

RECORD REVIEWS

KIP HANRAHAN
DESIRE DEVELOPS AN EDGE -
 American Clave' 1009

Two (Still In Half Light); Early Fall; Velasquez; (Don't Complicate) The Life; The Edge You Always Loved In Me; Sara Wade; Far From Freetown; All Us Working Class Boys; Child Song; Trust Me Yet?; Nancy (The Silence Focuses On You...); Desire Develops An Edge; What Is This Dance, Anyway?; Meaning A Visa; Nocturnal Heart; Her Boyfriend Assesses His Value And Pleads His Case; Jack and The Golden Palominos

PERSONNEL: Jack Bruce, electric bass and vocals; Ricky Ford and John Stubblefield, tenor sax; Jamaaladeen Tacuma and Steve Swallow, electric bass; Arto Lindsay, Elysee Pyronneau and Ti' Plume Ricardo Franck, electric guitars; Ignaccio Berroa and Anton Fier, trap drums; Kip Hanrahan, Puntilla Orlando Rios, Milton Cardona, Frisner Augustine, Olufemi Claudette Mitchell and Jerry Gonzalez, percussion; John Zorn, alto sax; others

Even for the most like-minded group of musicians, the recording studio is sometimes an incompatible, extra "instrument." At its best, the studio spurs interaction; at its worst, it retards it. For a musician-producer like Kip Hanrahan, who has the added responsibility of running his own independent record company, the studio is an even greater challenge.

For *Desire Develops An Edge*, this New Yorker's second solo album (his first, 1981's *Coup de Tele*, received glowing reviews), this film-maker-cum-musician, director-cum-producer has brought together a cast of musicians whose sensibilities, on the surface, would seem utterly incompatible. On one tune, bassist-vocalist Jack Bruce sings in French patois over a company of Haitian percussionists who speak little or no English. Saxist Ricky Ford, a tenor player with a pen-

chant for Sonny Rollins-type locutions, holds a tropical seance with the spirit of the late tenorman Ben Webster. Arto Lindsay, a minimalist guitarist and avant-rocker who plays the electric guitar like a percussion instrument, scratches and scrapes away while Ti' Plume, a Haitian guitarist, spins a latticework of gossamer lines. These are but a few of the cunning, improvised connectives that make *Desire* an epochal album.

Whereas Cuban bata rhythms provide the improvisatory thrust and what Hanrahan calls "the center of gravity" on *Coup de Tele*, Haitian percussion dominates *Desire*. The rhythms are every bit as essential as the horns and guitars; no instrument or group of instruments is subordinated to another, just as no one genre of music — jazz, punk rock, *avant-garde*, Caribbean — oppresses another. The emphasis varies, of course, but the production is devoid of instrumental clutter and surface noise. Each instrument is accorded the space it needs. Bruce, a commanding vocalist, evinces a surety on the ballads that is every bit as convincing as his abandon on the upbeat numbers. That's no small accomplishment when one learns that he cut his vocal tracks alongside the Haitian percussion battery.

Hanrahan uses echo to his advantage in certain spots, sometimes retaining the echo or aura of the saxophone, for example, and replacing the saxophone itself. Acoustic and electric instruments freely intermingle. In a sense, the attentive listener can almost discern the aural equivalents of such filmic devices as cross-cut, fade, dissolve and pan. Shadows and light, silence and sound, spaces and faces — these are the things that fascinate Hanrahan.

Desire demonstrates that Hanrahan's vision is clearly in tune with the times. (Available from Rounder, New Music Distribution Service and American Clave, 211 E. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10003.) — g.k.

* ***** Excellent

***** Very Good

*** Good

** Fair

* Poor