

# Reviving a legend

by Peter Ross

A group that calls itself the **Legends of Jazz** will not necessarily give a legendary jazz performance. Those among the audience which nearly filled the Cohn Thursday night who expected their breath to be taken, in a mind-bending encounter with "essential" jazz were probably disappointed. Those who attended with minds bent on simply having a good time probably went home satisfied. Because five gentlemen, all Dixieland senior citizens of Dixieland, gave us nothing more and nothing less than an evening of unabashed merriment.

Yes, folks, mythology can be fun. Drummer Barry Martyn (presumably not old enough to be a legend in his own right) assembled the five in 1973. They would tour as a collective vestige of the original New Orleans sound. Seated before us, grey haired, eyes and notes twinkling, playing as naturally as they were breathing, and standing as each piece ended to blow a final exuberant mix of parade-style phrases into our laps - who could doubt their authenticity? Who could resist their charm?

Curiosity seekers were frustrated at the outset by the announced absence of 93 year old bassist Ed "Montudi" Garland. The groans that went up as the audience heard of his strenuous European tour, jet lag, and resultant double pneumonia sounded more like sighs of disappointment than complaints of sympathy, but we all hope he returns to play again. His substitute, "Dorf" Morris provided ample foundation for the sets to follow.

At the other end of the tonal spectrum Andrew Blakeney, 79, topped off the arrangements with a bright, definitive trumpet line. Tapping, bobbing and weaving in time, he probably enjoyed the concert as much as anybody there. His delight in playing led to our delight in watching and listening. His gravelly vocal in "Down by the Riverside" belied the long-ago influence of Louis Armstrong.

Piano player Alton Purcell's straight, chubby fingers performed their chores adequately, if unremarkably. He supplied the slower more sensitive blues-style vocals in

tunes like "Body and Soul". He sounded like a curious combination of Billie Holliday and Alton Purcell, 5 and 95 per cent respectively.

Trombonist Louis Nelson, 75 and still sliding, maintained a good repartee with the girls in the front row as he slipped from mellow solos to brassy, punctuating accompaniments. His controlled, thoughtful solo in the band's offering of the Baptist hymn "Just a Closer Walk with Thee" had the others solemnly nodding and swaying in synchrony, and represented his best work. His rendition of Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender" never had a chance from the beginning, and stands as the low point of the night. Presley and Dixie mix like Mozart and Walter do los Rios - they don't.

Star of the performance surely had to be 73 year old clarinetist Joe "Brother Cornbread" Thomas. From first measure to last, the music was suffused with his personality. His vocals, illustrated with gestures and the occasional two-step, were irresistible. His solos were surprisingly dynamic and insistent. And for those who listened carefully, his accompaniments were invariably sensitive and enhancing. After standing to play a spot, he would sit down, pull up his trousers, put the reed in his lap, and apparently fall asleep. But at the sounding of some post-musical suggestion his eyes would open, his mouth broaden into an infectious grin, and a humorous exhortation of one sort or another brought smiles to us all. W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" led by "Brother Cornbread" highlighted the evening.

Finally, Barry Martyn filled the somewhat ambiguous role of player-coach, "leading" the group (in a non-musical sense), announcing the tunes, throwing out the occasional plaudit, and doing some unimaginative drumming (although in fairness Dixieland jazz allows for little else). The others, appropriately enough, didn't seem to pay much attention to him.

In summary, then, the concert provided two hours of happy music - comfortably predictable music. Granted it helps to be somewhat credulous, but old-time jazz, disarming as it is, can be even more so when played by real live legends.



Toe tapping, hand clapping music brought the Cohn to life when the Legends of Jazz appeared last week in a performance of their original Dixieland style.



## Simple Dreams Linda Rondstadt / Asylum

Just the same way Boz Scaggs sings like someone you're sure you know, **Linda Rondstadt** looks like a girl you know at school or a girl you wish you knew at school. You cannot complain about the lack of female stars in this decade, especially in popular music, when girls-next-door like Barbra Streisand and Rondstadt are replacing Aretha and Janis. Rondstadt's exuberant voice, backup band, record production and even lifestyle are things that cannot be copied by anyone; things that have not been and may never be copied.

Rondstadt has a profound new record out now called "Simple Dreams." Last year I was in Cambridge Massachusetts during a particularly red point of the fall (like this week at Dal) when **Hasten Down The Wind**, her last record, came out. It was a sensation on campus down there and no doubt **Simple Dreams** will be one, too—here and in the States, and probably around the world.

