

his tone and the volume of his playing simply don't vary enough.

Pearson turns in pleasant, tasteful solo work and does a nice job in the rhythm section. —Pekar

TED SHAFER'S JELLY ROLL JAZZ BAND

GOOD OLD JAZZ, Vol. 1—Merry Makers 101: *She's Crying For Me; Snake Rag; Southern Stomps; Working Man Blues; Oriental Strut; Riverboat Shuffle; I'm A Little Blackbird; Whistling Rufus; Sweet Baby Doll; Merry Makers Twine.*

Personnel: Jack Langlos, trumpet; Tom Barney, cornet; Dave Kennedy, trombone; Mike Baird, clarinet; Dick Shooshan, piano; Shafer, banjo; Pete Kier, tuba; Niel Kuhfuss, drums.

Rating: ★★½

GOOD OLD JAZZ, Vol. 2—Merry Makers 102: *Messin' Around; Camp Meeting Blues; Sic 'em Tige; Someday, Sweetheart; National Blues; At the Christmas Ball; King of the Zulus; London Blues.*

Personnel: as for Vol. 1, except Tom Riley, drums, replaces Kuhfuss (tracks 4, 6); Ray Ronnei, vocal (tracks 4, 6).

Rating: ★★

GOOD OLD JAZZ, Vol. 3—Merry Makers 104: *Sweet Baby Doll; Mamie's Blues; Big Chief Battle Axe; Sweet Lovin' Man; Over in the Gloryland; Maple Leaf Rag; Wabash Blues.*

Personnel: Ronnei, cornet, vocal (track 2); Bob Mielke, trombone; Bob Helm, clarinet, soprano sax; Shafer, banjo; Jim Cumming, bass.

Rating: ★★

The first two albums are after the style of Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, which was after the style of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. The attempt, agreeable as it may be to followers of this division of traditional jazz, fails in the area where Oliver and Watters (and Watters' heir

group, the Bay City Jazz Band) succeeded—the role of the twin lead horns.

Without the compatible improvisatory ability (genius, if you will) of Oliver and Louis Armstrong, or Watters and Bob Scobey, a band of this sort must have written music for the trumpets, as a guide to keep the two from straying, possibly, into each other's territory, and as a general safety precaution for the whole band. (Watters had charts, too, but he dispensed with each as quickly as the tune was mastered, and things loosened up considerably after that.) Here, the trumpets are written parallel (it's easier that way), as were those on Doc Evans' late-'50s attempts in this same field; and, because of this, both bands missed the point, for it is the improvising together, lead and second, that produces the excitement. The straight, open lead, with a quick, keen second, sometimes nearly parallel, then swinging apart like aerial artists, to join again—that's what it's all about.

Volumes 1 and 2 represent a two-year span, from mid-'64; the later tracks, on 2, show added confidence of the players with the material and each other. Playing time is skimpy—most tracks are 78 rpm length—and 2 is an outright gyp in this respect; still, *Sweetheart*, with its variegated arrangements, good, simple drumming and swing, and pleasant vocal is as good as almost anything from the later days of the west coast "Revival." Langlos is an ear-catching soloist, on 2, and the others (except Kuhfuss, who could well have been expended) are more than competent and knowledgeable within the idiom. Swing fre-

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quently eludes the rhythm section, but a certain jauntiness prevails nonetheless.

Volume 3, recorded at the start of '67, displays a change in personnel, attitude, and style, to better results. Recorded "live," the quintet is tight and loose in the best sense of the paradox, with veterans Helm (of the YBJB) and Mielke working around Ronnei's unique (read corny, but not ridiculous as it is on the South Frisco JB *Valut LP*) lead and Cumming's strong bass (not closely miked/overbalanced, as a studio engineer might have done). The brisker numbers (*Leaf, Axe; Doll and Man* at good medium tempos) are best; *Gloryland* is too slow for comfort, though the idea was a good one; *Wabash* is tedious in almost anyone's hands; and Ronnei's simulation of Jelly Roll's narration on *Mamie's* is a bit uncomfortable.

Moreover, Volume 3 is more generous in playing time. All three have good monaural sound (none is available in stereo) and are well-pressed. A companion album to 3, incidentally, is forthcoming on GHB records. —Jones

EDGAR WINTER

ENTRANCE—Epic BN 26503; *Entrance; Where Have You Gone; Rise to Fall; Fire and Ice; Hung Up; Back in the Blues; Re-Entrance; Tobacco Road; Jump Right Out; Peace Pipe; A Different Game; Jimmy's Gospel.*

Personnel: Winter, alto saxophone, piano, organ, vocals; Randal Dolanon, guitar; Gene Kurtz, bass; Jimmy Gillen, drums; Johnny Winter, harmonica; Ray Alonge, Earl W. Chapin, Brooks Tillotson, French horns; Paul Gershman, Gene Cahn, Ralph Oxman, Russell Savkus, Emanuel Green, strings; on *Tobacco Road* only: Edgar Winter; Johnny Winter, guitar; Tommy Shannon, bass; John Turner, drums.

Rating: ★★

The pleasures of this album notably increase with repeated listening, especially the first side. There, with a precise and delicate thrust, the seven songs order into a quasi-suite, *Winter's Dream*, and reveal both the tasty arranging and instrumental charms Edgar Winter has never quite made manifest on brother Johnny's hard blues LPs.

Sensitive melodic variance and flexible rhythm changes characterize a sprightly, fluid pace that few rocksters can approximate, and Winter well co-ordinates such effects to dynamic fruition, even though his voice distracts at times (often sounding like unpleasant whining).

True, the horns and strings now and then prove a bit gratuitous, particularly when adding pseudo-classical riffs and the like, yet the tight ensemble nonetheless spunks on through. For one, *Fire and Ice* may be the classic jazz/rock "fusion" and, with the other suite pieces (except for a few brief cutesy instants), also a testament to the powers of careful charting, focused emotional tension, and a sense of the enchanting in rock music.

Side two is more improvisatory and pales beside *Winter's Dream*, but nonetheless continues the inventive spirit of the date, spotting good Dolanon wah-wah on *Jump Right Out* and Winter with a synched scat vocal and organ on *Peace Pipe* and on fervent alto on *A Different Game* and *Edgar's Gospel*. Hopefully, *Entrance* precedes a fortune more of Edgar Winter before any exit. —Bourne