

soloists, in the manner of classic Basie or Ellington, or in the pre-eminence of a single super star, a la Buddy Rich, or in an iconoclastic new sound. Its strength is co-leader Boland's sometimes brilliant and always tasteful scores, which constitute the contemporary legacy of Henderson, Basie, Goodman and Ellington.

I'll go a step further. Boland's specific strength as an arranger is his capacity to write exciting, full-throated scores for the reeds, passages that have terrific momentum and cohesiveness. And I'm a pushover for a good sax section.

There are whole choruses carried completely by the reed section on this marvelous LP, without any brass counterpoint. The section writing can be found at its stinging best on *Face the Music*, *Stepped Out*, *Get Out*, *Lover and Strauss*, which unfortunately cops out with one of those fade endings.

But save *High School* for the end. This up-tempo track is an intensely crisp, biting arrangement that finds the reed and brass sections snapping at each other with a potent vengeance.

This is a true big band sound, uncluttered with gimmicks or tricks. It crackles with a surging but supremely graceful whiplash. It's the most exciting new band sound since Buddy Rich came on the scene. And through it all, the rhythm section renders bracing punctuations.

For the ultimate in sax section scoring, I always think of the famous passage in Ellington's *Cottontail*; now I will also think of this excellent LP by the Clarke-Boland band.

—McDonough

## WILBUR DE PARIS

OVER AND OVER AGAIN—Atlantic SD-1552: *Over and Over Again (Version I)*; *Table Thumpers Rag*; *Wabash Blues*; *Careless Love*; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Watching Dreams Go By*; *Goodnight Irene*; *Ja Da*; *Would You Care*; *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*; *How Ya Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm*; *Basin Street Blues*; *Over and Over Again (Version II)*.

Personnel: Tracks 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11: Sidney De Paris, trumpet, tuba; Doc Cheatham, trumpet; Wilbur De Paris, slide and valve trombone; Garvin Bushell, clarinet, bassoon; Sonny White, piano, electric piano; John Smith, guitar, banjo; Hayes Alvis, bass; Wilbert Kirk, drums, harmonica. On tracks 2 & 12, Cheatham is omitted, Omer Simeon (clarinet, soprano saxophone) replaces Bushell, and Lee Blair (banjo) replaces Smith. On tracks 6 & 9, Sidney De Paris is omitted, Simeon replaces Bushell, and Rudy Rutherford (clarinet, baritone saxophone) is added. On track 13, Simeon replaces Bushell.

db/RC Rating: ★★★★★

For 10 years—from 1951 to 1961—Wilbur De Paris' "New New Orleans Jazz Band" held forth at Jimmy Ryan's, the last jazz bastion on New York's 52nd Street. From that home base, it made many forays—as far afield as Europe and Africa—and recorded prolifically for Atlantic. It was a unique band, and this album of previously unissued material (excepting two tracks which appeared on singles only) is a welcome surprise and reminder.

The leader, who had worked with bands ranging from Jelly Roll Morton to Duke Ellington, had an original conception. Unlike most traditional bands of the revivalist period, the De Paris outfit used a wide variety of material, much of it original (or at least unhackneyed) and all of it performed in an original manner, and the leader insisted on musicianship of high

caliber. There were concessions to the peasant tastes of Dixieland audiences (here saluted with a touch of irony in *Table Thumpers Rag*), but on the whole, it was a very musical and interesting group.

Most of its members (the personnel was quite stable) were players whose primary background was mainstream jazz, not Dixieland. While Wilbur was the organizer, leader, and musical director, the jazz sparkplug was his brother Sidney, a remarkable trumpeter, whose untimely death in 1967 marked the end of the band, though Wilbur occasionally revives it.

There were other gifted soloists, the great clarinetist Omer Simeon among them, but it was Sidney's presence that gave the ensemble its characteristic lilt and supplied the biggest solo kicks.

On this album, he makes his presence felt almost throughout, and there are fine solos on *Irene*, *Wabash*, and *Farm* (all in his inimitable "fan hat" style), *Closer Walk* (muted growl), and *Basin Street* (in a particularly gentle, wistful mood), among others. On *Ja Da*, he takes a jolly, relaxed tuba solo and throws in some good breaks.

Doc Cheatham, a fine, sadly underrated trumpeter, is heard soloing on *Wabash* and *Ja Da*, and contributes some pretty fills to the second version of the title tune.

