

Malibu, California isn't so much a town—with a heart and a town square—as a high-priced real-estate ribbon stretching along the Pacific Ocean outside of Los Angeles. A coveted retreat from the urban turbines of L.A., it is home to many celebrities. In recent years, the jazz world has made its imprint on the citizenry as Miles Davis, Joe Zawinul, Herb Alpert, Charlie Haden, and Johnny Mandel have taken to the beach. Add to that list Stan Getz, currently residing at his friend/producer Herb Alpert's posh, postmodern home, directly across Pacific Coast Highway from the sand and sea.

And it is on the beach—Zuma Beach—where I find Getz, who suggests that we take a swim before an interview. "Ah, that ocean water brings me back to life," he beams. Getz is surprised to learn that Miles swims in the pool at the nearby Pepperdine University. "He doesn't swim in the ocean? I don't know—that chlorine in the water can't be too good for you."

Getz, a robust man who alternates between soft-spoken warmth and cut-the-crap curtness, has good reason to feel healthy at the moment, having gotten the better of a recent bout with cancer. Musically, his near-50-year musical career is reaching another zenith. In 1986, he joined the music department at Stanford University as an artist in residence. At present, Getz is making a belated but solid entrance into the rejuvenated jazz market of the last few years. Suddenly, Getz is in the news, and the air, with several projects in release, e.g., his 1987 live date *Anniversary*, the four-CD reissue collection *The Bossa Nova Years*, *Dynasty* (a live date with a French rhythm section), and, most recently, his first album for A&M, *Apasio-*

BRIAN MACMILLAN



STAN GETZ

nado (see "Reviews" June '90).

Produced and co-written by Herb Alpert (the A of A&M), *Apasionado* presents Getz in a new, well-produced light. Stylistically, the material manages—however intentionally—to cover the various bases of Getz career, from Latin-bossa-samba strains to elements of funk, plush balladry, and even

some big band horn accents.

"I had a real ball doing *Apasionado*," says Getz, stretched out on the beach. "We took our time. It was done in three days. I never took that long before. Well, we couldn't figure out what material to play. I got together with Herb and Eddie Delbarrio—the composer and synth player who I'm taking to Europe. I went up to Herb's house every day for three weeks and sort of put the skeleton together. That was the preparation we had.

"The melodies for Eddie, 'Waltz For Stan' and 'Lovely Lady,' were written out. The rest were all à la *Focus* [a 1961 sax-with-strings project with composer/arranger Eddie Sauter], made up over the background."

