

themselves inside the "repertory" box; "Intermission Riff" would impress those who know their Kenton, but it's no copy. All the self-effacing soloists (and guest DeFranco, performing on "Invitation" and "More Than You Know") are impressive in well-focused outings, but what is most pleasing is the luxurious sound of a well-rehearsed twenty-piece ensemble, with first-rate section work and an attentive but not overpowering rhythm section. I would prefer more original homages to Ellington than these two, but the band executes them well, and Jamey Simmons gets some of Ray Nance's fervor into them. (Sonny Greer's technique, however, seems to be beyond the reach of modern drummers.) Leader Snapp plays beautifully on "Body and Soul," and the band is comfortable with both Kern and Coltrane. This band can shout.

Although the music on the Dragon discs is a few decades older, the Harry Arnold sessions (2), (3) are more adventurous, perhaps because the music was made for the very hip Swedish Radio, unissued until now, not for commercial records. One place to begin is the jaunty version of Ornette Coleman's "Tomorrow Is the Question" featuring Arne Domnerus and Bosse Borberg, or the playfully eccentric "Groteskerier" (Grotesqueries). This accomplished band could also create glossy danceable versions of "Just in Time" and "Nice and Easy" or convincingly revisit the standards "Isn't It Romantic," "Margie" and "Ain't Misbehavin'," but their breadth of inspiration will captivate listeners, even when they occasionally draw on Ellington, Basie, Gil Evans and others. (Students of the genre may pass the time by charting Influences and Borrowings, but the Arnold band is indebted primarily to its own collective imagination.) They sound immaculately rehearsed but never stiff, and the performances are full of surprises, even when the well-written liner notes predict something no more startling than a ballad or a medium blues. The soloists, too many to praise, exhibit a fluid eloquence: a particularly luminous Domnerus on alto and clarinet, Johansson on piano, Gustafsson on guitar, Broberg on trumpet, and Nerem on tenor come first to mind—all given fine rhythmic support, with Georg Riedel's bass work noteworthy. The arrangements, most by Pete Jacques, Wallin, Broberg, Riedel, and Johansson, are intensely original, even when the material (the Ellington pieces) would seem to dictate the shape of the performance.

In 1957, the Arnold band made its first recorded appearance on an American label, coyly in disguise as the "Jazztone Mystery Band." Some famous critics and listeners were sure that the record had to be by well-known Americans because the band was too swinging and inventive to be anyone else. Such national chauvinism is now past, but these Dragon issues (in wonderful sound) could be instructive Blindfold Tests for some and a pleasure for everyone.

Michael Steinman

**1) DAVID HAZELTINE,
CLOSE TO YOU,
CRISSCROSS 1247.**

Close to You / Waltzing at Suite One / I'm Old Fashioned / You Don't Know What Love Is / Barbara / Buddy's Tune / Blues for P. Wash / Minor Adjustment / I'll Only Miss Her / Willow Weep for Me. 63:48.

Hazeltine, p; Peter Washington, b; Joe Farnsworth, d. Brooklyn, NY, Nov. 4, 2003.

**2) JONATHAN KREISBERG,
NINE STORIES WIDE,
CRISSCROSS 1244.**

Summertime / Just in Time / Dana / My Ideal / Juju / That Reminds Me / Fever Vision / Michelle / Relaxing at Camarillo. 55:22.

Kreisberg, g; Larry Grenadier, b; Bill Stewart, d. Brooklyn, NY, Oct. 30, 2003.

**3) PAUL STRANAHAN,
CLIMBING SOMEWHERE,
PAUL STRANAHAN, no#.**

Climbing Somewhere-1 / Neptune-2 / Closing Time-3 / Fifty Four-4 / Mellow Tune-5 / Get Off the Sofa-6 / 5/8 Tune-7 / Hot and Humid-8 / Corinne-9 / Charlie-10 / Fungus at 5:00-Don't Fall Down-11. 71:25.

