

INVISIBLE

★ JAMES MOODY ★

JUKE BOX

Every 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.

LEE KONITZ/JOE HENDERSON

"You Don't Know What Live Is" from *The Lee Konitz Duets* (Milestone).

The title of that song was "You Don't Know What Love Is" and I don't know what that was. I'll just take a guess. Was that Lee Konitz? And Warne Marsh or somebody like that? It was baritone wasn't it?

No, tenor. It was Joe Henderson.

I know Joe and Lee and I'll give them five stars because they both can play. But I guess maybe I'm old-fashioned – I don't like music that sounds like that. It's hectic-sounding and I think music should relax you and make you feel good. When you want to go to war then you can play "The War March". Although they were playing the changes and you could hear Joe playing those obbligato lines, I have to be honest – I didn't particularly care for it; it's not my cup of tea as you say here. But still they're great saxophone players.

What is it that makes them great?

Well, Joe has his style and Lee Konitz has his, but both are very valid. They're similar but different, but both have a thing that makes them great saxophone players.

But what is that thing, James?

Moody.

Mr Moody.

No, just Moody. They call me "Moody". Well, Joe knows his instrument technically, he has a great sound, execution, he's innovative, he's a hell of a composer, he has a great musical mind, and that's only scratching the surface. As for Lee, Lee knows, he's a great saxophone player and I don't say that all the time.

ERIC DOLPHY

"Gazzelloni" from *Out To Lunch* (Blue Note).

Is that Eric Dolphy? Nah [*he shakes his head, waves his hand down dismissively, and asks who else was on the date*]. I'm sorry, but I guess you can tell I didn't enjoy that. And you have some great guys there – Freddie Hubbard, Bobby Hutcherson you know, Tony Wil-

Frank Watson



A MUSICAL force, albeit an uneven one, in jazz for almost 50 years, James Moody was one of the first tenor players to fan the fire of 40s bebop. It's a style he's embraced and explored ever since.

Joining the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band aged just 21, he made his recording debut as leader (on Blue Note) in 1948, the same year he moved to Paris, playing there in 1949 with Miles Davis and Tadd Dameron. Later that year Moody recorded his classic "Moody's Mood For Love" in Sweden – a song that became a jukebox hit on both sides of the Atlantic. Returning to the US in 1951, Moody led his own septets in the 50s, added flute to his repertoire of tenor and alto (more recently he has also taken up soprano), and worked for eight years in the sixties back with Dizzy in his quintet and later his big band.

Falling out of favour in the 70s, he moved to Las Vegas to play in the Hilton Hotel house band supporting such artists as Paul Anka, The Osmonds and Liberace. Moody re-emerged on the New York scene in 1980, and has since played and toured with his own quartet, and with, among others, Dizzy's United Nations Orchestra and the Phillip Morris Superband. His recording career was revived, after a long hiatus, by Novus in 1986 and his fourth album for the label, *Honey*, was released last year.

James Moody was tested by Philip Watson.

BUDDY TATE/DON BYAS

"One O'Clock Jump" from *Count Basie vol IV – 1941–42* (CBS).

I'm going to give it five stars because it means a lot to me. When I was 18 I was living in Newark, New Jersey and I went to the Adams Theatre to hear Count Basie's Orchestra thinking that Lester Young – my idol of the time – would be there playing with him. But Lester had left and in the band were Buddy Tate and Don Byas. After I heard them, and I'd seen Don and Buddy

coming up to the mike like that, I said to myself "I want to do that, man". Those players and that band inspired me to play saxophone. They inspired me to do what I'm doing now, 50 years on. [*Long pause*]

Johnny Griffin once described Don Byas as "the Art Tatum of the saxophone". Do you agree?

Yes. [*Long pause*] That's a good description. Like Art, he could play different progressions that no-one else could play. Don Byas understood Art's complexity; he was more technical than Buddy Tate – Buddy was more with the changes.



liams you know, but er . . . [long pause] Er, yeah, and I'm sorry. All I know is what I heard and I just hated what I heard. Freddie Hubbard had some semblance of a line in his solo, but I got the feeling, and I hate to say something like this, that he [Dolphy] was just fingering the keys. He was playing harmonics, just making sounds, and to me that's not music. Even though music can be cut like this, there wasn't really any thought towards making a comprehensible line. It's OK to play like that, but play the changes – you see, I'm still trying to learn the changes now. And, you know, people are stupid when it comes to music because they go too much with what they read and not what they like. That playing is not organised – if that was the first thing I'd heard I would never have become a musician.

Would you like to give it some marks?

No. I'll give Freddie Hubbard and Bobby Hutcherson and Tony Williams five for being who they are . . . [pause], but I'm sorry, I can't.

BERNT ROSENGREN/THORE SWANERUD

"All The Things You Are" from *More Than You Know* (Dragon).

That was "All The Things You Are". Is that Stan Getz?

No. *Do you know the piano player?* [No answer] Well, here's a clue: this was recorded in 1984, but he played with you in 1949 on the original recording of "Moody's Mood For Love".

