

The Independent Record Story: Pt. 2 Riverside resurrection

Hacker & Goldstein

During the late '50s and early '60s some of the biggest names in jazz were recording knockout albums for the New York based Riverside label. The label boasted such heavyweights as Thelonius Monk, Art Blakey, and Max Roach as well as promising bantams who were later to become major figures in the music, such as Bill Evans.

After a long absence, the Riverside label has made a comeback re-releasing many old favourites. Milestone Records has been quietly pressing the discs over in Japan and have issued them in North America in their original covers (along with a page of Japanese liner notes) to the contentment of collectors. The Japanese pressings have a remarkably clear and crisp sound quality with next to no pops or crackles. The progressive re-recording equals in quality the best of today's recordings. They sound old, but not as though they were recorded in a tin can.

Thelonius Monk recorded several of his strongest albums on Riverside. *Monk's Music* is essentially performances of the pianist's greatest hits with some of his most formidable sidemen (John Coltrane, Coleman Hawkins, and Wilbur Ware to name a few). Most of the songs feature a septet arranged by Monk. The album begins with the four horns playing a Monk arrangement of the traditional "Abide With Me". On another high note Coleman Hawkins and the rhythm section form a quartet for a memorable version of "Ruby My Dear". *Monk's Music* is an impressive display of the unique technique of Thelonius Monk as well as the early work of John Coltrane.

Everybody Digs Bill Evans is a trio date, Evans' second recording for the label. Sam Jones is the bassist and Philly Joe Jones the drummer. This album features several Evans masterpieces most notably "Peace

Piece".

In many ways this is the quintessential Evans album, his lyrical style sparkles on pretty ballads such as "Tenderly" and "Lucky to Be Me" and even on more upbeat tunes such as "Oleo" and "Minority". This was one of the records that helped establish Evans as one of jazz's most influential pianists. Several of his other classical albums are also on this label.

The title of Elmo Hope's Riverside disc, *Homecoming* refers to the New York born pianist's return to the East after a lengthy stint in California.

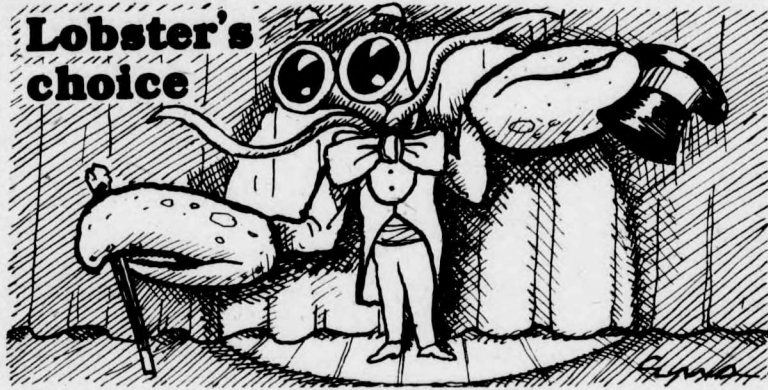
The return was special for Hope since it reunited him with some of his favourite sidemen such as Percy Heath and Philly Joe Jones who are present on this album. The results of this combination are very satisfying, displaying a very comfortable Hope. All but one of the compositions are by Hope, and are performed by either a trio or sextet. Both groups are featured

on a wide range of songs and styles from the blues, to swing, to the haunting beauty of "Eyes so Beautiful as Yours". Truly an underrated pianist and composer, Elmo Hope may finally achieve recognition as a result of these releases.

Standing at 5 feet, 6 inches, Johnny Griffin is known as the Little Giant. This album by the same name, clearly shows why Griffin is known as a giant among tenor saxophonists. This is probably the most intense and energetic of the four albums mentioned here. Griffin was always known for his speed, and on this album he chose compositions that allowed him to really crank up. Griffin is capably backed up by hot shots like Wynton Kelly, Julian Priester, and Albert Heath.

Any listener wishing to buy one of these albums but suffering from an empty pocketbook should look for Milestone's double reissues of the artist's work. All told a treasure chest for the jazz fanatic.

Lobster's choice



Billy Mayer

Bethune College has always been a college that has always held jazz close to its heart. Beginning next Monday and continuing all week, Bethune in cooperation with the American Federation of Musicians Trust Fund, will showcase some of Toronto's finest jazz talent in a series of noon concerts to be held in the J.C.R. The schedule reads:

Monday, March 30: The Dave Young Quartet
Tuesday: Memo Acevedo and Paul

Christopher

Wednesday: Ian McDougal and Friends

Thursday: The Bill Graham Quintet

Friday: The Aaron Davis Septet
Admission is, of course, free.

The York Jazz Orchestra, under the directions of professor David Mott, can be heard in a concert with "A Thelonius Monk Retrospective" on Sunday, March 29 at 8:00 p.m. at the Music Gallery, 30 St. Patrick St. Tickets are \$3, jazz currency.

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