

including two of its trumpeters, one of the tenor saxophonists and then a trombonist who succeeds in exciting the audience. For variety, singer Denise Perrier joins the band on several of the numbers, including "Swonderful" and "God Bless the Child." The big band mixes it up with the crowd pleaser, "Yo Mambo," which indeed requires the entire band to shout the exclamation "yo mambo" at the rest. Toward the end of the concert, legendary Bay area alto saxophonist John Handy joins the FJPBB as its guest artist on "A Night in Tunisia," followed by "I Can't Get Started" and "In a Mellow Tone." The significance of *Live at Herbst Theatre* lies in its contribution to the District's revitalization as the FJPBB kicks off what supporters hope will be a renewed awareness of its cultural potential.

The fact that Ira Nepus spent years in Benny Carter's groups certainly qualifies him to interpret Carter's songs with the insight arising from familiarity with his music and with a fondness for the venues and circumstances where he played it. The fact that Nepus' father, one of the founders of the Hot Club of France, performed with Carter in the 1930's deepens Nepus' qualifications for the project as if the music of Benny Carter were in his blood. (3), though a labor of love, doesn't too strictly adhere to the Carter arrangements that Nepus played. Rather, he teams with veteran West Coast guitarist Steve Moore to develop fresh considerations of Carter's music from an insider's knowledge of the saxophonist/composer's song list. On most of the tracks, Nepus and Moore are backed by their own rhythm section, though notables like Jeff Clayton, Jeff Hamilton and Luis Conte join in on a few of the tracks. Rather than trading solos or rather than having Moore act as accompanist for Nepus, both perform as equals, creating an interesting combination noticeable from the start when trombone and guitar play in harmony on "The Romp" with a light swing and a surprisingly compatible technical facility. None of the tracks receives an overly extended treatment, although they do allow for several choruses of improvisation as well as, of course, the initial and final statements of melody. By including 13 of Carter's tunes, Nepus and Moore provide a compressed overview beyond the most famous songs like "Only Trust Your Heart" or "When Lights Are Low." The uplifting, memorable, concise concepts leave an impression of the consistent melodic appeal of Carter's music. Beyond the appeal of Carter's material, *Another Time Another Place* offers the opportunity to hear some fine Los Angeles musicians who usually record with less recognition in studios or as back-up musicians. The burnished tone and logical solo construction of Nepus, evident in his affecting version of "People Time," matches the polished clarity of Moore's technique. A fine example of Moore's effortless playing occurs when his single improvisational line of "When Lights Are Low" moves into a relaxed chord-based bridge. No doubt Carter would have been pleased by the affectionate tribute so professionally produced and so well played.

Bill Donaldson

1) JOE ZAWINUL, BROWN STREET, HEADS UP 3121.

Brown Street / In a Silent Way / Fast City / Badia / Boogie Woogie Waltz / Black Market / March of the Lost Children / A Remark You Made / Night Passage / Procession / Carnavalito. 84:42.

Zawinul, kybd, vocoder; Victor Bailey, b; Nathaniel Townsley, d; Alex Acuna, perc; WDR Big Band, Köln; Paul Shighihara, g; Andy Haderer, Kenny Rampton, Rob Bruyen, Klaus Osterloh, John Marshall, tpt, flgh; Ludwig Nuss, Dave Horler, Bernd Laukamp, tbn; Mattis Cederberg, b tbn, tba; Heiner Wiberny, as, ss, flt, cl; Karolina Strassmayer, as, flt, cl; Olivier Peters, Paul Heller, ts, ss, flt, cl; Jess Nausef, bari s, bs, b cl. Oct. 2005, Vienna, Austria.

2) NORBERT STEIN, GRAFFITI SUITE, PATA 18.

Franz Patäng / U.B.U. / Musik in 7 Häusen / Der Berg / Gefegeuher der Vokale / Der Vogelflug / Global Positions / Maschinenmenschen / Zigzag Aethernitas. 99:36.

Stein, cond; Thorsten Benkenstein, Ingolf Burkhardt, Philipp Kacza, Claus Stötter, Michael Leuschner, tpt; Dan Gottshall, Sebastian Hoffmann, Stefan Lottermann, Christophe Schweizer, tbn; Ingo Lahme, b tbn, tba; Fiete Feisch, as, cl, flt, recorder; Peter Bolte, as, cl, flt; Christof Lauer, Markus Steinhäuser, ts, flt; Lutz Büchner, Gabriel Coburger, ts, cl, flt; Frank Delle, bari s, b cl, flt; Stephan Diez, Ed Harris, g; Lucas Lindholm, b; Vladyslav Sendekci, p; Mark Nausef, d; Marcio Doctor, perc. Feb. 20-23, 2006, Hamburg, Germany.

Both of these double albums introduce stellar European big bands to modern Jazz with contrasting results. One looks back to a popular sound that we recall with nostalgic delight, while the other forges ahead to the new Jazz world that stands ahead of us in the 21st Century.

