

arts and
entertainment

Jazz guitarists' album has a refreshing, brilliant sound

By Jeff Taebel

"It is refreshing after the barrage of electronic and synthesized sound that has characterized the last decade of contemporary music, to hear two brilliant, mutually attuned musicians once again exploring the resources of the acoustic guitar, certainly one of the most ravishing and exhilarating instruments in music."

The preceding quote from Mike Hennessey, editor of *Jazz Journal International*, appears on the liner notes of *Twin House*,

album review

an all-acoustic collaboration of jazz guitarists Larry Coryell and Philip Catherine and it describes the music of the album very well — refreshing.

Twin House represents somewhat of a departure from the musical style of each of these artists and the dual acoustic guitar format on which the songs are based is one which has not been explored a great deal.

However, coming from Larry Coryell, nothing should be unexpected. His music has been spotty at times in his career, but never predictable.

When he was still playing with Eleventh House, Coryell combined elements of pop, jazz, the classics, blues and heavy metal into his songs, provoking some very powerful responses from his listeners — either they loved it or hated it.

Coryell seemed to be equally satisfied playing with jazz men, fusion players or rock'n'rollers, as exemplified by his celebrated London blues jam with Eric Clapton, Ron Wood and Freddie King.

Occasionally he plays with such exquisite touch and such powerful emotion that, as some have said, he seems to actually become the guitar. But other times he sounds complacent and bored.

Philip Catherine, from Brussels, has built himself a strong reputation on the jazz/rock scene in Europe. He has worked with keyboardist Joachim Kuhn as well as doing a stint as the lead guitarist of Focus. His playing often is wistful and melodic, but still retains a strong jazz/rock flavor.

Both artists take turns with their solos, but Coryell winds up dominating the album with his powerful playing. His leads

have a rich tone quality and seem to be built from the core of the songs, whereas Catherine's solos tend to have an airy feeling, dancing around on the periphery.

In general, the slower tempoed, more melodic numbers fare much better than the upbeat or hard-edged tunes, mainly because the guitars get more of a chance to work together. On the funkier songs, especially "Twin House" and Keith Jarrett's "Mortgage On Your Soul," they seem to just be jamming, trading licks rather than really communicating musically. However, these two numbers are the only low points of the album.

Some of the other songs are made interesting by both guitarists' use of a twelve-string guitar, tuned in fifths rather than in unison and octaves. Coryell's "Ms. Julie" and Catherine's "Airpower" each feature this technique and the results are quite unique. These songs should be surprising to many as far as their general sound quality.

The best tunes on the album are Catherine's "Homecoming," "Gloryell," which was written for Coryell by Jimmy Webb, and "Nuages," by the immortal jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt.

"Homecomings" is based on a haunt-

ing-chord progression and features Catherine's best playing on the album by far. His delicate solo on this song is complimented perfectly by Coryell's rough, bluesy playing that follows it, causing the song to undergo a fascinating mood change without changing in structure.

"Gloryell" has a fine melody and features excellent solos by each guitarist, ending with some spectacular runs by Coryell, who can be extremely dynamic without losing his deft touch and sense of melody.

His prowess is further exhibited on "Nuages," on which each guitarist takes a beautiful solo. The song climaxes with an improvisational section that ends in some nice harmonics that evoke a dream-like feeling.

In general, *Twin House* is a very good album, however, I suspect with a little more care in its assemblage, it could have been better. The liner notes state that it was recorded several days after Coryell and Catherine gave an impromptu duet performance at the Berlin Jazz Festival and some of the songs do sound as though they were created rather spontaneously.

Yet, despite some occasional flaws, the musicianship displayed by Coryell and Catherine make this quite a refreshing musical experience.

Royal Winnipeg Ballet is marred by technical errors

By Charlie Krig

At best, the return of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was a mixed blessing. Certain moments in the Saturday performance were as good, if not better, than the company's January appearance in Pershing Auditorium for the Lincoln Community Concerts series.

On the other hand, some parts made me wish the Pennsylvania Ballet hadn't cancelled its tour and forced a replacement.

dance review

Most of the problems were technical. Lighting cues were noticeably off, especially in the opening *Festival* and the false start on *Women*. The follow spots just weren't following performers which made it more of a game to watch the fast-footed dancers outrun the light than to enjoy the motion.

But then *Festival* wasn't much to appreciate. The small Kimball Hall stage seemed to have a psychological effect on the dancers: the movements were sluggish, wary glances helped avoid collisions and some of the expanding diagonal movements were confined by the restrictive stage width.

The orchestra didn't help either. Kerry Duse, assistant musical director for the Royal Winnipeg, conducted the musicians in the piece which he arranged. Duse tried his best but only received sour notes and loud distortion. *Festival* could have been a pleasant opening number but the poor music and uncoordinated dancing made it a farce.

There was slight improvement in *Glinka Pas de Trois*. Again, the dancing lacked feeling and texture. The dancers acted as if their movements were routine drugery and not exciting classical leaps and turns.

Another distraction was the audience. Frequent applause kept the dancers at work and the audience awake but their performances weren't deserving of that much attention.

Roger Shim was the featured male dancer in *Glinka Pas de Trois* and he also danced the title role of *Sebastian*, the story of a Moorish slave who accepts death in reverence for his unaccepted love. He lacked fire in that first piece but had some emotive talent in *Sebastian*.

It was a demanding part that required almost constant

appearance on stage and, as a result, it offered two glimpses of his talent: his stamina for long work and his inability to maintain energy. Shim carried the story along but the performance ended after several spurts and exhaustions of force.