**Simple Dreams** is as much a record for women as men. Several of Warren Zevon's compositions for the album are addressed to the female consciousness, I think, the consciousness first of Rondstadt herself, and then of her audience. But Mick Jagger and Keith Richard's "Tumbling Dice" must be the male consciousness—and Linda Rondstadt must be unreal to pull it off. She sings it with an authority nobody would believe possible.

What she looks like isn't very important, and isn't at all important to women—and so what if Howard Cosell and Keith Jackson of ABC sports were speechless after she did the U.S. anthem at Dodger Stadium—but her look is her sound and her composure and her sensitivity. Rondstadt is a complete star, all the time, all the way.

## The Cat And The Fiddle Papa John / DJM

**Papa John Creach** is definitely a bold stylist, and his licks on the electrified Bay Area fiddle are all the jivest hamburger. As on this record cover: Papa John is into a cleanly white set of tails and a high-gloss blue violin. The cat, and his fiddle, mean business.

This album sucks all the same. Worse, some of it was recorded at

Toronto Sound, here in Canada. The nice bit is that, although the funk-filler here (on most of which Creach doesn't do his own singing, and the fiddle breaks are short) is driven by a very un-black bass and drums, the horns are excellent. The players really toot, shutting their horns on and off like faucets. That very funky sound comes thanks to Toronto horn and piano man Doug Riley (who's been through King Biscuit, Ed Bickert and everybody else.) Good horn charts can't save this album, though, and Papa John had better get down to some thick rhythm-and-blues next time out.

## Live The Butterfield Blues Band / Elektra

**Paul Butterfield** has not led a band since Better Days dissolved two years ago. He has been involved with Levon Helm (**The Band**) and Dr. John Creaux in one national tour last winter, a tour which featured a persuasive NBC Saturday Night Live performance. Helm handled most of the vocals as he jabbed away at his Civil-War era snare drum, and Dr. John (the reggae doctor) was the revue guru. Butterfield was soloist, his moaning harmonica sort of harkening back to Woodstock 2 (an album on which Butterfield, inspired by the 500,000, and with his crack seven-piece band behind him, absolutely ripped, like he had on no other record up to then).

That Butterfield Blues Band dissolved in 1972, but round about Woodstock was as hot as coals—for this reason you should check out Elektra's re-issued double live album, recorded at L.A.'s Troubador the year after Woodstock. Buggy Maugh, the band's guitarist who is heard on **Woodstock 2**, was no longer with the band at the time of this recording. That's unfortunate. Replacement Ralph Walsh really is not the same, but Butter's razorish harp certainly makes this record, bellowing and slicing, cutting the other band members to death.

**Errata** have reared their ugly heads lately: Mick sings beautifully on the Stones **Love You Live**, but he doesn't do "Angie"—try "You Can't Always Get What You Want." Elvin Bishop's **Raisin' Hell** is on Capricorn Records, not Warner Brothers'. Remember that turntable drugs, all the same, are safe, easy to use, and completely legal in most provinces.

# Deerfield bombs out

by J.L. Round

Having heard enthusiastic reports of **Bobby Deerfield** filtering through from various sources for over a year it was with a sense of frenzied impatience and expectation that I awaited the film's arrival. In my mind the opening of a new Al Pacino movie is somewhat of a major event, mainly because it was a guarantee of a dynamic and powerful performance as well as an excellent film.

**Bobby Deerfield**, however, is another matter. In **Deerfield** Pacino has slipped down a notch, not only in terms of the quality of the vehicle as a whole (how many of you serious literateurs would cringe if I were to compare the **Godfather** epic with Dostoyevsky's monumental novel, **Crime and Punishment**?) but in terms of performance as well (certainly Pacino's work in **Dog Day Afternoon** is one of the most electrifying film performances in recent years.)

Now I have a theatre friend who claims he would go to see Pacino merely flipping through the pages of a phone directory. Well, **Bobby**

**Deerfield** is only slightly less interesting. Certainly Pacino's presence is a fascinating force to observe. But in **Deerfield**, even as exciting a personality as Pacino's is allowed to suffer. Poorly photographed and given no material worth the utterance he bumbles on and off screen to little effect. In fact, there is hardly a substantial dramatic scene throughout the film in which his spontaneous theatrical energy can find an adequate source of combustion.

The film is what is called a "dud". Packed with enough explosive potential from producer-director Stanley Pollack downwards to have created more than a minor sensation, the film has had its energies sadly misdirected and become a sort of maudlin rag doll, pieced together from scraps of other films. For make no mistake - this is a boring movie. A mass spiritual ennui seems to pervade the film as it unravels in a string of over-tired scenes and verbal cliché.

"Who is Bobby Deerfield?" continued on page 15