

☆☆☆☆ landmark recording ☆☆☆ excellent
 ☆☆☆ good ☆☆ average ☆ disappointing

Eric Dolphy

Eric Dolphy Musical Prophet: The Expanded 1963 New York Sessions

Resonance HLP9035 ★★★★★

Eric Dolphy (f, as, bcl), Woody Shaw (t), Prince Lasha (f), Sonny Simmons (as), Clifford Jordan (ss), Garvin Bushell (bsn), Bobby Hutcherson (vib), Richard Davis, Eddie Kahn (b), J.C. Moses and Charles Moffett (d). Rec. July 1963

Originally recorded for Alan Douglas' Douglas label, *Eric Dolphy Jazz Prophet: The Expanded 1963 New York Sessions* is a deluxe, limited-edition re-release that comes in a gatefold sleeve, complete with copious liner notes and rare photographs, plus a remarkable 85 minutes of Dolphy's music that has never been previously released. These sessions, from 1 and 3 of July 1963, originally produced the albums *Iron Man* and *Conversations*, which have subsequently appeared in part or whole on labels such as VJLP, Fontant, Exodus, Joy, Epitaph, Affinity, Trip, VeeJay, Le Jazz and more, all of variable sound quality. In contrast, this well produced Resonance re-release comes on three 180gm vinyl audiophile pressings that reproduce the sound exceptionally well.

Album one comprises *Conversations* plus two previously unissued takes of 'Muses for Richard Davis'; album two comprises *Iron Man* with the bonus track 'A Personal Statement', while album three comprises seven previously unissued alternative takes. With the passage of time (over 50 years), the original Douglas albums (and other re-releases) have accumulated clicks and pops and things that go bump in the night. These new pressings are clean, which is especially valuable when listening to the duo tracks with Dolphy on either flute or bass clarinet with Richard Davis on bass, where surface noise could be intrusive. *Conversations* and *Iron Man* form a bridge between key albums under Dolphy's own name for the Prestige label – *Outward Bound* (1960), *Out There* (1960), *Far Cry* (1961) and *At The Five Spot* (1961) – and his seminal *Out To Lunch!* (1964). They capture him in solo and duo settings and performing his own music with a handpicked ensemble, capturing a true jazz original at his best, Resonance's three-disc set is of great historical significance and should be in every contemporary jazz collection alongside those classic albums by Miles Davis, Mingus, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane. **Stuart Nicholson**

Joe Farrell

Penny Arcade/Upon This Rock/Canned Funk BGO 1343 ★★★★★

Joe Farrell (ts, ss, f, picc), Herbie Hancock (p), Joe Beck (g), Herb Bushier (b), Steve Gadd, Jim Madison (d), Don Alias and Ray Mantilla (perc). Rec. October 1973, March 1974 and November-December 1974

When Corea replaced Joe Farrell in Return to Forever with Bill Connors' rock-angled guitar, it changed not only jazz (fusion) forever; it left the talented sax and flute man at a personal crossroads. These three albums, all recorded in the aftermath of RTF reflect how he wrestled with the vibe of the time, notably under Creed Taylor's production values. Not, of course, that Farrell lacked credentials: he'd taken Wayne Shorter's place with Maynard Ferguson, and played/recorded with Mingus, George Russell, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra and had led his own band with no less than McLaughlin, Corea, DeJohnette and Dave Holland. So who needed RTF?

Penny Arcade's title-track states its intentions with a full on funk attack penned by Joe Beck. It's followed by a 13-minute take on Stevie Wonder's 'Too High', with Herbie's electric piano reflecting how deeply Hancock was embroiled in the funk fad of the time. The clues are kind of in the titles of *Upon This Rock* and *Canned Funk*. In Hancock's absence, the former is dominated by Joe Beck's rock-centric often heavily distorted guitar, all encapsulated in 'Weather Vane', which handbrake turns between twinned top tempo lines in the same vein as Mahavishnu and super-smooth soprano sequences. Meanwhile, Beck swims happily between Benson-like grooves and quasi Iron Butterfly outtakes. *Canned Funk* is rich with funk grooves, and its title-track, like 'Upon This Rock', has been much sampled, so it's a cack-handed complement that everyone from Kanye (or should that be Ye?) to, yeah believe it, King Crimson have profited from Farrell's talents. Except the man and his family, of course, who died stupidly young.

