

THE EVOLUTION OF JAZZ WAS LIKE THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION,
THAT MOSES TO JESUS TO MOHAMMED TO BAHÁ'U'LLAH WAS LIKE
LOUIS ARMSTRONG TO ROY ELDRIDGE TO DIZZY TO MILES...



Wallace Roney and Miles Davis
at the Montreux Jazz Festival, 1991.

Photograph by Herman Leonard

Who Is Wallace Roney?



Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival



Diamond Dizzy



Wallace Roney Quintet: The History of Jazz



Katie Couric's Next Job: Concert Promoter



L'Histoire



Label Watch: Warner Brothers Records



Down Beat 1973: Chords & Discords

Detroit Free Press

Estimated printed pages: 5

September 4, 2001

Section: FTR; FEATURES

Edition: METRO FINAL

Page: 1D

Memo: FORD DETROIT INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

**SUMMER'S CRESCENDO: THE WEATHER WAS GREAT, THE EVENTS DELIVERED AND THE CROWDS ATE IT UP JAZZ
FESTIVAL FINDS ITS GROOVE**

MARK STRYKER FREE PRESS MUSIC CRITIC

Let me tell you why the Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival is one of the two or three best reasons to live in metro Detroit. On Sunday, under a full moon, flanked by the river and the city skyline, Wallace Roney's sextet offered a thrilling tribute to Miles Davis that bridged the gap between the Fillmore East in 1970 and a state-of-the-art definition of jazz in 2001.

Straddling the acoustic-electric fault line, the music was dense with abstract harmony and quaking rhythm. On "Filles de Kilimanjaro," Roney's trumpet slashed like a razor blade, and alto saxophonist Gary Bartz orbited in a parallel universe of time. Bennie Maupin -- one of the great unsung heroes of the tenor sax and a Detroit native who rarely performs at home -- played wry blips and furious, idiosyncratic tornados of scales with a throaty wail unlike any other tenor.

For that hour, the center of the jazz universe shifted to Hart Plaza.

The festival, which closed Monday night, is under its third artistic director in three years. So it needed a set like Roney's to remind us what the event's artistic standards should be and that it can still deliver on the promise.

Though some programming issues remain, the 2001 festival was one of the most engaging of the six I've witnessed. Most important, the festival finally feels as if it has regained its equilibrium.

First-year director Frank Malfitano knows how to run a jazz festival. The lineup was stylistically diverse and deep in headliners. The pacing was savvy, with each day building in intensity and bands scheduled thoughtfully.

A budget deficit from last year forced the festival to cut back from five to four stages, but that resulted in better focus and flow. One of Malfitano's best ideas was reconfiguring and enlarging the Waterfront Stage, giving the festival a lovely new setting and a vital third stage for headliners.

Another new idea, the monster TV screen erected on the plaza, was a double-edged sword. It provided a glitzy way to bring the music to more listeners, but the cameras swarmed around the main stage like flies, blocking sight lines. At one point, three cameras swallowed solo pianist Benny Green, and audience members began shouting epithets.

If diversity was much improved over last year's bebop-dominated festival, Malfitano's lineup still had blind spots, particularly the current left wing of the New York scene. There was also a nagging sense that too many of the headliners came straight from the major labels or off the covers of jazz magazines.

And too many slots were devoted to populist fluff -- the corny New York Voices, schlocky fusion from flutist Herbie Mann and the Jazz Crusaders, trivial ramblings from the Brubeck Brothers.

This is not a plea for more mediocre free jazz or bebop from guys without record deals. It's a request for a more sophisticated survey of the art, for musicians who represent the best of those styles.

There was no official count by Monday, but crowds appeared similar in size to those of recent festivals, which have drawn more than 700,000.

Other highlights and impressions distilled from the 100 national and local acts performing during the four-day event:

Best bebop: The Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Quartet's blazing set Saturday featured arrangements of Akiyoshi's stirring,

Japanese-tinged originals that were clever distillations of her big-band charts. But it was Tabackin's bravura tenor sax and flute playing that stole the show.

On a lickety-split "I'll Be Seeing You," he started with an a cappella tenor cadenza that painted the air with swing. He played the melody with gruff humor; his furry vibrato purred and then barked. Six scorching choruses followed, built on rhythmic wit, melodic rhyme, cannonball momentum and architectural integrity.

Enigma award: Pianist Benny Green married high rococo craftsmanship with no discernible sense of self in Friday's solo set. Essaying standards like "You Make Me Feel So Young," he'd play 16 bars like Erroll Garner -- chords chasing the beat from behind -- followed by 16 bars of stride, eight bars of speedy arpeggios a la Art Tatum and 16 bars of supersonic Oscar Peterson runs. Missing in this choppy history lesson was a chapter titled "Benny Green."

On the fence: Detroit-born wunderkind James Carter plays the bejesus out of the saxophone. So why did Saturday's "Chasin' the Gypsy" tribute to Django Reinhardt -- complete with violin, acoustic guitar and accordion -- leave me unsatisfied? Partly because Carter's virtuosity still tempts him to grandstand, and he climaxes every solo with the same menu of squeals, circular breathing and volcanic eruptions.

Carter, 32, is not a composer, conceptualizer, organizer or visionary. He's a brilliant soloist, an old-fashioned gunslinger, and there's nothing wrong with that. In the old days, he would've made a great Basie-ite or Ellingtonian.

But with the apprentice system now history, the record industry thrust Carter into a leadership role in his early 20s. The Reinhardt tribute felt like the result of his casting about arbitrarily for a production concept.

Carter's brash Electric Project set Monday felt more organic. His saxophone pyrotechnics were surrounded by a like-minded band of first-rate funkmeisters who, curiously, elicited more nuances from the leader.

Better than the CDs: Guitarist Russell Malone's singing tone and clean technique were placed in the service of a lovely flow of melody Friday with pianist Richard Johnson, bassist Richie Goods and drummer E.J. Strickland. A highlight was Malone's "To Benny Golson," a relaxed strut that showed off the quartet's mellifluous expression and dynamics.

Not as good as the CDs: Jerry Gonzalez and the Fort Apache Band's singular mix of post-bop and Afro-Cuban rhythms never started the expected brush fire on Saturday, perhaps because the set leaned more on straight-ahead jazz than the band's greatest skill -- adventurous soloing on top of clave rhythms.

Why can't our pop music be this hip?: On Saturday, Brazilian songwriter and singer Ivan Lins offered a set of Brazilian top 40, but the fetching melodicism and harmony of his multithemed structures were a joy despite the lack of jazz content.

