

# record REVIEWS

## SPOTLIGHT REVIEW

### DUKE ELLINGTON

LATIN AMERICAN SUITE—Fantasy 8419—*Ocupaca; Chico Cuadrado; Eque; Tina; The Sleeping Lady and the Giant Who Watches Over Her; Latin American Sunshine; Brasilliance.*

Personnel: Willie Cook, Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, trumpets; Chuck Connors, Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper; Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Ellington, piano; Jeff Castleman, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. (Recorded Nov. 5, 1968.) On track 4: Ellington, Victor Gaskin, Paul Kondziola, basses, Jones only; recorded Jan. 7, 1970.

Rating: ★★★★★

Of the recent—and most welcome—trio of new Ellington releases, this is the one. His greatest work since *Far East Suite*, it is destined to take a place among his masterpieces.

It is our good fortune that Ellington has the foresight (and means) to record new works when he feels they are ready. It took four years for this suite to find its way to public release, but it was *there*, produced, as the liner credit reads, "by Mr. Ellington." Perhaps because it was produced by its creator and not some dial-twisting executive, the music sounds absolutely right and positively gorgeous. The most opulent sound in big band annals comes through with all its warmth, natural balance and ambience intact.

The Ellington sound alone is often enough to seduce the ear. Today, we have the most proficient and clever of musicians and engineers, but none have managed to duplicate this sound—or rather, fountain of sounds. Perhaps because it is a living sound, a sound produced by an organism, the organism Ellington has called his instrument.

It is an instrument which finds itself in constant flux, even though it changes less rapidly than its surviving counterparts. Here, in 1968, it was in peak condition—the reeds still fabulously attuned to each other (no small credit to new man Harold Ashby), the brasses solid in the trombone department and holding up in the trumpets, Willie Cook's sensitive phrasing making itself felt. The rhythm section always takes care of business. Had Ellington had to wait until some record company fancied it, *Latin American Suite* might never have been recorded, or recorded without the special natural resources with which in mind it was created.

We might not, then, have heard Johnny Hodges enhance this music in his incomparable way. Or the microphones might not have encountered Paul Gonsalves in such superb form as he demonstrates here, or found the piano player in such a playing mood. Ellington knows how to seize the day, thankfully.

One could say much about this wonderful music, about its design and execution, its intent and content, its colors and textures. But these things will surely be said, and said well, by those who now and in future years will study and elucidate the music of the masters of the 20th Century.

For now, let us just say: Listen! Listen and

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

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hear the sounds of this great musical organism, and of the individual voices, the very special voices, of which it is made up. Listen to some really contemporary music—music by which our children's children will judge our age and perhaps not find it entirely wanting in the creation of lasting beauty. Listen and learn to love.

—morgenstern



### CANNONBALL ADDERLY PRESENTS

SOUL OF THE BIBLE—Capitol SAAB 11120: *In The Beginning; Yield; Obeah; Fun In The Church; The Eternal Walk; Krukma; Gone; Behold; Psalm 24; Make Your Own Temple; Taj; Psalm 54; Amani; Space Spiritual.*

Personnel: Nat Adderly, cornet; Cannonball Adderly, alto, soprano saxes; George Duke, Nat Adderly Jr., piano, electric piano; Walter Booker, bass; Francisco Centeno, electric piano; Walter Booker, bass; Francisco Centeno, electric bass; Roy McCurdy, drums; Airtio Moreira, Mayuto, Octavio and King Errison, percussion; Rick Holmes, narrator; Fleming Williams, Arthur Charma, Olga James, Stephanie Spruill, voices.

Rating: ★★★★★

In the beginning was the word. And ever since, the word was revealed, various composers have been attempting to set it to music all the way from the mystic monks whose chants were set down by St. Gregory to Weber and Rice.

So why shouldn't Cannonball and Nat Adderly, and Nat Jr., David Axelrod, George Duke, Walter Booker, Francisco Centeno and Chick Corea have their fling at it? They work both with words and without, and sometimes it works better without, because often words only serve to box composer, listener and performer into existing structures and misconceptions. Words could not add to Cannon's exuberant *Obeah*, yet they are necessary for the *Fun In The Church* which follows. Cannon switches to soprano for *The Eternal Walk*, again establishing his firm command of the horn. Not quite so lovely is the electric piano on the same piece, not specified by Duke or Nat Jr.; the instrument produces more distortion than music. This makes Duke's acoustic piano the more welcome on *Krukma*.

Booker's background for *Psalm 24* is a lovely solo for bowed bass with acoustic piano accompaniment. It is clearly one of the highlights of the album, and so is the setting for *Psalm 54* jointly credited to Cannon and Chick Corea. The most impressive segment, however, is *Amani*, featuring the vocalese of composer Olga James.

That's the gospel according to the Adderleys. Some people will feel that it isn't "religious" enough or "theologically unsound" but such folks probably wouldn't dig the music anyway. It's a nice touch that Nat Jr. and his classmate at the High School of Music and

Art, Francisco Centeno, are on the recording. Perhaps it could be called nepotism; maybe it's just a natural desire for an elite dynasty.

### FREDDIE HUBBARD

SKY DIVE—CTI 6018: *Povo; In A Mist; Godfather; Sky Dive.*

Personnel: Hubbard, trumpet; Marvin S. Alan Rubin, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Garnett Wayne Andre, Paul Falise, trombones; Price, tuba; Hubbert Laws, flutes; Phil E. George Marge, Wally Kane, Romeo P. flutes, reeds; Keith Jarrett, acoustic & electric piano; George Benson, guitar; Ron Carter, Billy Cobham, drums; Airtio, Ray Barrett, cussion; Don Sebesky, arranger, conductor.

Rating: ★★★★★

*In a Mist* is a masterpiece, featuring bard's glowing horn in a woodwindy, beautifully crafted by Sebesky. Bix Bebe's 1927 composition (for piano and trumpet) retains its haunting essence, and love for whole-tone scales gives it a "contemporary" flavor. It is the most challenging material for Hubbard on this set (I doubt if other pieces, *Godfather* in particular, survive for 45 years) and he rises to it; his rubato statements at beginning and end are reason enough to hear this album.

The rest isn't bad at all, but more conventional. There is fine Hubbard thro (he has been a remarkably consistent former on records, and his command of instrument is always evident). The tempo on *Sky Dive* promotes swing; ham's drums are wonderfully propulsive. Barretto, among the greatest of Latin percussionists, contributes much. But it nor the somewhat more tense *Prov* thematic material of great consequence.

Benson, a guitarist whose great somehow has seemed to elude success, fine spot on the title track. Keith Jarrett, flowing, attractively voiced electric piano has its moments of space, and Law surfaces here and there, always telling musically.

But this is Hubbard's outing first arranger Sebesky's, and of course producer Creed Taylor's. It could be argued that detailed and careful production CTI has on its artists is sometimes overwhelming much of a good thing. Hubbard, however, very strong, and his thing comes through. *In A Mist*, it's even enhanced. —morgenstern

### HAMPTON HAWES

I'M ALL SMILES—Contemporary S7631: *Smiles; Manha de Carneval; Spring Is Here; Shadow Of Your Smile; Searchin'.*

Personnel: Hawes, piano; Red Mitchell, Donald Bailey, drums.

Rating: ★★★★★

For Hawes, 1970 seems to have watershed year. It was then he recorded *In The Sky* (Vault 9010), his first recording indicating a yearning to be free of what he saw as the restrictions of song form and the blues. It's remarkable that since then he has gone considerably further out, assisted by synthesizer