

a meaningful and valid serious work."

Despite the pretension, there is a good bit to recommend the music.

First, there is the interactivity, the organic flow of the music among the members. Pianist Miles, bassist Booker, and drummer Perullo respond beautifully to the solos of the two horn men, particularly the pianist, who seems uncannily able to second-guess the soloist, with the result that the piano lines often complement those of the horns with a responsiveness that is surprising in its totality—doubly so if wholly improvised.

One suspects that the compositions themselves are responsible for much of this rapport, although it would be informative to know just how long this group had been together at the time of recording.

For all their freedom, the compositions are fairly highly and rigidly structured, demonstrating how important and helpful a strong sense of discipline and formal organization are to avant-garde jazz.

The performances cohere beautifully—even the 30-minute *Exposition and Development* hangs together, and as a result interest never lags. There is a strong, fluid motion to the lineaments of the piece itself, so that even during the course of a somewhat inconclusive solo (such as the latter part of Soloff's) the momentum is carried forward, and a good deal of excitement is generated by the high degree of interaction with the soloist by the rhythm section. (Even here one is unable to escape the tyranny of categories: this is

not simply a "rhythm" section, of course, but a trio of interacting musicians who do much more than make explicit the pulse of the composition.)

Miles' compositions and arrangements are vigorous, rich, full of potentialities, and rhythmically arresting (probably as a result of his former experience as a percussion prodigy). They make use of a great deal of contrast and contrary motion and must be interesting to play; certainly they engage the listener in their active interplay of light and dark, of tension and release. They seem to generate pretty strong playing most of the time; there's little shucking going on.

Kenyatta is the most consistently impressive solo voice. His alto is decidedly post-Ornette, post-Coltrane; full of shrieking, crying power, his playing is at the same time lyrical—but corrosively so. His lines are etched acid-sharp; they have bite to them. And he can sustain a long flurrying barrage at rapid tempo with perfect control and sense of direction. I dig his sound too.

Trumpeter Soloff struck me as a fine technician—excellent in the ensembles and in contrapuntal interplay—but failed to move me overmuch in his solo playing. He has power in abundance and perfect control over his horn but just never seemed to bring any sense of development or design to his solos. They seemed more a series of explosions that spluttered out than coherent, unified improvisations.

Miles is an interesting pianist—the

former prodigy has developed into a mature musician, and the play of his fertile imagination gives one a great deal of pleasure to follow.

What is particularly striking about his playing is the rich, counterrhythmic complexity with which he conceives his solo and supporting lines. His command of this area lends excitement to proceedings, coloring every aspect of the music—the arrangements, the solos of the horn men, and his own passionate improvisations.

He really pushes things—churns up the bottom, so to speak—and his playing gives the ensemble much of its impetus. His inventiveness is matched by his taste.

Venture records is at 53 E. 10th St., New York City. Orders can be made directly to that address. Incidentally, the playing time is more than 56 minutes.

I take back what I originally said—maybe it's not such a bad idea to send a jazzman to college. In Miles' case, it certainly paid off handsomely. —*Welding*

James Moody

MOODY AND THE BRASS FIGURES—Milestone MLP1005/MSP9005: *Smack-A-Mac; Bess, You Is My Woman Now; Cherokee; Love, Where Are You; The Moon Was Yellow; Au Privave; Ruby, My Dear; Simplicity and Beauty; Never Again.*

Personnel: Tracks 1, 2, 4, 6, 8: Moody, tenor saxophone; Snooky Young, Joe Newman, trumpets; Jimmy Owens, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jimmy Cleveland, trombone; Don Butterfield, tuba; Kenny Barron, piano; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Mel Lewis drums; Tom McIntosh, arranger-conductor. Remaining tracks: Moody, tenor saxophone, flute (track 3 only); same rhythm section.

Rating: ★★★★★

James Moody is an exemplary musi-



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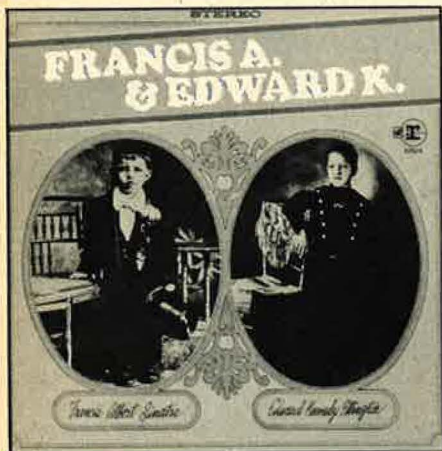
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cian—creative, dedicated, honest—whose versatility, ironically, may have contributed to deprive him of the degree of acclaim that is his due.

His mastery of three instruments—alto and tenor saxophones and flute—sometimes makes us forget just how damn good he is on each horn. This album could rectify that condition as far as the tenor is concerned, for it excellently showcases Moody on this (perhaps his favorite) axe.

