

Freddie Hubbard – Back To Birdland  
M & K Realtime Records

The renowned jazzman Freddie Hubbard steps into the spotlight to begin the month of February with his first Hard-Bop album since his 1970 debut on CTI Records, Red Clay (CTI 6001). Back To Birdland (M & K Realtime Records RT-305) features Hubbard on trumpet and flugelhorn in the company of Ashley Alexander on double trombone; Richie Cole and Mel Flory on alto sax; George Cables on piano; Andy Simpkins on bass and John Dentz on drums. Prior to this record, during the seventies, Freddie released a series of Contemporary Jazz LP's for CTI following Red Clay, and several albums for Columbia which marked his journey into Jazz-Funk, Jazz Fusion and Smooth Jazz. My copy used in this report is the original 1982 Digital Stereo recording. The 1945 Bebop anthem, Shaw 'Nuff by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker opens the first side with the front-line blowing fire on the melody with the rhythm section providing the energy to maintain their inspiration. Freddie tackles the first solo with intense emotion, then Richie cooks with plenty of passion on the second reading. Ashley brings brassy energy to the next interpretation and John sums up the solos with exceptional drumming in a short performance that's a testament to his virtuosity.

Star Eyes was written in 1943 by Gene de Paul and Don Raye, making its initial appearance in the musical-comedy, I Dood It! The song was first performed by big-band vocalists, Helen O'Connell, and Bob Eberly in the film with The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra. After Charlie Parker recorded it in 1951 as a 78-rpm single (11087) for Mercury Records, the tune became a popular standard. The ensemble states the theme in unison. Hubbard then takes over on flugelhorn to begin the second chorus and first solo, building each phrase tenderly. Cole is also gentle on the next reading with a mellow tone. The third statement by

Cables is brief but warm and sentimental. Vinnegar wraps up things nicely with a succinct chorus into the conclusion. Lover Man, of course, needs no introduction, this ageless evergreen was written in 1941 by Jimmy Davis, Roger Ramirez and Jimmy Sherman for Billie Holiday. It's a revered standard I never tire of hearing and one of the most recorded compositions in Jazz, Pop, and Soul. This version is a showcase for Richie Cole who is frolicsome and playful on the melody but etches a graceful interpretation that's emotionally thoughtful. Hubbard gets some attention on a brief flugelhorn statement, and on the opening and closing choruses anchored by the trio's subtle support.

For B.P., the first of two tunes by Freddie begins the second side and is one of the most interesting compositions on the album with interchanges of cross-rhythms within different time signatures. This tune is a tribute to the great Bop composer and pianist Bud Powell. The trumpeter leads the sextet through a strong-toned introduction and vibrant melody statement. George starts the soloing with a concise presentation which expresses his pleasure as each verse unfolds. The leader then fills the bill with a breathtaking performance possessing impeccable chops and a clean sound. George cooks up a tasty musical brew with a spicy flavor on the final reading, leading to a mesmerizing finale.

Stella By Starlight by Victor Young and Ned Washington gives trombonist Ashley Alexander the spotlight with the rhythm section backing him. This romantic standard served as the title song for the 1944 horror film, The Uninvited and is heard throughout the movie as the mystery unfolds. It's also one of the most popular songs ever sung or played by some of the greatest artists and vocalists in the annals of jazz. Alexander opens this ageless ballad with a somber introduction but picks up the pace to a sprightly tempo for the melody. He is also in excellent form on the lead statement with jubilant verses. George gives an invigorating performance next, soloing with conviction. Leroy illustrates his assurance with a velvety smooth reading ahead of the theme's return and climax.

Byrdlike, the final track by Hubbard was originally performed on the 1977 Columbia album, The Quintet (C2 34976) with Freddie in concert with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams. Everyone gives an individual performance except Vinnegar with Mel Flory taking over on alto, soloing twice. This uptempo joyride takes off with a rapid-fire theme treatment led by the three horns. George takes the reins first with great speed and agility on the lead solo. Freddie raises the temperature



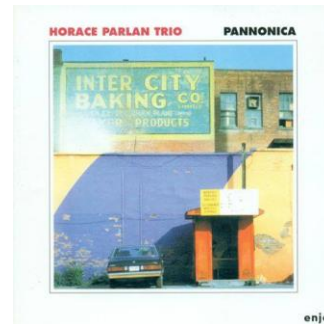
several degrees with robust verses on the second reading. Flory makes the most of his only appearance with exhilarating vitality. Alexander tells his story next with a definitive statement, succeeded by Flory who keeps the pace flying with a second blazing solo. Dentz takes the final solo providing a concise, excitingly fierce performance preceding the ensemble's closing chorus.

