



Horn circles! Bob Stewart photo by Douglas Cape.

whole personal instrument there to find out about. Five for Bill Barber for being part of the roots of a new beginning for the instrument.

#### PAUL RUTHERFORD

"Chefor" from *Neuph* (Sweet Folk And Country). Rutherford (eu).

It almost sounds like a French horn because this is not a tuba, it's a euphonium. Where's the player from? Russia? Germany? Poland? *He's English.*

Oh, it's Paul Rutherford. Yeah, I have this, last time I saw him, he gave me this record. Rutherford's a fine musician. To sustain an abstract solo piece like this for over eight minutes, when you're dealing with difficult multiple techniques from multiphonics to skipping registers – everything your teacher told you not to do in fact – he gets a five.

#### RAY DRAPER

"Essii's Dance" from *Tuba Jazz* (Jubilee). Draper (tba); John Coltrane (ts); John Maher (p); Spanky DeBrest (b); Larry Ritchie (d).

(*Straightaway*) Ray Draper with Coltrane. Ray knew how to choose notes and intervals on tuba that evoked colours in your mind. It wasn't that he was such a fantastic tuba player technically – as a matter of fact, Ray told me one time that the first time he heard Howard it made him want to give up the tuba – but what he did know was how to place notes with the rhythm section so that it really swung. It's totally different to Howard's soloing, but equally valid. Ray, along with such players as Red Callender and Slam Stewart, kept the tuba alive in the 50s, so that's a five.

#### EARL MCINTYRE

"Reactionary Tango (In Three Parts)" from

*Social Studies* by Carla Bley (Watt). McIntyre (tba); Joe Daley (eu); with The Carla Bley Band.

(*Straightaway*) Carla Bley. I knew it was her after the first two measures. It's from *Social Studies* with Earl McIntyre on tuba and Joe Daley on euphonium. Carla's very dramatic, very theatrical; it sounds like it could be from *The Threepenny Opera* or something. Yeah, listen there, that's interesting orchestration – she uses two bass horn instruments to accompany the electric bass solo. This was right after I left the band. It was around that time that I started working with Arthur Blythe, and I had to turn her down a couple of times, and bandleaders get a little sensitive about that. But the important part is that the tuba lived on in the band. Both of them were in the tuba and brass section with Howard and myself in Taj Mahal's band, Earl was 17, Joe was 21. Carla has a beautiful melodic sense, especially for the tuba – my ensemble parts always had lovely melodies. So five for Earl and five for Carla's orchestration.

#### DON BUTTERFIELD

"Solo Dancer" from *The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* by Charlie Mingus (Impulse). Butterfield (cbtrb, tba) with the "Charles Mingus New Folk Band".

Is there a tuba in there? No, well those blasts sound like bass or even contrabass trombone. It feels like Mingus. That colour, that coda right there is Mingus. Is it Don Butterfield?

*Yes, and according to Mingus's liner notes, he's playing two tubas with one mouthpiece.*

Mingus liked to lie; Mingus liked to tell stories. I got to be friendly with Mingus because I broke up a fight once between his trumpet player and road manager over some bread that was owing. That kind of show of force was the sort of thing that impressed Mingus, and after that he was just so nice to me, and I hired musicians for gigs for him. Mingus was a master composer – the more I study him, the more I appreciate that – and his musical ability far overshadowed his bass playing. Don Butterfield also did some front line recordings with Clark Terry, and he was part of the reintroduction of the tuba back into jazz in the early 50s. So five again for that.





This Month: Bob Stewart

*Each month we test a musician with a series of records which they're asked to comment on and "mark out of five" – with no prior knowledge of what it is they're hearing! This month: Bob Stewart takes the test with Philip Watson.*

J A Z Z M A Y have many instrumental backwaters, but Bob Stewart has done more than most to bring the tuba back firmly into the mainstream. A trumpet player at college, Stewart was inspired and encouraged on the more cumbersome horn by Howard Johnson, and on moving to New York in 1968 he joined Substructure, Johnson's tuba ensemble. Since then, playing an impressive range of styles (from Dixieland to bebop and freeform) in an even more remarkable range of bands, Stewart has helped redevelop and redefine the role of the tuba in contemporary jazz.

He has appeared in big bands led by Mingus, Gil Evans, Carla Bley, Dizzy Gillespie, David Murray and Taj Mahal, worked in small groups with Arthur Blythe, Bill Frisell and Lester Bowie (in *Brass Fantasy*), and frontlined a quartet with French horn player John Clark. Stewart's own quintet have recorded two much lauded albums on JMT (*First Line* and *Goin' Home*), and he is currently working on arrangements of such Mingus compositions as "Fables Of Faubus" and "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" for an octet he premieres this month at the Saalfelden Festival in Austria.