Jazz-rock redux: Along with Roney's Sextet, bassist Christian McBride's Quartet reminded listeners that fusion once pulsed with possibility.

McBride's band mixed originals with improvisatory covers of Steely Dan's "Aja" and Weather Report's "Boogie Woogie Waltz." The band's web of shifting meters, Geoff Keezer's sci-fi synthesizer textures and saxophonist Ron Blake's nimble solos were all impressive. Still, the long-windedness and stylized virtuosity recalled the sins that killed fusion the first time around.

Just another chick singer: The mega-hyped young vocalist Jane Monheit revealed a lovely instrument Monday, but her overchoreographed and unswinging phrasing were strictly middle-of-the-pack. She brought a cabaret intimacy to a crawling "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most," but her bounce tunes were as pedestrian as clothes from the Gap.

Happy 100th birthday, Pops: Detroit trumpet hero Marcus Belgrave brought the festival to a close Monday by channeling the spirit of Louis Armstrong. "Stardust" burst forth in a clarion call of warmth, grace and soul. The angels -- and Pops -- went to bed with smiles on their faces.

Contact MARK STRYKER at 313-222-6459 or stryker@freepress.com.

Illustration: Photo PATRICIA BECK/Detroit Free Press

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Diamond Dizzy**Bourne, Michael. Down Beat.** Chicago: Jul 1992. Vol. 59, Iss. 7; pg. 16, 4 pgs

Subjects: Personal profiles, Musicians & conductors, Jazz

People: **Gillespie, Dizzy**

Author(s): Bourne, Michael

Document types: Interview

Publication title: Down Beat. Chicago: Jul 1992. Vol. 59, Iss. 7; pg. 16, 4 pgs

Source type: Periodical

ISSN: 00125768

ProQuest document ID: 1618928

Text Word Count 2698

Document URL: <http://0-proquest.umi.com.novacat.nova.edu.ezproxy1.library.nova.edu/pqdweb?did=1618928&sid=3&Fmt=3&clientId=17038&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

Abstract (Document Summary)

In an interview, jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie discusses a wide range of subjects, including his recent bout with yellow jaundice, soap operas and Latin rhythms.

Full Text (2698 words)*Copyright Maher Publications Division Jul 1992*

EDITORS' NOTE: In late February, Dizzy Gillespie suffered a severe flare-up of his diabetic condition requiring a short hospitalization in Oakland, Calif. Upon returning to his home in New Jersey, Dizzy had a medical checkup, yellow jaundice was diagnosed, and he was immediately admitted to the hospital. "Tests revealed he had an obstruction blocking his bile ducts," explained the Gillespie family Physician, Dr. Arthur Grossman.

Gillespie underwent major surgery on March 12. "Since then," the doctor recounted, "Dizzy had to fight and conquer a series of setbacks, including severe anemia and a number of untoward reactions to some of his medication. This has been a very worrisome time. Now, finally, we see him approaching a full recovery. He has clearly amazed us all."

And when could John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie be playing again? "He certainly needs to build up his strength first," said Grossman. "But now, I can happily predict Dizzy will be making a lot more music later this year and for many years to come."

While we wait to hear Dizzy play again, we have his thoughts on survival, soap operas, and Latin rhythms as told to Michael Bourne.

I've enjoyed Dizzy Gillespie all around the world, from New York to Berlin, the Hague to the Caribbean. That's where Dizzy lives--on the road.

In 1972 when Dizzy was gigging in St. Louis near the ballpark, Down Beat wanted an interview. Instead of something formal, we talked over lunch. I called the piece "Fat Cats At Lunch" and still remember what we ordered: pepperoni-stuffed calzoni for me, beef tips with noodles for Dizzy. I was curious about the bebop revolution but Dizzy insisted that bebop was an evolution and that all music is one music. Dizzy also talked about the Bahai belief in the oneness of people.

Dizzy's faith in the Bahai religion became news that year. When next we bumped into each other, the 1972 presidential election was heated. Dizzy had been a perennial jazz candidate for president, and in interviews, even with tongue-in-cheeks, Dizzy was often quite serious about the problems of American life. But now he'd become a Bahai and the faith prohibits a follower from involvement with politics. I reported Dizzy's withdrawal in DB and the story was quoted in other media as if it were George Washington's farewell.

It seemed only natural--with another election forthcoming and with Dizzy about to embark on a yearlong 75th birthday celebration around the world--that we come together again in these pages. Dizzy was playing a month with friends at the Blue Note in New York--according to Dizzy, the longest gig he's ever played in one place as a bandleader.

Dizzy was already feeling pooped, even before the exhaustive touring that was scheduled: South America, South Africa, Japan, back and forth to Europe, and around the States, with the quintet or the United Nation Orchestra, with Miriam Makeba or the MJQ, an all-star birthday cruise of the Caribbean, a climactic week at Lincoln Center, all the while with interludes as artist-in-residence at

Queens College. If he wasn't playing, he was being interviewed or filmed or photographed or otherwise lionized. It's what happens when an artist becomes an artifact. That very week we talked, Dizzy appeared in newspaper cartoons, a goat on CBS TV's Northern Exposure was named Dizzy, a Saturday Night Live gag showed stars alleged to have silicone implants--Cher, Dolly, and, with cheeks ballooned, Dizzy--and the Euro-thriller Winter In Lisbon, with Dizzy playing an expatriate jazz legend, opened in New York.

We didn't have a chance for lunch again but I expected that we'd at least enjoy cigars together. I'd often given Dizzy cigars and offered some superb Dominican handrolls.

DIZZY GILLESPIE: I quit smoking the day Miles died. I just decided to quit. I haven't lit had a smoke since then.

MICHAEL BOURNE: And you can get all those great Cuban cigars!

DG: And people give me boxes!

MB: One of the most memorable times of my life was when we smoked a reefer and watched As The World Turns. I'll never forget you telling me who was who and shouting at the TV when something bad happened.

DG: [laughs] I just saw some of the people from As The World Turns the other night.

MB: Do you still watch?

DG: Not too much. I watched it for 27 years.

MB: How come you never guested on the show?

DG: It was mentioned. I don't know why it never happened. They've visited me. I was doing a show at CBS and all of them came over. I went down to the set and watched them.

MB: If you were a guest, what would you rather have happening While you're playing, sex or murder?

DG: [laughs] Murder! Or somebody taking somebody's wife!

MB: The film Winter In Lisbon is not the first time you've acted.