Back To Birdland is an absolute joy to listen to and a tour de force sound-wise. This album like all Realtime Records Digital Recordings, are imported pressings which were made in West Germany. Scott Simon and Ken Kreisel are the men behind the dials and the soundstage of each instrument across the highs, midrange, and the low end is exceptional. Miller & Kreisel Sound Corporation took the utmost care in preparing their records for the jazz lover, utilizing their exclusive Realtime Recording Process and mastering by their disc-cutting system and using the very best and purest vinyl available. The music itself is excellent as are the solos on each track. In my opinion, Back To Birdland is a special album by Freddie Hubbard which will recall Open Sesame (Blue Note BLP 4040/BST 84040) and Ready For Freddie (BLP 4045/BST 84045) that's well worth auditioning for your library, and a title I think you'll enjoy for years to come. There was only the one pressing of this album on LP in 1981 and it's been out of print in the US and Japan since then. The CD-album (RT-3005) by Realtime Records hit the stores in 1983. The most recent issue of this LP was released as a European CD-album (WW 2112) on West Wind in 2012!

Shaw 'Nuff, Stella By Starlight – Source: JazzStandards.com

Star Eyes, The Uninvited, I Dood It! – Source: Wikipedia.org

For B.P. – Source: Album liner notes by Dr. Herb Wong



Horace Parlan Trio – Pannonica  
Enja Records

The next album up for discussion from my library is by Horace Parlan, a pianist whose roots were deep in Hard-Bop. This extremely talented musician first impressed me with his 1960 debut album for Blue Note, *Movin' & Groovin'* (BLP 4028/BST 84028) and even more so once I acquired the 2000 Mosaic Records box set, *The Complete Horace Parlan Blue Note Sessions* (MQ8-197) which includes all the albums he recorded for the label from 1960 to 1963. As a child, he was stricken with polio, which resulted in the partial crippling of his right hand. This, however, would contribute to the development of a left-hand chord-voicing style and an ability to play highly rhythmic phrases with the right. In addition to a lucrative solo career recording for SteepleChase, Soul Note and other labels, he worked with some of the greatest musicians in the annals of jazz, Gene Ammons, Dave Bailey, Al Cohn, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Booker Ervin, Dexter Gordon, Slide Hampton, Charles Mingus, Zoot Sims and Stanley Turrentine to name a few.

*Pannonica* (Enja 4076) was recorded live at the Munich jazz club, The Domicile in 1981 and is the only record Parlan made for the German label, Enja Records. Alongside the pianist on this five-song set is bassist Reggie Johnson and drummer Alvin Queen. My copy is the original 1984 German Stereo pressing which was the only issue on LP. The jazz classic, *No Greater Love*, an abbreviation of the actual title, *There Is No Greater Love* by Isham Jones, and Marty Symes opens the album with an energetic statement by the trio that appeals at every turn. Parlan solos first, launching a powerful performance that is extremely satisfying, Johnson follows with vigorous enthusiasm on each phrase of the second statement. Queen takes the final solo, giving an aggressive melodic exchange with Parlan and Johnson that possesses a master's touch.



The title tune, Pannonica was written by Thelonious Monk in 1956, making its debut on his 1957 Riverside LP, Brilliant Corners (RLP 12-226). It's also one of his most beautiful compositions and has been said, was written to honor Baroness Kathleen Annie Pannonica de Koenigswarter, herself a British-born writer and a patron of jazz and Bebop. The standard starts with a very moving unaccompanied introduction by Horace who leads the trio through the intimately soft melody. He's also the song's only soloist and gives a sincerely beautiful performance that indulges in luxury, anchored by the lush foundation laid by Reggie and Alvin which is also lovely. The trio returns to an uptempo groove with a vivacious rendition of C Jam Blues, the 1942 ageless evergreen written by Duke Ellington and clarinetist Barney Bigard as a twelve-bar blues in the key of C major a year earlier. The vocal counterpart is known as Duke's Place with lyrics written by Bill Katts, Bob Thiele and Ruth Roberts. The trio's rendition starts with a supercharged melody treatment. Parlan opens with a rousing solo that's a work of art, followed by Johnson who puts together an attractive reading that walks with strong bass lines, breezing into a remarkable interpretation by Queen who soars on the closing statement with an amazing performance of power that culminates into a splendid finale of the first side.