Ever open-minded, Stewart dismisses any notion of the tuba being a limited instrument: "Even though I favour using the tuba as a bass instrument, I can play solos, melodies, and all kinds of bass lines. And there are so many sources to choose from – every culture has some kind of tuba tradition – from English colliery bands to the brass bands of Germany and Austria, and its use in the music of Africa, Cuba, Surinam, and of course, New Orleans. The tuba is truly a world instrument."

#### HOWARD JOHNSON

"Third World Anthem" from *Album Album* by Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition (ECM). Johnson (tba); David Murray (ts); John Purcell (as); Rufus Reid (b); Jack DeJohnette (d).

(*Straightaway*) Howard Johnson. Jack DeJohnette. *Album Album*. Nice album; fantastic album. Howard isn't just a master tuba player, he's a master musician. Howard was the person who opened my eyes and mind to the fact that there's a lot more available to the tuba than was being offered. He's the greatest influence on my musical career because he encouraged me to find out who I wanted to be on tuba and how I wanted to represent myself through the instrument. What this track shows is that there are as many sides and styles of playing the tuba as there are to the trumpet or saxophone. Howard presents the tuba as a horn player out the front of the band. It's unbelievable the things that he does on tuba – his upper registers are equivalent to the flexibility and skill of, say, Cat Anderson on trumpet.

*Marks out of five?*

Seven.

#### CYRUS ST CLAIR

"You'll Long For Me (When The Cold Winds Blow)" from *Clarence Williams's Jazz Kings* (VJM). Ed Allen (c); Charlie Irvis (tb); Albert Socarris (cl); Williams (p); Leroy Harris (bj); St Clair (tba).

No kidding. No kidding. Is this The Tuba Players' Band? No? Well the tuba is very prominent in the recording for this period. Is it early King Oliver?

*It was actually recorded in 1927, and it's Cyrus St Clair.*

It didn't sound that late. And I don't even know who that is. Wow, that's very interesting. This was about the time, or in fact a little earlier, that the tuba started to be replaced by the bass. Milt Hinton was telling me recently that, when a lot of blacks moved from the south to Chicago in the late teens, the tuba began to fade out because it came from a country marching tradition and it wasn't really considered hip enough for the urban clubs. It was actually *style* reasons rather than the tuba being difficult to play physically that led to its decline. I thought it was a fantastic track. I've listened to all the Smithsonian reissues of things like the Hot Fives and King Oliver and never have I heard so prominent a tuba solo. My beginnings were in Dixieland – that's one of the reasons I recorded "Sweet Georgia Brown" on my last album – and I can't deny the instrument's

roots. I imagine, for its time, this was pretty avant-garde. Five.

#### PHILIP FRAZIER

"Kidd Jordan's Second Line" from *Rebirth Kick It Live!* (Special Delivery). Frazier (tba) with The Rebirth Brass Band.

This is either The Dirty Dozen Brass Band or Rebirth. It sounds like The Dirty Dozen because they have a lead trumpet player who can hit high notes like that.

*It's Rebirth.*

The first time I saw them was in the lobby of the North Sea Festival. That totally turned me on; I mean, there was plenty to see, but I couldn't get past that lobby. I was dancing, it was fantastic. They seemed to have a rawness to them whereas The Dirty Dozen had become a little smoother, with a little more finesse.

*This track is called "Kidd Jordan's Second Line". What's the significance of that?*

Well, it literally refers to the second line of the marching bands where the drums and the tuba player were situated. The front line is the horns. I call my band First Line because I don't want to be second. Philip Frazier's playing is very effective on this track – if you're doing more, and playing a lot of notes, you're not respecting that tradition. He keeps it solid, just enough to push the band. Five, on spirit alone.

#### BILL BARBER

"Boplicity" from *The Birth Of The Cool* (Capitol). Barber (tba) with the Miles Davis Nonet.

It feels like early 50s, maybe Gil Evans, maybe *The Birth Of The Cool*. So it's Bill Barber. Yeah, that has Gil's colour on it. Bill Barber and Don Butterfield were on a lot of these early Gil Evans arrangements and this was the beginnings of the rebirth of the tuba in contemporary jazz. I think I worried Gil into letting me into his band, I was so determined. I remember taking a tape of what I was doing with John Clark to Gil, and the very compliment I had been receiving from other people and taken great pride in, like "Yeah Bob, that's great man, it sounds just like a bass", Gil said but with a slightly different emphasis. He said: "Yeah Bob, that's nice, but it just sounds like a bass." I thought about that and I realised there was a