

MUSICIAN

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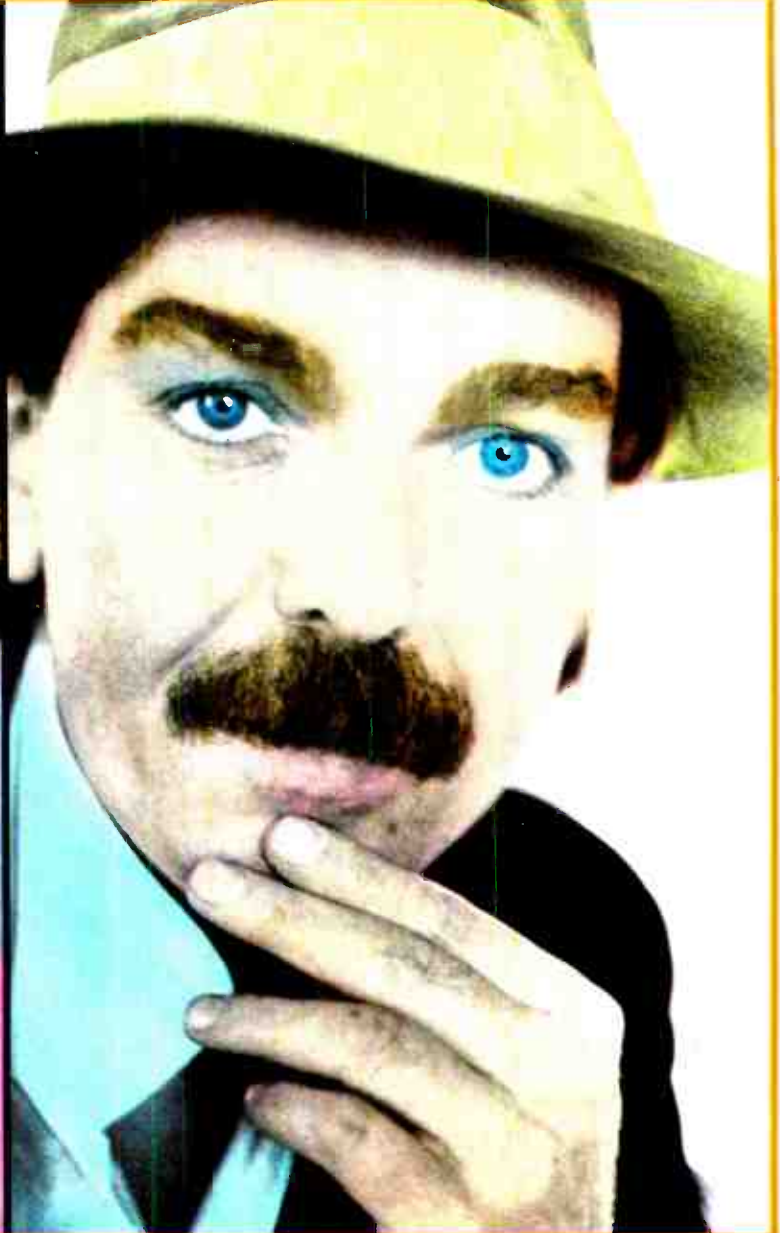
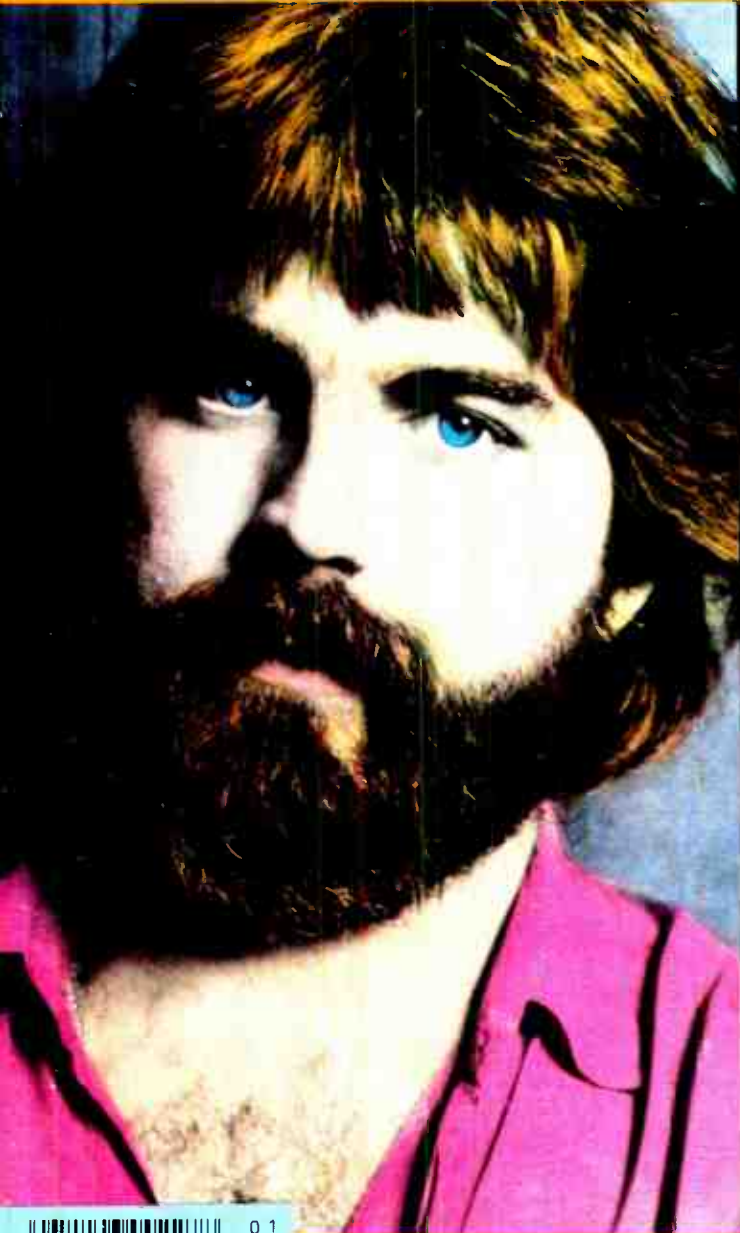
PLAYER & LISTENER

