

JAZZ

S H O R T T A K E S

Jazz At The Philharmonic (Verve). Did crew-cut college boys really used to holler "Go, man, go!" at jazz concerts in the 1950s? They sure did and you can hear them loud and clear on the ten budget-priced volumes of *JATP* concert performances from 1947-57, just reissued by PolyGram Classics. The obvious lure of the *JATP* concerts was that they promised civilians the hot licks musicians supposedly reserved for one another at the fabled after-hours cutting contests. What a fallacy! When paying customers are present, musicians go for the crowd. In retrospect then, like the Dixieland return to basics a decade earlier, *JATP*'s get-hot-fast exhibitionism represented little more than another hasty escape route from the increasing intellectualism of modern jazz. The story of *JATP*, as told on these ten records, is largely a story of wasted opportunities: Charlie Parker and Lester Young are together onstage on *Bird And Pres At Carnegie Hall '49*, for example, but all the pandemonium going on around them provides a chance to interact. Still, evidence suggests that some music of enduring merit was presented by *JATP* in the solo sets featuring one artist, if not in the jams. *The Ella Fitzgerald Set*, consisting entirely of previously unissued material, is a pleasure from start to finish; and *The Coleman Hawkins Set*, which also boasts its share of new material, is even better, capturing the great tenor saxophonist at two of his creative peaks. *Blues In Chicago 1955* is the most satisfying of the jam sessions, with Dizzy Gillespie and Roy Eldridge vying for the stratosphere on a blues, Gillespie and Young brushing lightly on "The Modern Set," and Young offering a lovely "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" on the ballad medley. It ought to be pointed out that whatever its shortcomings, *JATP* rescued from undeserved obscurity such heroes of the late swing era as Charlie Shavers, Bill Harris, Benny Carter, Willie Smith, Ben Webster and Flip Phillips, all of whom have their innings in this series. But take it from me, listening to all ten records consecutively can be a numbing experience. The titles I've not already mentioned are *The Drum Battle*, *The Rarest Concerts*, *Norgran Blues 1950*, *The Trumpet Battle*

1952, *One O'Clock Jump* 1953 and *The Challenges*.

Original Jazz Classics: If you don't already own *Monk's Music*, **Miles Davis' Collector's Items**, **John Coltrane's Settin' The Pace**, **Bill Evans' Portrait In Jazz**, **Art Blakey's Ugetsu**, **Mal Waldron's The Quest** and **Oliver Nelson's Screamin' The Blues** (these last two with blistering Eric Dolphy) on twofers, the opportunity to purchase facsimile editions of the original covers should be all the incentive you need. Not all the entries in the latest release of Prestige and Riverside *OJCs* (from Fantasy) are "classic," but it's good to have most of them back in circulation, particularly *When Farmer Met Gryce* and *The Rat Race Blues*, two dates spotlighting the imaginative playing and writing of altoist **Gigi Gryce**, who faded from view in the mid-60s, and died last year without ever receiving his just due. The other reactivated titles are *Red Garland's Piano*, *Jackie McLean & Co., Back Country Suite (Mose Allison)*, *On The Sunny Side (Paul Quinichette)*, *New Trombone (Curtis Fuller)*, *The Cats (John Coltrane/Tommy Flanagan/Kenny Burrell)*, *Bill Harris And Friends* (with magnificent Ben Webster), *That's Him (Abbey Lincoln)*, with Sonny Rollins and Kenny Dorham), *Last Chorus (Ernie Henry)* and *Chet (Baker)*, that is, who benefits from some spare but beautiful accompaniment from the young Bill Evans).

Dizzy Gillespie — *One Night In Washington* (Elektra/Musician). More manna from the Bill Potts/Jack Towers production/engineering team that has already delivered similar bounty from Charlie Parker and Lester Young, this is especially valuable for its Afro-Cuban material, which seems even more provocative (and pertinent) now than it must have in 1955. Dizzy is never bolder nor more inspired than when he stands in front of a big band, and the superb D.C. orchestra he fronts here is equal to every challenge he hurls its way.

Thelonious Monk — *Evidence* (Milestone); *Tokyo Concerts* (Columbia). Neither of these posthumous releases tells us much of anything about Monk we don't already know, but how good it is to

hear them! And how consistent a performer he was, eccentricities and all! The Milestone combines the unused quartet portion of the Riverside *Monk Orchestra At Town Hall* with outtakes from *Live At The Blackhawk*; the Columbia is the first domestic issue of a double long available from Japan, with an especially rousing version of "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You."

Kenny Burrell — *Bluesin' Around* (Columbia). Tasty sessions from '61 and '62, and I have no idea why they weren't issued sooner. In addition to the guitarist's usual blues-based urbanity, there are dapper touches by Hank Jones and whistling solos by the irrepressible Illinois Jacquet.

Not everything new this month is old, to wit:

Johnny Griffin — *Call It Whatchawanna* (Milestone); **Jimmy Smith** — *Keep On Comin'* (Elektra/Musician). The centerpiece of the Griffin LP is a rapturous and brilliantly sustained eleven-plus-minute "Lover Man" and the rest is very nearly as good. Griffin displays as fertile a harmonic imagination as exists in jazz, and a rhythmic zeal that is contagious. And the rhythm section of Mulgrew Miller, piano; Curtis Lundy, bass; and Kenny Washington, drums, is as tuneful and alert behind the tenor saxophonist as it was behind singer Betty Carter. Griffin and his winking blues "Call It Whatchawanna" combine with guitarist Kenny Burrell to add a touch of class to Smith's live date, as unadorned and funky a record as the organist has made in years.

Freddie Hubbard — *Sweet Return* (Atlantic); **Woody Shaw** — *Night Music* (Elektra/Musician). If all of Hubbard's records were as righteous and swinging as his new one (with Lew Tabackin, Joanne Brackeen, Eddie Gomez and Roy Haynes—fabulous group), we critics would leave him be, and I bet he'd still make a decent living. Shaw puts out only good records, but *Night Music*, drawn from the same live performance that yielded the excellent *Master Of The Art*, lacks the pacing and variety that might have made it one of the better ones.

Dave McKenna — *A Celebration Of Hoagy Carmichael* (Concord Jazz). The most sophisticated of latter-day stride pianists and the most homespun of vintage American tunesmiths make an inspired match, especially on a flapping "Riverboat Shuffle" and a fragrant "Star-dust." Highly recommended.

Big Sky Mudflaps — *Sensible Shoes* (Flying Fish). The problem with revivalism generally is that the demons that pursue innovators seldom bother with revivalists. But the good time these country swing (more like country pop) revivalists promise, they deliver, and at any rate, it's good to hear Judy Roderick again.