

vocalists he supports, and the cuts with Billie Holiday, Gladys Palmer and Anita O'Day are gems, but even Roy couldn't salvage dead weight like Howard Dulany and Johnny Desmond.

No dead weight on **George Winston's** solo piano album, *Winter Into Spring* (Windham Hill). Winston has a sure and delicate touch, reminiscent of (yes) Keith Jarrett or a more playful Steve Kuhn, though he actually approaches the keyboard more like a guitarist (John Fahey or Egberto Gismonti, say) than like a pianist, pedaling and spacing the way a guitarist might in an open tuning or with a dropped E string.

The Tango Project (Nonesuch) is a jaunty reworking of classic Argentine tangos by **William Schimmel** (accordion), **Michael Sahl** (piano) and **Stan Kurtis** (violin). It's a loving reconstruction of the tango that veers closer to the conservatory than to the dance hall, but it's still heartbreakingly beautiful and evocative, the perfect music of lost love, regret and late summer.

Baltazar Benitez, a guitarist from Uruguay whose *Latin American Music For Classic Guitar* (Nonesuch) remains one of my favorite albums, has a new record out of arrangements of *Bach/Scarlatti* (Nonesuch). Benitez has the skill and dexterity of the best classical players, but he also has a sense of swing and verve that makes his records jump; they fit perfectly next to the best work of Baden Powell, Bola Sete and Julian Bream.

Last year Rounder Records scored with the year's best blues album, Johnny Copeland's *Copeland Special* by the then-unknown Texas bluesman, and they look ready to do the same this year with **Ted Hawkins's** *Watch Your Step*, a terrific debut by a brilliant vocalist and guitarist from Mississippi who is currently serving time in prison. Hawkins has an open, heartbreaking voice reminiscent of Sam Cooke and, occasionally, Joe Tex and has a deceptively simple rolling guitar style. The songs are as pure and as troubling as any in the language, from the pathos of "The Lost Ones" to the tender "Sorry You're Sick." While a number of cuts feature Hawkins backed by a good-natured Stax/Volt style section, most of the album is just Hawkins accompanying himself on guitar...and just by himself he shines. If he gets out of prison (which he is scheduled to this fall) and can stay out of prison, he can be a star.

If you've been hoping that Soft Cell or Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark would stop singing and get into fusion, then **Paul Woznicki's** *Woz* (Uterior) might be just the record for you. If you never thought about it, it might not be.

Claus Ogerman, the arranger responsible for turning many of Antonio Carlos Jobim's albums to soup, and ace saxo-

phonist **Michael Brecker** team up for *Cityscape* (Warner Bros.). Ogerman's compositions and arrangements are less syrupy than usual; he comes in with some surprisingly lovely string charts, and Brecker's tone and phrasing are impeccable throughout, but the album still comes off as hip elevator music. Next stop: Main floor—men's shirts, raincoats and quiche. ☐

Sonny Stitt 1924-1982

Too many deaths and now his. He was one of the most brilliant instrumentalists in jazz, and although he never developed as distinctive a stylistic signature as, say, Sonny Rollins or Dexter Gordon, on a good night he could surpass either


of them in the sheer flow and abundance of his ideas, and the good nights were many. His voice on alto was Birdlike, his tenor fundamentally Lestorian, and he was his own. The last time I saw him he was soaring past a dreadful house rhythm section for chorus after chorus and then, after his solos, boozed and embittered, he hovered over the pianist, insulting him audibly every thirty-two bars. Stitt eventually swung his basilisk glare in the direction of his audience, face pitted and hair gone grey, I work places like this for people like you with this kind of rhythm and they still call me "Sonny." Edward Stitt. Not even sixty. It was cancer. Jazz has lost one of its most expert, ignored, and inspired voices. — Rafi Zabor

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