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*Albert Collins' Ice Cold Blues
Surf Music, Rockabilly, John Prine*

**MICHAEL
McDONALD**

**CAPTAIN
BEEFHEART**



TWO WORLDS OF POP

World Radio History

vitality (for the moment, anyway), there's the ineffable faith that on the other side of this dark but necessary passage there waits a victory that's worth the struggle. And a new beginning. "Some-day these childish dreams must end/to become a man and grow up to dream again/Now I believe in the end." It's the only road for an artist of his stature. Or for any of us. — Vic Garbarini

Pat Metheny
80/81, ECM 2-1180



This double album set is an example of the classic Orphic journey from light through darkness to light, as composed by Pat Metheny and performed by the guitarist with Charlie Haden and Jack DeJohnette on bass and drums, and tenor saxophonists Dewey Redman and Michael Brecker.

The "light" sides (1 & 4) show that these avant-garde players can bring life and color to Metheny's folky pastorales. On the "dark" sides though, Metheny ventures into more demanding musical territory, and gets in way over his head.

The problem seems to be one of listening. Jack DeJohnette is the dominant force in the band, playing with a constant inventiveness, combining subtlety and propulsive force in a truly astounding way. With Haden and Redman he establishes classic drummer-soloist dialogues, but Metheny sounds too rapped up in his own world for this kind of creative interplay. In the free group improvisation "Open" you can hear the moment when he finally realizes that the scattered bop licks and Bach quotes he's been playing aren't relating to what the drums are saying. He responds with a tough spasm of notes on the bass strings, swells some mysterious chords, then stops.

"80/81" and "Pretty Scattered" are nice post-bop lines that show Metheny's melodic imagination is up to the demands of jazz in the '80s, at least as a composer. Soloing, he relies almost exclusively on the patterns and riffs he's been cranking out nightly to adoring audiences with his own band. Placed over the Haden-DeJohnette rhythm section, they're out of context and facile sounding.

Redman and Haden are their usual excellent selves, although they sound occasionally bewildered by some of the sounds coming out of Metheny's amp. The big surprise on this record is Michael Brecker, who solos with authority on "Pretty Scattered," and with lyrical abandon on "Every Day," supported by Metheny's beautiful textures on acoustic and electric guitar. Brecker's list of

trademark phrases is smaller than the guitarist's, and he's been playing them longer, but he makes use of the studio musician's discipline of creating a band feeling on very short notice to listen and relate to the other players.

