

Classics to Keep

BY ED CRAY



One of the nice things about reviewing — aside from the princely wages and ego satisfaction — is that one may keep the records. Which is how I have come to make the following recommendations. These were the records from among the new releases played for the last few months for personal pleasure.

Bach: Complete Flute Sonatas, etc. (*Seraphim*) — Flutist Voorhorst and harpsichordist Uittenbosch endow these with an earthy, no-nonsense quality.

Bach: Cantatas 140, 148 (*Seraphim*) — Ameling, Baker, Altmeyer, Sotin. An embarrassment of riches.

Bach: Chaconne, etc. (*Sheffield*) — Guitarist Michael Newman's debut on records marks him as a young man of great capacity. The direct-to-disc sound is stunning.

Beach & Foote: Violin Sonatas (*New World*) — Mrs. Beach's unjustly slighted sonata gets a silken performance from violinist Joseph Silverstein and pianist Gilber Kalish.

Beethoven & Mendelssohn: String Quintets (*RCA*) — Pinchas Zukerman joins the Guarneri Quartet, demonstrating how much fun friends can have making music together.

Beethoven: Quintet for Piano & Winds, Serenade (*Turnabout*) — Relaxed music making, notable for its easy charm rather than its virtuosity.

Brahms: Violin Concerto (*Columbia*) — Isaac Stern and Zubin Mehta have played this together for years. Not often do soloist and orchestra blend so felicitously.

Bruckner: Symphonies No. 7 & 9 (*Vanguard*) — Kurt Masur's Leipzigers raise these works, and Bruckner, to religious passion. A great argument for the transcendental.

Bruckner: Symphony No. 9 (*Angel*) — Eugen Jochum provides a well-recorded, intellectual reading that lets the listener draw his own conclusions about the enigmatic composer.

Copland: Symphony No. 3 (*Columbia*) — Copland conducts one of the few contemporary works to have gained a foothold in the concert hall; a grand, accessible composition.

Dowland & Byrd: Lute Pieces (*Nonesuch*) — Paul O'Dette tosses off these 15 tuneful works with great élan, never making too much of too little.

Haydn: Symphonies 44–49 (*Vanguard*) — Antonio Janigro conducts brisk performances on three separate records of the best of Haydn's middle symphonies.

Mennin: Symphony No. 7, Piano Concerto (*CRI*) — The symphony is one of the more engaging, if dark, works in contemporary music. John Ogden's piano on the flip side of this former RCA disc overwhelms.

Mozart: Symphonies No. 25 and 28 (*Odyssey*) — Remastered mono recordings by the Mozart conductor of this century. If anything in music is definitive, this is.

Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Haydn: Sonata No. 52 (*RCA*) — Well remastered mono recordings of Vladimir Horowitz at titan power. Be grateful such men grace our times.

Rivers of Delight (*Nonesuch*) — American shape note hymns sung by the Word of Mouth Chorus; raw, intense, moving. The sort of thing one expects from enterprising Nonesuch.

Saint-Saens and Lalo: Piano Trios (*Turnabout*) — French confections whipped up by the Caecilian Trio proving even serious composers have fun now and then.

Schumann: Sonata in G minor, *Fantasiestuecke* (*Orion*) — Pianist Susan Starr is a gifted lady of no little sensitivity, a combination of assets much too rare.

Subotnick: *Liquid Strata*, etc. (*Townhall*) — Though not a Subotnick partisan, I'm still awed by pianist Ralph Grierson's capacities. The Lesemann and Kraft pieces seem more rewarding on a second hearing.

Thomson: *Four Songs from William Blake*, etc. (*CRI*) — Virgil Thomson was the quintessential American intellectual in Paris, in New York (a fearsome critic), in hometown Kansas City. This rechanneled Columbia release represents all three places.

Webern: Complete Works, Vol. I (*Columbia*) — Recorded under the direction of Pierre Boulez, all-star casts deliver lucid, precise performances. A Grand Prix du Disque/Grammy winner or there ain't no justice.

