supplements the originals, but it does not supplant them. In fact, particularly in the case of the Concerto, your enjoyment of the present version will be enhanced by hearing David Oistrakh's performance on Deutsche Gramophon, and/or the piano transcription (BWV 1054) as played by Glenn Gould on Columbia. These are three different ways of interpreting the same music, and each has its validity and own special qualities. —*Klee*

BARRY MILES

BARRY MILES—Poppy PYS 40,009: *Hijack; Contrasts; Aural; Take Your Clothes; Alone; New Derivatives.*

Personnel: Lew Soloff, trumpet; Lou Delgato, Joel Kaye, reeds; Miles, piano, electric piano; Jack Wilkins, guitar; Rod King, bass; Joe Corsello, drums; Ray Baretto, conga.

Rating: ★★★

Very pleasant, well-crafted and well-played music in a mold that includes a variety of influences. Miles, who composed and arranged all the pieces, calls it "syncretic music".

A former drum prodigy who long since has concentrated on piano and composing, Miles is a gifted and sincere musician, but the album is curiously lacking in impact. Neat and gentle, the music flows prettily, marked throughout by certain favorite devices, such as shifts in rhythm and cyclical patterns. It's nice to listen to, but not a lot more.

The horns do not solo. Effective use is made of reed doublings, yet the color is rather monochromatic. Miles and guitarist Wilkins are the only soloists. The leader certainly has chops, and his writing and playing is tasteful. On *Alone,* a piano solo without accompaniment, he shows a liking for the impressionist school—there are echoes of Ravel and De Falla as well as of Hancock and Corea—but the piece doesn't go anywhere; it's like an introduction to something that never appears.

The pretty *Aural* and the punchy *New Derivatives* are to me the most interesting ensemble tracks; on the latter, Miles' electric piano catches some fire, and the rhythm section drives. Throughout, Wilkins is excellent, and it is likely that more will be heard from him. His solos are the high spots of the LP.

I wish I could be more enthusiastic about this album. The music couldn't possibly offend anyone, and it is indicative of the current trend towards a new genre without labels, including elements of jazz, rock, and modern "classical". The craftsmanship is of high caliber. But overall, this is an appetizer rather than a meal. —*Morgenstern*

SUN RA

CONTINUATION—Saturn 520: *Biosphere Blues; Intergalactic Research; Earth Primitive Earth; New Planet; Continuation To Jupiter Festival.*

Personnel: Ebah, Wayne Harris, trumpets; Ali Hassan, trombone; Marshall Allen, alto saxophone, oboe, Jupiterian flute; Danny Thompson, alto saxophone, Neptunian libflecto; Danny Davis, alto saxophone; John Gilmore, tenor saxophone; Pat Patrick, baritone saxophone; Robert Cummins, bass clarinet; Ra, piano, space organ, galactone space instrument; probably Ronnie Boykins, bass; Bob Barry, drums, lightning drums; Carl Nimrod, space drums; James Jacson, log drums.

Rating: ★★★★

By now Sun Ra has recorded at least 28 LPs, a number exceeded by very few jazz musicians, and among free performers only by John Coltrane. If you can't find the great majority of them, it's because they're issued by the mysterious, elusive Saturn label. Saturn is located variously in Chicago, Detroit, and even Minneapolis; as many Sun Ra admirers have sadly learned, that Chicago address on the Saturn sleeves is non-existent. Record stores cannot order Saturns—they must wait for an irregularly-appearing salesman to bring what LPs he will. It's an interesting game, but also a shame, for a number of Saturn LPs are quite fine ones which should be far better known and more readily available.

They're well-produced and usually well-recorded—important considering that so much New Music has been shabbily presented. They start with Ra's 1957-58 hard bop band, and include a landmark in free jazz, *The Magic City* (Saturn LPB-711—at one time most Saturns were catalogued as LPB or 711 or both). It is well worth the listener's effort to discover this music: time may yet prove Ra one of the seminal modern thinkers.

The LP presents the strictly musical features of the band—the science fiction-electronics-colored lights-poetry-philosophy features of Ra are elsewhere. Ra's big band method is to present his players with clearly-defined outlines of his music's form. Within these they are required to improvise, though occasionally prepared band or section sequences appear. Sun Ra is the most featured performer, of course, but the others are interesting individuals. Among several fine woodwind players Marshall Allen often stands out—he is one of the best modern altoists. Gilmore is a sober, careful tenorist, Boykins a most able bassist, and the unidentified trumpeter in *Festival* is extremely gifted: Ra has chosen a fine band.