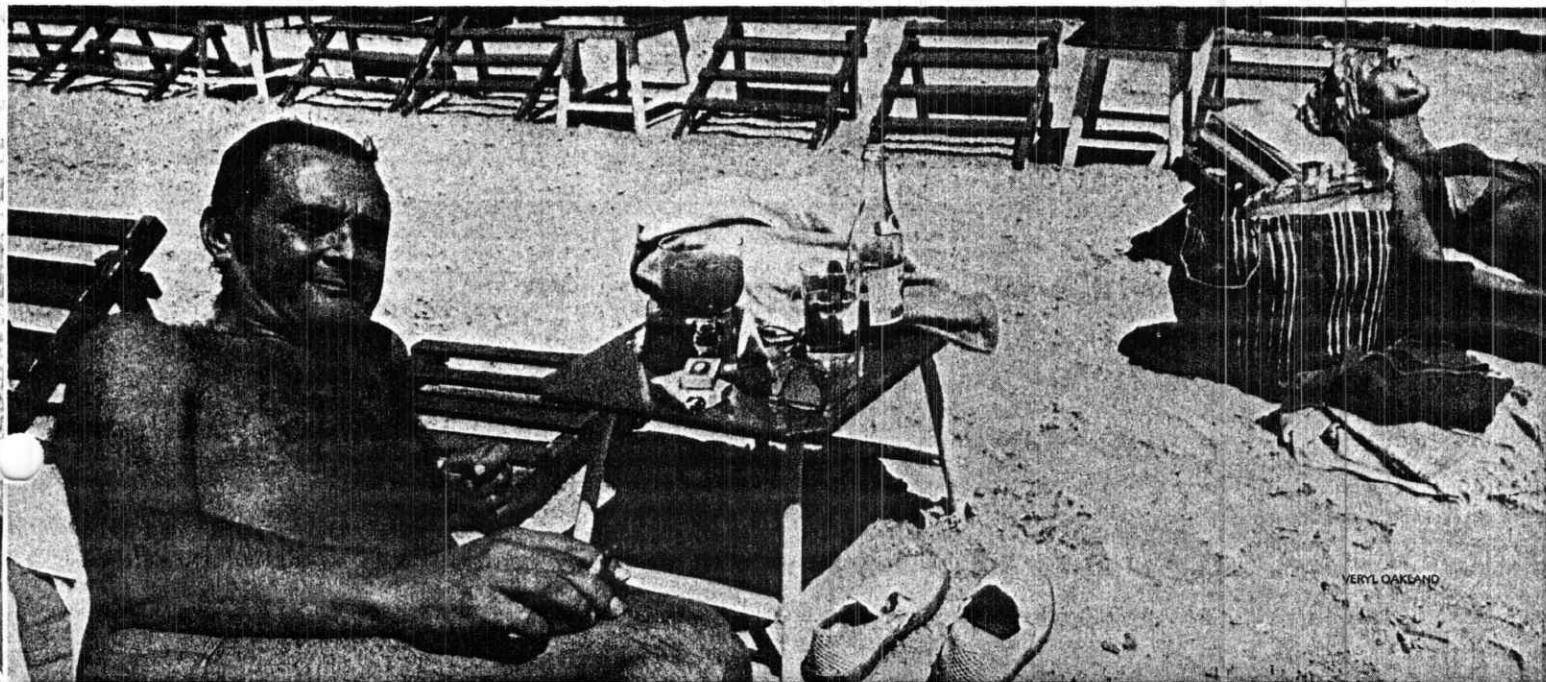
Apasionado is a departure for Getz in several ways. For one, it's the first time he has strayed from a traditional quartet format in some time. For Getz, the rhythm-section-with-horn-protagonist quartet is a classic format. "It's like a string quartet, I guess. One of each. Everybody's got to be a good soloist and good accompanist.

"I'll tell you, for my taste, there's really nothing in the whole world better than an acoustic rhythm section when it's popping. It seems to vibrate inside your body. You seldom get it, but when you get it, that can be felt. It's hard to achieve; you've got to have the right players in the right moods. A lot of times, listening to electric music just feels like I'm taking shock treatments."

Nonetheless, Getz hasn't taken a fundamental anti-electric instrument stance. "I say it's not the instruments you play, electric or otherwise. It's the musicians who play whatever kind of music it is. I wouldn't resist Joe Zawinul. I think he's a credit to our business."

By Josef Woodard

BACK ON THE BEACH



VERLY OAKLAND

Writing tunes has never been a direction that Getz has pursued. "I've probably been too lazy. I wrote my first record date in '46, and I left my music in the cab going to the date. I got so interested and so crazed about trying to play the saxophone the way I wanted it to work for me. On this last album with Herb [Alpert], I have a hand in the writing. Some of the things I've played have been made into tunes on records. I'd play on the record date and then they were written down.

"Otherwise, I'm a sad-ass writer, a lazy writer. Everytime I did try to write something over the years, I'd get up the next morning and change it and the next morning change it again and the next . . . until I'd finally rip it up. It's because I'm a player, and players play something different every time.

"I guess you could call improvisation composition—extemporaneous composition. It's like an extemporaneous speaker, as long as you know the language, and how to phrase the language and to project your voice and to say something sensible, you have logic in your music, and form and content."

In that Getz hasn't recognized in himself the composer instinct, he has developed the art—like, say, vibist Gary Burton—of being a good tune hunter. He laughs at the idea: "And musician hunter, too. I think that's my forte, actually—finding music and musicians. I think Gary Burton was in the band for four and a half years with [bassist] Steve Swallow and [drummer] Roy Haynes. When Gary left, he recommended somebody I'd never heard of, this 18-year-old kid named Chick Corea. He turned out to be beautiful. Couldn't have been a better replacement for Gary."

