

RECORDINGS REPORTS: Jazz LPs

TITLE, PERSONNEL, DATA	REPORT
Herb Ellis and Charlie Byrd: <i>Guitar/Guitar</i> . Ellis and Byrd, guitars; with Gene Byrd or Keeter Betts, bass; Bill Reichenbach, drums. Columbia CL 2330, \$3.98; stereo, \$4.98.	Each side is introduced by a sample of <i>bossa nova</i> , that tepid idiom jazz could so well have done without, but, apart from the tiresomely ubiquitous "Bluesette," the other performances are very attractive. They include "Oh, Lady Be Good," at an unusually slow tempo; an exciting essay in <i>chinoiserie</i> entitled "Chung King"; and nearly five minutes of confident blues on "Fings Ain't Wot They Used t' Be." Ellis plays electric guitar and his is the more strongly rhythmic role, but Byrd backs him skilfully and comes to the fore in solos that are less forceful but no less imaginative. Stereo adds much to the enjoyment of this record.
Lionel Hampton: <i>A Taste of Hamp</i> . Hampton, vibraharp; Sy Mann, piano; Bob Mann, guitar; Sevuca, guitar and vocal; Carmen Costa, vocal; and other unidentified musicians. Glad-Hamp 7009, mono only, \$3.98.	Included here is the ultimate refinement: <i>bossa nova</i> sung in French. The material and uninspiring support are generally too much for even Hampton's dynamism. He tries to shake loose occasionally in his normal manner, but the overriding considerations of a "mood" album soon stifle jazz aspirations. Sevuca and Carmen Costa have the cachet of being "imported" (from Brazil), but a policy of something for everybody, as so often happens, results in nothing for anybody.
Budd Johnson: <i>Off the Wall</i> . Johnson, tenor saxophone; Joe Newman, trumpet; Al Dailey, Jr., piano; Richard Davis or George Duvivier, bass; Grady Tate, drums. Argo 748, mono and stereo, \$4.98.	Although Argo has this time freed Johnson from the restraint of the conga cavalry, Latin-American rhythms make themselves felt on two blues (via rock-'n'-roll) and on two ballads (via <i>bossa nova</i>). In solos, however, Johnson and Newman overwhelm exoticism with their four-four conception. Both are very good indeed. Johnson's innate creativity and brilliant musical intellect triumph repeatedly, even on so unlikely a vehicle as "Baubles, Bangles and Beads." He plays with a compelling muscular strength, except on "Ill Wind," where he adopts a gentler approach. Newman resurrects many good ideas in his solos and presents them freshly. There are echoes of Rex Stewart, Buck Clayton, and Clark Terry, but he is his own man, as the blazing plunger-muted solo in "Playin' My Hunch" proves. It is the last track on the record, the most exciting, and the one to play first.
B. B. King: <i>Live at the Regal</i> . King, guitar and vocal; Carl Adams, John Browning, Fip Ricard, trumpets; John Watson, trombone; Lawrence Burdine, alto saxophone; Johnny Board, Vernon Slater, tenor saxophones; Charles Brooks, piano; Leo Lauchie, bass; Sonny Freeman, drums. ABC-Paramount 509, \$3.98; stereo, \$4.98.	Probably the most popular blues artist in the world, King is a singer and guitarist of great power and variety. This excellent album, recorded in a Chicago theater, shows how knowingly he plays on the emotions of his audience. Maudlin sentiments are often translated with seizing conviction, and his occasional use of wailing falsetto suggests forlorn and desperate lives. Even more expressive than his voice is his guitar, with which he tells dramatic stories over an exciting beat, the long, quivering notes having much the same effect as the falsetto. He regularly employs a band for accompaniment—like Ray Charles, Lloyd Price, and James Brown—and it is in this not unhealthy environment that many of the next generation of jazz musicians are being nurtured.
Rod Levitt: <i>Insight</i> . Levitt, trombone; Rolf Ericson, trumpet and flugelhorn; Buzz Renn, alto saxophone, clarinet, and flute; George Marge, tenor saxophone, clarinet, piccolo, and flute; Gene Allen, baritone saxophone and bass clarinet; Cy Johnson, piano; John Beal, bass; Ronnie Bedford, drums. RCA Victor LPM 3372, \$3.98; stereo, \$4.98.	Levitt, who likes writing for films and documentaries, is a musical image-maker. He does wonders here with a capable octet in nine well-varied performances, which together reveal an extensive knowledge of the jazz heritage. There is a tribute to the late Don Redman in a short, moving version of "Cherry," an amusing one to trombonist Vic Dickenson, and a salute to the Ellington tradition with plungered brass on "Holler No. 3." Some contrived effects uncomfortably recall Raymond Scott, but they are almost obligatory for a new group in today's market, and at its best, as in the first section of "The Mayor of Vermont Village," Levitt's writing is very agreeable. He and Rolf Ericson are dependable and versatile soloists, but individual honors go to Gene Allen. Besides giving valuable depth to the ensemble, his good tone and facility on baritone saxophone are impressive in each of his solos.