Stranahan, d; Bob Fraser (1-5, 8-10), Mike Barna (6, 7), Chris Bober (11), et g; Aidan Plank (1-5, 8-10), ac b; Jeff Scott (6, 7), Wilbur Krebs (11), et b. Cleveland, OH(?); no dates given.

I've admired pianist David Hazeltine (1) in other formats—as a member of the cooperative group One for All, as co-leader of the David Hazeltine/Joe Locke Quartet, and on a couple of dates under his own name that showcased young tenor phenom Eric Alexander. On this latest album from Criss Cross, Hazeltine is alone in the pilot's seat, buttressed by a topnotch navigator (bassist Peter Washington) and bombardier (drummer Joe Farnsworth), and every inch as admirable as before. Hazeltine, who plays with a natural swing and unerring touch that makes everything seem deceptively easy, favors elaborate right-hand runs, which is marvelous if one is able to shape them as handsomely as he does. While he may not have the dexterity of an Oscar Peterson, few pianists do, and Hazeltine is nonetheless quick and resourceful in every circumstance. He's especially persuasive at walking tempos, as on Ann Ronnell's "Willow Weep for Me" or his own compositions, "Waltzing at Suite One" and "Barbara." Hazeltine also wrote "Minor Adjustment" and bassist Washington's feature, "Blues for P. Wash." Completing the program are the ballads "You Don't Know What Love Is" and "I'll Only Miss Her," Buddy Montgomery's perky bossa, "Buddy's Tune," Jerome Kern's "I'm Old Fashioned" and Burt Bacharach's "Close to You." Hazeltine is stylish throughout, as are Washington and Farnsworth. A first-class album.

I'd not heard guitarist Jonathan Kreisberg (2) before but appreciate that anyone who keeps company with bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Bill Stewart must have supercharged chops, which, as it turns out, Kreisberg does, complemented by a mellow, full-bodied sound that serves him well at every tempo. Writer David Adler, appraising Kreisberg's style, notes that "his sparkling clean tone, colored with just a touch of delay, perfectly

suits his fluid, legato phrasing and tasteful, complex chordal work." Sounds good to me. The bottom line is that Kreisberg is a bright young guitarist who plays with sagacity and soul. Asked about his influences, Kreisberg names a varied group that includes Jim Hall, John Scofield, Pat Martino, Bill Frisell, Jimi Hendrix, Pat Metheny and others, and he seems to have learned something from each of them. The rich, full-bodied sound is certainly reminiscent of Hall, the unfaltering execution of any or all of the others. Kreisberg chooses to start slowly on his Criss Cross debut, easing gently into George Gershwin's "Summertime" before opening the throttle on Jule Styne's "Just in Time." Three of his compositions follow, strewn among Wayne Shorter's "Juju," the Richard Whiting/Leo Robin standard "My Ideal," Lennon/McCartney's "Michelle" and Charlie Parker's groovy "Relaxing at Camarillo." While Kreisberg is never less than engaging, his originals are no more than adequate. "Camarillo" is a highlight, as are "Just in Time," "Michelle," "My Ideal" and "Summertime." Grenadier and Stewart play their roles to perfection, soloing adroitly when called upon and helping to make Kreisberg's coming out party an unqualified success.

(3) is another guitar/bass/drums trio, this one led by drummer Paul Stranahan and featuring electric rather than acoustic guitar, giving it a funkier feel than Kreisberg's album. On three selections ("Sofa," "5/8 Tune," "Fungus/Don't Fall Down"), Adrian Plank's acoustic bass is supplanted by the electric bass of Jeff Scott ("Sofa," "Tune") or Wilbur Krebs. All of the compositions are Stranahan's, and they complement the band's makeup, lending the enterprise a smoky after-hours-at-the-club ambiance. It's a fairly well-recorded date with Stranahan's snares and ride cymbals conspicuous throughout and guitarists Bob Fraser, Mike Barna (6, 7), or Chris Bober (11) carrying the melody and handling the lion's share of the solos. As a whole, Stranahan's tunes are more blue-collar than blue-chip. There are some nice touches, such as the crisp interplay between Barna's guitar and Stranahan's tom toms on "Get Off the Sofa," Stranahan's brief turn on marimbas on "5/8 Tune" and Fraser's supple fretwork on the ballad "Corinne." For fans of funk, fusion, and trio Jazz whose rhythmic nature frames the bedrock on which it rests

