

# record REVIEWS

## THE CRUSADERS

THE 2nd CRUSADE—Blue Thumb BTS 7000: *Don't Let It Get You Down; Take It Or Leave It; Gotta Get It On; Where There's A Will There's A Way; Look Beyond The Hill; Journey From Within; Ain't Gon' Change A Thang; A Message From The Inner City; A Search For Soul; No Place To Hide; Tomorrow Where Are You? Tough Talk; Do You Remember When?*

Personnel: Wayne Henderson, trombone; Wilton Felder, reeds, electric bass, bass marimba; Joe Sample, keyboards; "Stix" Hooper, percussion. Assisted by guitarists Arthur Adams, Larry Carlton, David T. Walker.

Rating: ★★★★★

A look at the titles will reveal a great deal about this double album: they could have been interchanged on most of the tunes and no one would have known the difference. So often, instrumentals go begging for titles, and apparently what the Crusaders have done here is to assign some sort of cliché for the purposes of identification—that is, assuming that tunes like *Don't Let It Get You Down*, *Take It Or Leave It*, *Gotta Get It On*, or *Where There's A Will There's A Way* do not have lyrics. In other words, to use one of Felder's titles, it "ain't gon' change a thang."

Ah, but don't for one second think that the tunes themselves are not distinctive. The clichés are confined strictly to the titles. This is a collection of Crusader-style music that combines a brand of jazz that rocks, and rock that swings, along with some down home funk that has some gospel overtones. It's a good-time session, filled with happy sounds; an overall simplicity of infectious melodies on top of a rhythm section that won't quit.

Henderson and Felder still represent one of the most formidable front lines in jazzdom. Henderson's trombone emits a controlled wildness (if such a contradiction exists) and Felder gets a gutsy tenor sound without ever letting a hint of anger creep in. Together, the timbre flirts with muddiness, but it's a "clean" mud, and they keep their lines effectively simple, leaving enough open spaces for the hyperactive rhythm to carry the momentum and build the excitement.

Try some of these highlights: Sample's classic meanderings on the intro to *Journey From Within*; the breakaway from the granitic unison in *Where There's A Will* to an exciting call-and-response pattern in which Felder answers Henderson and later the roles are reversed; the childlike simplicity of Sample's keyboard bass line that runs through *Look Beyond The Hill*; the mournful violin effect over the martial rhythm in *No Place To Hide*; the excellent solos by Felder and Henderson in the nearly ten-minute-long *A Search For Soul*, where they have ample stretch-out room; the funkiness of Hooper's original, *Tough Talk*, a traditional blues, cleverly reharmonized in spots; and above all, *A Message From The Inner City*, which contains some of the most inspired solo work by Sample, Felder, and Henderson.

That last track, *Message*, is my favorite because it showcases the Crusader sound best of all. Following the opening vamp, the rhythm gets quite intense under the driving

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, Harvey Siders, Will Smith, Jim Szantor, Eric Vogel, and Pete Welding.

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

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unison of trombone and tenor. And when Sample solos on electric piano, Felder's bass lines are so adventurous they tend to steal the show.

Throughout the whole album, Hooper understates and never steps on anyone's solo. Let's fact it, there aren't many sensitive drummers on the jazz-rock scene today. One of the best guides the Crusaders.

The only lapse, and it's in terms of production, comes on the final track of Side 4, *Do You Remember When?* For some unexplainable reason, it contains a false start and no ending. Yeah, that's right—no ending!

—siders

## STAN GETZ

COMMUNICATIONS '72—Verve V6-8807: *Communication '72; Outhouse Blues; Now You've Gone; Back to Bach; Nursery Rhymes for All God's Children; Soul Dance; Redemption; Flight; Moods of a Wanderer; Bonjour Tristesse*.

Personnel: Getz, tenor sax; unidentified orchestra and voices arranged and conducted by Michel Legrand.

Rating: ★★★★★

Getz is in his customary superb form on this album composed, arranged and conducted for him by Michel Legrand. In his liner notes (there are also words from Alec Wilder and Stan himself), Legrand states that the album is his "offering to Stan of a musical banquet. I wanted to indulge both my own and Stan's hunger to taste and digest all kinds of delicious things."

Well, appetites and palates differ, and I like my musical diet not quite as rich and creamy. On the whole, however, Getz comes through even when the French chef gets too coy.

Notable moments include the refreshing blues sequence on *Soul Dance*, the lyricism of *Now You've Gone* and *Tristesse* (exquisite saxophone playing here!), the suppleness of *Flight* and the blue humor of *Outhouse*.