At mid-afternoon, we pile into Getz's Mercedes station wagon as he goes to the dentist. I mention the simultaneous sense of calm and control in his playing—what seem like twin guideposts for Getz. "Oh shit," he says abruptly, stopping the car and backing up. "I was so deceptively calm that I forgot to close the gate." Are calm and control his mistresses? "In music. Not in life."

Was there a time when Getz felt that he came of age? "You never do. I was telling Christina [Von Bulow, a young Danish saxist who received a grant to come and study with Getz] about that. It seems that you go along for about five years and don't seem to improve. You get so miserable and don't seem to be going anyplace. Just before you get to reach the next plateau, you drop down a little bit. Then you go to the next plateau and it levels off until the next one."

The Bronx, N.Y., native fell in love with the West Coast in the early '40s. "I started with [trombonist] Jack Teagarden on the East Coast. We worked 365 straight one-nighters, in a Ford station wagon. Ended up here, the band broke up. I loved it here. I worked at a haberdashery shop on Holly-

wood and Vine, I worked as a short-order cook. It was during the war. I brought my parents out here. They still had ads in the *L.A. Times* for renting apartments, reading 'no children, no pets, no Jews.' We lived in the back of a barbershop until we found a Jewish building owner."

Jazz work then mostly took place after-hours, out of sight. "We didn't get work playing jazz music. We got work playing rhumba bands, mickey-mouse bands, dixieland bands . . . then, after work, we'd get together for jam sessions. We had a Model A club—we all had Model A Fords. I bought mine for \$68. It was a four-door sedan and it had wings on the hood. Don La Monte had one, Herbie Stewart had one, Steve White had one, and we'd find places to play that weren't about work; they were just jam sessions. We'd play jazz even though there weren't any jazz jobs. We'd support our families by working some dumb jobs."

Getz's reputation grew as he became one of the "Four Brothers" in Woody Herman's big band. Thereafter, he carved out a career as a leader in his own right, gaining prominence as a "cool school" kingpin. "I think cool jazz was a reaction to bebop.



STAN GETZ'S EQUIPMENT

Getz swears by his Selmer Mark VI tenor sax, using Rubber Link mouthpieces and Vandoren #3 and 3.5 reeds.

STAN GETZ SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

- APASIONADO—A&M 5297
- ANNIVERSARY—Emarcy 838 769-2
- DYNASTY—Verve 839 117-2
- THE STOCKHOLM CONCERT—Gazell CD 1013
- THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA, THE BOSSA NOVA YEARS—Verve 823 611-2
- THE DOLPHIN—Concord Jazz CJ-158
- PURE GETZ—Concord Jazz CCD-4188
- CAPTAIN MARVEL—PC-32706
- FOCUS—Verve B21 982-2
- SWEET RAIN—Verve 815 054-2
- VOYAGE—Blackhawk BKH-51101-CD
- THE LYRICAL STAN GETZ—Columbia Jazz Masterpieces CJ-44047
- WITH EUROPEAN FRIENDS—Denon C38-7679
- with Arthur Fiedler and The Boston Pops
- A SONG AFTER SUNDOWN—RCA/Bluebird 6284-2-RB
- with Albert Dalley
- POETRY—Musician 60370-1-E
- with Charlie Byrd
- JAZZ SAMBA—Verve 810 061-2GH
- with Bill Evans
- STAN GETZ AND BILL EVANS—Verve 833 802-2
- with J.J. Johnson
- STAN GETZ AND J.J. JOHNSON AT THE OPERA HOUSE—Verve 831 272-2
- with Helen Merrill
- JUST FRIENDS—Emarcy 842 007-2

During the war years, it was a more frenetic time, that's all. That's how it works. Things go in spurts."

1962's *Jazz Samba* was the album that puts Getz in the household-name category, as Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Desafinado" hit the charts with a vengeance. Later, his version of "The Girl From Ipanema" hit yet harder, rising to the top of the pop charts. "I just go in to make a record and I never try to grab a hold of the gold ring," he says, matter of factly. "If you try to psyche out trends and what the people will like, you're fooling yourself. The approach should always be to look for beautiful music. That music came along at a time when it was needed, like a breath of fresh air after the Kennedy assassination. The Beatles were on the top of every chart until we knocked them off that one time."

