

GILLES PETERSON Digs America 2

Digs America II was compiled with tracks from the famous Brownswood Basement (a version of his Worldwide radio show dedicated to rare and old tunes, and also the name of the house where his collection is kept.) Many tracks were picked up on an-early 2007 visit to the USA and Canada. Between DJ dates Peterson squeezed in trips to local music stores. And while he found plenty of goodies he was also reminded that the demise of the used-record shop is a global phenomenon. The best specialty vinyl shops, typically run by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic owner, promising a selection of rare, curious, and classic tunes, are sadly vanishing fast. Village Music, the Mill Valley, California-based record store that provided the backdrop for the front cover of this album, will be closed by the album release date. Fingers have been pointed at all kind of reasons for store closures including: a lack of new vinyl to keep stores ticking over, the popularity of Ebay, iTunes and the sharing of digital files, poorly run stores, raised rent. Whatever the reason, the casual trip to your favorite vinyl emporium is quickly becoming much more difficult as stores disappear like endangered species. So here is Gilles Peterson, digging and sharing (legally!) to keep quality rarities alive, but searching perhaps at the **END** of an era?.....

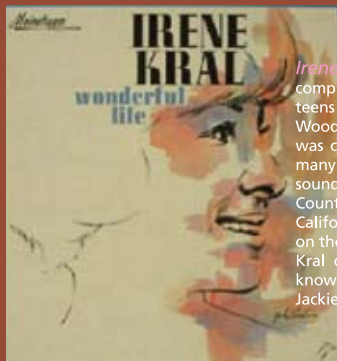
Village Music, Mill Valley, CA - RIP



A Peterson favorite for many years, **Lorez Alexandria's** "I'm Wishin'" was the first 7" single released on the Pzazz label back in 1968, and later appeared on the album Didn't We. With a moody West Coast jazz vibe, and featuring saxophonist Teddy Edwards, the album was produced by label-owner Paul Gayten. Gayten started out as a New Orleans pianist, became an A+R man for Chess Records, and later ran the Pzazz label under the motto "Put Some Pzazz In Your Jazz!" During her long career the Chicago-born Alexandria cut albums for labels like King, Argo, Impulse, Discovery, and Muse before she passed-away in 2001.

Recommended by Chris Veltri at the Groove Merchant, The **Bethlehem Progressive Ensemble** Mod Lit album is a relatively recent "discovery," but one that immediately obtained Worldwide message-board approval after an airing on a Brownswood Basement show. The BPE started out in 1962 and, from the hipster abstract album artwork to the funky Latin rhythms, were apparently not your typical Church band. They experimented with whole-tone scales and MJQ-like sounds for worship in college chapels and at youth conferences, playing everywhere from Long Island to Miami. In 1966, Fortress Press (now Augsburg Fortress) released the album which featured pieces for combo and chorus by Robin Miller, the Ensemble's leader and pianist. "Call To Worship (Make Straight)" includes a tritone, a musical interval once known as "the devil's chord" and banned by the Catholic Church. Recorded live in concert, the album also features singer Nancy Desiderio (now married to Robin Miller), vibraphonist Barry Erb, bassist George Jones, percussionist David Pearson, and sermons from New York City's pastor to the jazz community, John Gensel.





Irene Kral is another Chicago-born vocalist to appear on the compilation. She started her musical career as a vocalist in her teens and would go on to perform and record with the likes of Woody Herman, Maynard Ferguson and Shelly Manne. Her life was cut short by cancer, but her music was re-discovered by many posthumously when songs were featured in the soundtrack to Clint Eastwood's film *The Bridges of Madison County*. Alex of Jazzanova who tipped Gilles off to "Going To California", a cover a John Lee Hooker tune, originally released on the Mainstream album "Wonderful Life." Incidentally Irene Kral came from a musical family, her brother, Roy Kral, is known in jazz dance circles as one half of the vocal jazz duo Jackie and Roy.