Junior Mance: <i>Straight Ahead!</i> Mance, piano; Don Fagerquist, John Audino, Pete Candoli, Ray Triscari, Al Porcino, trumpets; Lew McCreary, Milt Bernhart, Vern Friley, trombones; George Roberts, Kenny Shroyer, bass trombones; Bob Bain, guitar and arranger; Monty Budwig, bass; Shelly Manne, drums. Capitol T 2218. Billy Taylor: <i>Midnight P.no.</i> Taylor, piano; Ben Tucker, bass; Grady Tate, drums; with big band, string ensemble, French horns, and assorted percussion. Capitol T 2302, \$3.98; stereo, \$4.98.	The idea of piano with ten brass, as on the first album, is intriguing, but for success it required more fire and virtuosity on the part of the pianist than Mance seemingly possesses, or the subtlety possible to a Basie who works regularly with his own band and rhythm section. Mance's is essentially a steady, straightforward style, with the result that the soloist commands the listener's attention less often than the ensemble. The other record is more pretentious, but the four tracks on which Taylor plays with a big band of normal instrumentation come off a little better, partly because the regulars of New York's recording studios are more satisfying than Hollywood's. Snooky Young, Clark Terry, Joe Newman, and Joe Wilder, for example, form a trumpet section that is very hard to beat. The atmosphere, however, is generally clinical, and the performances with strings, French horns, and Latin percussion are hazards from the jazz viewpoint.
Irene Reid: <i>Room for One More</i> . Irene Reid, vocal; Oliver Nelson, arranger and conductor; with eighteen-piece big band. Verve 8621, \$4.98; stereo, \$5.98.	Irene Reid, a vigorous singer formerly with Count Basie, here tackles Cole Porter, a gospel song, Broadway, and movie tunes, three by Buddy Johnson, and one of her own. She brings a note of conviction to all she does, but is most satisfying in a driving version of "If I Ever Would Leave You" from <i>Camelot</i> and in Johnson's typical Harlem ballad, "I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone." Oliver Nelson's band of experts cope admirably with his ambitious scores, Joe Newman and Roger Kellaway being responsible for pleasing individual contributions.
Don Wilkerson: <i>Shoutin'</i> . Wilkerson, tenor saxophone; John Patton, organ; Grant Green, guitar; Ben Dixon, drums. Blue Note 4145, \$4.98; stereo, \$5.98.	"Wilkerson's style is eclectic and, at fast tempos, happily energetic, but some of his most interesting statements are made on the slow "Blues for J" and "Easy Living." His coda on the latter is further evidence of the influence Paul Gonsalves now exerts on younger musicians. Patton and Green play sympathetically, as they also do on "The Way I Feel" (Blue Note 4174), an album made under Patton's name. Other sets of interest to organ devotees this month are by Baby Face Willette ("Behind the Eight-Ball," Argo 749), Paul Bryant with Plas Johnson ("Groove Time," Fantasy 3363), Don Patterson with Booker Irvin ("Hip Cake Walk," Prestige 7349), and Larry Young with Sam Rivers ("Into Something," Blue Note 4187). Annotator Leroy O. Williams makes the fascinating point on the Fantasy album that "the organ is to modern urban life what the blues guitar was to rural society."
Gerald Wilson: <i>On Stage</i> . Wilson, trumpet, arranger, and conductor, with nineteen-piece and twenty-piece bands. Pacific Jazz 88, mono and stereo, \$4.98.	Wilson gets better results from big bands of West Coast musicians than anyone else, and in this album there is more attention to variety of dynamics than in some of its shouting predecessors. The organ is used tastefully on a clever transformation of that tearful number, "Who Can I Turn To?" and the background figures behind Joe Pass on "Musette" and Bobby Bryant on "In the Limelight" add a great deal to their well-constructed solos. The apparently unavoidable Iberian influence makes itself felt on "Los Moros de España" (Gil Evans has serious competition!) and for a finale the band plays the rather busy arrangement of "Perdido" that Wilson wrote for Duke Ellington a few years ago. —STANLEY DANCE.