Jack Bowers

FRANK HEWITT, WE LOVED YOU, SMALLS 1.

A Ghost of A Chance-1 / Polka Dots and Moonbeams-2 / That Old Devil Called Love-3 / I Remember You-4 / I'll Remember April-5 / Lady Bird-6 / Frank's Blues-7 / Cherokee-8. 68:03.

Hewitt, p; Ari Roland, b; Jimmy Lovelace, d (1-5); Danny Rosenfeld, d (6-8); 5/16/01 (1-5) and 6/5/01, New York City, NY.

Discographies offer one way of reading Jazz history, but a subterranean history can be found in legends of unrecorded geniuses that outshone famous players. If only Columbia had given Kid Willie a session, so the tale is told, what marvels we

would have heard! Some late-period recordings of legends show little of the reputed talent (Peck Kelley); sometimes mastery emerges in hints and flashes (Snoozer Quinn). However, once in a great while evidence emerges that proves just how much brilliance escaped the microphones, and *We Loved You* is compelling evidence.

This posthumous issue featuring the late Frank Hewitt (1935-2002) is both glorious and sad. Its glory is in Hewitt's extraordinary playing; the sorrow is that he was consistently ignored by major record labels and did not live to see this issue. In the 1950's, he was an (also unrecorded) sideman with Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Coltrane, Howard McGhee, Cecil Payne, and others; he played in the 1961 production of *The Connection* and worked with saxophonist Clarence "C" Sharpe. In the 1990's, Hewitt appeared at the uptown New York Jazz club Smalls for nine years, often accompanied by bassist Roland. In 2001, Luke Kaven produced and engineered these sessions with Hewitt's working trios—one devoted to ballads, the second more assertive.

Hewitt's playing has been compared to that of Monk, Elmo Hope, Jamal, and Bud Powell, and the connections are audible—but this roster might lead listeners to expect another exploration of familiar Bebop paths. Hewitt, however, was interested in more than rapid-fire right hand lines based on extended harmonies over chordal punctuations. His playing is genuinely orchestral. Rich textures, not single-note lines, appeal to him, echoing Tatum and (at a distance) Teddy Wilson, transformed but still in evidence. His ballads are highly melodic but never restricted to the written melody—so that the nine-minute "Ghost of A Chance" or seven-minute "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" keeps the song in mind, each chorus exploring it from a different angle, never monotonously, so that the performances never seem long. A special feature of these recordings is the verses that precede the ballads, which will sound unfamiliar (and lovely) to experienced listeners: Hewitt composed them and they are indeed striking.

The trios benefit greatly from the long-term working relationship between Hewitt and Roland—a supportive bassist with a huge sound, whose brief arco solos are fascinating. The veteran Lovelace and the newcomer Rosenfeld treat Hewitt with affection and respect, so their rhythm is (perhaps uncharacteristically) muted but propulsive, as in the easy rock of "Lady Bird" and the more intense swing of "Frank's Blues." Even at fast tempos, Hewitt never seems rushed: his brisk "Cherokee" has breathing space among its percussive right-hand splashes.

Don't miss this disc simply because Hewitt was less publicized than his contemporaries: he is original and entirely gratifying. This issue is announced as "the first volume of historic recordings"; given the history of Jazz recording projects, where second volumes sometimes never arrive, I hope that listeners will support this one so that we may hear more of Frank Hewitt's rare art.

Michael Steinman