

Loss and some of Leviev's blues playing). But the humor (as on *Tears, Blues in Elf*), an element too often lacking in jazz (especially in big bands), and the improvisation help make this album what it is—fresh, invigorating and full of uninhibited creativity.

(One might question how successful this approach was just by virtue of the fact that Ellis is no longer employing it. But it's not really fair, of course, to judge this album on that basis. Ellis may want to experiment with many new concepts, as he undoubtedly will, before deciding which one to concentrate on or, possibly, on how to combine elements of Concept A with B, C, and D, etc. Or none of the above.)

Some capsule comments: The woodwinds often steal the show from the strings when both are to the fore but the strings are used to good advantage. They play very effective ensemble roles, especially on *5/4 Getaway* and *Soup*, one of Ellis' best compositions to date, which is also highlighted by an enchanting piano solo by Leviev, who is one of Bulgaria's leading pianists and composers. But, on the debit side, some of the patented Ellisian ensemble climaxes tend to sound alike and are often rather a letdown after the writing and blowing brilliance that preceded them.

This album contains some of the finest writing Ellis has done to date. One of the band's prime assets is that the nature of the material is such that it demands total involvement on the part of all players. When you have that, along with fine writing and good solo work, you have extraordinary jazz regardless of idiom.

—szantor

## HAL GALPER

THE GUERRILLA BAND—Mainstream MRL 337: *Call; Figure Eight; Black Night; Welcome To My Dream; Rise and Fall; Point of View.*

Personnel: Randy Brecker, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Mike Brecker, tenor&soprano saxes; Galper, electric piano; Bob Mann, guitar; Vic Gaskin, bass; Steve Haas, Charles (Don) Alias, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

## DREAMS

IMAGINE MY SURPRISE—Columbia C30960: *Calico Baby; Why Can't I Find A Home; Child of Wisdom; Just Be Ourselves; I Can't Hear You; Here She Comes Now; Don't Cry My Lady; Medicated Goo; Imagine My Surprise.*

Personnel: Randy Brecker, trumpet, fluegelhorn, vocal; Barry Rogers, trombone, alto horn, tuba, vocal; Mike Brecker, tenor&soprano saxes, flute; Don Grolnick, keyboards; vocal; Bob Mann, guitar, fluegelhorn, vocal; Will Lee, bass, vocal; Billy Cobham, drums, percussion; Edward Vernon, lead vocal. On track 1, add Steve Cropper, guitar; Angel Allende, conga.

Rating: ★★★★★

The presence of the gifted Brecker Brothers and guitarist Bob Mann provides a link between these very different albums.

Galper's date, though it takes in a lot of musical areas, is basically a straight-ahead contemporary jazz outing. Dreams, of course, is a so-called jazz-rock group, though in this case the emphasis is on the latter ingredient.

Galper, a fluent, inventive pianist who's worked with a number of established jazz greats, wrote all but one of the pieces and chose to play electric piano exclusively. He handles the instrument expertly, getting a variety of attractive sounds from it, but to these ears it remains a less expressive vehicle than its acoustic ancestor.

In the contexts Galper has fashioned here,

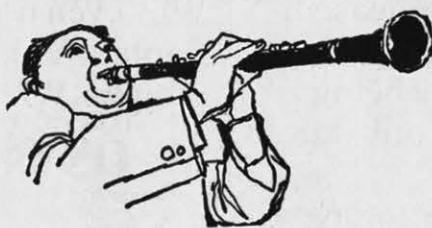
24 □ down beat

however, the electric instrument perhaps serves his purpose better. There is no denying that it gives a contemporary sound to the music, and it blends well with the electric guitar and bass. Additionally, Randy Brecker at times plays electrically amplified trumpet with pedal attachment.

But the flavor is not electronic, overall. This is free-flowing melodic jazz of a sort not readily categorized, blending natural and electric sounds, free and time playing. It is attractive music, though hearing the album in its entirety is a slightly monotonous experience.

I liked best the moody *Black Night* with its intriguing bass line; *Rise and Fall*, which makes good use of scale patterns, and the strong solo work on *Call* and *Point of View* by the leader, Mike Brecker on both his horns, and Randy Brecker on trumpet (his *Call* solo gets into a Miles Davis thing, with good use of the pedal gimmick).

Both drummers play throughout, but don't get into each other's way (the recording bal-



ance doesn't favor them). The chorale-like ensemble on *Dream* comes off well. In all, pleasant and quite original music with an impressionistic flavor.