DG: I've done a lot of small parts. Do you know Faith Hubley? John Hubley? I made a short for them called The Hole with George Matthews. Do you remember him? He wore a derby hat and had a cigar in his mouth all the time. He was a gangster in a lot of films. The Hole won the Academy Award that year [1962]. It was a cartoon. We were underground. We were talking about the situation in the world, nuclear weapons and things. This ground hog bites into a cord from a nuclear power station. This guy and I were talking. We didn't have a script. We talked about everything, and I was dancing!

MB: One of the most dramatic scenes--only dramatic scenes--in Winter In Lisbon is when your character sits at a piano and talks about why you left America, about racism and drugs, and that People don't understand the pressure that killed Charlie Parker and Billie Holiday. How much of that was scripted?

DG: None. I just started talking.... One of the things that wasn't too good about playing in the movie, except for playing on the soundtrack, was that I wasn't playing my horn. They wanted a straight horn.

MB: What was harder? Learning lines or playing a straight horn?

DG: Learning lines!

MB: One of the things your character says is that you have more dead friends than live friends. Many musicians left the country. Many musicians died. How have you survived against the things that have crushed others?

DG: They just weren't as strong as I was. I've seen a lot of things happen that washed musicians off the scene. It's a pity that so many musicians died.

MB: You were born the year of the first jazz record, 1917. You've lived through the whole history of record jazz.

DG: My first record was "King Porter Stomp" with Teddy Hill.

MB: It's very different recording nowadays. Does the new technology interest you?

DO: Not much. I don't use all these different means of recording. They've got a machine in Japan, you can record right on the job and you get a sound you never heard before. It sounds live. I like that.

MB: You've been traveling 50 years. What do you enjoy most about the road?

DG: You meet a lot of friends that you wouldn't see otherwise. I don't think I'd spend money to go to Paris or London, but when you're working you go and see your friends.

MB: When you're on the road, are you able to enjoy where you're at?

DG: There are different places. There's a beach in Minnesota that I like and used to go to. There's a lot of things you can do in Florida, a lot of things you can see in New Orleans, San Francisco. Libraries give me a great sense of knowledge. I get books. I've spent a lot of time reading.

MB: Where overseas have you enjoyed most?

DG: Beirut when it was Beirut. I've been so many places. I like Spain, Portugal. I like Japan.

MB: Where have you not played?

DG: China. I'd like to go there if they'd offer me a job.

MB: What do you like to eat the most on the road?

DG: I can't say! [laughs] I like German food, French food, Italian food. I have kippers for breakfast every day in London. The moment you know you're going somewhere you start thinking about what you're going to eat. My stomach starts sticking out!

MB: Do people around the world feel the same about jazz?

DG: Music travels. Music goes on. I don't think there's that much that's changed in the tastes of people.

MB: Is the audience overseas more enthusiastic for jazz than the audience at home?

DG: Not necessarily. People in America, they like the music. But they like rock & roll more than jazz. They put out more money for rock & roll.

MB: When you first played bebop it was very different.

DG: And there wasn't much money involved!

MB: But now your music is the mainstream.

DO: It just happened that it moved up to the front. There's more appreciation now than there was in the beginning.

MB: What are your best memories of Miles?

DG: We didn't see one another too much. He didn't call me much unless he wanted something. He didn't call to say, "Hey, what's happening?" like we used to talk in the early days.... Miles' music was very powerful. He could play a note, like a C that's coming later but it's not there yet, but he'd play it and hold it and you'd feel it, and when it finally comes you [sighs]. He knew a lot of music. I knew him when he didn't know that much. He didn't know piano. He'd come to learn piano with me. He'd come to my house with a record and say, "That note! What is it?" I'd take him to the piano and play a chord and say, "Boom! There it is!" He couldn't understand where the notes came from. But he went to Juilliard and learned from a lot of people, like all of us did.

MB: When we talked 20 years ago you said the evolution of jazz was like the evolution of religion, that Moses to Jesus to Mohammed to Baha'u'llah was like Louis Armstrong to Roy Eldridge to you and Miles. Who do you feel you've passed the torch to?

DG: I don't get a chance to hear too many young trumpet players. I like Wallace Roney. He played a whole week with me in Washington. I heard a trumpet player from down South. He went to that school with the marching band where they run real fast and play [Grambling]. These guys run hard! I don't know how they do that! If I move, my mouthpiece will move. I heard him at the very famous restaurant in Harlem [Sylvia's]. He was in his 30s. He was really doing it. He learned all that stuff in the marching band. I don't remember his name. [ed: Bill Kennedy] I had a long conversation with him.

MB: It must be heartening that so many young musicians have come along.

DG: When you realize the music is in good hands, it's okay. "Go ahead! Y'all got it!" They've studied. It's very good for music.

MB: What words of wisdom do you have for these young musicians?

DG: There were guys like Dud Bascomb who laid a good foundation for trumpet players. Kenny Dorham. Fats Navarro. Miles. There are a lot of trumpet players who really contributed to this music. I don't think the kids have anything to worry about. Just listen to these guys and be impressed by them.... It's been so long since I was young enough to realize what I needed to advance myself musically. It's always difficult to know what you should study most to be a good musician. Piano for the first thing! To learn the keyboard and to pick out your own things; and resolution, going from here to here to here, that is very important. But they've got that together. These young musicians are something else.

MB: You've said that the future of the music is in the rhythms of the tropics.

DG: That's something for young musicians to learn about, the rhythms of Cuba, Brazil, the West Indies. Then they should go to the Indians, over in India, and have a whole melange of music.

MB: Jazz is usually in 4/4 but Latin rhythms are not.

DG: When the Cubans came to the United States they came up here with 3/8, 6/8, 3/4, 2/4. It was very difficult for us to read that music. We were always playing 4/4. We didn't do much with 2/4. We played waltzes in 3/4. Cuban music was difficult to play because they didn't have a bass drum to keep you together. When I go to play at the Village Gate on Monday nights [for Salsa Meets Jazz], I have to get myself together. You don't have a bass drum to go by. They don't pat their foot. You can get lost. Even when you're playing you can get lost.

MB: How do you keep from getting lost?

DG: I found out what they were doing without our bass drum and I learned to play it. I learned how to play the conga. That helped a lot. And I danced the music, too! That was important. I could do the mambo, the cha-cha-cha, all those dances. I won a prize at the Palladium!

MB: You came from a time when jazz was dance music, but bebop was art music. People couldn't dance to it.

DO: I could dance to it!

MB: Is that a fundamental of music, that you can dance to it?

DG: It helps.

MB: George Bush is up and down in the polls and no Democratic candidate seems electable. Isn't it time for your Presidential comeback?

