

Musician captures changing jazz sounds

Tracks feature mixture of Latin, Blues melodies

John Young
"Serenata"
Delmark Records

"Serenata," recorded in 1959 and released in 1992, catches the shift in emphasis in the jazz world at the time.

SOUNDS

Through this album, Chicago jazz pianist John Young, backed by Victor Sproles on bass and Phil Thomas on drums, demonstrates the many influences on his musical life.

The disc starts with "I Don't Wanna Be Kissed," a simple but fun number that remains interesting melodically. Young demonstrates a definite bebop tendency throughout the piece, relying heavily on melody-derived improvisations and triplet conversion (a la Charlie Parker). It's a listenable number, as is the entire album.

On the next track, "Baby Doll,"

Young slows down a bit. He shows his Chicago blues backgrounds, playing simpler, more soulful solos, while mixing in a touch of fusion. The two schools would seem to be in conflict, but Young blends them masterfully.

The next two songs, "Circus" and "Cubana Chant," show off the stylistic leanings of Latin bands that were popular in the mid-1950s. Regrettably, Desi Arnaz even may have figured into this influence.

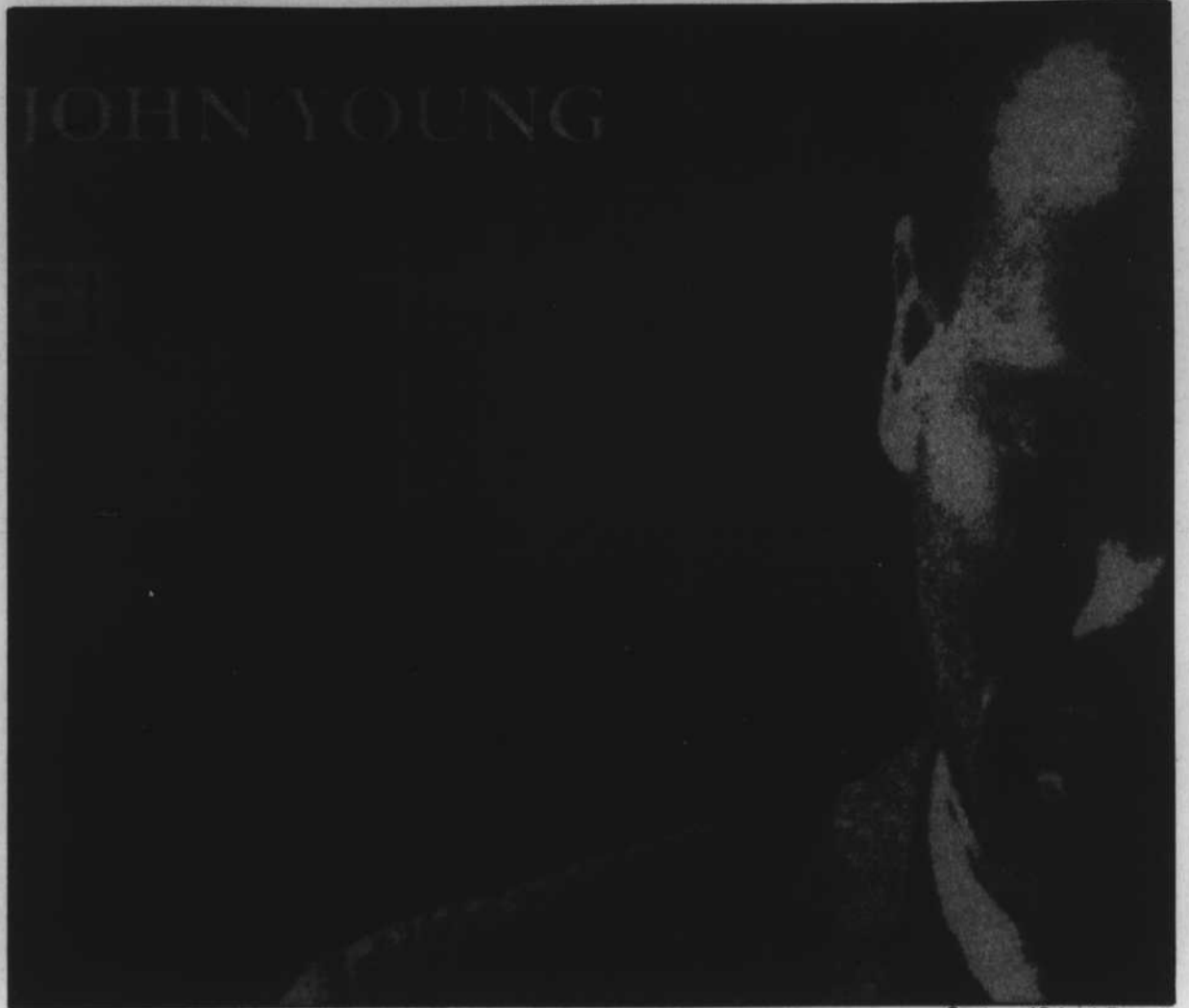
Young's playing on these two tracks is especially full, not letting the listener notice that the rest of the big band is missing. Much of the credit for the success of these songs also belongs to Thomas, as he captures the styles exquisitely and allows the other players to fit in.

