

Rhythmically, this LP is dull enough to obliterate any interest it might otherwise have held. Heavy rock-style thumping pounds monotonously through the meager 13:59 of side one's two tracks, and half of side two.

I still believe that jazz should swing, and the rock influence here seems to be working against this purpose by locking the players into a stiff, starchy posture in which their phrases invariably emerge as little square musical boxes. Whatever happened to eighth notes played legato?

Furthermore, Harris' gimmick use of amplification is hard to listen to for any length of time. It produces a kind of muffled distortion, as if someone had dropped a heavy curtain between the performer and the listener. His bag of tricks aside for the moment, most of the playing here is as dull as the beat, a sort of tonal monochrome.

The eternal search for the new sound, I suppose, is what prompted the final few bars of *Funky*, in which Harris seems to be gargling while playing.

Yet, through all this murky caterwauling one ray of light glimmers like a beacon: *Children's Song*. Here is a charming piece in which Harris' electronic gadgetry finds a noble reward. It is basically a series of softly articulated contrapuntal themes woven together in almost Bachian fashion against a restrained drum pattern. For once in the album, manner becomes the servant of matter. In spite of the rest of the LP, at least a listen to this track is recommended.

A Place for Us appears to have unamplified Harris. In any case, it offers a glimpse of full-toned tenor in a straight ballad vein. Nothing terribly special, but it sounds nice.

—McDonough

Pete LaRoca

TURKISH WOMEN AT THE BATH—Douglas 782: *Turkish Women at the Bath; The Dancing Girl; Love Planet; Majoun; Bliss; Sin Street; And So* (two takes).

Personnel: John Gilmore, tenor saxophone; Chick Corea, piano; Walter Booker, bass; LaRoca, drums.

Rating: ★★

Musical history has accelerated at quite a rate when music like this—serious, abstract, experimental—is best described as background listening. All four players on the date are accomplished musicians, the lines are pleasant and mildly interesting, and the solos are well conceived and executed.

Yet background listening it is. Many of the compositions, all by LaRoca, are Middle Eastern in feel. He seems to be going for the same kinds of effects that Coltrane so brilliantly achieved on sides like *African/Brass* and *Ole*—modal lines with few changes, with solos depending for their impact upon judicious use of repetition when intensity is required, and the ability to create countermelodies when tranquility is the desired end.

Nothing like that happens here. LaRoca is not aiming at the urgency of the Coltrane sides cited, and, of course, it's unfair to compare a merely mortal musician to Trane in any case. (If anything, Gilmore's virile, robust tone recalls Sonny Rollins. Corea, however, does evoke shades of McCoy Tyner in his block chord comp-

ing.) None of the players has a fertile enough imagination both to use the austere simplicity of the lines intelligently and to transcend them, making something new. No development, in other words.

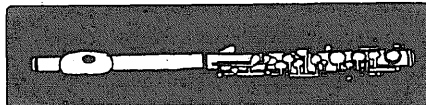
Corea is especially guilty here. He is far more interested in texture than horizontal movement; his chord series are often provocative, but his single-note work is frequently only filler. Gilmore has some nice spots: a good, controlled statement on *Planet*, which is an Eastern line with a distinctly occidental bridge, and a tough, strong solo on *Sin Street*. The latter solo, however, suffers from the aforementioned lack of development.

It is a credit to LaRoca that this doesn't sound like a drummer's date. He takes very little solo space—perhaps wisely, since on his one extended outing, on *Sin Street*, there's a lot of logic, a lot of control, and precious little innovation. As a supportive drummer, though, he's fine. (He also suffers more than anyone from the thin recording sound.)

Booker comes off best of all. A supremely undermentioned bassist, he has great tone, good chops and a wonderful sense of variety. On *Majoun*, Corea leads off with some frenetic chording which Booker complements beautifully in all ranges of his instrument; some of the high, keening notes he lays down under Corea bring to mind Denny Zeitlin and Charlie Haden at their best. Booker also states the melody of *Bliss* handsomely. (The statement is marred slightly by Corea's cliched summer-rain-tinkle-tinkle backing.)

The music here has many virtues; simplicity, strength, and occasionally, a most attractive sensuality. What it doesn't have, most of the time, is interest.

