

LPs

Rejoice Pharoah Sanders ©1981, Theresa Records

Pharoah Sanders, that illustrious giant of the tenor saxophone who wowed a Eugene audience last Friday, has come out with a fine double record set, *Rejoice*.

He also makes a small but significant contribution on another new recording, *Beyond a Dream*.

Sanders has emerged as the heir of his teacher and mentor, John Coltrane. In fact, the ghostly, almost tangible presence of Coltrane in Sanders' playing is uncanny.

But Sanders is a remarkable player in his own right. His dynamic range, his power, and his clarity of tone surpasses that of Coltrane, and his harmonic range equals it.

Sanders can be completely unrestrained without losing any control over his in-

strument. He can put out a deep, rich tenor sound, leap into piercing wails, then shift back again, without any intermediate preparation. He displays a masterly and uncommon ability to manipulate harmonic overtones.

Sanders has all this, and more. But he doesn't have Coltrane's soaring, explorative imagination. This is the impression given by *Rejoice*, at least.

Clearly, John Coltrane's baton has been handed down to Sanders. But Sanders is walking with it, not running.

Nevertheless, *Rejoice* is fresh, thoughtful, and beautifully assembled. It is an important album in that it re-establishes connections with the past, and does a lot to bridge the chasm that John Coltrane's death left in jazz.

Sanders is most true to the

spirit of Coltrane in the title cut, a one chord vamp that takes up all of side A. He makes it his point to instill a sense of religious reverence in the listener, and a sense of communion with the musicians.

This could have been done without the over-dubbed voice. The invocation-invitation is inside the record jacket for everyone to read, and should perhaps have been left implicit in the music.

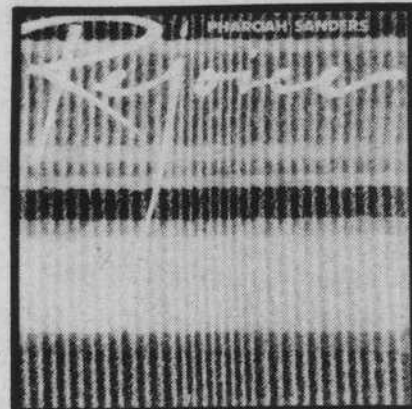
On side B Sanders exposes us to some terrific African highlife music, and some excellent young musicians who definitely know how to play it. Herb Wong, in the liner notes, describes highlife as "a West African forerunner of calypso, salsa and other Latin forms." It is percussion dominated, exuberant music done with a lot of guts and authenticity.

On sides C and D, Sanders

reaches back to Coltrane and bop roots. "Origins" is an exultant original composition, with a nice vocal arrangement by William Fischer. "When Lights are Low" is a clean, fresh rendition of a Benny Carter tune.

The vocal adaptation of Coltrane's "Moment's Notice," with lyrics and singing by George Johnson, is an outstanding cut, with a burning break and solo by Sanders. John Hicks, who sizzled on piano last Friday, also has a great solo, and so does Bobby Hutcherson on vibes.

"Central Park West," another Coltrane tune, and "Ntjilo Ntjilo/Bird Song," are both fine arrangements, with one qualification: they should have left out the harp. When harps are added to jazz arrangements they almost always spell corn, and these tunes are no exception.



The album does not achieve the intensity and drive that Sanders, Hicks, Walter Booker and Idris Muhammad achieved in concert. It is a smooth, more contained, sometimes even mellow studio product.

But it still a fine, five star recording. The personnel is great. Every cut is different, and every one flawless and fresh.

— Matt Taylor

Theater

Buried Child University Theatre

Buried Child, by Sam Shepard, is a play that illustrates the vulnerability of the human condition. Set in Illinois, it concerns a family driven slightly off-balance by the actions of Dodge (Tyler Bass) and Halie (Brigit Olson).

The seeds of madness are sewn because of a baby born, killed, and buried somewhere in the backyard.

As the play opens, we find Dodge and Halie quite old, and visited by their son Tilden (M.W. Mitchell) who has returned from New Mexico. Tilden is clearly a man with a problem. His speech is slow, his mind runs on only a few isolated tracks, and he spends most of his time digging around outside in the back.

Tilden's eyes seem to see for the most part, a vague and shadowy past, tinged with a secretive awareness that surfaces from time to time. He remembers a baby that he used to hold and sing to. He knows that Dodge killed and buried it long ago and that he is not supposed to speak of it. But it eats away at him and his silence is broken in the second act.

