

LEONARD FEATHER'S Before and After

It has long been obvious that musicians have two different sets of reactions and comments on recordings by their peers; one when they are unaware whom they are listening to, another after learning the artist and what they have heard. That is the premise for this series.

This month's musician: Emily Remler

As was made very clear in her last Concord album, *East to Wes*, Emily Remler now belongs in a pantheon that includes a few of her elders: Joe Pass, Herb Ellis, Jim Hall, Kenny Burrell. Over the years she has racked up credits that include R & B bands in New Orleans, a long association with Astrud Gilberto, and many festival and club dates with her own groups.

As is the custom in this series, during the "before" segments she was told nothing about the records; the "after" segments include her comments after she was given this information.

1. KENNY BURRELL AND THE JAZZ GUITAR BAND. *Raincheck*, (from *Pieces of Blue and the Blues*, Blue Note).

Before: I believe it's Kenny Burrell and Bobby Broom—I think it is, I'm pretty sure it is. I like the tune very much. I don't know who wrote it. But I guess Duke Ellington didn't write it. It's a lot of guitar. It's reminiscent of, like, Joe Pass and Herb Ellis duo. It's guitar duo in the classic jazz sense, I suppose, with a lot of notes blending into another.

I loved the intro; I thought it was very creative. As a matter of fact, I could have listened to that intro for a long time, and I laughed when they went into the tune. I thought that was very clever. I gotta say that I feel the time is funny. I don't know what's so truthful about me lately; although I respect those guys to no end, especially Kenny, and I'm very familiar with his work. I remember the thing he did with John Coltrane, I liked it very much. Although people have told me that I play like Kenny, I never really consciously copy that.

As I said, the time feels funny and that upsets me when I'm listening to something that doesn't really lay down there. I hear major problems with the bass and the drums. Otherwise, it's got a lot of spirit. I think they blend very well, those two guys, one into another. That was very good blending—Phewww! I think me and Larry Coryell could have done something like that—but we never did, not really. But that was a really hip intro.

I'll say four stars for it; no, three. We got to support one another. Do you agree with the time problem? The rushing?

After: Those guys are gonna hate me. Who's playing bass? He must be the problem.

I have a theory; there's basically two schools of jazz guitar playing. Those that stemmed from Django, who play on top of the beat, meaning Barney, Tal, all the guys who are exciting, reaching for stuff and not really laying in the pocket like the others, which is from Charlie Christian, Wes Montgomery, Joe... so I'm from that school.

There's something about Kenny, he's in between, 'cause he does rush a bit, but he is a bluesy individual. For some reason, I never really loved him, but I respect him tremendously, and he certainly gets more money than I do for a gig. And I love his solo...

2. HERB ELLIS-JOE PASS. *Seven Come Eleven* (from *The Concord Jazz Guitar Collection*, Concord Jazz).

Fantastic! Fantastic! That's it, that's the thing! As I expressed before, I was getting a little confused. I feel it's Joe Pass and Herb Ellis. The only problem is I don't remember them doing a live version of this. I'm wracking my brain; the only other guitar players that could play like this at all would be Ronnie Eschete and Vic Juris, and I don't recall them either recording this or playing together. So it's got to be Joe and Herb Ellis.

Oh, man, the spirit of that was incredible; and whoever is on bass and drums is great also. They didn't miss a trick, and that tempo... that's, I guess, what we were talking about before, the guitar duo of this kind of style, that's the definitive version. And it's

going to be really embarrassing if it's two totally other people.

After: I'm going to be playing with Joe soon, in Pittsburgh. I'm going to play an hour of solo, Joe's going to play an hour of solo, then we're going to play together. And it just struck the fear of death in my heart, just hearing that! That was such a fast tempo, and you just don't hear that nowadays.

Not only that, it was clever and humorous and the rapport was great. And when I hear something like that, it makes me feel comforted that in today's world, especially in guitar, the emphasis is on, 'Why don't you use distortion pedal and play fusion?' And really what we heard is why we don't! Five stars—five and a half.

3. CHARLIE BYRD-LAURINDO ALMEIDA. *Don't Cry For Me Argentina* (from *The Concord Jazz Guitar Collection*, Concord Jazz).

Before: This is beautiful. I'm sitting here ashamed of my ignorance about guitarists, especially in the last ten years. My sense is that's Laurindo Almeida with Carlos Barbosa Lima and/or Sharon Isben-Larry Coryell. I know intellectually that Sharon and Larry and Laurindo have a trio. At the same time I don't hear three guitars until the middle section, then it felt like three.

It was beautiful; obviously the people were classically trained... Boy, I wish you'd given me pianists instead! Here's a girl who's been listening to McCoy Tyner and Bill Evans for the last ten years. Four stars, and for that style, five.

After: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense, Laurindo and Charlie. And I thought it was Carlos, and I thought there were three guitars at one point. It sure sounded like it. It was a very full sounding two-guitar thing.

