

New American Music

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BLUEFISH by Gil Evans (11:15)

Joe Beck, guitar
Herb Bushler, bass
Gil Evans, electric and acoustic piano
Billy Harper, flute
David McDonald, drums
Warren Smith, percussion
Synthesizer

Bluefish was composed for a film, "The Sea In Your Future." Called the "Father of the Cool" — cool jazz is jazz in which the emotion or feeling, although it may be intense, is understood or given a restrained expression — Evans has gone beyond the orchestration needed for the cool. As John Wilson of the New York Times wrote, "His (Evans) arrangements now seem more responsive than ever to exotic, opulent coloristic effects and entirely original twists that they then become recurrent structural motifs in his compositions." Evans is capable of producing an infinite variety of sounds. By adding electric guitar, electric piano and synthesizer to other instruments (including at times the Japanese Koto) he brings jazz to a new musical and more fertile ground.

Gil Evans was born in Toronto, Canada and raised in British Columbia, Washington and Stockton, California. A self-taught musician, arranger/composer, he was leading his own band when he was twenty-one. Andre Hodeir has called Evans "one of jazz's greatest composer-arrangers.... He is capable of filling the vacancy left by Duke Ellington, and is by far the finest arranger of his generation."

TRANSMUTATIONS by Milford Graves (11:45)

Hugh Glover, saxophone, voice, samumba, conga drums
Milford Graves, drums and voice

Born on August 20, 1941 in Jamaica, L.I., New York, Milford Graves was first introduced to the drum at the age of three. From three to eight he was self-taught. Instruction in African drumming began at eight. He went to Boys High School, City College of New York and Eastern School for Physicians Aides. He is a medical technologist — of vital importance since he conducts medical music programs. He has also studied North Indian Music with Wasantha Singh.

Mr. Graves has lectured and held workshops in many colleges and at many festivals including the Newport Jazz Festival, Columbia, Harvard, Ohio Universities, Bryn Mawr, Sarah Lawrence, Bennington and Brooklyn Colleges. He is presently teaching at Bennington and lecturing on Black music.

In addition to his C.A.P.S. Grant, he has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has performed widely here and abroad including the Antwerp, Belgium and Laren Jazz, Netherland Festivals.

Mr. Graves pithy and succinct statement, when asked to comment on **Transmutations** is "This composition depicts the constant changes taking place in life."

ZONING FUNGUS II by Mary Lou Williams (6:48)

Mary Lou Williams and Zita Carno, pianos
Bob Cranshaw, bass
Mickey Roker, drums

What is this thing called Zoning? The usage here is new — a piece of freshly coined slang invented by Mary to describe what must be done by the composer or musician in performance if true musical art is to result. Zoning is a new word to describe the creative process of at least one true composer and musician. When sounds are not zoned the result is something less than music. When a musician really creates, he zones all the elements, or things, into music: something fresh, astonishing, whole and complete — not into something borrowed, disparate, haphazard, merely decorative, certainly not into something finally destructive. To mask good music everything must be zoned.

Fungus I (**A Fungus Amungus**) was written by Miss Williams more than ten years ago and is available on another recording (Mary 101). This Fungus II retains little of the first beyond some hint of the original melody when "the fungus" first appears in low rumbling from the second piano interrupting the lovely melody coming from the first. The fungus shoots in and out desperately trying to destroy the soulful feeling in

the music. It enters now in the form of rapidly executed musical exercises (empty and tacked on), now by harsh and abrupt atonalities, now by short and self-centered shrieks. In the final moments of the first section (scored for the two pianos alone) the fungus almost wins in the loud and violent passages, played in a heavy-handed and almost fistlike way, as the noise becomes more deafening and simple-minded, as when a child in a fit of jealous rage will throw a tantrum almost insane. But the tone lifts as the bass and drums lay down the 7/4 rhythmic pattern. Order begins to re-emerge. The patterns remain as wild as before, the chords as complex, the music as difficult to execute, the sounds of "free" music remain, including a touch here and there under the direct inspiration of McCoy Tyner (a pianist and musician much admired by Miss Williams) but the whole of it is zoned in terms of a soulful feeling: the feeling of the blues. This soulful and deeply felt texture unifies and transforms all these "influences" (these pressures) and "bits" — the music comes together and the composition goes out quietly with feeling back in the music. Zoning has taken place.

Notes by Peter O'Brien

SHADOWS by Sam Rivers (11:00)

Shadows is an extended composition for woodwinds in four parts. The opening statement is for tenor sax, flute, soprano sax and synthesizer. It is the shortest and only completely improvised section — themes stated here are the basis for the remaining three parts which are written although not heard in the section recorded here.