The next two tunes are decent, though they sound as though they belong in a lounge act, not on a jazz CD. The last three cuts are remixes of the first three tracks. This is not a great way to end an otherwise good album.

This album is easy on the ears and won't offend the sensitivities of anyone. It can blend into the background, or be the center of attention and function equally well.

Young succeeded in putting together an album that could bridge the gap between the differing styles of music and still make something that people would want to listen to.

— James Finley



Courtesy of Delmark Records

John Young

Cud's catchy tunes attract listener's attention



Photo courtesy of A&M Records

Cud is, from left, Carl Putman, Steve Goodwin, William Potter and Mike Dunphy.

Sonny Burgess shows fans rock'ability' on his latest rockin' rockabilly release

"Tennessee Border" features Dave Alvin

Reviews



Sonny Burgess
"Tennessee Border"
Hightone Records

Diehard fans of rockabilly music should be in seventh heaven with the latest release by rockabilly veteran Sonny Burgess.

With the help of guitar legend Dave Alvin, this release should find its way into the music libraries of anyone who likes the rockabilly sound. Unfortunately, if you don't care

for rockabilly, there's not much there.

The lyrical topics aren't about anything of earth-shattering importance. Most of the songs are about juke joints or women. While both are worthwhile topics, they've both been covered before.

However, this lack of lyrical content doesn't make the album a complete waste. Burgess isn't just some punk with a wild hair-do trying to revive rockabilly. Burgess was there when it started, and he's out there doing it today.

If nothing else, the man has stamina.

The musicians perform admirably and competently, but nothing really new is presented. Even Alvin seems somewhat restrained in his playing.

Maybe he didn't want to embarrass the old man.

This restraint is evident throughout the entire album. While the band tries to get things rocking, it sounds like they are apprehensive about being in a studio. If this were a live concert recording, the love they felt for their music would shine through.

As it is, everyone sounds like they are out of their element. It's too bad.

This album had the potential to be a great extension and tribute to the late-50s style of rock and roll that included Elvis, Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis among its practitioners. But it manages to become just another CD on the shelf, to be lost among the shuffle.

— James Finley

Nervous energy and raw talent fill English band's fourth album

Reviews



"Asquarius"
A & M

"I'm never fed up/Because I'm made up/ Head full of loose change/ Because I'm rich and strange."

What more could English-born band Cud ask for? How about a sold-out U.K. tour, a full-length album released in the states and a U.S. tour scheduled for 1993? This is where the British pop band is headed.

The band's fourth full-length album pulls the listener right in with the first song, "Rich and Strange." It is the first single of "Asquarius" and has enjoyed well-deserved Top 30 success in Britain. After listening to the album, this is the one that listeners should go away singing.

Lead singer Carl Putnam begs listeners to "thrill me" in "Easy."

"Sometimes Rightly, Sometimes

Wrongly" gives a great display of Putnam's range and pop-sounding voice.

Don't bother trying to study when "Spanish Love Song" begins. This song has a catchy tune that draws the listener in, like it or not.

Side two is full of nervous energy and plain raw talent. Just put the books away if you plan on sampling the next four songs.

"Pink Flamingo" gets listeners in the groove with a mid-tempo tune while "Through the Roof" gets into an all-out jam. If the talents of Mike Dunphy and his acoustic guitar don't attract you, turn it off and go back to the books.

After raising your blood pressure and surely your heart rate, Cud brings it down with "Once Again," a debatable love/hate song. The combination of Dunphy's guitar and a violin is enough to bring the house down.

"Asquarius" has hit the states with full force. They're not number one yet, but if nothing else, Cud will keep you popping 'till the cows come home.

— Kimberly Garcia



Courtesy of Hightone Records

Sonny Burgess and Dave Alvin