I can think of few tenor players out here now that can touch Moody as he reveals himself here. And this is not a tour de force kind of album. Much better, it is—simply, but oh so rarely these days—a well-thought out, well-crafted, well-balanced album of straightforward, intelligent music-making.

McIntosh, whose scores call no undue attention to themselves but are rightfully designed to set up and set off the featured soloist, and Barron, whose absolutely right comping serves the same purpose, are old associates of Moody from his last own group. It tells that they dig and respect him, and aren't those the kind of people a man should record with? Cranshaw and Lewis acquit themselves beautifully as well, and the brass men handle their assignment with the superior skill that one would expect from these top-of-the-game cats.

Smack is a hip blues, by Moody and McIntosh—hip but not hippy-dip. It's all Moody, with some brass licks to spur him along. He has immediate presence; the mark of a real player.

Trumpets and gentle tuba lay out a carpet for Moody's *Bess*, and he makes her his own. A lovely tune (one of Gershwin's finest melodies), played with un-wavering taste and deep feeling. Moody's sound is virile yet pliant—a rare combination, reflected in the masculine tenderness of his emotional expression.

Cherokee is Moody's request for a flute feature. The reflective opening reminds us what a pretty tune this is, and then the tempo comes on briskly, Moody displaying mastery of horn and mastery of changes. Note how he stretches a single riff phrase across some 14 bars for maximum swing and tension, promptly and effectively released in a flurry of rapid triplets. The rhythm section cooks on this.

Love, Where Are You is one of three fine Moody ballads on this set. His full, warm, yet lean tone is admirably displayed on a melody of substance and grace. *Yellow*, a good standard, has an opening statement which is as direct and to the point as Dexter Gordon at his best, and moves on into superior improvising. Those who dug middle Coltrane will dig this—not that it is "like" that, in anything but affect.

Charlie Parker's *Au Privave* has McIntosh's most ambitious writing of the date, with some aptly incorporated "freedom" touches. The tempo is just right, and the composer would have approved of the interpretation.

Monk's *Ruby* has been given the royal tenor treatment by Coleman Hawkins and John Coltrane. Moody's version now takes its rightful place alongside these masterpieces, from the startling intro to the last

note. It is a prime example of how a great player can get *inside* a great tune.

Simplicity and Beauty is just that—a gentle waltz, with Moody flowing and blowing. Someone might profitably put good lyrics to this; Moody sure sings it. *Never Again*, also a Moody original, has a blues feeling and features legato passages that show Moody's ability to sustain long notes in magisterial fashion.

A word for Kenny Barron: aside from his perfect comping, he has a few solo spots (*Moon; Ruby; Privave*) that are indicative of his rare talent—a talent that yet has to be appropriately displayed on a record date of his own. His taste and sinewy delicacy remind of Tommy Flanagan, and in my book, that's something.

The only other soloist is Owens, who takes two exquisite fluegelhorn choruses on *Privave*.

Bob Cranshaw has some remarkable moments, notably behind Barron on *Ruby*, and is a pip in the section. Mel Lewis shows once again how well he understands the drummer's role in making music, and how well he can translate that understanding into action.

James Moody and his companions tell a story on every track in this rewarding album of warm, mature, communicative jazz music.

—Morgenstern

Don Scaletta

SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE TRIDENT
—Verve 5027: *Summer Samba; People Will Say We're in Love; Sweet Betsy from Pike; Favela; My Little Houseboat; Love for Sale; Time Weary Rock; Chessy Cat.*
Personnel: Scaletta, piano; Mel Nowell, bass; Nikki Lamkin, drums.

Rating: ★★½

I have not heard from Scaletta since I reviewed one of his albums more than two years ago. Since then, he seems to have changed in his musical thinking from the Vince Guaraldi bag to a Bill Evans approach. It still means that an identifiable "Scaletta sound" has not yet emerged, but at the same time, it makes for extremely enjoyable listening.

The more cerebral direction Scaletta has taken suits his approach. With Nowell furnishing implied time, *Sweet Betsy* becomes the album's showcase for the pianist's advanced harmonic conception, as well as his fluidity of melodic line. The same track boasts a busy, but never obtrusive variation on 3/4 by drummer Lamkin.

Bossa novas come in for highly original treatment—neither *Summer* nor *Favela* depends on anyone else's Latin outlook. Both are thoughtfully reharmonized, and both are given brisk rhythmic workouts, as opposed to the Brazilian penchant for introspective sambas.

Time Weary Rock (the last word is used only in the geological sense) is a moody, changeable thing, and Lamkin and Nowell help paint a portrait with effective cymbal-tapping and bowing. *Love for Sale* allows for maximum stretching out, with fine solos by Scaletta and Nowell, but the tambourine-tinged background tends to wear after 8½ minutes.

Heavy-handed drumming robs *Chessy* of any subtlety. (Scaletta doesn't help either; his interpolation of *Playmate* is too long—in order to be effective, a quote