Randy Weston's Hi-Fly, an original from the fifties which I first heard on the 1959 United Artists album by Weston, Live at The Five Spot (UAL 4066) as High-Fly. The song's title was inspired by Randy's imposing height of 6' 8" and is now a jazz standard played by many top artists and groups. Jon Hendricks added lyrics to it for the 1962 Columbia album by the vocal trio, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, High Flying with L, H & R (CL 1675/CS 8475)! Horace solos first, getting a chance to stretch out in a flawless opening statement of beautifully constructed verses. Johnson also gives a lengthy performance with a fine flow of ideas that builds to an effective climax. The LP ends with the 1931 composition by George and Ira Gershwin, Who Cares? The song was written for the Broadway musical, Of Thee, I Sing which premiered the same year. The trio's interpretation of this chestnut lowers the emotional temperature by only a few degrees, opening with a medium tempo melody as fresh as the fragrance after a summer shower of rain. Horace brings the sun out on the lead solo, taking charge with a performance that's admirably suited to show his ability to swing and affirms the fact that he could operate comfortably in any rhythmic foundation. Johnson responds with a compelling solo that flows nicely, making each note stand out ahead of the trio's closing chorus and conclusion.

Pannonica is a Direct Metal Mastering album which was recorded by the German engineer, Carlos Albrecht and the sound he provides the listener is excellent. The instruments come alive with an impressive soundstage which places them on the stage in front of your sweet spot to enjoy. Horace Parlan was one of jazz's elder statesmen who always explored the individual possibilities of each tune he played with a sureness in his approach which fueled his ability to continually improve with each new album. Together, he, Reggie Johnson and Alvin Queen make a fine team and are excellent representatives of what a piano, bass, and drums could accomplish when firing on all cylinders. The album has been out of print since its 1984 release, but Pannonica by Horace Parlan is definitely worth searching for on your next vinyl hunt. In my opinion, it's one of Horace Parlan's best records and if you're a fan of trio jazz, should on no account be missed! The two CD-albums were only released in Japan in 2009 (VQCD-10115) and 2013 (PCD-93644) by Enja Records, both are also out of print.

C Jam Blues – Source: JazzStandards.com

Horace Parlan, Baroness Kathleen Annie Pannonica de Koenigswarter – Source: Wikipedia.org



Hank Mobley  
Blue Note

Next up for discussion is an album by a former member of The Jazz Messengers and a superb Hard-Bop bandleader, composer and tenor saxophonist of the first order. Hank Mobley steps into the spotlight with his album Poppin' (Blue Note GXK 3066), originally recorded in 1957 but not released until 1980 in Japan only by King Record Company. It was the third of four dates Hank made that year and he leads a sextet featuring an all-star lineup, Art Farmer on trumpet; Pepper Adams on baritone sax; Sonny Clark on piano; Paul Chambers on bass and Philly Joe Jones on



drums. I can only guess that his two previous LP's were still selling well as the only reason this record wasn't released shortly after this recording was made. My copy used for this report is the 1980 original Japanese Stereo LP. Poppin', the title tune and first of three originals by Mobley opens the album at a brisk pace with a peppy melody statement by the sextet. Sonny is up first, delivering an effective lead solo with a dynamic drive and virility which shows he was maturing and developing the style that would make him one of Blue Note's most frequently recorded musicians. Pepper steps in next, building each phrase of the second presentation with plenty of electricity preceding Art's skillfully constructed, infectiously swinging presentation. Hank gives a knockout performance of rhythmic and melodic exhilaration next, then Philly Joe closes with propulsive comments in exchange with Mobley prior to the theme's reprise and finale.