Andy Robson

Dizzy Gillespie & His Orchestra

Gillespiana
 Essential Jazz Classics EJC 55751
 ★★★★★

Clark Terry, Ernie Royal, Joe Wilder, John Frosk (t), Urbie Green, Frank Rehak, Britt Woodman (tb), Julius Watkins, Gunther

Schuller, Jimmy Buffington, Al Richman, Morris Scott, William Lester (trhn), Don Butterfield (tba), Leo Wright (as, f), Lalo Schifrin (p, comp), Art Davis (b), Chuck Lampkin (d), Jack Del Rio and Willie Rodriguez (perc). Rec. November 1960

This recording marks the moment that Lalo Schifrin took over from Junior Mance as Gillespie's pianist in the quintet, bringing with him new ideas and a fresh repertoire. 'Gillespiana' was conceived as a *concerto grosso*, in which the trumpeter's quintet played as the group of soloists and a massed big-band brass section formed the *ripieno* ensemble. The resulting texture is quite unlike any of Gillespie's other 1950s and early 1960s big-band works, including Schifrin's later big-band suite 'New Continent', because of the absence of reeds. Leo Wright's solo alto and flute contrast dramatically with the full weight of the horns, underpinned by Don Butterfield's tuba. Gunther Schuller (present in the French horn section) commented at the time that they all marvelled at Gillespie's 'sovereignty' on his trumpet and at the way Schifrin had reflected such different aspects of Dizzy's musical personality, from his rapid-fire 'Toccata' to the



Joe Farrell

melancholy 'Blues' or the heritage explored in 'Africana'. Re-listening to this album now, it's impossible to disagree – this is Gillespie on top form, and in a more ambitious and through composed setting than anything he had attempted up to that point. Unlike the 1990s Verve reissue on CD, which pairs this with Gillespie's *Carnegie Hall Concert* album, EJC have wisely decided instead to add a Paris concert, performed just days after the recording sessions, which features the quintet playing extended versions of four of the movements from the suite – the lengthiest, 'Toccata', running almost 14 minutes. This is a fascinating and instructive contrast, and a fine piece of production by EJC that urges one to acquire this reissue even if the Verve original is already on hand. **Alyn Shipton**

REVIEWER'S REMORSE

Duncan McCoshan exhumes beauties from the vintage jazz mag archives

Hecky Oppdahl and his Lapps of Luxury Santa Claus is Coming to Swing!

YoHoHo HO/59 001

Hecky Oppdahl (t), plus unidentified personnel. Rec. 22 July 1959

OK, this is a first-rate swing outfit. They play nice, they play tight, the ensemble work is good and the charts excellent. So why is this album the festive equivalent of the Hindenburg disaster? I'll tell you why – Oppdahl sings. Oh boy, does he sing. Is it good singing? If you like the sound of someone yodelling with molasses then Oppdahl is your man. If I had to put him somewhere on the vocals spectrum it would be between Billy Eckstein and a bath-time Bugs Bunny. But to business... Oppdahl stuck to swing throughout the bop revolution. A Harry James acolyte with a vibrato wider than a fjord and phenomenal breath control he was a staple of many Scandi big bands of the period. He was also fond of the pop and described as having "a liver the size of Belgium". That aside, the bands he put together swung like a saloon door in a force nine gale. Things kick off here with 'Sleigh Ride', which bounces along nicely until the arrangement introduces a solo section for the nyckelharpa or Swedish 'key fiddle' – not an unpleasant scrapey sound (in fact I rather like it), but perhaps not here. Then Oppdahl sings. The effect is indescribable. Why? one asks oneself. Then track two opens and things brighten immediately, like arctic sun to a man adrift on a berg of dark atonality: very nice romping brass here and a non-cheesy rendition of 'Rudolph'. Then the singing again. Is it singing? To be honest it sounds so unrefined, so elemental, it could be issuing from some lumpy hirsute beast of Norse myth. I digress... I digress because it is so unsettling. Do I make myself clear? There is more of this: 'Jingle Bells', 'Silent Night' (natch), 'The Little Drummer Boy'... All of it wrecked by Oppdahl's wounded howling. I lay down with a very large eggnog and stuffed snow in my ears. **J.J. Geiger**