DO: I can't. My religion won't allow me to participate in political activities.

MB: When you were a candidate you were very concerned about racism. Is life any better now?

DG: A little. You can go to a restaurant and eat now. You can go to the toilet and not be afraid. We can get rooms at the hotel. We used to have to go to the kitchen to eat.... People definitely get along better than they did years ago.

MB: Is jazz something that's brought white people and black people together?

DG: One of the reasons, yes. [laughs] To play the music, white guys have to get together with colored guys or else they don't play!

MB: Is there an actual medical term for what happens with your jowls when you play?

DG: Gillespie Pouches. There's a doctor at Walter Reed, the hospital where our presidents go, and he said, "Mr. Gillespie, if you'll have some photos taken of your jaws with your cheeks extended I'll name them Gillespie Pouches." I went to the hospital and they took x-rays and everything.

MB: Is it unique to you?

DO: Africans can do it. I saw a guy in Casablanca and his jaws were as big as mine!

MB: What are you looking forward to the most as you travel the world for your 75th birthday?

DO: Nothing too much. I'm satisfied.

MB: Being 75 is just another gig?

DG: [laughs] Yeah!

EQUIPMENT

Dizzy's distinctive upswept-bell trumpet--custom-made by Schlike--was a gift from Jon Faddis.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(See DB Aug. '90 for additional listings.)

AS A LEADER

TO BIRD, WITH LOVE--Telarc (fall release)

TO DIZ, WITH LOVE--Telarc CD-83307

LIVE AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL--enja R2 79658

THE WINTER IN LISBON--Milan/BMG 35600

DEE GEE DAYS--Savoy Jazz ZDS 4426

SWING LOW, SWEET CADILLAC--Impulse! MCAD-33121

DIZZY'S BIG 4--Pablo OJCCD-443

DIZZY GILLESPIE JAM--Pablo OJCCD-381

WITH VARIOUS OTHERS

DIZZY GILLESPIE & MITCHELL-RUFF--Mainstream 721

SONNY SIDE UP--Verve 825 674 (w/Sonny Rollins & Sonny Stitt)

DUETS--Verve 835 253 (w/Sonny Rollins & Sonny Stitt)

FOR MUSICIANS ONLY--Verve 837 435 (w/Stan Getz & Sonny Stitt)

THE TRUMPET KINGS MEET JOE TURNER--Pablo OJCCD-497

THE TRUMPET SUMMIT MEETS THE OSCAR PETERSON BIG 4--Pablo OJCCD-603

DIZZY GILLESPIE MEETS THE PHIL WOODS QUINTET--Bellaphon 250

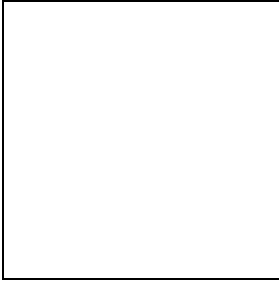
BEBOP & BEYOND PLAYS DIZZY GILLESPIE--Bluemoon 79710

EYES ON TOMORROW--Polydor 849 313 (w/Miriam Makeba)

THE PARIS ALL-STARS--A&M 75021 5300

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Article Courtesy AllAboutJazz.com

Wallace Roney Quintet: The History of Jazz in Thirty Minutes or Less or Your Money Back

By [AAJ Staff](#)

Submitted on behalf of Anthony Gallo

Ever since Wynton Marsalis came under the tutelage of Stanley Crouch, jazz has never been the same. From their pulpit high on Lincoln Center, the two have created a significant schism in the jazz community. Crouch's opinions have been apparently unorthodox and controversial, and his insistence on jazz "purity" (whatever that term is supposed to mean), has split the jazz community into two camps. Personally, I have always been in the camp who places value on innovation and am glad to hear the introduction of other influences, including electronic ones, into the lexicon.

I never anticipated having to re-evaluate my own standpoint.

On June 23rd, the Wallace Roney Quintet played at the Regattabar in Boston. My only familiarity with the work of Wallace Roney was with the Miles Davis tribute band circa 1992, which was Miles' Second Great Quintet minus Miles plus Roney, and Miles at Montreaux, where Roney played some of Miles's harder trumpet parts from the Gil Evans collaboration. That body of work is impressive indeed, and Roney's ability to sit in the place of the great master of space and tension was uncanny. So let it be known that I did not have much of a preconception when I sat down at the table, front row, center stage, and strapped myself in for one hell of a concert. And that is exactly what I got.

From Mr. Roney's opening note, I was simply astounded, and for a multitude of reasons. First and foremost, the group was in top form – the show was perhaps the greatest jazz performance I have seen to date. The quintet, including Adam Holzman on keys, Wallace Roney's younger brother Antoine Roney on tenor, soprano, and bass clarinet, Buster Williams on bass, and Lenny White on drums, explored compositions from their most recent album, No Room for Argument. A number of pieces I heard sounded familiar, some more than others. The concert opened up with Monk's "Straight, No Chaser," where the group

managed to stay quite tethered to structure at first, and about halfway through, letting loose into a very free hardcore blowing session that peeled the paint off the walls with the power of a huge explosion. It was going to be a great night.

Next up was “Filles de Kilimanjaro”, the Miles Davis/Gil Evans composition from the album of the same name, which segued into “A Love Supreme” (note: I had not heard the album which they were promoting, and the aforementioned piece is a medley from the album, now entitled “Homage and Acknowledgement”). This piece signified the only time Antoine Roney used the bass clarinet, a disappointment considering his ability on the horn and the textures it supplies to the group’s sound. I was also surprised to hear the tasteful use of electronics by Mr. Adam Holzman. He employed the use of no less than four keyboards: a traditional piano, a Rhodes, a Korg, and a Kurzweil. When it comes to electronics, history has taught us that ambitions can often lead to pure stink at times, but Mr. Holzman, a pioneer of MIDI and a key part of Miles’ 80’s groups, always appropriately utilized the proper sounds for either embracing support or stunning solos. Wallace Roney’s playing reminisced Miles’ playing during his late Sixties electric period, rapid fire notes ascending the scales with raw power and excitement. Mr. White’s playing combined the sheer force and swing of Elvin Jones with a much needed sense of dynamics.

