

MUSICIAN

PLAYER & LISTENER

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Metheny



TOM COPI

Slowly but steadily, the Pat Metheny Group is building an audience. Guitarist Metheny assembled the quartet in June, 1977. "We rehearsed for three weeks, and we've been on the road ever since," says Pat. "We've hit it about as hard as you could possibly hit it without dying: coast to coast, all over Canada and three trips to Europe."

Now the hard work is beginning to pay off. A year ago attendance at their concerts and club dates was light. Today their gigs, especially return engagements, are apt to sell out. Their ECM album *Pat Metheny Group*, released late this summer, is selling briskly. Perhaps most important, the constant touring has tightened up their music.

Onstage the band is casual but serious. Pat runs the show smoothly, rarely speaking, sometimes moving from one tune to another via a long solo cadenza. He may begin with an acoustic guitar and then switch to his hollow-body electric or to a 12-string.

Pianist Lyle Mays is the other principal voice. He does his work at an acoustic piano, using a synthesizer for color and contrast. Behind Pat are bassist Mark Egan and drummer Danny Gottlieb. Egan plays with a flowing, humming sound similar to Jaco's. Danny is a colorist in the Tony Williams mold, using his cymbals as often as his snare.

Many people would classify the Pat Metheny Group as a fusion band, although Pat is reluctant to accept that label. "The only thing I can say about our music is that it's current music. There are traces of rock and traces of bebop, but the main thing about our music is that it's dealing with right now." — Douglas Clark

It seems that Joni Mitchell likes northern California. Her last three performances, to the best of our knowledge, have taken place there, the latest being in Berkeley (September 2 and 3 of this year) where she performed before 9,000 people at the outdoor Greek Theatre as part of the benefit for Mimi Farina's Bread and Roses organization. Quoting from Conrad Silvert's review in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "About six hours after the music had begun, Joni Mitchell walked on stage to a standing ovation. She began strumming her big guitar and sang 'Coyote' from *Hejira*, sing-talking the words into the microphone as intimately as she might in someone's living room. Then she sang the haunting, 'Shadows and Light,' from *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*, investing her poetry with fine shades of expression that evoked multiple layers of *deja vu*, like fingering ghostly rosary beads of past lives."

She then sang her 'Ode to Memphis Bluesman' Furry Lewis, "Furry Sings the Blues," and then introduced the funny Las Vegas song by saying: "Imagine you're on the Strip and up walks Lola Folana in a gold lame jumpsuit, all sucked up. She then beckoned Herbie Hancock to the grand piano, and Herbie accompanied her with exquisite harmony as she sang her lyrics to a pair of tunes by Mingus, presumably from her upcoming album. Her words were a stunning portrait of Mingus, and her phrasing was light years ahead of the jazzy stuff she sang on *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*, her last album. Joni's been woodshedding."

Joni has recorded four tracks of Mingus' music for her next album, which, according to sources at Elektra/Asylum, will probably not be released until at least Christmas. So far, Joni has used the services of Wayne Shorter, Jaco Pastorius, Stanley Clark, Jerry Mulligan, Don Elias and Jeremy Lubbock. Joni is currently vacationing in Mexico and will return to the studio later this fall to complete work on the album which she is producing herself.

Mitchell



Jazz-Stars

On the night of Friday, September 22, Sonny Rollins, Ron Carter and McCoy Tyner appeared in concert at the Masonic auditorium in San Francisco. They were joined on drums by Al Foster, and by a lively audience which arrived full of great expectations. The performance they witnessed was one of those rare events when a great deal has been promised but even more is delivered.



DAN CLUNY

The quartet opened with Rollins' "Cutting Edge" and Rollins wasted no time reminding everyone that he is *the* Sonny Rollins, *the* ace of the saxophone, *the* extraordinary master of the heart-stopping solo. After "Cutting Edge," Carter and Foster left the stage to Rollins and Tyner, who performed "In A Sentimental Mood." Tyner, who could have easily commanded everyone's attention with one of his signature solos, chose instead to show how truly adept he is at setting up lush, rhythmic frameworks for other players' talents.

Carter and Foster returned, Rollins went backstage and Tyner led the trio through Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Once I Loved." Ron Carter seemed a little anxious to show how complex and profound his bass-playing can be, but the audience loved it — they were there to be impressed. When Tyner and Foster left, Carter alone and Carter stormed his way through "Will You Still Be Mine," more than a few people left their seats to applaud him.

Tyner, Rollins and Foster returned and the quartet closed the set with Tyner's "Nubia." For the first time that evening, McCoy Tyner let his power flow into its natural position at the center of the music and, during the final minute of "Nubia," Rollins stood with almost religious composure on his side of the stage, listening, smiling, and obviously awed by Tyner's magic.

