been a remarkably consistent performer on records, and his command of the instrument is always evident). The relaxed tempo on *Sky Dive* promotes swing; Cobham's drums are wonderfully propulsive, and Barretto, among the greatest of Latin jazz percussionists, contributes much. But neither it nor the somewhat more tense *Provo* offer thematic material of great consequence.

Benson, a guitarist whose great talent somehow has seemed to elude success, has a fine spot on the title track. Keith Jarrett's flowing, attractively voiced electric piano also has its moments of space, and Laws' flute surfaces here and there, always tellingly and musically.

But this is Hubbard's outing first—then arranger Sebesky's, and of course producer Creed Taylor's. It could be argued that the detailed and careful production CTI lavishes on its artists is sometimes overwhelming—too much of a good thing. Hubbard, however, is very strong, and his thing comes through. On *In A Mist*, it's even enhanced. —morgenstern

### HAMPTON HAWES

I'M ALL SMILES—Contemporary S7631: *I'm All Smiles; Manha de Carnaval; Spring Is Here; The Shadow Of Your Smile; Searchin'.*

Personnel: Hawes, piano; Red Mitchell, bass; Donald Bailey, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

For Hawes, 1970 seems to have been a watershed year. It was then he recorded *High In The Sky* (Vault 9010), his first released work indicating a yearning to be free of what he saw as the restrictions of the song form and the blues. It's reported that since then he has gone considerably farther out, assisted by synthesizers, ring