

JAZZ COLLECTOR

By Charles Waring

"It was like having your record collection come to town," once quipped Oscar Peterson, recalling the impact the famous Jazz At The Philharmonic jam sessions had on the American public. Begun by the visionary jazz impresario Norman Granz as a one-off benefit concert at New York's Philharmonic Auditorium in 1943, the venture proved so popular that it quickly expanded into a brand name (JATP) and achieved renown for presenting star-studded touring shows as well as releasing seventeen volumes of live recordings. The specialist reissue label Mosaic first focused its attention on JATP back in 1998 with a box set covering its 1940s output but now offers a sensational companion volume, **Classic Jazz At The Philharmonic Jam Sessions 1950-1957** (★★★★★ Mosaic), a limited edition 10CD set collecting albums originally released via the Mercury, Norgran, Clef and Verve labels.

The mind-boggling cast of contributors reads like a Who's Who of the great and good in jazz; everyone from Dizzy Gillespie and Ella Fitzgerald to Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins and Stan Getz. Given the high calibre of musicians involved, the jam sessions are unsurprisingly spectacular; an embarrassment of musical riches whose quality is enhanced by

stunning audio restoration. In addition to the music, a detailed booklet, furnished with spectacular monochrome photos and an insightful essay by jazz historian John McDonough, helps bring an important part of jazz history vividly back to life. (It's only available at mosaicrecords.com).

Talking of jazz history, London pianist **STAN TRACEY** was responsible for recording one of the greatest British jazz albums of all time in the shape of the brilliant **Jazz Suite Inspired By Under Milkwood** (★★★★★ ReSteamed), which has now been remastered and resurfaces on vinyl for the first time in 40 years. (If you want it, you'd better hurry as it's limited to 1,000 copies worldwide). Thelonious Monk's DNA is all over Tracey's homage to Welsh poet Dylan Thomas – you can easily detect his influence via the quirky melodies of the tracks Cackle Row and No Good Boyo – but it's on the haunting ballad Starless & Bible Black that the pianist shows remarkable originality.

Another must-have archive release is organist **SHIRLEY SCOTT**'s amazing **Queen Talk: Live At The Left Bank** (★★★★★ Reel To Real/Wienerworld), a previously unissued incendiary performance dating from 1972 that is available as a double vinyl Record Store Day pressing limited to 3,000 hand-numbered sets. Recorded in Baltimore with Scott leading a trio of tenor saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN** and drummer Bobby Durham, it opens with an epic version of Coltrane's modal warhorse Impressions, which shows

that the Philly Hammond heroine could play progressive pieces as well as the bluesy soul-jazz grooves that were her hallmark. Other highlights include a funky version of The Jackson 5's Never Say Goodbye.

Coleman, now just turned 88, is still active musically and has a fabulous new album out, **Live At Smalls Jazz Club** (★★★★★ Cellar Music Group), which was recorded last year at one of New York's most iconic venues. The Memphis hornblower and NEA Jazz Master is in fine, amazingly agile, form, rolling back the years as he leads a simpatico, much younger quartet that includes dextrous pianist Spike Wilner. Highlights include a spirited version of Miles Davis's Four, a swingingly bluesy At Last, and a supremely sensitive reading of the old standard My Funny Valentine.

Coleman, as any informed jazz aficionado will tell you, played with a host of luminaries in the 1950s and 60s, including Max Roach, Herbie Hancock, and **MILES DAVIS**; the latter's groundbreaking, loosely improvised soundtrack album to Louis Malle's 1958 movie **Ascenseur Pour L'echafaud** (★★★★★ Valentine), has now been reissued on limited edition vinyl in a stunning new cover. It was the first album by Miles that introduced modal jazz – the concept of playing scales rather than chords – that would culminate in the epoch-defining *Kind Of Blue* a year later.

Miles began his career in the 1940s as a sideman of the bebop progenitor **CHARLIE PARKER**, who is commemorated by a new double LP compilation, **Afro Cuban Bop: The Long Lost Bird Live Recordings** (★★★★★ Wienerworld), which captures "Bird" live-in-concert creating Latin jazz by fusing bebop with Afro-Cuban music during the late 40s and early 50s in the company of Dizzy Gillespie, Milt Jackson, Art Blakey, and others. It's worth buying just for the amazing (and arguably definitive) version of A Night In Tunisia.

