



The Vinyl Syndrome

Police warrant investigation

ANTHONY BRAXTON
Performance 9/1/79
(hat Hut)

Over the years, Anthony Braxton has written for and recorded in many different contexts, ranging from solo to big bands to orchestras. It's always nice to hear him in the quartet setting, particularly with a group as sympathetic to his music as the one on this, his latest effort for the Swiss hat Hut label.

Recorded at the Willisau Jazz Festival in Switzerland, this album draws from many pages of the Braxton songbook. In fact, listeners may be surprised to find that the man they thought of as a leader in avant-garde also enjoys playing straight ahead and composing marches. In addition, *Performance 9/1/79* includes some of the open improvisations and spatial music that Braxton is more well-known for.

Braxton and hat Hut have included an impressive six-page booklet with the album, designed to describe the music within and to (begin to) outline Braxton's philosophy behind it. Some listeners will be thoroughly confused by the explanations, and skeptics may think they have found more fuel with which to support their attacks on Braxton. But really, the music can be listened to and appreciated by most listeners without the booklet. It is a

pleasant surprise to find an artist and company who care so much about the presentation of the music.

N.B.—hat Hut records are easily recognized by their distinctive cover art. The label was started in 1975 by Werner X. Uehlinger, who intended to release one or two albums by his friend, saxophonist Joe McPhee. The initial releases were successful and the hat Hut catalogue now includes about 40 releases featuring the likes of Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, and Max Roach.

The albums are available at the Jazz and Blues Centre or by mail from:

hat Hut Records
Box 127, West Park
New York, 12493 USA

Steven Hacker

THE POLICE
Ghost in the Machine
(A&M)

On their fourth LP, the Police try some new sonic tactics. They still believe in

the 3-minute-song-with-a-hook-that-won't-let-go and their music is still strongly based on revised reggae beats, but this time they've gone heavy on production. No longer content with the traditional guitar/bass/drums sound, these fuzzy little chart-busters have added heavy doses of keyboards, synths, and sax. The additions are rarely intrusive though (after all, bassist/vocalist Sting is barely able to squawk out a note on sax) but rather serve to beef up the textures. The thick layering of overdubbed vocals also contributes to the density of the proceedings, more than slightly recalling Jon Anderson on several tracks.

The songs divide themselves into 2 categories: tight, tuneful pop songs, and chant-like rhythmic numbers with endlessly repeating ostinato riffs. Of the former, the best is "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic", a joyous tune with rolling piano cascades and love-song lines like "It's a big enough umbrella/But it's always me that's getting wet". But the second variety suggests that the Police are

trying to be 80's contenders for Iron Butterfly's crown—danceable and hypnotic perhaps, but not exactly enthralling.

Even so, the monotony of this second variety may be part of the point, for *Ghost in the Machine* is something of a concept album about the state of society. "Too much information/Running through my brain", they tell us, "One world is enough/For all of us", they say. You've got to "re-humanize yourself".

The first half of Side 1 and the second half of the flipside make for absolutely arresting platter. But even with the rest, these cadets have still copped a winner.

Roman Pawlyszyn

RATINGS

- You gotta buy
- Golly. . .
- Your average sounds
- Bed-bug overbite
- Btle

Tower power hits I.D.A.

Ed Nossac

It is a great pity that many of you will have missed the first exhibition of the year at the I.D.A. Gallery (in the Fine Arts Building). "More or Less", a show by grad students Ron Sandor and Alex de Cosson, was an eye-opener to conceptual object-oriented art.

The show, which ran from Oct. 5th-9th, was a combination of flamboyancy and blatant flippancy—or so thought many of its viewers who unfortunately may have missed some of the more obvious and subtle points, as the artists, their actions, and the objects they manipulated became part of the total art piece.

The opening was well attended. A welcome refreshment was served—empty walls. These rough, with burlap walls were the setting for beer-serving Ron Sandor who could find no excuse to miss his own opening. He was elegantly attired in a newly-pressed "Think Tower" t-shirt (white on black), finely-pressed white cotton flannels and Rod Laver tennis shoes.

Alex de Cosson entered the gallery and proceeded to pound nails into the gallery wall, warranting minimal attention. He wished to do his daily yoga and attend the opening, and needed somewhere to hang his clothes. Three quarters of an hour later he left to take a shower, returning to change into a white shirt, red tie and grey flannels. As he was an hour late, most people had left.

During this hour, however, many occurrences took place which were important to the over-all reading of the work. Impatient with the seriousness of the crouched crowd that surrounded de Cosson's meditative space, Sandor let loose his loud, battery-operated miniature car.

This sudden breaking of the heavy breathing from de Cosson's yoga space lifted the people from their trance: laughter broke out, people moved, more beer was opened, donuts were eaten.

The space had at last been broken, the reality seen, the tension dissipated. De Cosson continued his routine, but now people freely talked, watched, drank, and walked the entire space of the gallery. A towering acceptance had now taken place, thanks to a tiny mechanical car.

The interplay of sound and total gallery space was now unified. The continual whine of the car as it circumnavigated the gallery, blended with de Cosson's soft but strenuous inhaling and exhaling into a symphony of interchangeable moments. The space became charged with a deafening meditative silence.

Over the next five days de Cosson proceeded to bridge the various elements in a variety of ways, and Sandor continued his original statement, the towering presentation of occupied space.

The most striking effect came on the fifth day of the work, with de Cosson's structural representation of the bridge motif. A perfectly scaled model with reflective, highly-glossed white enameled slates, bridged his contemplative first-day space, now filled with a jungle of metaphors, to the peaceful 'other' space of Sandor.

This was an exemplary beginning for the I.D.A.'s season. Let's hope the future presentations provoke the same viewer interest and antagonism. Today and tomorrow bring us 'First Year Graduates Works-in-Progress Exhibition'. Gallery hours are 9-5 Mon. Fri. □

RADIO YORK

*** FEATURE ALBUMS ***
September

- *Heaven Up Here/Echo and the Bunnymen
- *On the Other Hand There's a Fist/Jona Lewie
- *Skareggae/Ernie Smith
- *NYC Underground/Johnny Griffin
- *Compass/Kum'pas/Dalek 1
- *Closer/Joy Division
- *Rancho Banano/Joe Hall
- *The Lounge Lizards/The Lounge Lizards
- *Best Moves/Chris DeBurgh
- *Magic, Murder and the Weather/Magazine
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