After the intermission, Tyner returned by himself and offered everyone another slice of his genius. He called the piece "Hello To Pianissimo" and there is no way to outline or describe how beautifully he played it. A Tyner/Carter duet followed, "Alone Together," and then, to great applause and shouting, Sonny Rollins strolled back on stage, took one breath and gave the solo performance of the evening. It was wild. It was pure spirit. The more he played, the more apparent it became that Sonny Rollins is so accomplished, so thoroughly centered as a man, that he can give and give and keep on giving without losing even a fragment of his power. No name was given for the solo, and no name was needed; it could only be called "Sonny Rollins."

When it was over, Tyner, Carter and Foster returned to the stage, each of them nodding at Rollins as they went to their respective instruments. The quartet closed the set with Carter's "N.O. Blues" and then did Thelonious Monk's "I Mean You" for an upbeat encore — *Joshua Baer*

Monterey



TOM COPI

Faces



TOM COPI

Telluride

Telluride lies in a box shaped canyon, high in the southwestern Colorado Rockies and remote from any large urban area. It is a rather odd place for a jazz festival. Sheriffs strutting around in Tony Lama boots, buckskin vests, guns on hips, Stetsons perched just right, your eyes shift from them to the stage, and, lo and behold, it's McCoy Tyner, not Willie Nelson. The mountains,

which side the canyon, loom up perhaps another 2,000 feet, and at nightfall it gets cold. Most nights there'd be a fire in the backstage area and the sound people, roadies, groupies, performers, promoters, and hangpersons would gather around passing bottles of Jack Daniels like so many High Plains Drifters.

Against this rich setting, there was a lot of good jazz to be heard. Betty Carter's Friday night set was certainly one of the high points, singing a marvellous rendition of "Star Eyes" and doing a surprise bop duet with Leon Thomas. The four blues men's Saturday morning extravaganza was great, with Mighty Joe Young giving perhaps the strongest performance, although it would be hard to fault Willie Dixon and Lightin' Hopkins. McCoy's solo piano performance was typically strong later on that day, and Chick Corea and Gary Burton had an interesting, if somewhat mechanical, Saturday night duet. I was not all that impressed with Leon Thomas's own set Sunday afternoon. Leon worked part of his show with one of his long-time associates, Pharoah Sanders, another surprise guest, and Pharoah supplied Leon with some rocket fuel. Pharoah on his own was more like the Pharoah we had come to admire, i.e., before *Love Will Find a Way*. Sunday evening's proceedings were highlighted by Phil Woods' set and particularly a duet he did with Richie Cole ("Scrap Apple From the Apple") whose incredible technical command of the alto has to be seen to be appreciated. It is sort of a pain in the neck to get there, but some 6,000 of us did manage to do so this year, and I don't think anyone went home disappointed. — *Hugh Cosman*

This year's Monterey Jazz Festival was again a celebration of the traditional. Somehow, though, No. 21 was a lot livelier than most of the recent editions.

The festival, which bridged Friday and Sunday evenings with five full musical programs (something like 24 hours altogether), was built around Dizzy Gillespie's Saturday night party. Dizzy decreed that three long rows of tables and chairs be positioned

stage left. The chairs were occupied by such as Milt Jackson, James Moody, Ray Brown, Trummy Young, Buddy Tate, Arnett Cobb, Sweden's Arne Domnerus and Bengt Hallberg, Al Harg, Mel Lewis et al. Dizzy, dressed in peach-and-tan sartorial splendor, happily presided over a series of combo permutations, giving everyone a chance to play at least two numbers. The top candidate for show-stealing was Arnett Cobb, whose preachy Texas tenor struck a dramatic note amidst all the musical-chair fun and games. Gillespie, while not particularly inspired, played impeccably.

Friday night's disappointment was the failure of Stan Kenton to appear; his big band slot was filled by a more-than-adequate, if not earthshaking, assembly headed by Grover Mitchell, a former Basie trombonist who now sells charts to the Count. The rest of Friday's program was devoted to Dexter Gordon's quartet (wonderful) two sets by Bob Dorough and Bill Takas (entertaining, but slightly lost on the 600-plus Monterey throng), singer Ruth Brown and Billy Cobham's sextet.

Saturday afternoon meant the designated dose of blues, which came off fairly well, except for the unannounced no-show of Etta James.

The festival's Sunday night closing extravaganza came off without a hitch. A vital young band from San Francisco, Listen, opened by playing a few original compositions that featured the reeds of leader Mel Martin. Martin then stepped back to allow the Listen rhythm section to back Cobb, Tate, and Scott Hamilton in a few standards.

Two highly newsworthy events followed. Expatriate tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin made his first American appearance in 15 years. He was poised, mellow, supple, triumphant. The second Triumphant Return of the evening was staged by the Hi-Lo's, the same four men who defined cool jazz singing in the '50s. It was planned as a one-time reunion, but the set was so flawless, and so well-received, that at least a few more performances seemed mandatory.

Sunday night, and the festival, closed with that supersonic wonder-of-the-cosmos, Maynard Ferguson, who neatly rounded up all the stray dogs on the Monterey Peninsula. Ferguson does have a fine band, however. — *Conrad Silver*