This sense of taste and touch by Mr. Roney was never more present than on the fourth piece of the evening, a ballad penned by Buster Williams entitled “Christina.” From the second Wallace Roney blew the air from his lungs into that Harmon-muted trumpet, I was thrown into memories of the hours and hours spent in my room, wondering how Miles achieved that much tension and emotion in pieces like “It Never Entered My Mind.” Wallace Roney’s playing was stunning, breathtaking. I sat there in awe as this man, this mortal creature just as I, played something so beautiful that I simply cannot put it into words. As he played the melody, which reminded me of Bernstein’s “Maria”, and improvized over subsequent choruses, I began to understand how this man had fully integrated the sounds and lessons of Miles Davis and incorporated them into his own music. Music so beautiful cannot simply be mimicked. An entire lifetime of human experience goes into a performance like that, and hours spent listening to recording and even copying the playing of a great balladeer would leave one short. This is where my dilemma arose.

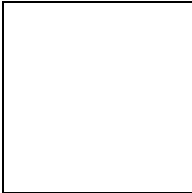
Were Stanley Crouch and Wynton Marsalis right? Was mimicry for the sake of purity and aesthetics a worthwhile endeavor? The answer, or rather the value judgment, would argue no. Wallace Roney’s improvisations, his musings, his emotions, all creeping out the end of that trumpet utilize a particular tone and approach for his own expressive purposes. To create such personal music is not something that can be mined from old recordings and performances. To fault him for such an endeavor would be similar to chastising Roy Eldridge for sounding too similar to Louis Armstrong. Wallace Roney has integrated the lessons taught by Miles Davis, and he pays significant homage too them with his quintet, while also nodding his proverbial hat to the free jazz and avant-garde movements at the same time. He is using and fully integrating the lessons of all that modern jazz has taught us in the last fifty years, and creating an exciting hybrid. We should be both thankful and anticipatory.



Katie Couric's Next Job: Concert Promoter

Thursday , March 16, 2006

By Roger Friedman



[Katie Couric's Next Job: Concert Promoter](#) | [Jacko's Deadline Is Now](#)

Katie Couric's Next Job: Concert Promoter

I don't know why **Katie Couric** is interested in taking over the anchor chair on the "CBS Evening News." How boring! It turns out she's got other, more hidden talents, and she showed them last night at her annual fundraising dinner for her colon cancer charity.

I told you in this space last week that Katie was planning a Motown tribute night with lots of special guests. As a favor, I did hold back that her surprise star would be **Sting**, and that **Smokey Robinson** was coming in to finish the night and give it real Motown legitimacy.

The lavish evening, produced by music great **Ken Ehrlich**, really was sensational. In fact, the music was so good and the vibe so positive that it somehow managed to nullify the creepy and abusive way **Lou Palumbo's** Elite Security treated me when I arrived.

I still don't know why the Waldorf doesn't hire **Chuck Garelick's** GSS or **Mike Zimet's** security agencies, the two most respected in town. But that's another story.

People so love Katie Couric that 1,500 of them — including **Connie Chung** and **Maury Povich**, **Ron Perelman**, **Whoopi Goldberg** (who made a cameo appearance on stage in pajamas) and CBS's **Harry Smith** — were jammed into the Waldorf's Grand Ballroom for this memorial to her late husband, **Jay Monahan**.

But this is what I'm afraid of: the "Today" show begins this morning at 7 a.m., and the last I saw Katie was in a suite above the Waldorf around 1 a.m., saying goodbye to friends who attended a swell after party. She had lost her voice, but she was still — can we say it? Perky.

It's too bad that Katie's friends and supporters aren't smart, talented or successful. Just in that Waldorf suite, Sting, **Elvis Costello**, "sometime-kinda beau" artist **Stephen Hannock**, music manager **Kathy Schenker**, Smokey Robinson, Ehrlich, the evening's music producer and band leader **Nile Rodgers** and comedian **Caroline Rhea** were just a few who came to congratulate on a job well done.

But I've skipped the show, which I hope was taped but I fear was not. There were just some sensational performances, including Sting on **Stevie Wonder's** "Signed Sealed Delivered," Costello really doing justice

to "Ain't that Peculiar," **Mary J. Blige** swallowing and spitting out "If I Were Your Woman" with ferocity and **Chaka Khan** in her best voice in years soaring through "What's Going On?"

She brought the mostly white audience to its knees — a fact that fed **Jimmy Fallon's** best line of the night when he asked everyone to sing along to "Endless Love" with him and **Tina Fey**. "Just the white people," he said, meaning everyone. Fallon and Fey's number was splendid, right out of Nichols and May's old playbook — they should do more of it.

But then there was **Tony Bennett**, who followed Sting — not easy — by singing "For Once in My Life" out of the Stevie Wonder songbook. Bennett told the audience that he'd actually introduced the song in the '60s before a very young Stevie made his harmonica-driven hit version.

Bennett will be 80 in August, but let me tell you: his voice is more gorgeous than ever. In the middle of a night of power pop, he just took the microphone and transformed the event. Bravo!

There were some difficult moments, but with so many guests that's why you hire Nile Rodgers and his crack team of musicians and singers, including **Fonzie Thornton** and **Silver Logan Sharpe**.

James Taylor — who was supposed to sing "How Sweet It Is" — was not exactly right for **Junior Walker's** "I'm a Road Runner." **John Legend** was well-suited to the **Temptations'** "Just My Imagination," but **Chris Botti's** horn playing was a little disappointing after hearing **Wallace Roney** on the same stage two nights ago.

And then there was what you might call "real" Motown. **Ashford & Simpson**, who could have been more prominent since they wrote so many of the label's hits, delivered "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" and "You're All I Need to Get By" with soulful panache.

Michael McDonald, who's released two volumes of Motown albums, cannot be beat for his versions of the **Four Tops'** "Reach Out I'll Be There" and "Baby I Need Your Loving." He got the staid, moneyed crowd off its feet for the first time with the Temptations "Ain't Too Proud to Beg."

There were odd moments, especially when Katie's "Today" show comrade **Matt Lauer**, going off the cue cards, reminisced about trying to seduce a beautiful but clueless girl in his apartment while "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" was playing in the background.

"I can't believe they made a record out of that raisin commercial," the girl told Matt, who grinned nostalgically as he recounted the episode. "She was very good-looking," Matt concluded, as if to say that made up for her not being bright.

Even in the fun, there were also a couple of strange digressions. When they asked all the survivor cancer patients to stand, and the doctors working on cancer research, their really bad tables became quickly evident.

The very first survivor who'd passed through Couric's Jay Monahan clinic, a New York city judge, had the absolutely worst and last seat at the back of the room, hidden by a post.

Another survivor, a major TV exec, was stashed with his wife in the third tier — and they paid for their tickets themselves, not their network.