4. PAT METHENY. *Sueno Con Mexico* (from *Guitar Music from ECM*, ECM Records). Metheny, acoustic guitars, electric bass.

Before: Wait a minute, I think that's Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays. My first thing was that it was a guitarist playing that background ostinato, which was gorgeous. And I thought it was a Brazilian guitarist, or Pat Metheny overdubbing himself. So my guess was gonna be Pat Metheny with Toninho Horta... but at the last few seconds, I guess it's a synthesizer with Lyle Mays playing the chords. Or maybe Pat playing guitar synthesizer. Five, absolutely, I love it. Beautifully recorded.

After: So that was my first guess, that Pat Metheny was overdubbing himself. It's beautiful. There's nothing he did that I didn't like yet. That's all there is to it. He's sincere, he's got soul, he's got great rhythm, he opens up to new things, he's really captured this Brazilian thing. Jeez, that sounded like Toninho Horta. His music just makes me happy.

5. ORNETTE COLEMAN & PRIME TIME. *Cloning* (from *In All Languages*, Caravan of Dreams).

I'm wracking my brain to think who that is. I can't for some reason recognize the horn player. When I first heard it, it sounded like Brecker, but it can't possibly be. Or could it? See, I'm trying to think of situations where I know people were together, like Mike Stern and John Scofield played together behind Miles. (Long pause) Look, I'm not gonna guess who this is. What I will say is what I think about it, what I like about it and all that.

I like it very much, I do, and it reminds me of early John McLaughlin stuff, and the *Bitches Brew* record and *Extrapolation*, especially; I really like John McLaughlin and that's how I was introduced to jazz, whatever that type is. I heard that before I heard Paul Desmond. I could relate to that because it was more like rock, and I could understand why kids feel the way they do. I always liked the innovation of it. It does remind me of early



Larry Coryell, also. And John McLaughlin was doing that, which was fast, clever melodies and no tonality, and everybody playing in unison against each other. Those special sounds that the rock guitar can make to give that confusion sound.

They're real powerful musicians, whoever they are; I'm embarrassed not to know who it is. But I really like that kind of music; it's more like avant garde. Four stars.

After: So it was Ornette? Well, I have to respect that, and I did love that era with McLaughlin and Larry.

6. BARNEY KESSEL. *Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life* (from *Spontaneous Combustion*, Contemporary). Monty Alexander, piano; John Clayton, bass, Jeff Hamilton, drums. Rec. 1987.

Before: My guess is Barney Kessel, Monty Alexander, and it's either John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton or Ray Brown and Jake Hanna. Piano player is burnin'.

It will be very embarrassing if I'm wrong about this. After all, I was married to Monty for two years! I really should be sure.

I recognize the tune, seems I heard it before. I remember Barney playing with Monty years ago, when I was at Berkeley. I feel sure it's Barney! Liked it very much; five stars.

After: All right! I felt a lack of confidence, but I was right. Monty was burning, wasn't he? Be sure you put that in. Are you going to

print everything I say? Anyhow, I'm very relieved that I got that one. On a social level.

7. ROSS TRAUT/STEVE RODBY. *Up On The Roof* (from *The Great Lawn*, CBS).

I think it's Larry Carlton or Lee Ritenour. I had the sense that it wasn't a jazz player in the traditional way. A very pretty song, beautifully recorded. Guitar sounded beautiful. Very relaxing, nice stuff. Four.

After: Ross Traut? I went to school with Ross Traut! To boarding school and to Berkeley! I like Steve Rodby very much, always did.

8. JIM HALL-RED MITCHELL. *Osaka Express*. Jim Hall, guitar, composer.

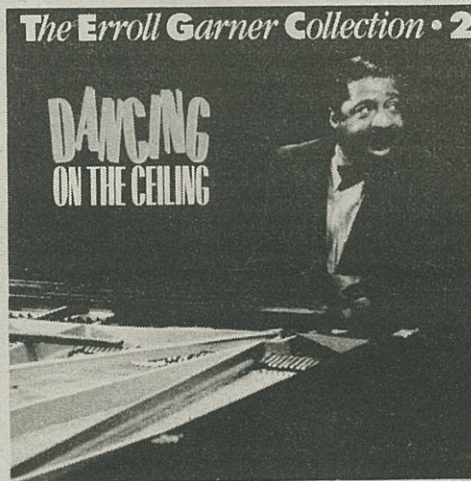
Before: Jim Hall and Ron Carter. This is a stone five stars, no question. My only problem was thinking Red Mitchell instead of Ron Carter.

I don't know the tune; it's great, and Jim is one of my favorite guitar players. His comping is incredible; nobody comps like Jim. His time is impeccable, his ideas are as modern as the most contemporary person. The bass player is a monster; it has to be Ron Carter.

After: Well, at least I said Red Mitchell! Come to think of it, I have this record. It just serves me right for thinking Red Mitchell's not funky enough. I never trust my intuition.

For one thing, I never heard Ron grunt, but Red Mitchell... he grunts!

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