Mary Lou Williams Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University

Much of pianist *Mary Lou Williams* work has been archived by the good folks at Smithsonian/Folkways. However, a handful of rare nuggets have recently been uncovered and aired on Worldwide. "You Know Baby" was released on a Mary Records 7" single as Mary Lou Williams and Group featuring Leon Thomas on vocals. Recorded in the late 1960s the song saw extremely limited edition pressing in 1975. Other players on the track include Chris White on bass and Melba Liston on Trombone. Also included on this compilation is the bluesy "Pussys In the Well" which was previously unreleased. This funky take on a nursery rhyme features Bob Banks and James Bailey on vocals. According to Fr. Peter O'Brien, who runs the Mary Lou Williams Foundation, Williams had been listening to James Brown at the time of recording and wanted to record something that a younger audience would be able to connect to. Watch out for more Mary Lou Williams on Luv N'Haight soon.



Carrie Cleveland and *Dee Edwards* weigh-in with two tasty soul cuts that ride the line between funk and Northern Soul. This version of Cleveland's "Make Love To Me" was released on private press 7" single only and originals are hard to come by. A version with different instrumentation is included on the album *Looking Up*. Cleveland's husband Bill wrote and produced the track which was recorded on a 4-track tape machine in their garage in Oakland, CA. He played all the instruments, while Carrie nailed the vocals, on the night before Valentine's day in 1980. Dee Edwards is no stranger to Luv N'Haight compilations with her awesome "I Can Deal With That" previously appearing on the *Searching For Soul* collection. "Why Can't There Be Love?" has a raw Motown flavor befitting one of Detroit's finest. This 7" single was originally recorded and released by Guido Marasco on his Bump Shop label, so named because Marasco ran a car bump and paint repair shop.



2007 has been kind to *RAMP*. A recent album re-issue, a 5-page spread in *Wax Poetics*, and a live performance at the New York Central Park Summer Stage has put the band back in the public eye. For a long time RAMP were one of modern soul music's biggest mysteries. What did RAMP mean? (FYI - Roy Ayers Master Production is the answer). How come their album is so damn hard to find? What happened after their first record dropped? Back in 1977 the band turned their *Come Into Knowledge* album into the ABC label during a change in leadership. The new label head was not interested in the album. The LP was buried, released only as a promotional item in limited quantity. However, RAMP has maintained a musical presence despite a lack of wax and info. Over the years the record has been sampled multiple times (most notably on A Tribe Called Quest's "Bonita Applebum") and much adored by soul music fans for their version of Roy Ayers "Everybody Loves The Sunshine." "The Old One, Two" is another cover of an Ayers track, written by Ayers, William Allen and Edwin Birdsong and originally released on the Roy Ayers album "A Tear To A Smile." The RAMP version is punchier than the psychedelic-tinged Roy Ayers release. Produced by Ayers post-album recording, this is not a new recording: this is vintage RAMP. "I knew I had the cassette somewhere and just figured that as the album was now being viewed as a classic that people might like this unreleased material," explains band-leader John Manuel. "The vibe and vocal styling was unique to RAMP, so our interpretation of the song, with Roy's help, was naturally different from the original version."



"Intergalactic Love Song" by *The Diddys* is a typical Brownwood Basement dojoining joint. An obscure, soulful, disco-tinged cover of the Charles Earland cosmic jazz classic, that Peterson sandwiched in between music from the disparate likes of saxophonist Albert Ayler and a folksy number from vocalist Bud Siffron. Released on The Bam Buu label out of Philadelphia, it was recorded and produced by Sonny Hopson. Hopson, a well-regarded local radio show host (on WHAT 1340 AM), was dubbed the Mighty Burner for his speed in locating car accidents for local a body shop. His original record label even named one of his Prestige Mighty Burner releases after him. In addition to WHAT, running his own label and clubs, and chasing down car wrecks, he also wrote songs including the Freedom Now Brothers' "Sissy Walk," which was sampled later by Fatboy Slim



Ray Camacho and *Steve Parks*, two San Francisco Bay Area artists, add a dash of Latin influence to proceedings. Camacho's take on The Brass Construction "Movin' On" can be found on a couple of his albums, this version being the longer of the two. If you didn't catch his "Si, Si Puede" on Bay Area Funk II you might not know that Camacho has recorded over 600 tracks and played for royalty and two leper colonies. Watch out for a long-overdue full Camacho compilation coming out of the UK soon. The version of "Sadness In My Samba" by Steve Parks is not the more well-known recording from the Movin' In The Right Direction album released on Solid Smoke in 1981. Instead this is a 7"-only mix originally released on San Francisco-based Reynolds Records prior to the album release. An entire album was recorded for Reynolds but the album, tentatively titled The Golden Key, went unreleased. The tracks for the Reynolds album all ended up on the Solid Smoke release but with extra instrumentation and minor changes, including the addition of 2 cover versions: "Under The Boardwalk," and "The One Who Really Loves You." Hold tight for Chris Veltri's compilation of Reynolds Records rare releases coming soon on Re: Joint.

