

Record Reviews



RAY ANDERSON

OLD BOTTLES, NEW WINE

(1) *Love Me Or Leave Me; Bohemia After Dark; La Rosita; Owl; In A Mellow Tone; Laird Baird*; (2) *Wine* (39.21)

(1) Ray Anderson (tb); Kenny Barron (p); Cecil McBee (b); Danny Richmond (d); NYC, 14 or 15 June 1985. (2) same except Anderson (tb, v).

Enja ENJ 2143 2

I hadn't heard anything of Ray Anderson for several years but an internet search uncovered a YouTube clip of him performing in Amsterdam last year and details of a 2007 recording in Copenhagen (with Ibrahim Electric on Stunt Records). I'm glad he's still in action and I'd certainly travel to see him if he comes to the UK but I doubt that he'll ever record anything that I'll enjoy more than this CD. The combination of a variety of

familiar material with his very adventurous approach is a winner.

Richmond is ideal in this situation and Mingus would surely have made good use of Anderson if he'd had the chance. Barron too has the necessary musical strength of character not to be overwhelmed by Anderson's power. The trombonist appears to draw from the entire jazz tradition with particular reference to the exuberance of the young Higginbotham and the slippery virtuosity of Jimmy Knepper. His use of plunger mute on two tracks is deeply expressive and his playful tonal resourcefulness can recall Vic Dickenson. Technical virtuosity is casually displayed but his accurate rendition of Parker's *Laird Baird* reminds us that he could have played just like J.J. Johnson if he'd wanted to.

One more name must be mentioned. I don't know if Anderson ever heard Snub Mosley though Mosley's 1978 London recordings and even his 1933 sides with Trent reveal some similarities of approach. But as a singer Anderson was (and maybe still is) way ahead of Dickenson and Mosley and his delivery of the lyrics on the final track shows confidence, character and aplomb before he explodes into a wild conclusion.

Graham Colomé

LOUIS BELLSON QUINTET GREETINGS

(1) *Charlie's Blues; I'll Remember April; Buffalo Joe; Stompin' At The Savoy; Love For Sale; The Man I Love; Basically Speaking; Concerto For Drums*; (2) *Basie; Charlie-O; All Right Jump It Man; Greetings* (64.16)

(1) Charlie Shavers (t); Zoot Sims (ts); Don Abney (p); George Duvivier (b); Louis Bellson (d). NYC, 21 June 1954.

(2) Charlie Shavers (t); Seldon Powell (ts); Lou Stein (p); Wendell

Marshall (b); Louis Bellson (d). NYC, 2 February 1955.

Fresh Sound Records FSR-CD 555

This is another fine reissue from Fresh Sound featuring the complete 'Concerto For Drums' album together with four titles from 'The Hawk Talks' LP. The irrepressible Charlie Shavers is common to both dates and it is always rewarding to hear him in a small group context where he is allowed to stretch out. The riff-like *Charlie's Blues* and *Buffalo Joe* (an *I Got Rhythm* contrafact) are two of his originals written for the 1954 session which would have worked equally well for the John Kirby sextet, an early showcase for his extravagant talents as soloist and arranger. They are examples of how even the most basic harmonic sequences can appear fresh and inventive with really creative jazz musicians.

Zoot Sims adds his light, dancing lines on tenor to create a potent brew of infectious swing throughout the first eight titles – most notably on a hard-driving *Love For Sale* which he has all to himself from bar one. The elegant Don Abney who was beginning a three-year engagement as Ella Fitzgerald's accompanist contributes some Teddy-Wilson-like moments especially on a moving *Man I Love*. (Another good example of his work from the period can be found with the Oscar Pettiford All-Stars, along with Gigi Gryce, Donald Byrd, Jerome Richardson and Bob Brookmeyer – Bethlehem CD 11043).

It goes without saying that the leader Louis Bellson gives sympathetic support throughout on both brushes and sticks. He has his own moment in the solo spotlight on *Concerto For Drums* which is an extended feature combining power and subtlety.

Gordon Jack

BOB BROOKMEYER

TRADITIONALISM REVISITED

Louisiana; Santa Claus Blues; Truckin'; Some Sweet Day; Sweet Like This; Ja Da; Don't Be That Way; Honeysuckle Rose; Brook's Blues; Slow Freight; The Sheik Of Araby; Pony Express; Down Home (71.57)

Bob Brookmeyer (t, p); Jimmy Giuffre (cl, ts, bs); Jim Hall (g); Joe Banjamin (b); Ralph Pena (b); Dave Bailey (d). July 1957.

Essential Jazz Albums EJA 048

How nice to hear Bob Brookmeyer on the Beeb (3) earlier this year, shortly after his 80th birthday, discussing his extraordinary career in jazz music: sharp, witty and getting straight to the point he picked through his development from being a slightly nervous, accommodating young man to the prickly composer who won't answer his door or pick up the phone for weeks on end if he doesn't feel like it. Flitting through his back catalogue on the show they 'saved the best until last' – 'Traditionalism Revisited', a distillation of the superficially laid back music that embodied West Coast jazz in the late 50s.

Of course, those guys – Hall and Giuffre et al – weren't as laid back as they sound on the surface. They were just as intense as the post-boppers on the other coast. That's why this music is so extraordinary: on the outside it is a warm, breezy and simple pleasure but under the surface there is a very great deal going on. 'Traditionalism Revisited' is that classic mix of bleached out bluesy originals and, as the title suggests a modern revisitation of some trad classics from such as King Oliver and Fats Waller. The choice of numbers in the programme was arrived at to give emotional variety, Brookmeyer said. But, he added, the songs all also have the emotional simplic-

REVIEWS

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