His preference for a big-band medium derives mainly from his love for sound colors: actually, four to six players perform the short pieces on *Continuation.* The slow *Blues* has pleasant trombone and baritone solos. *Research* moves slowly through space from low tones on a moaning reed instrument to Ra's making treble organ chords over bass stabs on something that sounds like an electric harpsichord. *Earth* is a wooden flute improvising as free-spaced percussionists scratch, tinkle, and ring a cymbal. In *New* a flute improvises over a 3/4 piano vamp while an echo-chamber makes heavy reverberations. These are interesting, controlled, but easy and simple pieces.

Festival is all of side 2. After the opening ensemble wail, pianist Ra plays a sequence of uncharacteristically swinging fast chords. The following very long trumpet solo is most fascinating for the man's rhythmic-spatial brilliance and thoughtful dynamics. He opens in space and then plays, perfectly poised and personal, against the rhythm's 4/4 vamp, brief band chords, and the vamp's return. His rhythms are determined entirely by his linear needs, without reference to stated time or the band's doings. Thus the solo is a freely-moving lyric curve, a gentle movement among the band's and rhythm section's relative hardness; it's a beautifully successful conception.

Plucked and slapped bass opens the second part, followed by the band vocal ("Sing a song of Jupiter"). After a brief ensemble, an altoist begins with trills and plays a good solo over varying accompaniment. In open space, then, another alto and the bassist (apparently Boykins, though the sleeve doesn't identify him) make unique sounds at each other, pausing for a bowed bass solo. Finally several horns, led by the piano, enter individually, a melange of tempos is suggested, a clarinet-like horn plays over these, and suddenly the ending simply cuts them off.

This hardly indicates the variety of sounds, band effects, and rhythms that the music includes. Here is the reason for Ra's eminence, for the clearly defined and segmented movements of band-soloists-rhythm section-background are truly an original development of traditional big band techniques. The maneuverable aspects of Ra's method are first rhythm, then sound, then ensemble density; structure, though, is the great force of Ra's communications. Perhaps it is a one-sided music—the less tradition-minded Roscoe Mitchell has had greater success in inventing free structures, though with smaller groups—but good soloists and Ra's odd organization of material often make this music attractive.

Sun Ra has been an important enigma for a decade and a half now, and his music must be heard—even with the bother of tracking down these now-you-see-them-now-you-don't Saturns. —*Litweiler*

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER/ TIM RICE

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR—Decca DXSA 7206: *Overture; Heaven on Their Minds; What's the Buzz/Strange Thing Mystifying; Everything's Alright; This Jesus Must Die; Hosanna; Simon Zealotes/Poor Jerusalem; Pilate's Dream; The Temple; Everything's Alright; I Don't Know How To Love Him; Damned For All Time/Blood Money; The Last Supper; Gethsemane (I Only Want To Say); The Arrest; Peter's Denial; Pilate and Christ; King Herod's Song; Judas' Death; Trial Before Pilate (Including the 39 lashes); Superstar; Crucifixion; John Nineteen: Forty-One.*

Personnel: Chris Mercer, tenor sax; Peter Robinson, keyboards; Neil Hubbard, Henry McCulloch, guitars; Alan Spenner, bass; Bruce Rowland, percussion; Murray Head, Ian Gillian, Yvonne Elliman, Paul Raven, Victor Brox, Brian Keith, John Gustafson, Barry Dennen, Annette Brox, Paul Davis, Mike d'Abo, principal singer/actors; music by Andrew Lloyd Webber; libretto by Tim Rice.

Rating: ★★★

Inevitable comparisons will be drawn between *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Tommy,* for both are heralded "rock opera" and in that perspective are unique events—but otherwise, both are also overblown with praise and somewhat unfulfilled in intent, which are observations likely not to be widespread. For one granted huzzah, the music of *Tommy* was at least varied and exciting throughout, even though the plot was contrived—yet it was clearly the energetic performance by The Who that compensated for any lack of drama.

But *Jesus Christ Superstar* must be witnessed in production to be effective, for the opera (which it is, which *Tommy* is not) simply does not communicate on record—unless one follows the libretto, which soon becomes tiresome. Furthermore, the music separate from visual illumination is revealed as mostly ordinary rock 'n' roll with a touch of quasi-hip vaudeville, more like catchy tunes strung together (and not that memorable) than a well-ordered op-