

Bass, piano, vocals take blame for unconventional jazz album

Reviews



**Holly Cole Trio
"Blame It On My Youth"
Manhattan**

Blame the freshness of the Holly Cole Trio's new album on a string bass player who can make his instrument hum, sing or scream. Blame it on a pianist with a great ear for jazz, or blame it on a singer with a sultry alto voice and an attitude to boot.

Or do as the title suggests and "Blame it on My Youth."

Cole is 28 years old, and her youth may be part of the reason she is able to push the limits of jazz on her new release. The LP is irreverent. Without a modicum of respect for tradition, it remakes standards into entirely different and unfamiliar musical experiences. Cole performs songs by such unrelated composers as Cy Coleman, Lerner and Loewe and even Charlie Chaplin.

Cole disregards the age-old practice of resolving chords at the end of

a piece. Several of the cuts end unsettlingly on stress chords.

Despite all this, or perhaps because of it, the album works. It reminds the listener that music and life don't always make sense. With a wry sense of humor that is as often directed at the musicians as it is at the listeners, the Holly Cole Trio challenges preconceived ideas and middle-class values.

Cole does an excellent job of conveying this message through her singing. Her style is unpretentious. She stresses the text of the songs, occasionally over-pronouncing her consonants to be understood. Cole has an excellent ear. She sings sustained blue notes and seemingly effortless glissandos without losing pitch.

Pianist Aaron Davis and string bass player David Pilch do a good job of accompanying Cole without doubling her.

The songs on the album are arranged in no particular order. Often the mood of the album changes dramatically from one piece to the next. However, the fact that each piece is performed by a singer, a string bass

and a pianist gives the album continuity.

The best cut on the album is "Trust in Me," from the Walt Disney film "The Jungle Book." The musicians bring out the sinister implications of someone blind believing in someone else. The string bass mimics the sound of bongos, and Cole successfully brings out the sibilants in such lines as "Slip into silent slumber/Sail on a silver mist/Slowly but surely your senses will cease to exist."

The album makes yet another dramatic change in mood with the next track, "If I Were A Bell," which describes the heady feeling of new love. The lyrics show how ridiculous this experience can be. Cole sings, "Ask me how do I feel, ask me now that we're fondly caressing/Pal, if I was a salad I'd surely be splashing my dressing/Or if I was a season I'd surely be spring/Or if I were a bell I'd go ding."

"On the Street Where You Live" brings meaning to the song that Lerner and Loewe probably never intended. While the string bass mimics police sirens and screeching cats, Cole staggers through the lyrics, "I have often



Courtesy of Manhattan

walked down this street before/But the pavement always stayed beneath my feet before/All at once am I several stories high," making the words into a description of a drug experience.

Cole is not a typical jazz artist. Her

songs are unconventional and daring. While some of them are difficult to listen to, all of them are interesting. Those who are looking for something different should check out her album.

— Andrea Christensen

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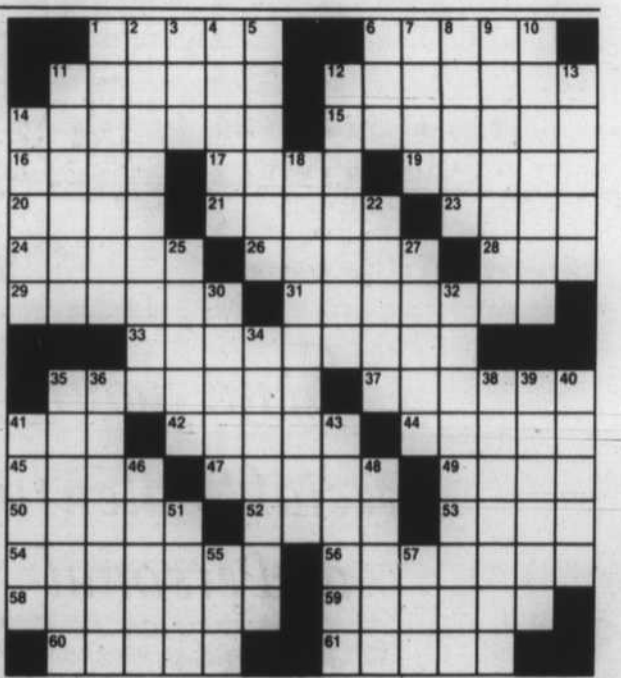
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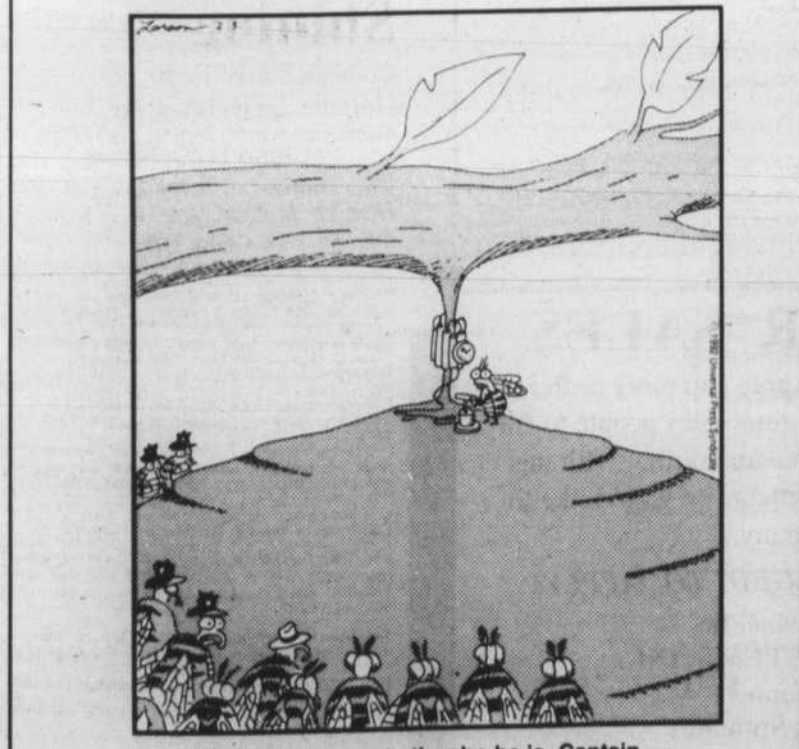
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 - 11 Melville's whaler
 - 12 Héloïse's beloved
 - 14 Overwhelmed
 - 15 Ballerina Makarova
 - 16 — podrida
 - 17 "He — that he was ever born": Robinson
 - 19 Emulate a bloodhound
 - 20 Chopper sound
 - 21 Trial's partner
 - 23 Kind of starter
 - 24 More rational
 - 26 Radar's relative
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 - 31 In relation to
 - 33 Gratuity
 - 35 Antarctic penguins
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 - 44 Big name in farm implements
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 - 47 Blackthorns
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 - 50 Pause
 - 52 Creep
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 - 54 Ancient oared warship
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 - 59 Main channel
 - 60 Moved forward
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