Darn That Dream, the 1939 song by Jimmy Van Heusen and Eddie De Lange made its debut in the Broadway musical *Swingin' The Dream* which premiered that year. The musical wasn't a success, but the song became a hit the next year for vocalist Mildred Bailey and bandleaders Benny Goodman, Blue Barron, and Tommy Dorsey. The sextet's version opens with a brief introduction by the trio and pensive melody reading led by Mobley who leads the solos with a tenderly soothing interpretation. Farmer also gives a voluptuously pretty muted performance. Adams communicates his intimate feelings and thoughts effectively in the next reading. Clark wraps up the soloing with a sensuously enticing and deeply peaceful solo that leads back to Hank's poignantly affecting ending. *Gettin' Into Something*, the second creation from Hank's pen ends the first side on an upbeat note with the sextet showing they know how to present a lively melody. The first solo commences with Hank giving a strong tenor performance which should start the listener's finger-snapping, foot-tapping, and dancing to the contagious beat. Art fuels the second reading with a dazzling display of fireworks that are balanced by plenty of interaction from the rhythm section's rock-solid groundwork. Pepper takes over next for a captivating presentation which provides an exceptional example of his tuneful virtuosity, afterward, Sonny adds an effervescent enthusiasm to the closing statement that drives straight-ahead into the ending.

Tune-Up by Miles Davis opens the second side and gives everyone a chance to play extensive statements beginning with an energetically brief introduction by Jones which paves the way into the sextet's enthusiastically full-bodied

melody. Miles wrote it in 1953 and it originally appeared on the Prestige ten-inch LP, *Miles Davis Quartet* (PRLP-161) a year later. Farmer begins the lead solo with biting passion and plenty of heat, then Pepper takes flight next with an intensely emotional statement. Clark takes the next spot with an aggressively expedient performance of hard, happy swinging that really smokes. Paul walks with a strong bass line on the fourth reading that cooks comfortably, then Hank raises the temperature a few degrees higher on the next reading with unrestrained zeal and intensity. Philly puts the exclamation point on the solos with a short statement of infinite exuberance that provides a tidy and convincing summation to one of my favorite Davis compositions. The album's final track, Hank's *East of Brooklyn* opens with a soulful Latin flavor on the melody by the ensemble before stepping aside for Mobley who begins with a passionately expressive interpretation which is artistic, cheery and lyrically fulfilling. Farmer steps into the spotlight next, soaring efficiently through each verse of straight-ahead bop, Adams then places his indisputable stamp on the next reading with a gorgeous solo of undeniable pleasure that speaks volumes of his adaptability and assurance as an ideal soloist. Clark gets the final reading and reveals the hands of a master in a splendid performance that is a treat to hear and provides the perfect ending to an enjoyable album.

Hank Mobley was also a prolific and gifted composer, as he was a musician. Whether he wrote tender ballads or torrid uptempo tunes, each work is so eminently enjoyable to listen to and several have become jazz standards. He would record a total of twenty albums for Blue Note from 1955 to 1970, and also make records for Savoy, Prestige, Roulette and one LP for Cobblestone as co-leader of The Cedar Walton-Hank Mobley Quintet. His time with The Jazz Messengers, Miles Davis, Horace Silver and as a leader would serve him well as one of the best and most sought-after tenor saxophonists in the genres of Hard-Bop and Soul-Jazz during the sixties and early seventies. Lung problems from smoking would force Hank to retire in the mid-seventies, and he would only work two more times performing once in 1985 and an engagement a few months before his death from pneumonia at the age of fifty-five on May 30, 1986. The music on *Poppin'* was skillfully recorded by Rudy Van Gelder with the sound quality, an ear-opener. The remix engineer is Tony Sestanovich and both men do their jobs as the sextet emerges from your speakers with superb detail in each of the instruments as if the musicians are playing right in front of you. The three-horn lineup of Pepper Adams, Art Farmer, and the leader make a



formidable front line together and are all excellent soloists. The music swings throughout each selection with the superb ensemble work provided by the talented rhythm section of Sonny Clark, Paul Chambers, and Philly Joe Jones make Poppin' by Hank Mobley, an unbelievable session that might be difficult to find, but will reward your diligence with an album I feel will be welcomed in the libraries of any beginner or seasoned jazz fan! There would be three pressings of Poppin' on LP and four CD-albums with the most recent reissue, a 2017 CD-album (UCCQ-9319) released by Blue Note as part of The Masterworks - Top 50 Series, all were released in Japan only and with the exception of the 2017 reissue are out of print. The lone US issue of the album can be found within The Complete Blue Note Hank Mobley Fifties Sessions, a 1998 limited-edition ten-album box set (MQ10-181) and six-CD box set (MD6-181) by Mosaic Records. Both the LP and CD box sets are excellent and out of print!