Partaking of Power

IN A world stocked with high-fidelity amplifiers ranging in output power from 4 to 75 rms watts per channel, it may come as a surprise to learn that only 0.4 acoustic watts of power will re-create, in the average living room, the same average sound level as a third-row listener in the concert hall hears in loud symphonic passages. Five watts will fill a small stadium with music, and the power of a loud shout is only five thousandths of an acoustic watt or so.

Power can take many forms—acoustical, electrical, or mechanical, to name but three—and a watt of power in one form is equal to a watt of power in any other. But transducers—devices that convert power from one form to another—are not perfectly efficient. Loudspeakers, which convert electrical to acoustic power, range in efficiency from a high of 50 per cent for some horn-type enclosures to a low of 0.5 per cent for some acoustic suspension systems. Thus, to produce in the listening room the 0.4 acoustic watts necessary to reproduce an orchestral crescendo at third-row levels, an amplifier would have to feed anywhere from 0.8 to 80 watts of electrical power into the speaker system.

An amplifier's peak power rating is exactly twice its average power rating for sine-wave test signals. But in complex musical wave forms, the peaks may be not twice but ten times as powerful as the average power of the wave. Thus, while only 2 watts (rms) of amplifier power would be required for an average of 0.4 acoustic watts output (from a speaker of 20 per cent efficiency), it would take an amplifier rated at 10 watts continuous (20 watts peak) to reproduce the instantaneous peaks of 4 acoustic watts that might occur. Ten watts has, in fact, long been recommended as the minimum amplifier power for average high-fidelity applications.

All of these figures assume a living room of about 3,000 cubic feet in volume and of average acoustics. Doubling or halving the volume of the room would double or halve the power required. Deadening the room's acoustics with rugs, upholstered furniture, or acoustic tile would also increase the power required, while sound reflections from hard, bare floors, picture windows, and the like would decrease the power needed to maintain any given listening level.

The acoustics of the listening room are an integral and important part of the sound of any reproducing system. It

would be the falsest of economies to brighten a room's acoustics in order to economize on amplifier power. The dollar saving would be small (for equivalent amplifiers, a 75 per cent increase in output power might mean only a 15 per cent increase in cost), but the added echoes would destroy the clarity of sound within the room.

Too "dead" an environment, on the other hand, can absorb up to half of your system's power, while making the music sound as though it were coming from some unnatural, velvet-lined limbo. People absorb sound, too, and more power will be needed when the whole family is present than when a solitary listener is present.

Another aspect of the listening environment affecting amplifier power needs is background noise level. In a noisy setting, listeners turn the volume up so that quieter passages can be heard above the background. Hence more power would be required for comfortable listening in an apartment overlooking a freeway than in a more isolated home.

Thus, while a 10-watt amplifier might be adequate for loud orchestral listening in an average living room (with a speaker of 20 per cent efficiency), it might take 80 watts of power to achieve the same sound level in a large, crowded, and noisy room where all of these difficulties present themselves simultaneously.

THE power of high-quality amplifiers is rated at a specified distortion level; but below rated output, distortion is usually far less. As a consequence, 10 watts of output from a 60-watt amplifier will usually be less distorted than the same 10 watts from a 10-watt amplifier strained to the limits of its capabilities.

At still lower levels, such as one watt, both 10-watt and 60-watt amplifiers of equal quality may sound identical. But the ear is more sensitive to distortion at fairly high levels than it is at low, and the difference in quality at 10 watts between a low- and a high-powered amplifier will usually be discernible.

Preferences in program material and listening level also affect power requirements. While one seldom reproduces a Mozart sonata at ear-shattering volume levels, it takes rather more power to re-create the coronation of Boris Godunov, with all its pomp and pageantry, within the confines of one's living room. And background-level reproduction will require less than one-tenth the power of loud listening.

BEAR in mind that amplifiers have inputs as well as outputs; no amplifier will deliver its full rated power unless driven by a signal of the proper amplitude. Before purchasing a phono cartridge or other signal source to be used with any amplifier, it should be determined that their outputs are sufficient to drive the amplifier to its full rated power, yet not enough to overload that amplifier's input stages. Amplifiers with input-level con-



trols avoid this problem, though often at the expense of increased noise.

It is better to have an amplifier with more power than is needed than it is to have one with less. But there is a point of diminishing returns, beyond which no increase in quality will be audible, and only the hum and noise levels are likely to increase as more and more powerful amplifiers are used. Amplifier power should in no case be greater than the rated power-handling capacity of the speaker system. It is unlikely that anyone would knowingly listen at power levels capable of harming the loudspeakers, for both the resulting sound levels and distortion would be more than the ear could tolerate. Nevertheless, it is possible to burn out a speaker with a momentary pulse accidentally applied.

Beyond the point of adequate power plus a comfortable reserve, even if the loudspeaker's power rating is not exceeded, every cent spent on extra power is wasted. The money could be put to better use purchasing an amplifier of higher quality and lower distortion, or in upgrading other components in the system.

—IVAN B. BERGER.