Getz is such a master that he can make all sorts of music sound good, and he shares with some other great jazzmen the ability to be inspired by musical settings that without his contribution would mean very little. If the stuff works for him, it should for us—even if we do prefer our Getz without mayo.

—morgenstern

## JOHNNY HARTMAN

TODAY—Perception PLP 30: *By The Time I Get To Phoenix; Didn't We; Games People Play; Betcha By Golly Wow; Summer Wind; Help Me Make It Through The Night; Folks Who Live On The Hill; We've Only Just Begun; I've Got To Be Me*.

Personnel: Hartman, vocal; George Coleman, reeds; Herman Foster, piano; Roland Prince, guitar; Earl May, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

Though I'm only familiar with Hartman's records of the last 15 years, I have to say this must be his greatest recording to date—simply on the basis that I can't imagine how it could be improved.

Hartman is an exceptional ballad singer with beautiful control, sensitivity and range, and here he uses exceptional shifts in tension and phrasing to completely immerse the listener in the lyrics, mood and coloring of the

tunes.

The singer adapts his ballad approach to exceptional backing from an unusually spired combo, which on its own plays five-star jazz throughout the album. In fact, this is the reason for the album's total success. Hartman uses his voice as a horn playing with the group, and when his "horn" sits out, one remains involved with the music. Singer and instrumentalists blend in such unity as to make totally meaningful, pulsating jazz.

When I first listened to this album, I was familiar with all the songs; after repeated hearings, I became so caught up in Hartman's renditions that I can't hear other versions without measuring them against what seem to me the definitive interpretations. Hartman has made all these tunes his own—an ability that, aside from a Ray Charles or a Billie Holiday, is rarely found so consistently among singers.

Hartman and his gifted accompanists have set a standard here that defies the usual critical approach. Give this album a few hearings and chances are it will become part of your definitive collection. Unconditionally recommended.

—rusk

## HUBERT LAWS

WILD FLOWER—Atlantic SD 1624: *Wild Flower; Pensativa; Equinox; Ashanti; Motherless Child; Yoruba*.

Personnel: Laws, alto flute, soprano flute, piccolo; eight violins, four violas, four cellos, Richard Davis, Ron Carter, basses; on track 6 only, Laws, Chick Corea, piano; Gary Burton, vibraphone; Carter, bass; Bernard Purdie, drums; Mongo Santamaria, congas; Airto, Warren Smith, John Chambers, percussion. Arranged & conducted by John Murtaugh.

Rating: ★★★★★

This is a beautiful album of music that defies categorization yet contains the elusive spirit of jazz. From all aspects—Laws' impeccable and soulful playing; the superb string writing by Murtaugh and its flawless interpretation by the cream of New York's studio players; the consistently high level of the composition—this is an exceptional achievement.

Laws' musicianship and musicality (not always gifts found in one and the same person) are displayed more impressively than on any other album I've yet heard. He favors the alto flute here, and its warm sound is, to me, more consistently pleasing to the ear than that of the more commonly used C or soprano flute. But then, Laws' sound never becomes shrill, not even on the piccolo. And he never idly displays the virtuosity of which he is capable, preferring to make real music.

John Murtaugh, who arranged, conducted and conceived this album and also contributed three fine compositions, has for years been responsible for some of the most tasteful and skillfully made music heard on TV—behind commercials and in dramatic and documentary programs as well. Prior to that he was a more than competent jazz tenor player, and a few years ago made one of the still most musical synthesizer albums extant, *Blues Currents* (Polydor). It's in the nature of his TV work that it involves little public re-

dition—maybe this LP will help remedy it.

The string sounds created by Murtaugh are aromatic but not cloying, and they set off the sound of the flute to perfection as well as being enjoyable in and of themselves. In some instances, as on the fine arrangement of Coltrane's *Equinox*, the strings even make an effective rhythmic contribution. (On this track, Laws amplifies his flute and uses an octave divider with taste and discretion.) Laws and Murtaugh restore the oft-abused *fatherless Child* to its essential nobility.

Murtaugh's own pieces, the Debussyesque title tune, the interestingly dissonant *Ashanti*, and the rhythmically dense and complex *Yobuba* (with an array of potent percussionists replacing the strings) impressively demonstrate the range of a genuine composer, and his treatment of *Pensativa* should please Clare Fischer.

Highly recommended. —morgenstern

## VOLKER KRIEGEL

INSIDE: MISSING LINK—BASF/MPS 33 21431-1; *Slums on Wheels*; *The "E" Again*; *Zanzibar*; *Missing Link*; *Fur Hector*; *Remis*; *Tarang*; *Elastic Plemon*; *Janelas Abertas*; *Plonk Whenever*; *Definitely Suspicious*; *Finale*.