Was that Thore Swanerud? Ah, Thore, man. You know Thore passed away recently. Isn't that something. Ah, man. Old Thore, man; we had a wonderful time together. Thore Swanerud. He was a bit neglected as a piano player – only a select few knew him – but he was a good musician, and a nice person. He could play in many different styles and he knew the changes – I mean I don't particularly like stride piano – but he was still a wonderful pianist. And the tenor solo was nice too – he's a nice player. I'm giving Thore five and five also for the tenor solo.

COURTNEY PINE

"Sacrifice" from *Destiny's Song And The Image of Pursuance* (Antilles).

That tenor player played some nice things, things I liked, like intervals, but I don't really have a clue who it was?

Another clue: he's young and British.

Is that er . . . oh, that Jamaican player, what's his name . . . oh yeah, Courtney Pine. Yeah, he's got a thing. He's going to be OK. Who was the piano player? He was

really with the song.

Julian Joseph.

Yeah, I like him. He's a nice player. Courtney can play man, he's young and he's playing some different intervals, you know, he's cool.

Some people have said Courtney sounds too derivative of Coltrane.

Look at it this way. Courtney's young; he's in his 20s. Didn't we all copy somebody – like if you'd heard me in the 40s, I was trying to sound like Charlie Parker or Lester Young or Don Byas. Everybody copies – if we didn't we wouldn't be able to say, "Hello, how are you?" So Courtney is just following what comes naturally to anybody. What do they want – him to jump up and sound like Courtney Pine at 22? Give the man a break and let him grow and grow.

ROLAND KIRK

"From Bechet, Byas and Fats" from *Rip, Rig And Panic* (Emarcy).

I have no idea who that is. It's not Benny Golson is it?

No. *It's from an album called Rip, Rig And Panic – does that help?* [No] *It's Roland Kirk.*

It's OK. Good execution, you know. It was fine. Erm, I'll give it 5 because it's Roland, but [pause], you know, I mean, it's not something I would listen to. When I hear music, it has to make me feel something. I guess I'm a little funny because I have to feel music and when I don't feel it, I don't get anything. I shouldn't have to force myself to listen to music. Because when I listen to this my ear automatically wants to go somewhere else. It doesn't mean it isn't good, it's just that I don't care for it – put it that way.

Rahsaan Roland Kirk once described jazz as "black classical music". Do you agree?

Many years ago it was, yes. But now it's classical music, period. Jazz isn't black music anymore – it's a universal music played by everybody. No-one has any more soul than anyone else; no-one has any more rhythm than anyone else. Colour has nothing to do with anything. Listen, I've seen that bullshit. When I was 18 I was in the air force in America and I had to watch prisoners-of-war jumping off trucks and going to eat in restaurants that I couldn't even enter. That's a bunch of shit, and the sooner the world realises that no-one is better than anyone else the better place it will be.

ORNETTE COLEMAN

"Enfant" from *Ornette On Tenor* (Atlantic).

Is that Ornette Coleman? I can't dig that –

turn it off. You know, I really don't want to make any comment on this at all. No comment, none. Just put that down: 'No comment'. Because I don't like that stuff; don't like it, never did. It's like me coming over to you and saying [speaks a stream of nonsense words]. And it's as if people are listening and thinking he just said, 'What a wonderful day it is'. No, I'm sorry. You know, I've spent all this time trying to learn my instrument and he's coming along and . . . [more nonsense words]. If I said that to my wife, she'd probably divorce me – or at least put me in a straitjacket. You wouldn't want a doctor treating you with that kind of knowledge, believe me. It's a bunch of shit – that's what it is – but the nice thing about it is that I don't have to buy it, or listen to it.

The critics think they understand this bullshit, that they have such good ears for this music. But what are their credentials for telling that this is good music? Ask critics to sing a C-scale and they have no idea – that's the truth. You know, you think this is good, but can you sing me a major scale. [Critic demurs] Go on man, sing me a major scale. [Critic sings one – pitch unknown] Now go up a semi-tone. [Critic goes up a semi-tone – pitch still unknown] Now sing a minor scale [Critic diplomatically asks what all this is proving] It proves that if you can't sing it, you can't play it. What I'm saying is the more you practise things like that the better your ears get and the less you want to hear things like this; the less you want to hear no bullshit.

I take it you don't want to give this any marks then.

No, no comment. Because you know, man, I've put a lot of work into practising and trying to play changes and I haven't got good enough where I can just play at will. You tell me what's different from that and a kid learning a scale. He's just sticking with one tonality. Dar [pause] Dar [pause] Dar, dar, dar, dar . . . Daaaaarrrrrr . . .

BUD SHANK

"Mood Antigua" from *Brazilliance Vol 2* (World Pacific).

My first reaction was that it sounded like a girl playing flute. I don't know who she is – it doesn't sound like anybody I know.

It was Bud Shank.

It was. I know Bud, but I've never heard him play like that. I like Bud Shank. [Long pause] I've played with him and Lee Konitz – we did a TV thing. You know, Bud's been around and he plays what he plays.

Marks?

Oh, I'll give that five. ■