Jarrett. A bass and piano line are central to "House of Wax," on which Walcott's sitar is the primary voice, accented by the breathy flute of McCandless. The title track really burns, and Towner has a dandy 12-string solo.

For *Introducing*, Moore stuck to small groups with no overdubs, or solo bass and piano devices. His bass gets a woody, thumping sound that fills rooms and bounces easily, while his piano is ruminative and sparse. The quartet pieces show a different coat again, with Zbigniew Siefert, the late Polish violinist, and Jan Hammer playing pin-pointed, exuberant drums on two rock works. There are also quiet trio opuses with cellist David Darling.

All the Mornings utilizes two ensembles, a trio with Art Lande, piano, and Dave Samuels, vibes and marimba; and an elegant woodwind octet. Both units achieve an open, outdoorsy quality that is most attractive. The trio is a better study in interaction among improvisers while the octet displays McCandless's depth as a composer and arranger.

Zan Stewart

Note: This record contains only 26-1/2 minutes of music.

SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE
Back on the Right Track
(Warner Bros.)

Sly Stone's return to vinyl after a lengthy hiatus is a mixed bag, neither the work of a cocaine casualty — as many feared — nor a smashingly triumphant comeback.

Sly's brand of funk doesn't sound

dated in the least. His vocals are on the mark, as is the horn section and backing vocals that always made the Family Stone so distinctive.

However, the music and production is altogether too slick and smooth, lacking any sort of dynamic variation; none of the songs really stick in the memory. A flawed, inconclusive effort, the album nonetheless indicates that Sly can't be counted out yet. *Consumer Note:* This record contains only 26½ minutes of music.

Don Snowden

The material on "Restless Nights" cries to be milked of its pathos.

KARLA BONOFF
Restless Nights (*Columbia*)

Famous for her own and for Ronstadt's versions of "I Can't Hold On" and other originals, Bonoff exhibits her usual flair on *Restless Nights*, with special emphasis on evocative, heart-rending melodies. Yet, while not bloodless, Bonoff's voice lacks emotional precision. Good songs all, the material on *Restless Nights* cries to be milked of its pathos. Bonoff just doesn't have the chords.

Davin Seay

SONNY ROLLINS
Don't Ask (*Milestone*)

Rollins has endured a lot of negative comment, much of it unfairly, for his journey into pop-jazz, and though his detractors may not think his material worthy of the preeminent saxophon-

ist of our time, Sonny nevertheless stays true to himself; he always swings, he plays with a never-ending energy and enthusiasm that makes even the weakest song happen, and his almost-human tenor sound gets rougher, warmer, more personal as the years are logged. *Don't Ask* has lots of music: the funky "Harlem Boys"; "Disco Monk," a hot and cold item with a storming Larry Coryell guitar solo; the melodious "My Ideal"; and the straight-ahead title track. One can't help but smile at these genuinely affectionate sounds.

Zan Stewart

FUNKADELIC
Uncle Jam Wants You (Warner Bros.)
MUTINY
Mutiny on the Mamaship
(Columbia)

In its original, undiluted form, Funkadelic was the most original and amusing black music concept of the Seventies. George Clinton, P-Funk mastermind and chief booty polisher, took hard James Brown/Sly Stone soul and goosed it up with a heavier bottom and lyrical and musical conceits that incorporated science fiction, Frank Zappa, the purest streetcorner jive and the most complicated cosmogony this side of William Blake. The result was daffy, extravagant dance music — looney and mindless and lots of fun.

Unfortunately, to borrow a phrase from the P-Funk lexicon, the butt pleasures have waned considerably, as amply demonstrated by Funkadelic's new release, *Uncle Jam Wants You*. Nothing on the new album comes close to achieving the rhythmic delights of the unshakable "One Nation Under a Groove." *Uncle Jam's* magnum opus, "(not just) Knee Deep," is

Sonny Rollins

