

# Douglas releases 50s jazz archives

There seems to be a current trend among record companies to re-release vintage recordings under the title of a collection or series. Supposedly this gives the listening public a chance to broaden its knowledge in a certain area.

So, I decided I might as well do a little plugging of music I enjoy. United Artists (UA) has started a jazz series called The Douglas Collection. To its credit, UA has not resorted to the volumes gambit. Instead each album in the collection focuses on an individual who played an important part in the progression of jazz, such as Billie "Lady Day" Holiday, King Pleasure, Duke Ellington-Charlie Mingus-Max Roach, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers and John Coltrane.

Unfortunately, with the exception of the Ellington-Mingus-Roach disc, which was recorded in 1962, the rest of the records are undated. As close as I can tell, it appears

that the albums were recorded between the early 1950's and the mid 1960's.

## Lady Day

Billie Holiday's *Lady Love* is a delight. Recorded before two audiences, side one offers Billie backed by piano, bass and drums. She opens with Rodgers and Hart's standard "Blue Moon," and moves through six more numbers with "My Man" and a request, "I Cover the Waterfront," highlighting that side.

"Lady Day" changes grooves on side two, moving into a jam session with some excellent jazz musicians.

*Moody's Mood For Love* features King Pleasure. During jazz's infancy, brass and reed instruments were used to imitate the human voice. Scatting or scat singing reversed this process by using wordless vocal improvisation to imitate the instruments.

## Pure Pleasure

Influenced by some of jazz's great saxophonists (Lester Young, James Moody, Charlie Parker and Stan Getz) Pleasure combines word with scatting to develop a unique and different style of performing.

Larry Kubert

*Money Jungle* features Ellington on piano, Mingus on bass and Roach on drums. Ellington also wrote all the charts on the album.

Side one opens with the title song headlined by Ellington's driving piano. The Duke's lilting piano and Mingus' flitting string bass set the mood for "Fleur de Afrique."

Hauntingly beautiful "Solitude" is included on side two, as well as the powerful Ellington big-band standard "Caravan" which is superbly handled by the trio.

Recorded live at the Renaissance in Hollywood, *3 Blind Mice* features Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Blakey's drumming is characteristically fine and the Jazz Messengers, lead by talented Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, Curtis Fuller on trombone and Wayne Shorter on tenor, provide solid support.

The inner beauty given to side one's oldie "Blue Moon" by Hubbard's trumpet is inspiring. Side two is the better of the two sides. Tenor man Shorter steals the spotlight on "Plexis," while everyone gets their lick in on "Up Jumped Spring." Benny Carter's "When Lights Are Low" features a nice solo by trombonist Fuller.

Some years back I was talking with a friend of mine who supposedly knew something about jazz. I happened to mention John Coltrane. His response was "Who dat?" To which my tempered reply was "Man if you don't know, there ain't no way to tell you."

## Trane time

Along with such great names as Louis Armstrong, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, tenor saxophonist John Coltrane was one of the foremost improvisational instrumentalists in jazz history, before his untimely death in 1967.

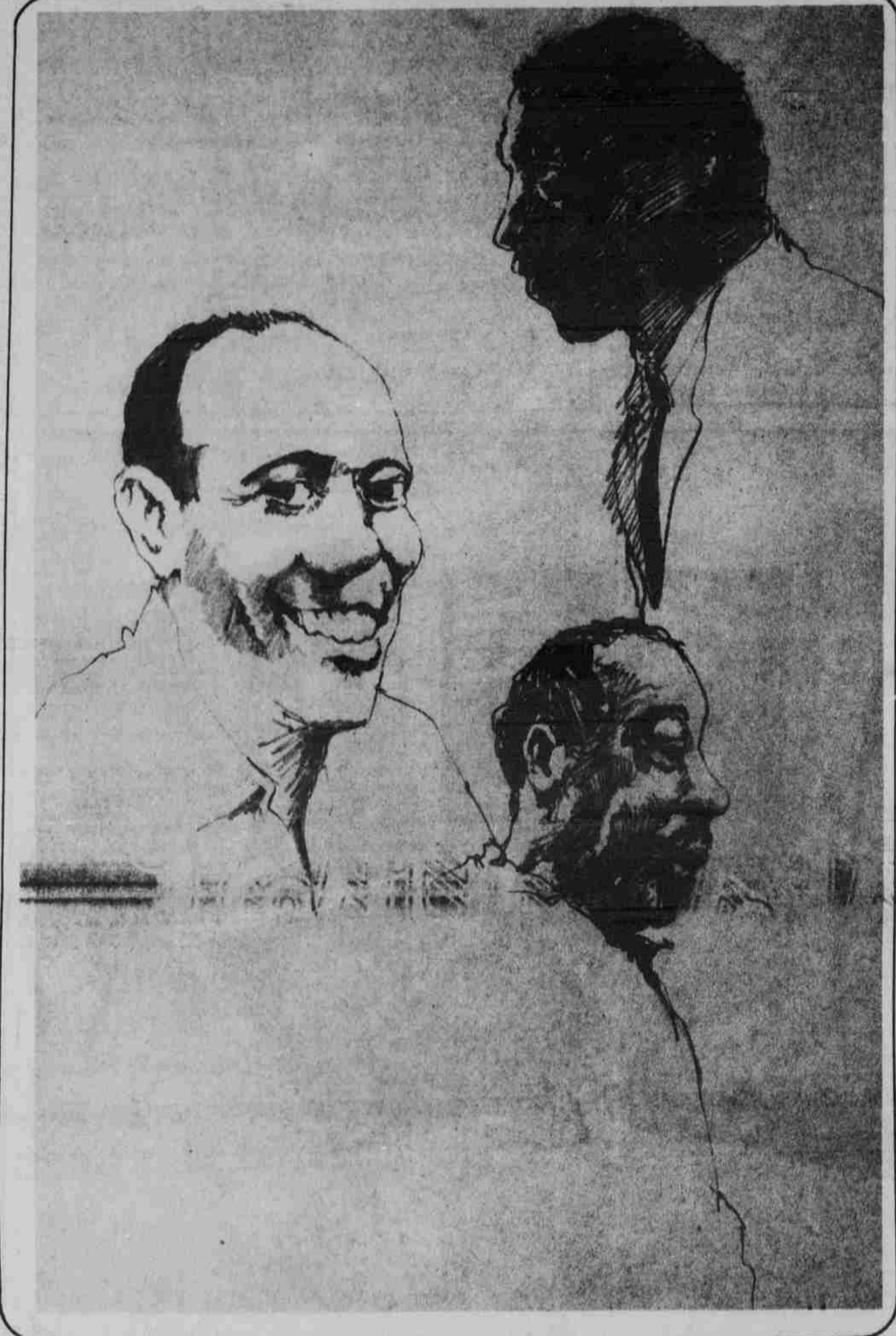
*Coltrane Time* features Trane and friends: Cecil Taylor/piano, Kenny Dorham/trumpet, Chuck Israels/bass and Louis Hayes/ drums, in some excellent "cool" jazz.

The album includes four cuts, all well worth the listening time, "Shifting Down," "Just Friends," "Like Someone in Love" and "Double Clutching."

Trane does some exceptionally nice work on "Shifting Down" and "Double Clutching."

The United Artist's Douglas Collection provides an interesting, entertaining and informative insight into the various jazz artists featured. An additional positive point is the inclusion of a discography of each featured artist, for those people who would like to study an artist in more depth.

The only bad aspect of the Douglas Collection is that I doubt if any of the local record stores will think the Lincoln jazz audience is large enough to warrant stocking it. I hope I'm wrong.



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