

Book continues series



"Star Bridge: Serpent's Gift"
A.C. Crispin with Deborah Marshall
ACE Science Fiction
From Staff Reports

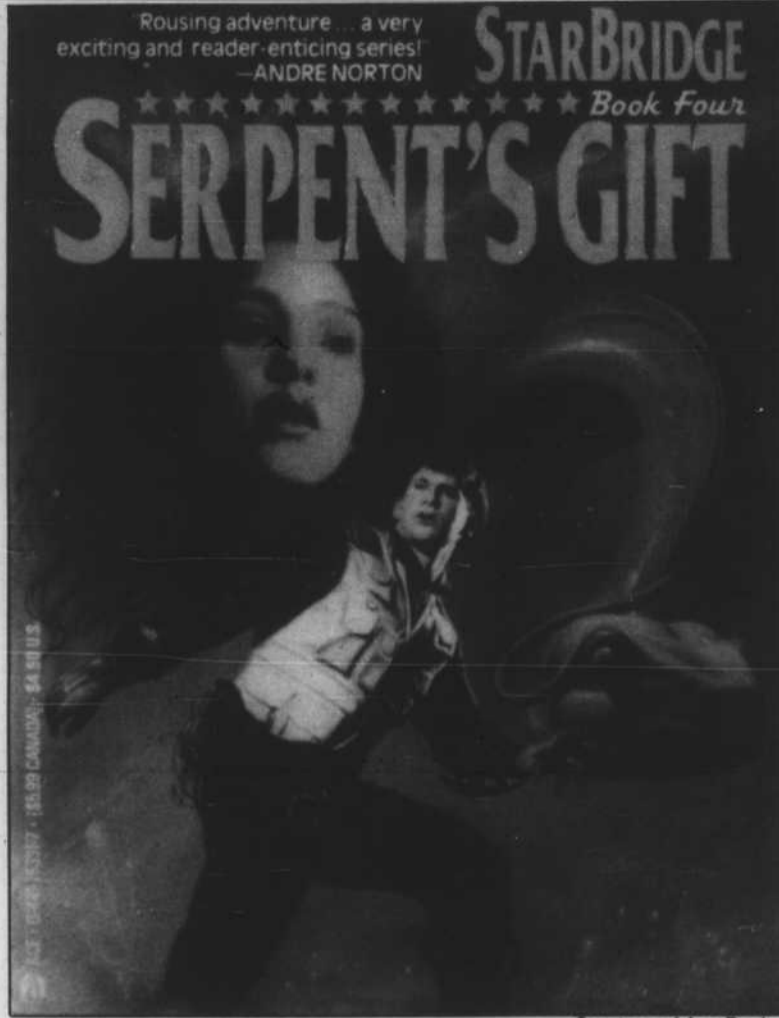
"Serpent's Gift" is the fourth volume in a projected five-book series focusing on a future interplanetary academy promoting interstellar harmony.

This book, unlike the previous three, looks at the inner workings of the academy, built on a stray asteroid in interstellar space.

Into this community come Heather Farley, a preteen telepath with the ability to invade computer systems with her mind, and Serge LaRoche, a talented concert pianist who hasn't played since he lost both hands in an accident.

An archaeological dig on the asteroid — began in search of an ancient landing site of exiles from one of the known races — is declared off-limits when a problem with radioactive contamination is discovered.

However, the source of the contamination is an isotope of the main source of power for interstellar flight.



"Star Bridge: Serpent's Gift" by A.C. Crispin and Deborah A. Marshall



Courtesy of Delmark Records

Brad Goode's "Shock of the New"

Mediocre album requires order, focus to be great

Reviews



"Shock of the New"
Brad Goode
Delmark Records

While life in general is too orderly and strict to classify everyone and everything (or so the long-haired hippie professional student says), some order is necessary to exist and make sense in life.

And so it is in the world of music. If artists take too many influences at one time, they sound wishy-washy and don't develop their own styles to classify. This is the problem with Brad Goode on his new album "Shock of the New."

A relative newcomer on the jazz scene, Goode sounds as if he is trying to display just how diverse and correct he is by showing how many different artists have influenced him.

To his credit, this does show off his technical ability, but it makes the album hard to handle as a whole. No one song is terrible, but the album just doesn't seem to flow.

It is one thing to perform a swing

tune with a Latin influence, but quite another to try to balance the two. The result, as often happens here, is that neither style is done justice. Fusion/blues/be-bop just isn't all 'hai' pleasant to hear and make sense of.

Goode is young, only 28, so he will have plenty of time to explore adequately his various influences and interests. So why try to cram it all on one disc?

Goode is a decent enough player, more than adequately handling the technical demands of his art form.

Goode also surrounds himself with players of equal quality. Of note is Lin Halliday, who is firmly entrenched in the be-bop style on saxophone, and Jodie Christian, who adopts a more fusion attack on piano. Again, this typifies the problem of the entire album — too many different styles and no center to ground the diversity.

This isn't a terrible album, but it's just not a great album. "Mediocre" would be a good word to describe it. Hopefully Goode will sort out his impulses in future albums, because he has the skills to become one of the greats. He just needs to focus a little more.

—James Finley

'Honkers and Bar Walkers' provides pure sound of blues, jazz for die-hard music fans

Reviews



"Honkers and Bar Walkers, Volume 1"
Various Artists
Delmark Records

In the opinions of some people, the best jazz and blues is the jazz and blues that is not heard by the masses.

This is an intensely personal art form that has somehow become embraced by the masses. When this happens, something is lost. This is why the purest forms are found in the small clubs and bars that no one has ever heard of or been to.

Delmark Records has attempted to tap into this source to find some music worth releasing, and they do a decent job.

"Honkers and Bar Walkers" is an album of rhythm and blues saxophonists from the mid-to late '50s. Most are not well known, maybe known only to the die-hard fans of the genre.

Nonetheless, this album is filled with quality examples of the music that has shaped popular music ever since. This is the "roll" of rock 'n roll.

The album starts out with a totally honkytonk version of the burlesque classic "Night Train" by Jimmy Forrest. One can almost see the women slinking around the stage while Jimmy

and the band blow that sex beat. From there, the music tones down just a little, but not much. Cozy Eggleston contributes two solid blues tracks with "Cozy's Beat" and "Big Heavy (Blue Lights Boogie)."

Teddy Brannon also adds a great drinking song in "Everybody Get Together." The camaraderie can be heard in the vocals, and the group sounds tight — mixing blues and swing influences.

Many other artists contribute to this album, with no one track really standing out, but each is a reflection of the soul of the man blowin' the horn. Fred Jackson contributes two tracks, and Paul Bascomb adds a fun tune with "Pink Cadillac."

The entire album is equally solid and diverse, mixing rhythm and blues styles from across the country at that period. Each track has been cleaned up and sounds remarkably good, considering the recording techniques of the time.

This album is a great introduction to some lesser known practitioners of the art of blues.

Reviewer's Note: The reviewer of this album is a saxophone player, and thus his views are slightly warped anyway.

—James Finley

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