"As a composer, instrumentalist and listener I am in the extremely fortunate position of being totally immersed in American music (the duality of its origin) but primarily the feeling. As a fourth generation black American musician — with many teachers, quite a few Methodist and Baptist Ministers, my music is instinctual. My activity has been varied and I find myself often playing viola with a string quartet in the afternoon and with a blues band in the evening. It has been important for me to do this as part of my drive to find out as much as I can the way music is, what music is, why music is.

Since the late fifties with the advent of 'freeform' in jazz (with its origins in black music) music has been revitalized by spontaneous improvisation — to have no pre-conceived plan of complex harmonies, intricate rhythms and technically difficult melodic lines — improvisation to make every performance different, to let your emotions and musical ideas direct the course of the music, to let the sound of the music set up its own impetus, to remember what has been stated so that repetition is intentional, to be responsive to myriads of color, poly-rhythms, rise and fall, ebb and flow, thematic variations, etc., etc....."

SAM RIVERS, jazz composer and tenor saxophonist, is currently director of the Harlem Ensemble, director of Studio Rivbea, and composer-in-residence with the Harlem Opera Society. He performs his works with the Sam Rivers Trio. In January, 1975, he was guest soloist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and his record, **Streams**, received an Oscar in 1974 as well as being voted Best Record of the Year by the Academy of Jazz, Paris. From 1971-73 he was Visiting Artist in African-American music at Wesleyan University and was a lecturer in Black Music at Connecticut College in 1972. He plays a number of instruments in addition to the tenor saxophone — including flute, piano, oboe, bass clarinet, and soprano saxophone — and has played with jazz artists Miles Davis, Cecil Taylor, and McCoy Tyner.

ENCOUNTER BY Sunny Murray (9:40)

Played by The Umum Quartet

This composition represents a broken road in the musical thoroughfare of lives. As the players and the listeners are musically tuned to the same vibrations. Vibrations of nature's motion. Thus the percussion of sounds are evident in all of its simplicity and ambiguous motions. We are looking and listening while wanting perfection and any form.

In this composition there is mainly the play of opposition. In musical delight as in the rhythmic feeling there are segments in 3/4 time. This creates highlights of time and harmony conversation which leads to the importance of each player establishing ecstatic unison.

Seemingly there has been this unbearable syndrome whereby

any form of "pure art" existing from within, on its powers of support; variably cannot survive in American competitiveness. This society born of **Slavery, Suffering and Death** has its balance of time to deal with. Surely that change is upon us. Check it out. Gabriel was definitely a priest of the Holy Chastisement. Music has reached the aura realization of the Creative Blackmusician, but lies dead for the unsensed audience. The serious cause of the present syndrome arises from the indifferent unedited sides of the nation of America.

Blackmen-musicians, the likes of Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, Sun-Ra, Ornet Coleman, John Coltrane etc., knowingly sought strength and spiritual commune of the Black populace, so terribly needed, thus musical delight. As it has been in the past so shall it be now/in the future as the Sunny Murrury UMUM Quartet continued this unique tradition of change and creativity.

Notes by Gene Stephenson

Ed. Note: Mr. Stephenson writes "these notes have been carefully thought out. They will not need to be edited. As it would alter the meaning meaningless. So please print them in their entire presentation."

GLORIA by Mary Lou Williams (6:23)

Mary Lou Williams, piano
Milton Suggs, bass
Tony Waters, conga

Miss Williams broke new ground for Jazz in 1962 when she composed her hymn in honor of **St. Martin de Porres**. Her interest in composing for sacred purposes has led to the writing of three complete Masses including **Mary Lou's Mass** which forms the musical basis for the ballet of the same name by choreographer Alvin Ailey. In recent years Miss Williams has been honored by the Guggenheim Foundation through a grant for musical composition, by Fordham University which awarded her an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, and the people of Kansas City who named a street after her (permanently) to pay recognition to this extraordinary life in music. Miss Williams is the founder and president of the Bel Canto Foundation for needy musicians. Her extraordinary religious faith also frequently finds expression in extensive work among the poor and the young in musical workshops in storefronts, in classes on college campuses, in performances of **Mary Lou's Mass** in churches, large and small, throughout the world. Today Miss Williams appears frequently in concert with her trio, in clubs, in the recording studio, on radio and television; in short, she is in the forefront of music which is exactly where she belongs.

Notes by Peter O'Brien

THE CREATIVE ARTISTS PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM (CAPS)* is the first statewide program utilizing public and private funds to provide financial support for individual artists. The CAPS program, now in its fifth year, awards fellowships in: painting, sculpture, graphics, photography, film, video, fiction, poetry, multi-media, choreography, playwriting, and music composition.

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