Not content to chase the "Girl"'s commercial clout, Getz involved himself in various contexts in the '60s. One of the many bright lights of the Getz discography is '67's *Sweet Rain*, an inspired set born of desperate circumstances. "You know, on the night before the recording of that album, both Roy Haynes and Steve Swallow came down with the flu. On the morning of the date, we hired Chick Corea, Grady Tate, and Ron Carter. They came in and sight-read that shit. We still sound like a working quartet.

"The record I'm proud of is *Focus*. That was one hell of an effort, to match up with those strings, with no music written, but just a score transposed into my key. I listen to that record and feel proud."

Resting on laurels, however, doesn't seem to be Getz's approach. "You make 'em and you go on. If you're a player, you think you can always change something for the better. You make a record and you're sorry you didn't play certain other things which you now feel you could have. You just ignore it and go on to the next one. I don't second-guess it anymore. It's done."

With his recent flurry of activity—at least in terms of publicly-visible activity—Getz takes his spot at the forefront of sax veterans who continue to search for new modes of expression. He has passed through most of the phases of jazz—swing, bop (briefly), cool, Latin-jazz, fusion (although he bristles at the idea of his being termed "the grandfather of fusion"), and a standards redux. Is he a product of all these branches on the jazz family tree? Did they leave their marks on him?

"If one did, I don't know," he says as we pull into *Chez Alpert*. "It's hard to say. Maybe somebody will classify me. I'll leave that up to you, Joe," he laughs.

"I really think I'm a product of today and tomorrow. Right now. I feel that there's no stopping me. I can do anything that I want. I just play. I always did, but now I feel I have the confidence in knowing that people want to listen. I'm a very sentimental character. I'm not jaded about jazz. I'm jaded about other things, but not about jazz. I shouldn't say the word jazz—all music." **DB**

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record & cd reviews

flavored by rockabilly. The highlight is "Play-girl," which is fueled into orbit by a Tex-Mex polka beat. Like Maher's album, The Paladins' latest has "party time" written all over it. So,

roll up the carpet and crank up the V with these guys. (reviewed on cassette) (Powerhouse Records are available from Box 2455 Falls Church, VA 22042.) —dan ouellette

GETZ SERIOUS

by Kevin Whitehead

"Stan Getz the money," Lester Young is said to've observed in the early '50s. But Getz quickly evolved past mere Pres-tidgitation, becoming one of the most pleasing tenor stylists of our time. A brace of (re)issues, spanning 1962 to 1989, make his case.

The earliest of these recordings really made the saxophonist's rep, and helped the world get a fix on his style: *The Girl From Ipanema: The Bossa Nova Years* (Verve 823 611-2; 4CDs, 3 hours 40:44; ★★½). Here are the five albums Getz recorded in the years 1962 to '64, when the fad swept the country, swept up the bucks, and then was swept under the rug. (Neil Tesser's excellent notes sketch the historical context; like the box itself, they expand on the 1984 LP version of this set.)

Getz didn't know much about the "new flair" from Brazil when he made his first recording with guitarist Charlie Byrd and company—he just kept his ears open and blew over the top. (He was a likely candidate for such a job; the year before he'd winged beautifully over Eddie Sauter's string charts, on the splendid Verve album

Focus.) One result was the massive hit "Desafinado," which you've probably heard hundreds of times even if you don't know the title. Byrd's strumming is a bit mannered and prim, but then he's striving for authenticity—the guitar is the heart of bossa nova—while Getz is free to invent. And what inventions they are. His light touch, the way he floats across the beats and lazy melodies, obviously owe a lot to Pres. But his soft hazy sound is his own. The other albums he cut while Brazilian cool was hot vary in quality. Gary McFarland's reserved orchestral samba charts don't quite come off. The sessions with guitarists Luiz Bonfá and Laurindo Almeida are much better—the latter allows Stan the most room to stretch; improvising, he works over, elaborates on, and cycles back to simple melodic motifs. Really, as melodic invention goes, this is primo Getz. (If you're listening for his solos only, add another star to the above rating.)