"80/81" is certainly more ambitious than anything Pat Metheny has done recently, and that's good news. These records contain abundant evidence of his technical brilliance, and isolated moments that hint at his potential contribution to modern improvised music. I hope he tries this kind of thing again, after he gets some of the American garbage out of his system. — Chris Doering

Joni Mitchell
Shadows And Light, Elektra Asylum.



Soon to be a major television special, Joni Mitchell's '79 summer tour hits the bins as *Shadows and Light*. It's a pleasant double LP in

that summery put-it-on-while-you're-doing-something-else sort of way. The performance I heard at Forest Hills was far more striking than this September recording from Santa Barbara, and I can't help but wonder if they weren't a little tired, if not bored, with their material by then.

They, by the way, are Jaco Pastorius, his good friend Pat Metheny, his good friend Lyle Mays, Joni's buddy Don Alias on percussion, and Michael Brecker, everybody's favorite malleable tenor east of Tom Scott. The repertoire is a smorgasbord of mid-to-late '70s Mitchell: five from *Hejira*, one from *Don Juan*, three from *Mingus*, and the rest from more innocent days.

"Shadows and Light," elevated if you like it, pretentious if you don't, introduces the record with a gawky stab at intertextual profundity: Mitchell has spliced in from "Rebel Without a Cause" some histrionic "adults" squabbling about a car crash, idealism, and sermonizing (how apropos!) and then an old recording of Frankie Lyman and the Teenagers singing "No No No etc." As far as the rest of the record, here's what's wrong, wrong and right.

Wrong: Most of the originals are better than the duplicates. Brecker's horn work is way too pat, too facile and slick, on everything save "Dry Cleaner." Alias is fine on congas but anemic on traps. Lyle Mays is underutilized and undermixed. Mitchell's cool professionalism and cool tone flatten the energy of the concert context. And she should never, never try to imitate old bluesmen like Furry Lewis or sing "Why Do Fools Fall In Love": in the first case, she don't have the funk; in the second, the spunk. Last, though the

Persuasions (the tour's opening act) make "Why Do Fools" tolerable and redeem a second treatment of "Shadows and Light" (with Mays) by gospelizing it, the recording emasculates their sound.

Right: Mitchell picks the three best tunes on *Mingus* — "Dry Cleaner," "Pork Pie Hat," "God Must Be A Boogie Man" — and does them up with a looseness and spirit lacking on the rest of the record, perhaps because they're they freshest, most challenging tunes in her songbook. "Coyote" also works quite well. Jaco Pastorius acts as the group's second voice, carrying things along on his own with some of the most rhythmically insistent (almost to the point of distraction) and melodically singing work of his career. Metheny contributes one nice pastoral sketch. Best of all, one line from the title track, harmless when written in '75 and sung in '79, has deep meaning due to the workings of history: "Hostage smiles on presidents." President. — David Breskin

Art Pepper
Landscape, Galaxy 5128.



To my mind, this is the best of all the recent Art Pepper albums. It won't bear out Pepper's claim to being the greatest altoist in the world

but it does prove him an engrossing and lyrical stylist who comes from the shadows of himself and knows how to make all his notes, phrases and hesitations sound significant and lived. You end up listening attentively to every turn of phrase — who knows what portion of Pepper's life might be hanging in the balance? — but Pepper's is, after all, a rather delicate and pleasant style, and the man you encounter in it is not the egomaniacal drug-monster of the autobiography but the smaller, truer, more gentle self that immolated itself in drugs, savagery and crime as if total loss were final refuge. If Pepper is tormented by anything, it is by the beauty he is ashamed to admit to and which he cannot escape. He is not the first to adopt the bizarre strategy of trying to protect his essential self by doing everything in his power to destroy it, and he will probably not be the last. In any case, he sounds terrific on this album, fluent, melodic, and subtly impassioned.

The rhythm section has everything to do with how good he sounds, from the lovingly nuanced cymbal beat of Billy Higgins to Tony Dumas' bass to George Cables' apposite if somewhat over-supplied chords. They swing marvelously together, and Pepper couldn't

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