But these are the things that are tweaked from year to year. At this point, Couric has got the big issues nailed down. She even chose Mary J. Blige's song — and it was a rare success for the hip-hop queen, who usually cannot do cover songs.

Maybe Katie is in the wrong business completely. **Clive Davis**, meet your new A&R woman.

Jacko's Deadline Is Now

Michael Jackson will pay up all back wages to his 60 or so employees today. Then he'll pay massive fines and fees associated with this mess.

His staff will not be allowed to return to Neverland without workmen's compensation, which he is said to be restoring. All of this will be done under the microscope of the California Department of Industrial Relations.

The DIR will not allow Jackson to fall behind on wages again, however. This time it was 12 weeks through today. Last time it was four weeks from Nov. 23-Dec. 23, 2005. And the insurance must be in place, although health insurance — which no longer exists — does not come under their purview.

The employees will have to decide if they can live without it. I am shocked no union organizers have tried to get into Neverland.

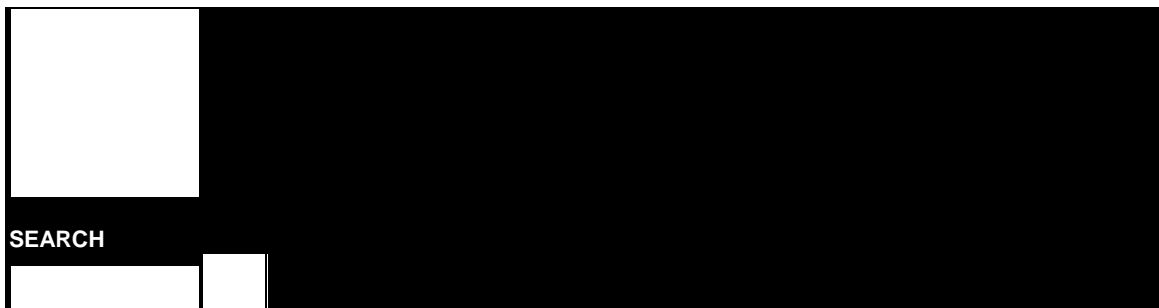
Reports put the Neverland staff at 69, but that may be high. My sources say the number there is really 45. Then there are the employees at Jackson's family home, also on his payroll, plus his assistant **Evvy Tavasci**, two nephews and a couple of miscellaneous types. They all have to be paid now through today, although some can also be laid off now, too.

What really came out of this is that despite their loyalty to him, the more than 50 people and at least 60 families were just not important to Michael Jackson.

You can sing or talk about feeding children and saving the world, but all integrity is lost when you abandon that many hard-working, decent people.

For three months during a hard winter those people suffered, and no one in the Jackson family cared — especially Michael. He didn't return to deal with the problem, but sloughed it off on an accountant and his sister. And sources tell me the **Janet** footed the bill.

Does the world really want more promises of charity from Michael Jackson now? I don't think so.



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All market data delayed 20 minutes.

L'Histoire en direct

L'hommage à Gil Evans, lundi au Casino, s'appelait «L'Événement». C'en fut un



□ **QUINCY JONES DIRIGE...**

... K. Garrett (avec le chapeau), W. Roney, M. Davis, George Gruntz (de dos)

Bosshard —

PAR

Philippe Clot

Gil Evans est au ciel depuis trois ans. Mais le Ben Dieu du jazz, lui, avait sans doute accordé un aller-retour Paradis-Casino de Montreux pour voir Miles Davis déchiffrer ses arrangements, plus de trente ans après leur collaboration. Pour voir aussi Quincy Jones diriger l'idole et ses partenaires de luxe (Kenny Garrett, sax et Wallace Roney, trompette) au sein d'un «méga» big band (ceux de George Gruntz et de Gil Evans) où tous les instruments étaient dédoublés, grâce aussi à des musiciens suisses appelés à la dernière minute.

Contrairement à ce qu'une interview récente laissait craindre («Je n'aime pas tous les types dans l'orchestre»), Miles semblait adorer remplacer ses phrases courtes, faussement nonchalantes, dans cette architecture sobre ultrasophistiquée, où les sections de cuivres côtoient la harpe. Intacte dans les passages avec sourdine, il déléguait lucidement quelques-unes de ses interventions de trompette non bouchée à Roney, son crâne de trente-quatre ans.



□ **MILES DAVIS**

Les yeux rivés sur le lutrin

Bosshard —

Gaining Landspeed

Five years ago, the name Warner Brothers would not ring in the ear of the jazz observer as an industry force to reckon with. Since the '70s, the label's jazz focus—apart from its brief distribution arrangement with ECM—was limited to the stuff that inspired cash registers as much as serious jazz culture. George Benson, Al Jarreau and David Sanborn were reliable staples—usually relying on a pop-jazz approach—of the WB jazz department, such as it was.

As of 1996, all that has changed, and the Warner Brothers Jazz roster, sculpted and refined by department head Matt Pierson, is a fully-rounded—and, finally, fully-functional—entity. The process was a slow-brewing one, with detours of corporate shifting and venue changing along the way, but now the reckoning has begun. The Warner Brothers roster now includes such young heavyweights as Joshua Redman, Wallace Roney and Kenny Garrett, as well as pop-jazz big-sellers such as Fourplay and Joe Sample, and wild cards such as the Bay Area “acid jazz” group TJ Kirk and distinctive, veteran vocalist Jimmy Scott.

Pierson, working avidly in both A&R and production capacities, is in a position to see them evolve from various angles. A lead trumpeter-turned-producer, Pierson first got into the industry working for Blue Note. “I thought if I learned how to work within the system that I could move some great music forward. But the key is that you’ve got to work the system.”

Four years ago, Pierson was handed control of the jazz department. “At the time they hired me, the idea was that they wanted to have a more well-rounded jazz department. Mo Ostin had a big jazz background, working with Norman Granz, on *Jazz at the Philharmonic* and other things in the jazz area. He felt it was an area where there was a major resurgence and that it was something that they should be involved in. At that time, Mark Whitfield was the only straightahead jazz artist on the roster.

“When I first came aboard, the first order of business was on an A&R level.

MITCHELL SEIDEL



Warner Bros.'s Matt Pierson (left) and engineer James Farber at a James Moody session.

I needed to balance out the roster to a degree. It wasn't ‘go sign three straightahead jazz guys.’ It was ‘address the roster, try to make it as healthy as possible and try to make it represent what's best in what someone calls jazz.’ It was a matter of signing some artists, mainly straightahead artists, a couple of more commercial jazz artists, and see to it that the artists already on the roster make the best possible records, and go from there.