The Complete Blue Note Hank Mobley Fifties Sessions also includes the albums The Hank Mobley Quartet (BLP 5066), Hank Mobley Sextet (BLP 1540), Hank Mobley & His All-Stars (BLP 1544), Hank Mobley Quintet (BLP 1550), Hank (BLP 1560), Hank Mobley (BLP 1568), Curtain Call (BN 61006) and Peckin' Time (BLP 1574).

Poppin', The Masterworks-Top 50 Series – Source: Discogs.com

Darn That Dream, Swingin' The Dream, Mildred Bailey, Benny Goodman, Blue Barron, Tommy Dorsey – Source: JazzStandards.com

Hank Mobley – Source: Wikipedia.org



Kenny Dorham – Whistle Stop  
Music Matters Jazz

One of the biggest pleasures I get from listening to and reviewing LP's from my library is I'm able to revisit and reexamine albums to share new perspectives with you all. Such is the case for the final album up for discussion this month by bandleader, composer and trumpet player Kenny Dorham with his 1961 album, Whistle Stop (BST 84063). Kenny who was born in Fairfield, Texas played and recorded with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Tadd Dameron, Lou Donaldson, Herb Geller, Benny Golson, Ernie Henry, Andrew Hill, Milt Jackson, Clifford Jordan, Jackie McLean, Hank Mobley, Thelonious Monk, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins and Horace Silver among others. He was also a member of the orchestras of Billy Eckstine, Mercer Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and The Jazz Messengers. He appeared on three albums by Joe Henderson, Page One (Blue Note BLP 4140/BST 84140) and Our Thing (BLP 4152/BST 84152) in 1963, and In 'N Out (BLP 4166/BST 84166) in 1964. His composition Blue Bossa which was featured on Page One is now a jazz standard, and the album is a highlight in Henderson's career. He's also contributed tunes on drummer Art Taylor's 1961 album, A.T.'s Delight (BLP 4047/BST 84047) and trumpeter Freddie Hubbard's 1961 album Goin' Up (BLP 4056/BST 84056). Joining him here are former Messenger Hank Mobley on tenor sax; Kenny Drew on piano; Paul Chambers on bass and 'Philly' Joe Jones on drums. My copy used in this report is the 2017 Music Matters Jazz 33 1/3 Stereo reissue (MMBST 84063).

The opener, 'Philly' Twist is a driving straight-ahead blues that is off to the races from the opening notes of Jones' brief introduction, followed by the quintet's brisk beat on the melody. Kenny leads the way with a vigorously agile reading followed by Hank who wails convincingly on the second solo. Drew sinks his teeth into the next presentation with an irresistible groove that moves



smoothly through each chorus. Paul delivers a convincing interpretation next walking at a moderate pace that is especially noteworthy ahead of 'Philly' who closes with dazzling velocity and propulsive timing on the song's final interpretation. Buffalo is good soul-food cooking in a midtempo blues with a leisure beat by the quintet that serves up four delicious solos by Mobley, Dorham, Drew and Chambers. Hank starts the soloing with four well-structured verses of mellowness, Dorham responds with a fine performance punctuated by the efficient flow of the rhythm section's groundwork. Drew keeps the laid-back feeling going with an infectiously swinging interpretation that will have you snapping your fingers and your toes tapping and Chambers wraps up the solos with a carefree informality anchored by only Jones before the melody's return.

Sunset closes side one with the trio inaugurating the introduction with tasteful richness in one of the prettiest tunes on the album. Dorham on muted trumpet and Hank lead the quintet through a lavish theme treatment, then with the mute, illustrates a refined grace and elegance on the lead solo. Hank delivers a stylish performance of sultry discretion followed by Kenny who provides a softly expressed interpretation next. Paul adds a closing word with tender restraint on the song's final performance which is lovely. Whistle Stop, the title track starts the second side with a brisk, voracious drive on the quintet's opening melody. Hank ignites the first solo with an infinite amount of incandescent heat. Next comes Kenny who instills the second reading with spirited phrases that are pleasantly tangy. Drew follows, providing the next provocative performance that really smokes with a zesty flavor and Paul delivers a closing statement that is warm and propulsive with percolating phrases of conviction which wraps up the song on the group's conclusion.