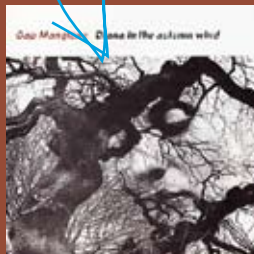


Reverie Hail and their percussive jazz fusion nugget "In Every Way" might have come out on Inner City Records. However the band were unceremoniously dumped when the label decided that fusion was not the cash cow they had hoped it would be. "We hated their idea for the cover anyway: an empty rowboat drifting on a placid pond full of water lilies," remembers Reverie member Jim Miller. The band started their own label (Encounter) and used money they were previously going to put towards a tour-van to fund releasing the album. "We still had our old van, which was becoming increasingly difficult to get into gear, until finally the shift lever just snapped off as we were entering an expressway ramp after a gig. We drove it in 2nd all the way back home. We eventually acquired a much more dependable and comfortable vehicle," jokes Miller. Another Philadelphia album is *DB Shrier's* *Emerges*. Fortunately the album, released in 1967, sounds as good as

Gap Mangione's "Boys With Toys" is a long-time Peterson favorite, even before it was sampled by Talib Kweli on "Shock Body". The lead cut from Mangione's first solo album, *Diana In The Autumn Wind*, was released in 1968. The Mangione Brothers (Gap's brother is Chuck) had previously recorded and led the Jazz Brothers sextet for Riverside Records. Diana In The Autumn Wind, recorded a recent departure in style for brother Gap. Incorporating rock, Brazilian and '60s pop ideas into his jazz repertoire the album mirrored the musical experiments played five nights a week during his residency at The Other Side of The Tracks, a supper club in Rochester, New York. The core of his group included Gap on pianos and organ, plus Tony Levin on basses and Steve Gadd on drums. Chuck Mangione brought in an orchestral section for the recording that included Jerome Richardson, Joe Farrell, Frank Wess, and Clark Terry.



the intriguing cover would lead you to believe. Shrier was a sax player who worked with a quartet that included Tyrone Brown. About a decade after *Emerges* was released, Brown was working with Billy Paul (he has also worked with Max Roach, and Odean Pope) and they re-recorded "East" as a psychedelic-tinged vocal soul masterpiece complete with full string section and an amazing arrangement (coincidentally I first heard Billy Paul's "East" on one of Peterson's Brownswood Basement specials.) There can't be too many Philly-soul classics that started out as heavyweight modal jazz pieces, but this one sounds fantastic both ways. "I've never heard the Billy Paul version, but I actually played with him back in the day," confesses Shrier. "He used to work with some great musicians." *Emerges* was Shrier's first and last album release, but not his only recording. Hours of sessions are on tapes in a number of locations and Shrier is currently seeking them out. At one time he played in the Woody Herman band, with Jimmy McGriff, and even sat in with his hero John Coltrane at his last



..... gig in Philadelphia. It took 4 nights for Shrier to get the courage together to get on stage with Coltrane, but he busted out a transcending 10 minute solo when he finally got there that was met with a nod of approval from his hero. Shrier also had a jazz-rock band by the name of Lifeblood and produced acts on the independent Sound Gems label out of Philadelphia, including Ebb Tide's soulful disco tune "It Takes Love To Make Love." A CD of Billy Paul's "East" was dispatched to Shrier shortly after this interview took place.