“More than anything, it had to do with, instead of presenting a specific point of view, try to represent what's happening in jazz, period.”

But the progress of the newly-endowed jazz department was slowed down by the relocation of the office from Los Angeles to New York, and then corporate upheaval when long-time company head Mo Ostin stepped down. “These types of changes happen in the record business all the time,” Pierson asserted. “The reason it seemed shocking was that it was Warner Brothers, the most stable company in the business.

“I will say that now that the dust has settled, this company is as healthy as it has ever been. (New CEO) Russ Thyret is an incredible man and a great boss, the embodiment of what Mo and Lennie were about. The new structure within

this company provides a perfect environment for what I and the entire jazz department are trying to do.”

More than other, specifically jazz-oriented labels, the Warner Brothers jazz department is doing a delicate balancing act between art and commerce. From Pierson's perspective, “labels are superfluous. If you look at what someone might perceive as the straightahead side of our roster—Joshua Redman, Wallace Roney, Kenny Garrett, Larry Goldings, Brad Mehldau, Kevin Mahogany, James Moody—all of those guys have been influenced by all kind of music. They have that on their records, and will in the future have elements of all kinds of music, not just what we would perceive as hard bop or straightahead.

“All I can do is my job and see to it that what I hear is represented and that it is as good as it can be. Observing all the flak that Wynton got about Lincoln Center, I could relate, because at that time, I was getting criticism about not signing enough straightahead artists. Wynton said, ‘I was hired for my tastes, not on what you do, or what Kevin Whitehead or Gene Santoro or Peter Watrous think.’ That's his gig, and this is my gig.

Continues on page 118

"I'm just beholden to a corporation, where he's beholden to an artistic entity. They have to balance commerce and art as well, but at a record company, we have more pressure to serve up the numbers."

Numbers, of course, are never beside the point in a corporate environment, and Pierson sees as his challenge the successful use of the machinery. "It's powerful to be able to sign something that I truly believe in, that I do believe can reach a mass market, and know that I've got a machine here that can reach that market."

"I don't believe that Joshua Redman could have sold 150,000 *Mood Swing* records in the states if it weren't for the strength of Warner Brothers. If he were on a jazz label, not only would he have sold less, but he would not be perceived that he's an artist without category, the way he is on Warner Brothers. And he wouldn't have the freedom to take a turn, artistically, the way he does with us. So with the next record we're making in April, which will have some groove and electric elements on the record, he can do that and not be criticized. The only thing we have to deal with is that they'll probably criticize us for it," he laughed.

Do the more commercially active artists on the roster help to bankroll smaller, though potentially more artistic and prestigious projects, such as Roney's new quintet album?

"I think it's a misconception," Pierson responded, "that if you have commercial success with one artist that that gives you money to spend on another artist. If you do business that way, you're not doing good business. Every artist is considered on their own. With Fourplay, you spend a certain amount and you expect to make another amount. You base the amount to spend producing and marketing that record on what you think you're going to sell. Along the life of the record, you kick in another phase of marketing and spend more money. You're doing advertising, doing remixes, hiring independent publicists and promoters, whatever, based on the sales potential."

"Obviously, the marketing plan we put together for the Wallace Roney album, we're not spending the kind of money we would spend on a Boney James or Yellowjackets record. But we're spending it in ways that we feel would help expose it to the audiences who will hear it and we have a plan on how to go around that audience and reach a different audience. On a record-by-record basis, that varies

greatly. At the end of the day, you've got to be able to look the artist in the eye and say 'we did the best we could. This was our best effort' and truly believe it in your heart."

"As a record company, we have an obligation to market the music, so we have to find a way to expose it to the widest potential audience and identify which existing markets there are that we can tap into."

Those markets vary widely from act to act. The audience for Roney differs from the Fourplay crowd. Other, newer splinter areas have cropped up in the jazz world of late, such as the acid jazz scene, with its appeal to the alternative rock and dance market.

It's a world that TJ Kirk speaks directly to. Pierson commented, "the guys are great guitar players, there is a lot of interaction in the band and they groove their asses off. To me, it's jazz. That's more jazz than 90% of what's on NAC radio and even more than many things on jazz radio today. It's pure, unbridled communicative playing. It's free ensemble playing in the truest sense of the word."

"The market is alternative and there are alternative influences there, so when you market it, you try to reach the kids. That's more a marketing element. The music is music. Is it jazz? Who gives a shit? To me, music has cross-pollinated so much that who cares what you call it?"

Also in the jazz department are Randall Kennedy, senior director of marketing and sales—who is also in charge of the WB jazz internet site—Marylou Beaudeau, vice-president of product management; Chris Jones and Deborah Lewow for radio promotion, Jeff Levenson, VP for publicity and catalogue, Kathe Charas, the international marketing manager, and Dana Watson, the A&R manager. Pierson said, "those are the people who are running the business and making us look good."

From the promotional end of the process, Pierson and company have also been working on devising "fresh marketing ideas." Recently, the label co-sponsored, with DKNY, a Joshua Redman performance at the Fashion Café in New York, and the show was broadcast live on the internet. "It was an obvious tie-in—fashion and jazz," Pierson said. "It's

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The saxophone player is excellent. A lot of great technique there and certainly picked up a lot of late Coltrane, no question about it. On alto too, which is nice to hear. He played a couple of things, I wish he'd explored them more than just going into that squeaky thing and staying there for so long. I'd like to hear this guy in a context where I hear him stretch out more and develop something. If that's Trane on alto, that would be amazing. Could be.

AFTER That is Trane. Is that alto?

BP That's been the subject of some speculation.

DL I think that's alto man. Speculation meaning it's not listed.

BP The liner notes report he only plays tenor, but some people believe it's an alto.

DL The thing that's remarkable about this recording is that they're all short tunes. Five to seven minutes rather than the long, long ones he was doing at that time. In that case, there's a point to it.

But the way he goes high and low. It's a little easier to do that on the alto than on tenor. With the mouthpiece, the reed, the embouchure, it's a smaller area and you can really jump all over the horn easier than on tenor. When Trane did that stuff on tenor, it was amazing.

On the duo he did with Rashied, "Interstellar Space," he does a lot of that. I always describe that as dueting with himself. High low, high low, it's like two saxophone players at once.

When you hear him on alto, well when you think about it, he was an alto player first. He probably picked it up and said, this is like going back home. I know when I pick up the tenor, which I've been doing lately, I feel like I did when I started. There's something about that you can never replace, how it felt when you first played. Even if you don't pick it up for 20 years, it's still home base.

