

J.J. JOHNSON • RED RODNEY • TANIA MARIA

JAZZ MEETS HIP HOP—WHAT'S THE RAP?

# JazzTimes

America's Jazz Magazine

December 1993 Vol 23 No. 10

## BÉLA'S BeBOP BREAK DOWN



Béla Fleck &  
The Flecktones

U.S. \$2.95 CANADA \$3.95



42 SOUND GIFT IDEAS





## 8TH ANNUAL DU MAURIER LTD. INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL Vancouver, Canada

If the mission of a jazz festival is to build an enthusiastic, committed audience for adventurous music, the International Jazz Festival Vancouver is enormously successful. The Festival's adroit programmers,

the Coastal Jazz And Blues Society, know the fine art of integrating cutting edge artists from around the world with such well loved festival circuit fixtures as Sonny Rollins and Betty Carter, and excel at showcasing the vigorous Vancouver scene to its best advantage.

This year's festival had several fascinating currents. The flamekeepers of the Ellington-Monk piano tradition were well-represented by Abdullah Ibrahim, Randy Weston, and Mulgrew Miller. Prominent among the numerous international iconoclasts were the riotous Dutch drummer Han Bennink (who, in three days, performed three Clusone Trio concerts with reedist Michael Moore and cellist Ernst Reijseger, and had separate face-offs with pianists Myra Melford and Vancouver-based Paul Plimley), the seemingly possessed Australian alto legend Bernie McGann, and British vocalist Phil Minton, who sang (an approximate term for his inventory of gasps, grunts, and screeches) with German pianist Georg Grawe's GrubenKlang Orchestra. There was also a healthy representation of the Cornerstore Syndicate-Knitting Factory axis by, among others, Joint Venture, 4 Horns And What?, Ned Rothenberg's Double Band, and the Thomas Chapin Trio.

There was also a trio of concerts built around the force that is Steve Lacy. His moving song cycle *Vespers* was presented in the hushed calm of St. Andrew's-Wesley Church. For this hour-plus work, Lacy's long-standing sextet was augmented by Ricky Ford's Gonsalves-tinged tenor and Tom

Varner's ringing French horn. The soprano saxophonist also performed striking duets with legendary L.A. pianist Horace Tapscott at the Western Front; the pianist's animated post-Monkian compositions were tailor-made for Lacy's sinewy lyricism. And while he didn't perform at Steve Potts' trio gig with fellow Sextet members J.J. Avenel and John Betsch at the Pitt Gallery, it was impossible to listen to their fluid interaction without refer-



Thomas Chapin photo by Laurence M. Svirchev

encing their roles within the sextet.

While the festival presented some of Canada's more internationally known mainstream musicians, ranging from P.J. Perry, the bop-steeped Edmonton altoist, to Lorraine Desmarais, the Evanish Montreal pianist, it was the impressive pool of off-center Vancouver-based musicians, regrouping on a daily, occasionally hourly basis, into consistently distinctive ensembles, that provided the most rewarding domestic content. The newly relocated Glass Slipper was the

late-night launching pad for such prime exponents of the Vancouver scene as the gregarious N.O.W. Orchestra, guitarist Tony Wilson's scrappy sextet with drum phenom Dylan van der Schyff, the extended folk forms of Tribal Dynamics, one of several bands featuring reedist Francois Houle, and a Plimley-led session including tenorist Coat Cook and bassist Lisle Ellis, who now resides in San Francisco.

So, how good are these guys? Plimley ran with Bennink, Houle was hot with Melford's quintet, and Ellis was acutely attuned to Joe McPhee's unique voice in a trio rounded out by drummer Donald Robinson. That says a lot about what's been nurtured in Vancouver.—Bill Shoemaker

## CLASSIC JAZZ FESTIVAL

Los Angeles, CA

How do you review an event involving 300 musicians, whose names alone take up 600 words? It's not easy. The Tenth Annual Classic Jazz Festival, staged by producer Chuck Conklin over the Labor Day Weekend at two hotels near the Los Angeles Airport, was no doubt the biggest yet, attracting 4,000 to 5,000 fans daily.

Originally a strictly traditionalist affair, it has moved slightly toward the center through the inclusion of, for example, Ken Peplowski, Howard Alden, the fantastic bassist John Leitham and, most remarkably, Ann Patterson's Maiden Voyage. The 15-piece all-female orchestra delivered two knockout sets with superb solos by trumpeter Stacy Rowles, Betty O'Hara (on valve trombone, various trumpets and double bell euphonium), Patterson herself on saxes and Kathy Rubbico on piano.

Nevertheless, the heaviest accent was on older musicians and styles. There was a partial reunion of The World's Greatest Jazz Band, with Yank Lawson, 82, and Bob Haggart, 79, and a group of compatible companions. Milt