Contemporary Jazz Mass, *James Tatum's* highly collectible, first and self-released album provides us with "Introduction/Lord Have Mercy." It's another deep piece for the spiritual jazz fans. In addition to his epic debut, Tatum has composed and released several major works including Return of Joshua, Back To Roots, and The Great Detroit Renaissance. These pieces are often performed within symphony hall settings with large bands. A live recording of the band, called At Orchestra Hall, the Paradise Theatre, which includes the awesome "Zoombah Lu," was also released on JTTP records and is worth tracking down. In addition to composing, performing (The James Tatum Trio Plus has performed every year since 1981 in the Detroit/Montreux Jazz Festival) and writing, Tatum also teaches about jazz and has led lectures on The History of Jazz, African Influences in Jazz, How to Listen to Jazz, and How to Improvise Jazz. In addition he spearheads The James Tatum Foundation For The Arts, Inc., which was founded in 1987 by a coalition of concerned educators and civic leaders who recognized that in the Metropolitan Detroit area, there were many artistically talented youth whose potential were not being nurtured to development.

Al Jarreau is possibly the most well-known artist on this compilation. While he has released many major label mass-sellers, he also has a couple of independent label surprises in his discography. His Bill Withers cover album (Lonely Time Lonely Street) is one, and there's also 1965, his first album, which features the sublime take on the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic "My Favorite Things" included on this compilation. Recorded in Illinois, the album is a strictly jazz affair featuring pianist Cal Bezemer, bassist Gary Allen, and drummer Joe Abodeely. Brothers Dimitri and Tony Sotirakis were blown-away one night when a young Al Jarreau walked into their Illinois night club and sat in with the band. Being big jazz fans they



movies Beverly Hills Brats and Sweet 16 along with videos for Kool and the Gang.



Very little is known about *The Love Affair* track "Never In My Life." It was a George Semper production released only on a very scare white label (with handwritten label), called Inner city Review, and released in a makeshift album jacket. Semper previously appeared on Luv N'Haight by way of the InnerCity Sounds collection released a few years back. Semper was an organ player, producer, booking agent, and with his production company, Inner City Attractions, traveled the country looking for new acts. As "Never In My Life" and the collection of his productions InnerCity Sounds prove, Semper was responsible for some stellar soul and funk, but he missed his shot at household-name status when he turned down George Clinton to produce a band called Mean Machine.

Musicians from the Summer Program for Youthful Musicians is the long-winded band name for a group of young musicians put together by Bubbha Thomas (the drummer of the Lightmen fame) at a Summer Camp in Texas. This ultra-rare slice of psychedelic soul jazz business, was recorded in either 1973 (or '74, Thomas was not exactly sure) and released on 7" single-only in almost non-existent quantities on the Lightnin' Records label. Since the early 1970's, at The Summer Jazz Workshop, Thomas and a dedicated staff of seasoned musicians offer students from all over the world the opportunity to learn the rudiments of jazz. The workshop has been credited with producing professional educators, and musicians and individuals from over 8,000 teenagers including notables like Joe Carmouche, Jason Moran, Brandon Lee, Horace A. Young, Frank Lacy and Eric Harland.

On the vinyl and digital version of this collection is an 18+ minute monster by *The Pyramids*. Band leader Idris Ackamoor has rightfully been in the spotlight of late thanks to the awesome collection of his material released on the Japanese EM label (The Music of Idris Ackamoor 1971 - 2004). In 1972 Ackamoor's group, musician friends known as The Collective based at Antioch College in Ohio, received a travel grant to study in Europe and Africa. While in France they met new musicians and formed the Pyramids. From France they traveled Africa and soaked up the art, music, and history of Morocco, Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia. On their return to Antioch they would add additional members to the band and released 3 excellent spiritual jazz albums steeped in the rhythms and inspirations of their trip: Lalilbela, King of Kings and Birth/Speed/Merging. Included on this compilation is "Nsorama" from the 1974 release King of Kings. Coincidentally The Pyramids played their last gig at the 1977 UC Berkeley Jazz Festival alongside Al Jarreau who also appears on this compilation. Ackamoor has enjoyed a long lasting musical career post-Pyramids and now lives in the Bay Area. He would, however, like to know who has been bootlegging his Pyramids albums on vinyl.

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The Groove Merchant, San Francisco, CA

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Giles Peterson thanks: andrew jervis, the crew at ubiquity, simon goffe, emily, brownswood crew, beccy greason, ben cave, helen smith, karen pearson, thistian, kuni, freshly cut family, jim holt, zinger, bernstein, moni, kate t, swood, benstead, ats, ollie, luc, toshio matsuura, ray hearn, raphael, paul martin, naomi, mari, allie, da vince, garfield, simbad, sundae, garnier, kruder, jazzanovas, truby, beadle....

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