—Heineman



Junior Mance

LIVE AT THE TOP—Atlantic SD 1521: *Before This Time Another Year; I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free; That's All; Turning Point*.

Personnel: David Newman, tenor saxophone (tracks 3 and 4); flute; Mance, piano; Wilbur Little, bass; Rudy Collins, drums.

Rating: ★★

Side one offers Mance an opportunity to stretch out for a full 19 minutes of playing, broken only by a brief interlude by bassist Little. *Before* opens in a moody fashion and dwells on a single chord spurred forward by a softly shuffling rhythm. The mood breaks when Collins begins to pour it on, and we get a solid example of good contemporary blues-rooted piano.

I Wish I Knew, which sounds vaguely like *Deep River*, continues in the same vein, although with greater harmonic and rhythmic variety, and even some hand-clapping from the audience. The main problem seems to be that of sustaining interest. This is more true of *Before*, which becomes a bit repetitious after four of five minutes. This genre is a basically simple one and should not be overextended.

Side two settles into an easy listening groove and shifts our attention from Mance to Newman, whose warm tenor sound enhances *That's All*. *Turning Point*, a Newman original, finds him turning from

tenor to flute for another blues-flavored up-tempo workout. Nothing memorable happens, but it's pleasant listening.

—McDonough

Sonny Stitt

COME HITHER—Solid State SS18057: *Mendocino; Gentle On My Mind; I'm Gonna Make You Love Me; Wichita Lineman; Tasty Cakes; Private Number; Gimme Gimme Good Lovin'; For Once In My Life; California Soul; Jo-Ann; Soiree*.

Personnel: Joe De Angelis, Don Corrado, French horns; Stitt, Varitone alto saxophone; Jerome Richardson, baritone saxophone, flute; Paul Griffin, piano, organ; Billy Butler, guitar; Bob Bushnell, Fender bass; Joe Marshall, drums; Jimmy Mundy, arranger, conductor.

Rating: ★ 1/2

The latest Schwann catalog lists 41 available Stitt LPs. I haven't heard them all, but would guess that at least 40 must be better than this one.

Great old pro that he is, Stitt could have made this date in the half hour or so it takes to play the record, and perhaps he did. There isn't a memorable moment on it, and he probably forgot all about it as quickly as I hope to, and as quickly as you will if you decide to waste your time listening to it.

I don't understand what motivates records like this. Though the tunes and treatment are all "contemporary", the end result lacks the coarse vitality of rock or r&b, and could be of no appeal whatever to a jazz-oriented listener, while the beat is too persistent for Muzak purposes and only passable for dancing. In sum, this waste of talent, time and effort is yet another example of the total mindlessness prevalent in the recording industry.

The rating is above zero for Stitt's professionalism and for the pleasant textures obtained by Mundy from voicing French horns with baritone sax.

The liner note, by disc jockey Jack Walker, speaks of "the dearth of recorded Stitt sides in recent years," indicating that DJs run schlock record producers a close second in sagacity. It also raises an interesting question: what's an unrecorded side? If there be such a thing, this album should have been it.

—Morgenstern

Bobby Timmons

DO YOU KNOW THE WAY?—Milestone MSP 9020: *The Spanish Count; I Won't Be Back; Last Night When We Were Young; Do You Know The Way To San Jose?; Come Together; Something To Live For; Soul Time; This Guy's In Love With You*.

Personnel: Timmons, piano; Joe Beck, guitar (tracks 2-5, 8); Bob Cranshaw, electric bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

Rating: ★★

A few years ago, the critics regularly slammed Timmons because he wrote popular tunes (including the standard *Moaning*) and played funky piano. Nowadays, what with the most popular jazz piano trend being the romantic modal submerged-disonance school led by McCoy Tyner and Herbie Hancock, Timmons' outlook on music appears by contrast quite healthy and forward-looking. Far from being a fashionable bandwagon-jumper, Timmons presents almost a single-mindedly melodic attitude with only the most necessary or provocative harmonic touches added. In fact, his ideas in many, many passages on this LP are pure Bud Powell, offered with something of Powell's pure fire, and