Sunrise In Mexico is a pretty midtempo tune with a personality which comes alive on the quintet's soulful melody presentation as the day begins. Dorham goes first with a gracefully light interpretation that is lyrically pleasant, then Mobley swings along with a rich and flavorful flow on the second reading. The third interpretation by Drew is marvelously lyrical with abundant potency and Chambers has an effective closing solo that is refreshingly intriguing. Windmill is an energized swinger right out of the gate which begins with a robustly strong opening melody. Dorham opens with aggressive fierceness which is equally matched by the rapid supplement by the trio. Mobley gets into the next reading with unrestrained zeal, making each

note count with searing heat. Drew comes next, producing a definite quantity of electricity on the third presentation that is answered by Chambers' abbreviated blistering reading. Jones makes the final statement of the song with vivacious brushwork which drives all the way to the high-spirited closing chorus.

The album ends with Dorham's Epitaph, a brief, but beautiful ensemble piece which Kenny wrote to mark his own passing. Kenny's statement of the melody is exceptionally gentle and tender illustrating his capabilities as a ballad composer and soloist with a sentimental foundation offered by Hank and the rhythm section in support. An expanded version of this composition was written for a sixty or seventy-piece orchestra and renamed Fairy Tale. Throughout the remaining of the decade, Kenny Dorham would continue recording excellent albums that were easily the equivalent of those released by Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, and Lee Morgan, but sadly never received the recognition which might have catapulted him to stardom. He would die at the age of forty-eight from kidney disease on December 5, 1972. Because I own another copy of this album, I did an A-B comparison between my Music Matters reissue and my 1994 Blue Note Connoisseur Series Stereo LP (B1-28978) to see which one had the better sound to my ears. The Connoisseur reissue was mastered by Wally Traugott of Capitol Records and the sound quality is excellent throughout the highs, midrange and bass that isn't thin in tone or harsh. It's also a true stereo album despite the back cover showing it was Electronically Rechanneled to Simulate Stereo as are the earlier pressings.

The mastering by Kevin Gray of Coherent Sound and audio engineer Steve Hoffman however is phenomenal and improves on the original recording by Rudy Van Gelder with a crystal-clear sound that is demonstration class placing you in the studio alongside the musicians as the MMJ slogan proudly states, "you listen, you look, you're there". Each of the MMJ 33 1/3 and 45-rpm reissues receives a great deal of care with attention to detail including high-definition gatefold photos, superb packaging of the covers and the use of 180-gram Virgin Vinyl for the music, which is the most important thing. If you're just discovering The Definitive Vinyl Reissue Series, welcome to the worldwide society of collectors who've purchased and own these remarkable reissues from the Blue Note vaults. If you're looking for a Hard-Bop album that will excite your ears, I invite you to audition Whistle Stop by Kenny Dorham, a delightfully rewarding album by one of the best trumpet players in jazz that I'm sure will fit comfortably in your jazz library. As of



this writing, Whistle Stop is currently available from Music Matters Jazz at their website alongside three other albums that are perfect to acquaint yourself with the music of Kenny Dorham, 'Round About Midnight at The Café Bohemia (MMBLP-1524), Afro-Cuban (MMBLP-1535) and Una Mas (MMBST-84127)!

Page One, Our Thing, In 'N Out, A.T.'s Delight, Goin' Up, Whistle Stop, Analogue Productions – Source: Discogs.com

'Round About Midnight at The Café Bohemia, Afro-Cuban, Una Mas – Source: [www.musicmattersjazz.com](http://www.musicmattersjazz.com)

Toshiko Akiyoshi, Tadd Dameron, Lou Donaldson, Herb Geller, Benny Golson, Ernie Henry, Andrew Hill, Milt Jackson, Clifford Jordan, Jackie McLean, Hank Mobley, Thelonious Monk, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, Horace Silver, Billy Eckstine, Mercer Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, The Jazz Messengers, Joe Henderson – Source: Wikipedia.org