

# Vancouver band vehicle for founder's works

New Orchestra Workshop  
The Future Is N.O.W.  
(9 Winds NW CD 0131)

In this Vancouver collective which he helped to form, pianist Paul Plimley leads one of five ensembles functioning under the N.O.W. umbrella. The nine members of the current workshop are all heard in the five groups showcased here, shifting roles as leaders, sidemen and composers. Apart from Plimley, the most recognizable name to audiences in eastern Canada will probably be that of drummer Claude Ranger, a Montrealer who moved west in the mid-'80s after a stint in Toronto. He's a forceful presence wherever he appears.

These pieces have been drawn from both concert and studio dates in the Vancouver-Seattle area and they recall the ground-breaking work of more famous new music collectives and leaders such as Chicago's AACM and Ornette Coleman (*Harmolodic Highlander*). Guitarist Ron Samworth, drummer Gregg Simpson and saxophonists Bruce Freidman and Coat Cooke also make strong impressions.

If you hear of recordings by the groups Chief Feature, Lunar Adventures, Turnaround and Unity, these are the musicians involved. They testify to a determined and inspired new music core in the Canadian west.

Lunar Adventures  
Alive In Seattle  
(9 Winds NW CD 0132)

This quartet is now five years old,



## JAZZ

Lois  
Moody

although its members have worked together in various contexts and combinations since the mid-'70s. They are saxophonist Coat Cooke, guitarist Ron Samworth, bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Gregg Simpson. They are full of surprises, driving in a funky groove at one moment, capturing an infectious Caribbean pulse the next, then exploring several corners of the avant garde in collective improvisations.

It's a dynamic, colorful performance developed on original themes by Cooke and Simpson. Joy, humor and the enthusiasm of discovery run through this entire program of what the brief notes call "electric acoustic tribal sounds in the tradition of the 21st century."

Paul Plimley/Lisle Ellis -  
Both Sides Of the Same Mirror  
(9 Winds NW CD 0135)

Plimley, who plays piano and marimba, and bassist Ellis are best known to new music audiences in Canada, but have reached the consciousness of at least part of the mainstream audience through their appearances at jazz festivals across the country. Plimley was one of the

guests in the solo piano series at Ottawa's annual festival in '86 and Ellis, along with Paul Cram — another of the current generation of avant gardists — appeared here in a Gallery 101 presentation in late October this year.

These musicians have collaborated in various ventures and formats since the '70s and both were founding members of Vancouver's New Orchestra Workshop in '77. Even though Ellis has lived away from his home city for most of the past decade, he and Plimley work together here as if they were accustomed to testing each other's ideas every day.

The only piece not conceived by the duo is *Third Stone From the Sun*, a Jimi Hendrix tune transformed into a fresh and lyrical tribute. Each piece effectively reveals the inspiration which these performers bring to the music. This recording for a company dedicated to the cause of new creative music should widen their audience internationally.

Since items on the 9 Winds label are often difficult to find in Canadian record stores — even when Canadian artists are featured — you might consider writing them directly at P.O. Box 10082, Beverly Hills, CA. 90213.

Hugh Fraser  
VEJI Now  
(Unity 114)

The Vancouver Ensemble of Jazz Improvisation (VEJI) is the brainchild of pianist/trombonist/composer Fraser,

an energetic young musician quickly building an international reputation. With his 19-piece big band, he has the vehicle needed for his expanding interests as a composer.

This recording is principally given over to two of his extended works — the five-part *Mass In C Minor for Jazz Orchestra* and the three-movement *Freedom Suite*. Three individual pieces complete the collection, of which *Kilometers* was written and arranged by Ron Thompson. The rest are Fraser creations.

With him from the earliest days of VEJI and his smaller combo are saxophonists Campbell Ryga, Pat Caird and Perry White, trumpeters Bill White and John Korsrud, trombonist Dennis Eason and bassist Chris Nelson. This newest edition of VEJI benefits from such experienced players as alto saxman P.J. Perry, trumpeter/violinist Blaine Dunaway and drummer Blaine Wikjord. Just about everybody gets to solo at some point, so there's no shortage of individualism to color the music.

This marks 10 years of activity for VEJI which has come a long way to reach the point of this ambitious music.

## Free concert

The Carleton University Jazz Ensemble performs in concert this Sunday at 8 pm in the Alumni Theatre of Southam Hall. Laurie Nelson will be guest vocalist, singing some of the new pieces written by the ensemble's director, Bill Jupp. Admission is free.

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