Also in the box, of course, are the Getz/Gilberto sides, with husband Joao G. singing softly in Portuguese and wife Astrud handling the English translations. The original "Ipanema" was her first professional vocal, and it sounds it—her breathing is awkward, her emotional temperature beyond cool. (She steadily improved afterward, but Maria Toledo, on a few tunes

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from the Bonfa session, sings with more blood.) Yet Astrud's artlessness makes the Getz solo that follows seem that much more suave. Still, it's interesting to note that some of bossa nova's critical boosters accuse rock singers of sounding like off-the-street amateurs.

In hindsight, we can see these sides anticipate the adventures of Kip Hanrahan, Paul Simon, David Byrne, et al., bringing first- and third-world musicians together. But Getz displayed better taste—he never tried to write for the Brazilians or dictate anyone's direction except his own. As Tesser notes, Getz heard the music as a reaction against overly complex writing and free jazz dissonance. It was antithetical to both, with its vamping pretty chords, cookie-cutter syncopated drum parts, and simple horizontal melodies. But the limits were so narrow, the albums began to sound redundant, and not only because a few tunes were recorded more than once. The audience burned out on the bossa pretty quick—such is the way with fads. (Complex orchestrations and free improvisation are still going fine, thanks.) But by the time it was all over, nobody was sneering at Stan Getz.

Jump ahead to 1971 for a radically different date: Getz live in London, with the Paris-based trio of organist Eddy Louiss, guitarist Rene Thomas, and drummer Bernard Lubat: *Dynasty* (Verve 839 117-2; 2 CDs, 1 hour 33:18: ★★★★★½). Getz is nobody's idea of an organ-group tenor player, but he plays with uncommon grit: almost honking once or twice on the whisper-to-a-scream samba "Our Kind Of Sabi"; spitting notes from his horn on Thomas' uptempo "Theme For Emmanuel." Stan's ballad sense and melancholy side are exploited as well. Louiss' playing is praiseworthy for what he doesn't do as well as what he does. He downplays the boogaloo clichés and washing-machine sonorities—his style's full but not in your face. And check out his fancy-footwork rapid basslines on "Sabi." Thomas' work is clean and bluesy, if not in the mode of his idol Django (who wasn't an organ-combo kind of guitarist). Lubat raps out tasty ride-cymbal phrases. Stan's swaggering quote from "It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)" on the title track is his tip of the hat to the reliable trio. *Dynasty's* an undersung gem of the Getz discography.

By 1987—when caught at the Club Montmartre in Copenhagen for *Anniversary* (EmArcy 838 769-2; 69:51: ★★★★★½)—his tone had deepened a little bit, but at 60 he was playing as elegantly as ever. If anything, his ballads ("I Can't Get Started," Strayhorn's "Blood Count") may be even richer and more beautiful. The rhythm section's beyond reproach, as Johnny Mandel's opener "El Cahon" quickly proves: Kenny Barron's piano everywhere demonstrates his rhythmic and lyrical mastery; Rufus Reid's bass solo sings; Victor Lewis subtly varies his *ching-ching* cymbal patterns to keep them lively. The band achieves synergetic excellence: on

"Stella," Kenny's starlit punctuating chords and Getz's spinning-top phrases feed on each other. Assembling four talented musicians doesn't guarantee great music, but on this gig everything clicks—it's as lustrous a mainstream date as I've heard in awhile. Wish I'd been there.

1983's *The Stockholm Concert* (Gazell CD 1013; 44:44: ★★★★★) was first issued by Sweden's Sonet, and is a sequel to Sonet/Gazell's Getz/Chet Baker *Line For Lyons*, recorded the same evening. (Chet's not on this volume.) It's nearly *Anniversary's* equal. The quartet includes Victor Lewis (splendid again) and bassist George Mraz, who's not ruthlessly over-amped as he is these days. Pianist Jim McNeely's rolling lines and relaxed swing magnificently reinforce Stan's gifts—this concert makes the case that we don't prize McNeely enough. The tenorist feathers through an emotionally complex "We'll Be Together Again," but it's topped by "Blood Count," even more moving than in Copenhagen. Getz invests Strayhorn's vision of death with melancholy resignation and courageous resolve, both.