Personnel: Albert Mangelsdorff, trombone (tracks 1-4); Alan Skidmore, soprano&tenor saxes (tracks 1-4); Heinz Sauer, tenor sax (tracks 1-4); John Taylor, electric piano; Kriegel, electric, acoustic&octave guitars; Eberhard Weber, acoustic&electric basses, tarang; John Marshall (tracks 1-4) or Peter Baumeister, drums; Cees See, percussion, vocal, flutes, etc.

Rating: ★★★

This two-record album is very musicianly and all, but somehow it doesn't come close to being convincing. Everybody plays well enough, if derivatively, and there's really nothing particularly wrong. Yet something

nags.

There's little fire and soul. Everything's too studied, professional; not exactly cold, but certainly sounding calculated. It's pleasurable and yet there's little commitment.

Mangelsdorff and Weber come across best. The trombonist is a gruff, blustery, yet fairly easygoing player. Even with his free-form moments it's hard to keep from hearing J.J. Johnson's influence on his work. Weber has a big sound and swings fairly well.

The saxophonists seldom get into anything. Both men have based their styles on Coltrane roots, with Skidmore also bringing Albert Ayler slightly to mind and Sauer doing some Shepp and Sanders things.

Leader Kriegel plays skillfully, but says little that's exciting or meaningful. Likewise Taylor. When he's not getting harp-like sounds from his Electra electric piano, Taylor is making like Hancock, Corea and Jarrett.

The drummers are okay. Enough said.

—smith

## MALO

EVOLUTION—Warner Bros. BS 2702; *Moving Away*; *I Don't Know*; *Merengue*; *All for You*; *Dance to My Mambo*; *Entrance to Paradise*; *Street Man*.

Personnel: Jorge Santana, guitar; Ron Smith, Forrest Buchtel, trumpet; Steve Sherard, trombone & vocals; Ron DeMasi, keyboards & vocals; Pablo Tellez, bass & vocals; Arcelio Garcia, Tony Smith, Francisco Aquabella, percussion & vocals.

Rating: ★★★½

*Evolution* is an ironic title. This is the third Malo record and it isn't at all as exciting as their first and second. The band has changed some. Santana, Tellez, Garcia, and Aquabella remain the fiery centre. But neither trumpeter Luis Gasca (on the first LP) nor wind player Hadley Caliman (on the second LP) play on

*Evolution*, and their ensemble and soloing isn't equaled. Tony Smith is a new drummer/vocalist and is at best okay.

For some reason, commerciality maybe, the music isn't as Latin as once. *Dance to My Mambo* is an all-out Mongo/Tito Puente-style burner, with hot trumpet by Forrest Buchtel. And *Merengue* is elementally Latin, with chanting and incendiary percussion. But otherwise, the music is almost more Latin-like than their super-Latin soul before. *Street Man* is virtually ordinary top-40 hard-rock. *Moving Away* is likewise, except the rhythm and a searing solo by Jorge Santana is enough to prove it the best of Malo. *I Don't Know* is romantic. *Entrance to Paradise* is colorful. *All for You* is simply dull.

*Evolution* is certainly testament that the music of Malo is appealing to more than the Latin soul/rock audience. They play more usual hard-rock with style and spirit. But they play their all-out Chicano street music better.

—bourne

## BARRY MILES

SCATBIRD—Mainstream MRL 382; *Scatbird*; *Suburban Shuffle*; *Life-Cycle*; *Arrows and Eagles*; *Skeleton Dance*; *Latina*; *First Love*.

Personnel: Miles, acoustic&electric piano, vocal; John Abercrombie, guitar; Frank Tusa, acoustic&electric bass; Terry Silverlight, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

There's a lot to like about this album: Miles plays the hell out of both of his pianos; Abercrombie, though he may be a bit close to John McLaughlin in style, is a powerful and creative guitarist; Tusa and Silverlight keep things on the burner.

A lot of the music's got Mahavishnu contours, largely because of Abercrombie. But there's also Miles' keyboard prowess. He sel-

# Lou Donaldson keeps his reed wet

Sophisticated Lou	BNLA 024-S	Mr. Shing-A-Ling	BST-84271
Cosmos	BST-84370	Alligator Boogaloo	BST-84263
Pretty Things	BST-84359	Good Gracious	BST-84125
Everything I Play	BST-84337	The Natural Soul	BST-84108
Hot Dog	BST-84318	Gravy Train	BST-84079
Say It Loud	BST-84299	Here 'Tis	BST-84066
Midnight Creeper	BST-84280	Blues Walk	BST-81593

Lou Donaldson on Blue Note 