The best work of the evening was *Women* but it, too, suffered from the small stage. The five female dancers maintained their intensities during the long choreography (set to a selection from Grace Slick's *Manhole* album), and made the piece a coherent work. The movement was suited to the music so that the women's frustrations were evident.

But the feeling of loneliness and isolation was lost in the close proximity of the dancers forced by the small dancing area.

The music (since it was on tape) was flawless which no doubt made the work stand out above the other three pieces which were accompanied by the orchestra. Blame another problem on the lighting.

Having to open the curtains and then close them again because someone forgot to turn off the lights in the orchestra pit did nothing but create an unnecessary restless feeling in the already bored audience.

To say the least, it showed a lack of professionalism

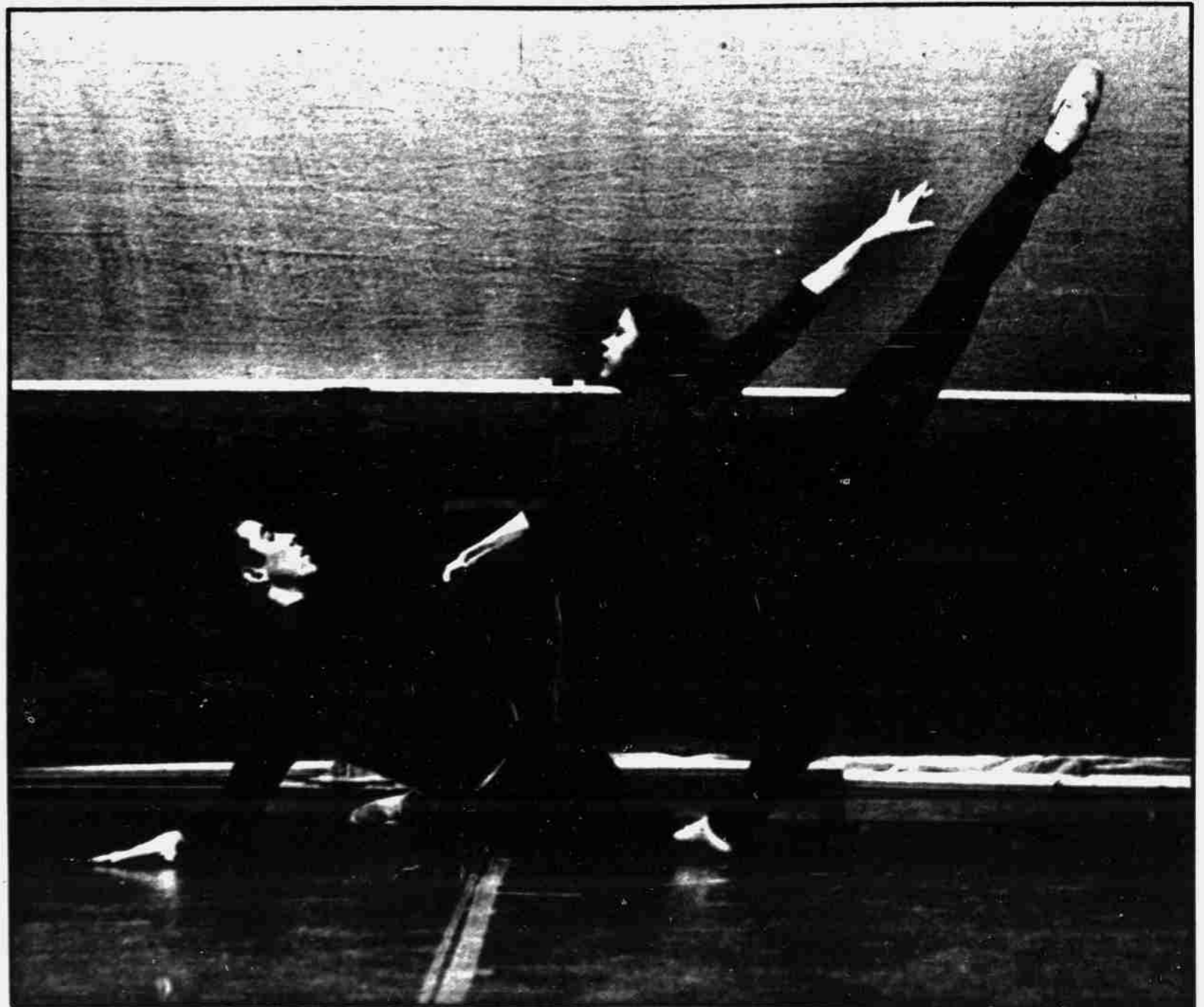
that was rectified by powerful dancing by the quintet of ballerinas.

Professionalism seemed to be the missing element in the evening's program. The arrangement of dances was a bit absurd in that an intermission followed the first number — a scant 20 minutes after the program began.

I doubt anyone was in need of a bathroom break that soon so the result was only confusion as people either shuffled in and out of the aisles or else stayed in their seats and experienced diminishing anticipation of the next work. A logical alternative would have been one break in the middle of the four-part program but that would have deprived the socialites an extra chance to mingle with their friends in the lobby.

Maybe the Royal Winnipeg will forget Lincoln for a few years and return with something new to offer. The people who saw the company's Community Concerts performance were no doubt expecting much greater artistic results. Those who attended for the first time probably were disappointed after hearing about that recent success.

In either case, time will heal the wounds of the imperfect performance and a later appearance might revive some interest and respect for the usually excellent company.



Royal Winnipeg Ballet principal dancers Joost Pelt and Bonnie Wyckoff.

Photo by Bob Pearson

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