(1) features veteran Jazz Fusion keyboardist Joe Zawinul celebrating the music of Weather Report. His integral rhythm section is augmented by the WDR Big Band, which takes on the appearance of a big Fusion affair. Long known as a flexible organization capable of providing stellar Big Band Jazz in a variety of settings, the WDR organization here takes on the Groove role of musical partner for Zawinul's powerful romps, sensual ballads, and his unique vocoder fantasies. Surprisingly, the keyboardist turns much of the program over to the WDR Big Band, allowing the soloists free rein to stretch out with authority. The chemistry between the band and Zawinul works wonders. You'd think that his longstanding Fusion arrangements would become tiring after all these years. Zawinul left Weather Report in 1986 after fifteen years pioneering their new sound in the developing world of Jazz Fusion. He and the band left their mark and continued to grow in several directions. Partnerships with other musical entities have brought about significant high points for Zawinul and for the others. His work here with the WDR Big Band, however, proves uneven. For the most part, the session drives hard with sparks that ignite, as on vintage Weather Report memories from songs such as "Black Market," "March of the Lost Children," and "Brown Street." Elsewhere, the leader's keyboards resort to old clichés and the WDR Big Band fills in with pale interludes that run

squeaky clean. "In a Silent Way," "A Remark You Made," and "Night Passage" fall into the latter category, as the sparks from this live session at Zawinul's club in Vienna miss their mark. The session, while uneven, includes some fine solo blowing from the veteran keyboardist and members of the big band, particularly trumpeter John Marshall, tenor saxophonist Paul Heller, soprano saxophonist Olivier Peters, and alto saxophonist Karolina Strassmayer.



Joe Zawinul © Dan Audain

Saxophonist Norbert Stein serves as conductor for the 23-piece NDR Big Band on (2) with a program of creative improvised music. Following his compositions to the letter and taking their cues from his hands, the band moves together as one big voice. Eschewing standard notes and symbols in his work, Stein gives the band a graphic representation of what he wants. The performance requires that its conductor provide every downbeat, a cue for every solo, and motions for changes in mood. Thus, the band acts with a cohesive voice, crowding together for voluminous downbeats and relaxed patter in between. The first selection, a suite in four parts, features improvised solo work from saxophone and piano while a dramatic wall of sound thumps alongside. The band comes together with every large pulse, parading rhythmically with a steady pattern. Surprises come only in the form of quirky harmonic structures, which result from the freedom that Stein advocates through his composed pieces. Rhythmically, the suite follows a linear order to precision. The next selection is a suite in one part. "U.B.U.," subtitled "No.w.here.," which features several members of the brass and saxophone sections in excited fury. Here, rhythm gets a reprieve, as the band lets down its hair and proves that it can deal with spontaneity. Once again, the conductor's downbeats provide a cohesive sound wall; however, this time the band's rhythmic patterns vary. The first CD closes with a 6-part suite, "Music in 7 Houses," whose named movements count out the houses in order. Extended solo work from Fiete Felsch on soprano recorder, Marcio Doctor on percussion, Lucas Lindholm on bowed bass, and Mark Nauseef at the drum set drive this piece with plenty of spirit. The suite marks the best use of Stein's format: soloists with large band accompaniment in a spontaneous outcry. The composer's suite "Der Vogelschwarm" opens the second CD with three pieces that flow like Joe Zawinul's Jazz Fusion in a contemporary affair that features the high anxiety of electric gui-

tar, the ancient tradition of vocal chants, and a propulsive big band sound that explodes with collective thrashes. Stein's suite "Hot Spots, Tai Chi & More" closes out the second CD with three pieces that include spoken word, a cocktail hour piano trio interlude, and more of his big band unison thunder. All together, the large ensemble attacks each measured beat with perfect precision while providing spontaneous clusters of offbeat harmony.

Jim Santella

1) TRIO CLEG, RELATIV ATTRAKTIV, JAZZ4EVER 4782.

Weekend Theme / Ohnmacht / Relativ Attraktiv / Song of Weakness / Arise & Vanish / Waltz for Four / Mr. Hanky n/ Traumbad / Herbst zu fruh / Liom / A Fairytale Little Anthem. 63:41.

Philipp Cieslewicz, p; Matthias Eichhorn, b; Martin Greule, d. 8/14-16/06. No location listed.

2) STEVE HERBERMAN, ACTION: REACTION, REACH 7120.

Cos' Groove / Be Nimble / Negev Journey / Shoutin' Down / Halcyon Air / Worry Not / Nearly Time / Snap! / Sphericity. 59:58.

Herberman, g; Drew Gress, b; Mark Ferber, d. 4/26-27/06. Monkton, MD.

3) HELMUT KAGERER & ANDREAS DOMBERT, NIGHT OF JAZZ GUITARS, JAZZ4EVER 4783.

Waltz for Joy / Deep Blue / Whisper Not / Blues for Bireli / Rise the Stars / Broadway / Waltz for Jim / Two Roads. 43:03.

Kagerer, Dombert, g. 12/05, Strauberg, Germany.

(1) The Trio Cleg is in line with the current crop of piano trios that take a germ of inspiration from Bill Evans' romantic impressionism and let it sprout in wildflower fashion into unexpected fields. There's a classical stateliness to its delivery. The tunes have a folk-like quality at heart, wearing their more sophisticated adornments lightly.

And while Cieslewicz's piano is the focal point of the ensemble neither bassist Eichhorn nor Greule is relegated to mere foot-tapping bystanders. They provide another layer of emotional complexity. On "Fairytale" they prowling behind the piano's phrases. "Song of Weakness" shows just the kind of finely registered psychological drama the trio can script. The song is somber with the frail theme grounded by plodding bass accents. The intensity grows by the finest gradations underscored by Greule who switches from brushes to sticks with which he implies the faintest backbeat. "Mr. Hanky" is as perky as the trio gets opening with a bit of unsettled melody before settling into a rock-like groove. The drummer expounds on that feel trading licks with the piano. Mostly though on *Relativ Attraktiv*, Trio Cleg devotes itself to wistful ruminations on attractive if bland themes.

(2) It seems sometimes that the guitar trio is the new piano trio. As pianists begin to explore the full textural possibilities of their instrument, this leaves the lithe, unadorned explorations backed by complementary bass and drums to guitarists. Not