Dreams gives the Breckers less of a chance to stretch out, but there is a fine muted trumpet solo on *Surprise*, and Mike shows he can play convincing soul tenor on *Wisdom*, a blues. Barry Rogers has a nice trombone bit with plunger on *Here*, and the horn ensemble work is very good on the entire album.

Rhythmic drive is abundantly supplied by Billy Cobham, a marvelous jazz drummer who can make rock rhythms swing more than any other percussionist I know of.

In person, this band can be quite a musical experience, but the album at times almost makes them sound bland. Eddie Vernon is a tasty lead singer in a less than extreme soul vein, while Lee's voice has a contrasting lighter folk quality. Randy Brecker's singing on *Surprise* will not send any vocalists to the woodshed, but it is engagingly natural and the song has humor.

Nothing on the album should offend anyone, including rock haters, and perhaps that's the problem. It's musical, nice and not very exciting.

Columbia's recording quality is far superior to Mainstream's, by the way. —morgenstern

## WES MONTGOMERY

JUST WALKIN'—Verve V6-8804: *Wives and Lovers; My One And Only Love; The Big Hurt; Sunny; Bumpin' On Sunset; Just Walkin'; Tequila; Round Midnight.*

Personnel: Montgomery, guitar; Jimmy Smith, organ (track 8 only). Others unidentified.

Rating: ★★★★★

My collection does not contain all the Wes Montgomery on Verve. Thus it is hard for me to tell with much certainty whether the "previously unreleased" claim is a fact. Verve has

issued four titles (*Big, Sunny, Bumpin, Tequila*) in other packages. *Sunny* is an alternate take of the master issued on the *California Dreamin'* LP and the others are probably alternates from Wes' *Tequila* LP.

To my knowledge, the remainder is new material. *Wives* is up and very good until the end, when Wes runs out of ideas. *My One* is pretty, with strings added, while the Smith-Montgomery *'Round* has a big band under Oliver Nelson. The strings show up again on *Walkin'*, a groovy *All Night Long*-type blues.

In general, there are slight imperfections in these performances (an unresolved ending, an out-of-balance trumpet, a missed note of melody) that would have precluded release. In the case of Montgomery, nothing here adds to his prodigious reputation, but no great harm is done either.

No points to Verve for a sloppy production (no personnel and no recording dates). But enough good material to interest the Montgomery fans.

—porter

## CLARK TERRY/ BOB BROOKMEYER

QUINTET—Mainstream 320: *Tete a Tete; Pretty Girl; Blue China; Hum; Blindman, Blindman; Step Right Up; Weep; Straight No Chaser; Sometime Ago; (The) Hymn.*

Personnel: Terry, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Brookmeyer, valve trombone; Roger Kellaway, piano; Bill Crow, bass; Dave Bailey, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

Records like this are rarely made any more, so the reissue of these 1964 sides is especially welcome.

The program consists of good jazz standards and originals, and the playing is full of wit, maturity and soul.

The only demerit for this set is the very short (less than 30 minutes) playing time. Still, the rating makes it clear that brevity is no handicap to these men.

Thank you, Mainstream, and don't forget the remaining album by this happy partnership.

—porter

## SARAH VAUGHAN

A TIME IN MY LIFE—Mainstream MRL-340: *Imagine; On Thinking It Over; Inner City Blues; Sweet Gingerbread Man; Magical Connection; That's The Way I've Always Heard It Should Be; Tomorrow City; Universal Prisoner; Trouble; If Not For You.*

Personnel: Ms Vaughan, vocal; Buddy Childers, Al Aarons, Gene Goe, trumpets; George Bohanon, Benny Powell, trombones; Jerome Richardson, Bill Green, Jackie Kelso, reeds; Willy Mays, piano; Joe Pass, Al Vecovo, guitars; Bob Magnusson, bass; Earl Palmer, drums; Alan Estes, Jimmy Cobb, percussion; Ernie Wilkins, arranger, conductor.

Rating: ★★★★★/★★★★

Five stars for Sassy and the pleasure of having her back on records after an absence that is an indictment of the record industry; barely three stars for a disappointing album that misguidedly attempts to give her a "now" image.

There can be no doubt that Sassy has the greatest voice of any singer in the popular field. It is an instrument of rare beauty and astonishing range; had she gone in that direction, she could have been a great opera singer. It is our good fortune that she didn't, for she is