Like Parker, Eric Dolphy, eight years his junior, was a virtuosic alto saxophonist who helped to expand jazz's vocabulary. One of his greatest

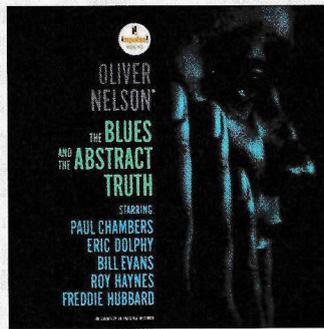
recordings as a sideman was on **OLIVER NELSON**'s classic 1961 LP, **The Blues And The Abstract Truth** (★★★★★ Wax Time), just reissued on vinyl. Dolphy was part of Nelson's all-star septet that also featured Freddie Hubbard, Bill Evans, and Roy Haynes, who shine brightest on the magnificent opening cut, Stolen Moments.

The incomparable **NANCY WILSON** was one of those rare singers with a distinctive, immediately recognisable timbre. Straddling the worlds of jazz, soul and pop, she first made her mark in the early 60s as a versatile song stylist and can be heard at her best on **Nancy Wilson With Cannonball Adderley And George Shearing** (★★★★★ Wax Time), a compilation drawing from two early 60s albums.

A wonderful modern-day US singer, LA's **GRETCHEN PARLATO** joins forces with Benin guitar virtuoso **LIONEL LOUEKE** on **Lean In** (★★★★★ Edition), a stunning collaboration where the chemistry between the pair creates an aesthetic spark that shapes the entire album. Standouts include a revamp of the African-flavoured Akwe, a track Loueke cut when he was in the group Gilfema, and the lush Brazilian-tinged Astronauta.

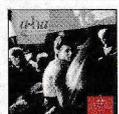
Two other new albums worth investigating this month come from the Blue Note stable: Grammy-winning pianist **ARTURO O'FARRILL**, who reframes jazz standards from a Latin perspective with **Legacies** (★★★★★ Blue Note) and the all-female band **ARTEMIS**, whose sparkling group interplay impresses on their second LP **In Real Time** (★★★★★ Blue Note). Also, listen out for pianist **BILLY CHILDS** who returns with the ace **The Winds Of Change** (★★★★★ Mack Avenue) featuring the formidable trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire.

Finally, US tenor saxophonist **SCOTT HAMILTON** releases **At PizzaExpress Live in London** (★★★★★ PX Records), the first album released by PizzaExpress's new record label. The Rhode Island veteran serves up a solid set of straight-ahead jazz in the company of pianist John Pearce, bassist Dave Green and drummer Steve Brown.



a-Ha Hunting High And Low

★★★★★
BMG 4050538791396 (6LP)
The 80s pop classic, back in boxset form



How much of a good thing is too much? a-Ha's 1985 debut album is undoubtedly one of the 80s' finest pure pop artefacts, containing one bona fide, generation-spanning classic in Take On Me and a bunch of enduringly gorgeous pop moments in The Sun Always Shines On TV, the wintery, balladeering title track and the lesser-known but robust

synth-pop explorations Train Of Thought and Love Is Reason. It very much demands rediscovery, the work of a pine-scented Pet Shop Boys buoyed by Morten Harket's dramatic, Let's Dance-era Bowie vocal tone. Yet this release's full, six-disc exploration of 25 demo recordings (from the painful, rinky-dink Take On Me predecessor Lesson One to the New Wave rawness of The Sphinx) and another 25 alternate single versions and mixes can only be recommended to enthusiasts devoted enough to demand the comprehensive treatment. *David Pollock*

Animal Collective Spirit They're Gone, Spirit They've Vanished

★★★★★
Domino REWIGLP 175 (3LP)
Origins of the species



Drawing on influences from Echo And The Bunnymen to Destiny's Child, Animal Collectivists David Portner and Noah Lennox suggested restless blueprints for Animal Collective's open-range evolution on this 2000 album's freeform fancies. *Alongside Untitled's abstract pitch, the skittish percussion and untethered yelps of April And The*

Phantoms showcase a driving exuberance for rhythm and twinkling melody. Penny Dreadfuls and Chocolate Girl are psych-pop wonders, fluttering and dreamy, while brush-stroked winner Bat You'll Fly balances control and chaos impeccably. This welcome reissue tags on the previously unreleased *A Night At Mr Raindrop's Holistic Supermarket*, an EP of five contemporaneous recordings, including frisky shapeshifter An An Angel and the ecstatic Untitled #1. Also featured is a submerged cover of Fleetwood Mac's Dreams: fine indication of the Collective's facility for reconfiguring their

influences in their own canted image. *Kevin Harley*

David Bowie

Laughing With Liza: The Vocalian & Deram Singles 1964-1967

★★★★★
Decca 4870015 (5x7")

Formative five singles from nascent notable



With some Tommy Steele and a lot of Anthony Newley, young aspiring Bowie cut a dash through swinging London on his early try-hard singles, five of which (with B-sides) are gathered in this box for the first time. Too