Enter Vince (Michael Cal-

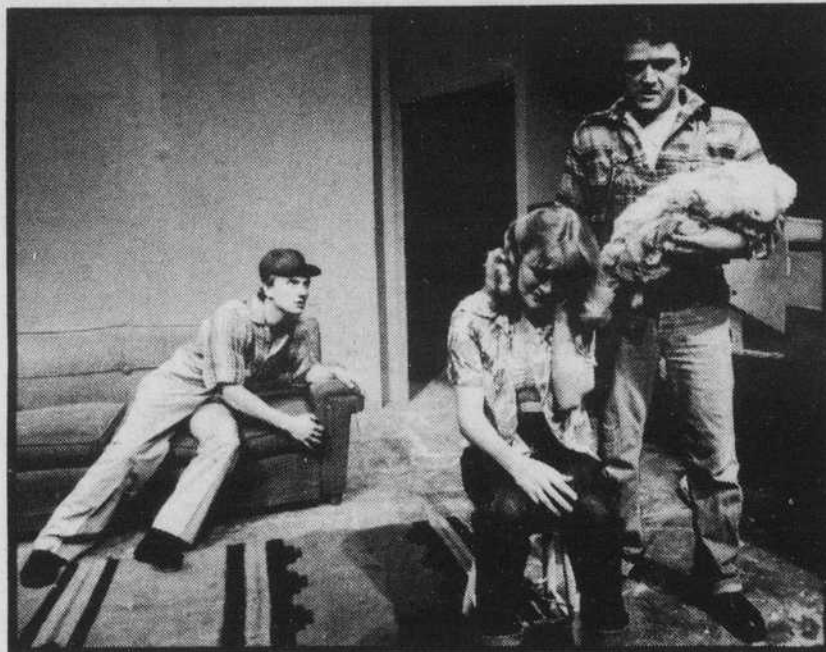


Photo by Erich Boekelheide

lahan) and Shelly (Deanna Duplechain). Vince is Tilden's own son who has brought his girlfriend for a visit. He has not been home for six years. But, caught up in their own mind games, both Dodge and Tilden do not seem to recognize Vince. Their minds travel shadowy trails, they appear to linger in the past, locked in a trance, where there is no room for change.

Unable to handle this strange and cold welcome, Vince leaves to get whiskey for Dodge and ends up driving all night, caught up in the same

spell, though, he does not yet know the deadly secret. He feels only his father's and his grandfather's blood coursing through him, leading him into their future, fitting him into their shoes.

Shelly, finding herself in an unpleasant and crazy situation, deals with things as best she can during Vince's absence. She eventually, if not indirectly, gets Tilden to reveal the secret that plagues him. She learns of a baby, killed. Bradley (Martin Steiner), Tilden's brother, then enters the scene. He scares Tilden away

and harasses Shelly in a rather demented fashion.

In the final act, Halie, slightly tipsy, returns to the house with Father Dewis (Stephen Michael Purvis), whom she has invited to tea.

Ideas and actions move very quickly toward a climax.

Shelly tries to raise a sane voice amidst all this insanity. Vince staggers home drunk, ranting and raving, and Dodge tells the grisly story of the "buried child." The atmosphere rings with words that haven't been said, and thoughts that haven't been voiced, in years.

The final moments of this last act are, at first, energized. Halie goes upstairs, Father Dewis leaves, Shelly leaves, Vince throws Bradley out and passes out on the couch, and Dodge seems to die unnoticed.

After the crisis has passed, and an emotionally weary mood reigns, Tilden walks in carrying the dead baby, newly dug up. He sings to it and actually looks at peace. He carries it slowly up the stairs to show Halie who is heard rejoicing over the sun. Curtain.

You are left with a feeling of numb horror yet to come, unacted, but vaguely imagined. The madness has worked its way into full bloom over the

years, seeded by an act of violence and reaping a tortured harvest. The family could not escape their wounded condition, and could not hide from it. They could only live with it, allowing it to gnaw away at the roots of their minds and hearts, victims of their own inability to forget. Time could not wipe away the damage done it could only worsen it.

The acting was superb. The set was designed to evoke a mood not only of the midwest, but also of neglect and timelessness. The past reigned and could not be wiped away, not even by the abrupt present.

The lighting and sound were effective. You got the feeling that it was raining even though nothing was wet. The sunny morning, complete with leaf shadows, blue sky and clouds, gave one a sense of stability. As things got more and more tragic, I found myself looking again and again at the reflection of light and leaf as the one solid base of reality. I felt as if I were watching a bad dream come to life. A human nightmare. Are we not but slaves to our own thoughts and actions? *Buried Child* gives us an insight into these things but all the same, it ruined my night.

— C. Hanson

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