Late Trane, not a very discussed music. The last two years of his life, to think about where he came from in ten years, from Miles, through those 12 years, it's just extraordinary growth. And his saxophone, even if you don't like the music, the way he plays the horn is unbelievable. Nobody can get close to that. Technically, his facility, his fluidity, his deep sound, his amazing agility for going high and low, plus, for me, what he played.

When Trane played in the so-called free style it was the best and it still is because you could hear that he had all the other stuff together. He had all the ground work laid. From the blues to "Giant Steps" to "Impressions," the

ability to play chords, no chords, modal, free, pentatonic, changes every second, to do all that and to go and play this style, where it's more of a free association thing, you can hear the depth of what he had under his fingers and in his mind that carries over to this playing.

That's what you don't hear in a lot of free players. You hear, oh I can play the saxophone this way, but you don't hear that grounding and that fundamental foundation of bebop. I always tell my students, you can go anywhere you want, but you've got to have the ground work. **!!**

BOOKS *continued from page 64*

able attention while key patrons such as the Ertegun brothers and George Wein are noted. It would have been useful for Short to describe a typical recording session in a bit more detail than one finds here.

While this is an enjoyable read there are a few complaints. When the names of friends and associates are misspelled it is annoying. Yet this is a book without a discography and an index. Not having these sections is rather like making a martini and then forgetting the vermouth and the olive.

—Bob Porter **!!**

WARNER BROS. *continued from page 118*

all about what strikes you emotionally."

Pierson feels empowered by his position, now that the department is in place, but he's still keenly aware of the elusive aspects of the music industry. "Selling music to people is like trying to determine what people are going to want to eat. You can't. But the record business is this huge machine that, once you get to know it and how to work it, you can make more right calls than you would if you didn't. But in the end, who the hell knows?"

"Most importantly, if something is great, it's going to reach people—unless you mess it up. Art will win over commerce. You've got to believe that if you do your best, great artists will reach their audience. But it takes time." —Josef Woodard **!!**

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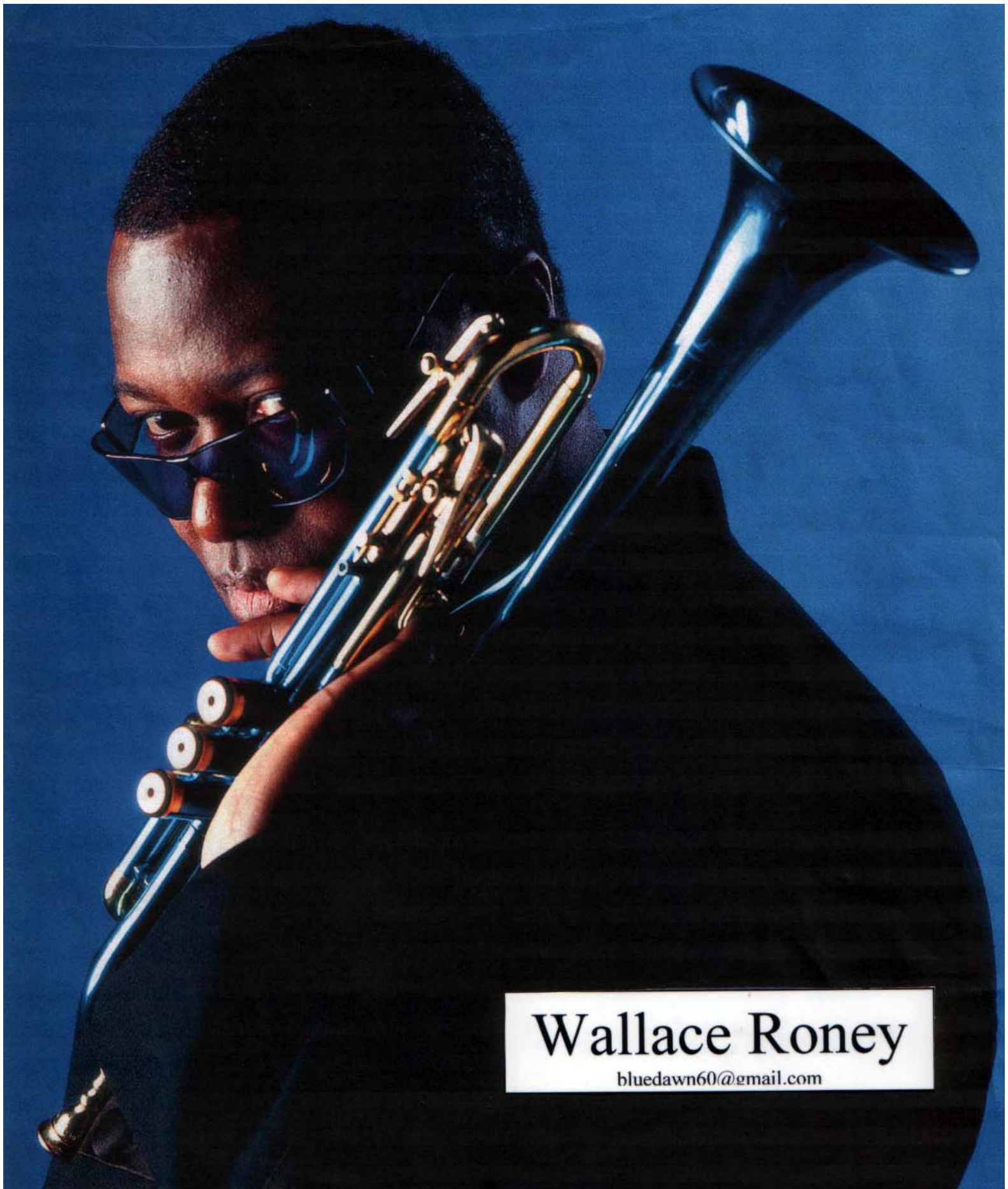
Down Beat 3/29/73 p. 10 (Chords and Discords):

I disagree with Sweets Edison (Brass Roundtable, Feb. 1) when he says that Miles couldn't play a first part. He also said that Miles is only a soloist, but being a soloist is the highest thing in a band. Miles would rather solo than back somebody up with a first part, but he can do it all.

Sweets was trying to say that Freddie Hubbard is better, which is his opinion; I think Miles is best. He also said that he comes to hear Miles, not his electronics, with which I agree - but if you *listen* to Miles' electronic stuff, you can dig what's happening...

Some people are mad because Miles plays that new music, but the reason he plays it is that he's bored with playing his old side.

Wallace Roney III
Philadelphia, Pa.



Wallace Roney

bluedawn60@gmail.com