Getz is featured guest on Helen Merrill's *Just Friends* (EmArcy 842 007-2; 44:49: ★★★★★), where they're backed by pianist Joachim Kühn, bassist J. F. Jenny-Clark, and drummer Daniel Humair. Most of the tunes are from the standard songbook: "Yesterdays," "It Never Entered My Mind," "Baby Ain't I Good To You." (The latter's one of three duets for Merrill and saloon pianist Torrie Zito.) As usual these days, the singer is most comfortable at the middle of her range, and favors emotional restraint (though her vocal timbre is more full and resonant than, say, Astrud Gilberto's). The mobile tenorist weaves his lines around her, wafting through the music in a way that may recall his bossa nova days. Getz has the good taste not to upstage Merrill, and their thin vibratos almost match. Still, to these ears it's a bit of a mismatch; Stan sounds held back (Tenor and band take off on a breakneck "Don't Mean A Thing.") Joe Raposo's "(It's Not Easy) Bein' Green" works for Kermit the Frog, and Van Morrison did a killer version, but the Merrill/Zito take just sounds precious.

Apasionado (A&M 5297: ★★★★★) almost brings us full circle to the bossa nova sides—but not quite. Arranger/composers Eddie de Barrio and Herb Alpert tack down shuffling samba carpets for Getz to strut over—Oscar Castro-Neves' guitar is prominently featured—and Stan's "Ipanema" quotes on the title track show he can take a hint. But the idea misfires. The twinkly synths and fake strings (and postdubbed horns) are meant to swaddle Getz's tenor; instead, his ever-handsome sound underscores the backdrops' polyester textures. The stretched-out compositions aren't very stimulating harmonically, either—"Espanola's" progression comes off like a parody of flamenco. Getz sounds less than totally involved. But his usual standard is so high, his solos still earn this overproduced fizzle its rating. (reviewed on cassette) DB

CECIL TAYLOR
THE EIGHTH

CECIL TAYLOR

THE EIGHTH—hat Art 2036: CALLING IT THE 8TH I-III; CALLING IT THE 9TH.

Personnel: Taylor, Bösendorfer piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone; William Parker, bass; Rashid Bakr, drums.

★★★★★

The Eighth is the complete 1982 Freiburger Jazztage performance from which an edited version, *Calling It The 8th* (hat Music 3508), was released in 1983. Since this is the only recording issued to date of a particularly striking edition of Taylor's Unit, the release of *The Eighth* reconfirms the shamefully inadequate documentation of a national musical treasure.

It is understandable that Gary Giddins should, in his *Village Voice* review, suggest that producer Werner Uehlinger be questioned for his handling of this material; few of Taylor's listeners can afford to indulge in the redundancy of both sets. But what, then, would Giddins prescribe for American producers, whose reissue programs he consistently praises, for failing to record new Taylor material for almost a decade? The handling of this excellent concert recording, apparently a mixture of marketing convenience and an archival urge, is somewhat beside the point. The point is that we only had to wait three years for the original, a mere wink of the eye in the reissue racket.

The edited version of *Calling It The 8th* proves to be less of a cut-and-paste proposition than expected, the only excision being approximately 25 minutes following the opening vocal chant. Taylor's extended trio passage, which details his rigorous rapport with William Parker and Rashid Bakr, actually succeeds another, more lightning-paced exposition, that is sandwiched by two arguably definitive Jimmy Lyons solos. Still, the editing radically altered the piece's structure, and truncated Lyons' central role.

Both albums have the unedited performance of *Calling It The 9th*, which now seems like a tentative afterthought. Despite its appreciable qualities (including fits-and-starts cadences, plaintive melodic contours, and ruminative pacing), its 11-minute duration is barely time for the Unit to bring the material to the boiling point. As demonstrated by *Calling It The 8th*, it is somewhere beyond this boiling point that Taylor's most potent magic takes hold.

With the untimely death of Jimmy Lyons—a loss that becomes greater with time—*The Eighth* assumes larger proportions. His energy and invention is boundless on this recording, and the restoration of his aforementioned solos is reason enough to seek this album out. Hopefully, hat Art will reissue the remainder of its sizable portion of Lyons' work as a leader, as well.

—bill shoemaker

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