

RECORD COLLECTOR

WORLDWIDE SUCCESS
SERIOUS ABOUT MUSIC

Jazz

Collector
By Charles Waring

It perhaps was no surprise to those who knew him that the legendary hard-drinking, fast-living British bebop multi-instrumentalist **TUBBY HAYES** died relatively young. He didn't die directly from his excesses, though, but under a surgeon's knife during a heart operation in 1973, when he was just 38. Despite his premature death, the prolific tenor sax titan (who also played the flute and vibraphone) left a large body of work behind. Though his 60s albums for Fontana are revered by collectors, his earlier recordings are also well worth seeking out. An excellent new 3-CD retrospective, **Jazz Genius: The Flamingo Era** (★★★★★ **Fantastic Voyage**), largely focuses on the saxophonist's late 50s work, which includes his recordings with The Jazz Couriers (both studio and live) and London Jazz Quartet. It's a terrific set that reaffirms what a supremely gifted virtuoso musician Hayes was.

Belonging to the same era is **HENRY MANCINI** *The Music From Peter Gunn* (★★★★★ **American Jazz Classics**), an excellent 2-CD set comprising all the incidental jazz-flavoured tracks written by Mancini for a popular late 50s TV show about an uber-cool private detective. Interestingly, in a move to capitalise on the phenomenal success of *Peter Gunn*, jazz drummer **SHELLY MANNE** and his band served up their own looser interpretation of Mancini's score in the shape of two albums – *Shelly Manne & His Men Play Peter Gunn* and *Son Of A Gunn!!* (★★★★ **American Jazz Classics**) – both of which appear back-to-back on a new compilation. Manne's sextet includes jazz luminaries Victor Feldman and Russ Freeman, who both feature prominently. (Talking of jazz soundtracks, the original music to a couple of 50s Hollywood biopics – *The Benny Goodman Story* (★★★★ **Hot Record Society**) and *The Glenn Miller Story* (★★★★ **Hot Record Society**) – have been remastered and can be found together on a new 2-CD set).

Another noteworthy compilation that draws on classic archival recordings is

Little Jazz Bird (★★★★★ **É!)**, a 23-track collection devoted to the late singer/pianist **BLOSSOM DEARIE** (once described by Miles Davis as "the only white woman who ever had soul"). Dearie's wispy, little girl-like voice combined with her coquettish delivery and dry wit still prove captivating half a century down the line. The standout track is a truly wonderful and mesmerising version of the standard, *Someone To Watch Over Me*, which appeared on her first Verve album helmed by jazz impresario Norman Granz.

Aiming to follow in Granz's footsteps was budding young record producer **ALAN DOUGLAS**, who joined the staff at United Artists in the early 60s. A new retrospective, *Douglas On Blue Note* (★★★★★ **Wienerworld**), focuses on UA jazz sessions (now owned by Blue Note) that Alan Douglas either produced or supervised, and includes great tracks from an array of legendary names – ranging from Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington to John Coltrane, Art Blakey, Bill Evans, Billie Holiday and Kenny Dorham.

Out of a different bag completely is *You Shorty, Me Tarzan* (★★★★ **Giant Steps**), a compilation devoted to three late 50s sessions by West Coast trumpeter **SHORTY ROGERS** and his band **THE GIANTS**. It includes Rogers' rare and collectable percussion-heavy score to the 1959 movie, *Tarzan, The Ape Man*, and also a clutch of live tracks culled from a TV performance by The Giants.

On the new albums front, legendary soul-jazz pianist **RAMSEY LEWIS** marks his 75th birthday with a straight-ahead trio set, *Songs From The Heart: Ramsey Plays Ramsey* (★★★★★ **Concord**). Amazingly, it's the first ever record the pianist has recorded that's entirely devoted to original material, and features some wonderfully lyrical playing, especially on the dreamy ballad *Conversation*.

Another noteworthy new piano trio album is *The Other Place* (★★★★ **Edition**), the third long-player by **CURIOS**, the much-feted and award-winning UK combo led by pianist/composer Tom Cawley. By turns serenely meditative and turbulently edgy, the group's music explores both the jazz tradition and the idiom's outer limits.



Hiromi stretches her piano to its limits.

More groundbreaking contemporary jazz comes in the shape of **JIM GAILLORETO'S JAZZ STRING QUINTET** and their album *American Complex* (★★★★ **Origin Classical**). Fusing jazz and classical music, the quintet blends original material with imaginatively-arranged deconstructions of tunes by Thelonious Monk, Jerome Kern and Fats Domino. Singer/pianist Patricia Barber also drops in for two striking vocal cameos.

On the subject of vocalists, mellow-voiced chanteuse **SOPHIE MILMAN** – born in Siberia, raised in Israel and currently residing in Canada – returns with her third album, *Take Love Easy* (★★★★ **Linus**). It's by far her best offering yet, and her performances of material that ranges from jazz standards to numbers penned by Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon and even Bruce Springsteen display an impressive maturity. She can really swing too, as her finger-clicking rendition of *Day In, Day Out* attests. Definitely a singer to keep tabs on.

A more ambitious jazz vocal album comes from 44-year-old Norwegian jazz siren **RIGMOR GUSTAFSSON**. *Calling You* (★★★★★ **ACT**) is a truly sensational collaboration with the radio string quartet *vienna* and features stunning new arrangements of songs by Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, Stevie

Wonder, John Legend and Bacharach & David. An unusual and intriguing record, it has moments of great sonic beauty.

TAMMY WEIS – a Canadian-born singer who's relocated to London – is also hoping to make a name for herself in the jazz world with her new album, *Where I Need To Be* (★★★★ **TammyWeis.com**), which highlights the piano playing of Tom Cawley and Julian Joseph, along with legendary pedal steel maestro BJ Cole. Weis is an assured performer with an intimate delivery and, while most of the material is self-penned, she also includes a striking version of Lennon & McCartney's *Help!*, which is reconfigured as a sultry, after-hours ballad.

Finally, the technically accomplished Japanese keyboard sorceress **HIROMI** has just unleashed her sixth album, *Place To Be* (★★★★ **Telarc**). It's basically a 12-track solo piano recital and, though some of the pieces seem little more than empty pyrotechnical exercises showcasing Hiromi's rapid-fingered right hand virtuosity, there are a couple of pieces that warrant repeated listening. One is *Somewhere*, where the young pianist displays a delicate lyrical sensitivity that's much more rewarding and meaningful than some of the self-consciously ostentatious faster-paced numbers she churns out.