

However, this curious ability to get deep into a song at a time when you feel drained is shared by most singers I know, myself included. It's a throwback to jam session days, I guess. You're really tired, but you'd like to sing something special—a ballad, usually—now that the club has become quiet, and most of the customers have gone. Anyway, you just sing, and maybe for the first time that night you can really hear yourself. So you "stretch out," as they say.

That's what Nina did on *My Man's Gone Now*, and this tune is all hers.

There's more to the album, of course: good, straight, down-to-earth blues singing in the finest tradition, and heartily recommended.

To Nina's fans it will be a delight; to her detractors, a revelation; and to those who may have inadvertently neglected her of late, a refreshing rediscovery.—Sloane

Ira Sullivan

HORIZONS—Atlantic 1476: *E Flat Tuba G; Norwegian Wood; Everything Happens to Me; Adah; Horizons; Oh Gee!; Niniveh.*

Personnel: Sullivan, trumpeter, fluegelhorn, tenor and soprano saxophones; Lon Norman, trombone; Dolphe Castellano, piano, electronic harpsichord; William Fry, bass; Jose Cigno, drums, timpani.

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Sullivan is one of those legendary players with a big underground reputation who surfaces occasionally but never has stayed in sight long enough to get the recognition he deserves.

And Sullivan deserves to be widely known—no question about it, even though this album, his first in many years, may be a bit disappointing if you know what he can do. Perhaps this is because he tries a little too hard to show that he is not a period player: he made his mark playing "bop" and now he wants to prove that he is capable of playing "free" also.

He does prove his point, but spends a little too much of the record doing it. He plays soprano on *Wood, Niniveh, and Adah*, and the similarly modal climate of all three tracks robs the album of some of its potential variety.

His soprano is interesting, however, and though the mold is Coltrane, the sound is his own. It is smooth, almost silken, with an oboe-like quality, and he has mastered the instrument's intonation problems. Voiced with baritone horn and electronic harpsichord on *Wood*, it produces a haunting, unique ensemble sound. On the other two tracks, the soprano is the only horn.

The most successful of the deliberately "contemporary" tracks is *E Flat*, on which the leader plays trumpet and tenor. The line (his own) is interesting, and his solo trumpet has some of the lively freedom of Don Cherry (and much better command of the horn). His tenor is vigorously "outside," too.

In contrast, he plays these two instruments with warm melodic grace and easy swing on *Everything*, throwing in some pretty fluegelhorn for a few good measures. The first chorus, melodic exposition with nice embellishments, played out of tempo and showing fine trumpet chops, is a telling indication of Sullivan's stature. The half-

chorus of relaxed, velvety tenor is lovely, too.

It's all tenor on *Horizons*, a good up-tempo line by pianist Castellano. Sullivan begins a bit like current Getz, but soon has his own thing going. His mind is as fleet as his fingers, and he can make the horn do his bidding.

Oh Gee, which shows signs of studio editing, is a happy, straight-ahead track, everybody having a relaxed good time. Sullivan's tenor boots, and Norman takes a good trombone solo, with plunger. (The sidemen are from Sullivan's regular Miami group, and they are good players all—Norman and Castellano are capable soloists, and the rhythm section is together, "in" and "out.")

Now that Sullivan has shown that he isn't dated, let's hope he'll let his hair down and relax on the next outing. He can play all his horns, he's a complete musician, and he has a story to tell. Though his group is fine, perhaps he could use that extra added something that comes from the company of peers (some of his best work on records was done with Red Rodney).

In the past, Sullivan has been a "one record" man; i.e., he hasn't had the chance to follow up. Atlantic, having had the good judgement to bring this fine musician back out where he belongs, will surely have the good sense to record him again, with the pressure of being "rediscovered" off.

—Morgenstern



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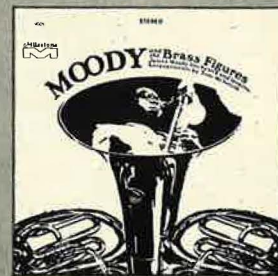
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