Among the examples of the band's unique choice of material are *Watching Dreams*, an old French pop tune, on which drummer Wilbert Kirk takes a surprising mellow harmonica solo, and electric piano and guitar blend prettily; *Would You Care*, a 1905 ballad spotting a booting Rudy Rutherford baritone sax solo, and the title tune, a Wilbur De Paris composition heard in two quite different versions.

One of the most attractive tracks is *Irene*, treated in a very relaxed manner, and spotting a swinging bassoon solo by Bushell (who also plays very competent clarinet) and the leader's best solo outing.

Simeon plays hauntingly if briefly on *Dreams*, but his best moments here are on *Basin Street* (the solo shows where Mezz Mezzrow, all his talk about Jimmy Noone to the contrary notwithstanding, really comes from). Pianist Sonny White, a Teddy Wilson disciple, is pleasantly featured on this piece.

The rhythm section is solid throughout, not least due to the firm presence of Hayes Alvis, a wonderful bassist who plays the right notes in the right places, and Kirk's good cymbal work. In fact, the swing-oriented rhythm of the band was not the least important of its assets.

Traditional jazz releases on major labels are rare these days, and traditional bands of this caliber even rarer, so this album can be considered quite a treat. Mainstream-oriented listeners will also find much to their liking here. Very nice job on sound and balance, too. Keep digging into those files, men.

—Morgenstern

## BILL EVANS

ALONE—Verve V6-8792: *Here's That Rainy Day*; *A Time For Love*; *Midnight Mood*; *On a Clear Day*; *Never Let Me Go*.

Personnel: Evans, piano.  
db/RC Rating: ★★★★★

In his revealing liner notes, Evans laments the precarious position of the solo

piano tradition in jazz. He says the public attitude relegates a "single pianist to background for conversation or dinner."

At the Top Of The Gate in New York, Jaki Byard, whose every phrase should be listened to, is presented as an intermission pianist with second billing to featured artists often inferior to him. Armand Hug sits night after night in a New Orleans hotel lobby, spinning out one masterful piece after another for businessmen and tourists whose babbling often drowns him out. Hopefully, the new solo albums by Evans, Byard, and Don Ewell, and the recent one by Hug, will encourage a trend.

Evans has never, to my knowledge, gone outside the song form for his creations. Within it, he is able to find such possibilities of harmony, melody and rhythm that one wonders that some feel it necessary to suggest that he play more "free" and "outside." This album is Evans' first solo collection. He has recorded three- and two-piano LPs (conversing with himself by means of multi-taping) but brilliant as those were, it seems to me the real Bill Evans stands out in boldest relief in this group of straight solo performances.

He honors the melody of Johnny Mandel's *A Time For Love* by remaining quite close to it, lavishing attention on it with his celebrated chord voicings. Evans' time, of course, is impeccable. *Clear Day* swings as hard as any piece of music has a right to.

In a review of an earlier Evans album elsewhere, I said: "There is nothing superficial or calculated in his playing, and his audiences should be flattered that he is playing for them as he would for himself, with no condescension and no attention-getting devices. He makes music, undiluted and uncompromising." That could have been written about the long piece that makes up the entire second side of this album, *Never Let*. Aside from alerting your ear to the harmonic delights of this track, let me remind you that swing can be a subtle thing, and that Evans has a long-standing love affair with *Louise*, who is again quoted here.

Fellow pianist Joe Zawinul's *Midnight Mood* has a melody that is the equal of *A Time For Love* and it is so compatible with Mandel's piece that Evans' playing them back to back results, whether by design or accident, in a two-part suite. Evans has a great deal in common with George Shearing (one of his earliest and most benevolent influences). The unsticky rhapsodic opening chorus of *Rainy Day* and his use of the pedal during blockchording are reminiscent of Shearing, although Evans seems to get inside the music more.

Bill Evans is the complete pianist; there is apparently nothing he can't do on the instrument. There's a great deal he won't do, however. He won't submit to the tyranny of jazz fashion, which changes with the seasons. He won't embrace the schlock popular tunes of the day and record "jazz" versions of them. He won't make an album of two-and-a-half minute pieces in hopes of getting air play (*Never Let* runs 14:32).

When the dust subsides from the meaningless battles for recognition waged by so many of his contemporaries, he will still be there, playing his music as he hears it.