

'Magic,' 'Spellbound': maturity shows as jazz albums escape commercialism



Magic
by Billy Cobham

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Columbia Records recently celebrated Thanksgiving with the release of a bundle of new jazz albums. It is somewhat of a surprise that two of the best are *Magic*, Billy Cobham's latest, and *Spellbound* by Alphonso Johnson.

Magic is easily Cobham's best work since his first two albums, *Spectrum* and

records

By **ERNIE HOOD**

Billy Cobham: *Magic*

Alphonso Johnson: *Spellbound*

Crosswinds. Since those days when he was fresh from his stint in the original Mahavishnu Orchestra, his music has bogged down considerably. He has made unfortunate concessions to the disco sound and gained a large following in the process.

With *Magic*, however, Cobham has returned to the freshness and originality of his earlier releases. *Magic* is characterized by a new maturity and confidence. It seems that he finally has found himself as a leader, a composer and a musician.

Cobham's band on the album is not composed of big-name musicians, but they deserve to be. Pete Maru on guitar and Alvin Batiste on clarinet (yes, clarinet!) especially

stand out. Maunu sounds like a latter-day Al DiMeola — he positively flies on "On a Magic Carpet Ride." Batiste's presence is a key to the success of the album. His work lends a jaunty air which complements the heaviness of Cobham's drumming. This is most evident on "Puffnstuff," the best cut on the record. Batiste's clarinet combines with Mark Soskin's work on acoustic tack piano to set up the cute, infectious melody. It may be cute, but it is oh-so-funky. Cobham himself contributes a break for hamboning and scat singing. "Puffnstuff" shows that Cobham remembers that fusion jazz, despite its rampant pretensions, can still be fun.

Cobham's drumming is, as usual, sensational. Joachim Kuhn also makes a fine guest shot on keyboards. *Magic* is a good album, and it is reassuring to see an artist, once thought lost to the temptations of commercialism, regain his integrity.

Spellbound is Alphonso Johnson's third solo release since his departure from bass duties with Weather Report. He also seems to have matured musically. For one thing, *Spellbound* is not a superstar session (designed to attract buyers by way of name-dropping) like his others. Johnson has settled down to a quartet format: Clyde Criner on keyboards, Kevin Shireve on guitars, David Igelfield on drums and Johnson on basses, electric stick and "effects." Pat Thrall sits in for some



Spellbound
by Alphonso Johnson

devastating guitar solos.

Johnson's compositional abilities have improved. "Bahama Mama" sounds much like his work with Weather Report, and is probably the high point of the album. "Earthtales Suite" is an intricate, challenging effort.

There is some very interesting music on *Spellbound*. It is a shame, however, that Johnson continues to include vocals on his records. Like most of the singing these days in an electric jazz context, it simply does not fit. Johnson's singing is weak, and his lyrics are best forgotten. It is a relief when the instrumentals, which are uniformly good, take over again.

Johnson and Cobham are both masterful musicians. It is a pleasure to know that with *Spellbound* and *Magic* both are developing into composers and handleaders on a level with their instrumental talents.

Records provided courtesy of Record Bar.

mono

Continued from page 1.

worth living after all. I had gotten off easy.

Infectious mononucleosis is a potentially serious viral infection that is at least three times more likely to hit college students than other young adults.

U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) studies suggest that close to 100,000 college undergraduates contract mono each year.

"The numbers are big enough to make it an important disease," Dr. Paul Feorino was quoted as saying in *Consumer Reports*. "And although it's usually self-limiting, it has considerable impact in terms of lost academic time."

Mononucleosis is caused almost certainly by the Epstein-Barr (EB) virus, which causes lymphocytes to become greatly enlarged and diminished in their ability to fight off other infections. Once a person has mono, he becomes immune to it.

"When students come to college, maybe 30 percent are already immune to mono," Dr. Ruth Hoffman of the Student Health Service says. "But then they are crowded together in labs, classes, dorms. Those who are not immune to mono are exposed to it."

The usual symptoms of mono are sore throat, fever, swollen glands at the back of the neck and a general fatigue. Many myths surround the symptoms and their cure.

Some college students believe that fatigue causes mono. Mike Lockerby, a senior in interdisciplinary studies, had mono during the spring semester of his junior year. "I think it was caused by a combination of studying for midterms and unwinding before and after," he says.

Hoffman disagrees: "Fatigue is a symptom, not a cause. There seems to be an increased incidence of mono in people whose bodies are run down, but this is because they can't fight the infection."

Another myth is that mono is extremely contagious. "When I had mono, people treated me like a leper," Lockerby says. "They stayed six feet away. I felt like I had a scarlet fever on my forehead. I went around to all my friends and asked if they had any ex-girlfriends that I could

take out and infect."

In fact, mono is not very contagious. It can be caught through kissing but not from a brotherly or sisterly peck. There has to be a transmission of saliva, Hoffman says.

Dropping out of school is seldom necessary. "It hit me at a time when everything else was going wrong," Lockerby says. "I didn't have the energy to do anything. I just felt like dropping out of school, shutting myself up in my room and lying around forever. That feeling lasted for about three weeks."

Dr. L. W. Holden of the University of Colorado Student Health Service says in a pamphlet on mono: "Some students, particularly those who are depressed, become discouraged and panicky and withdraw from school needlessly. Only a few students find it necessary to drop out. Most are able to make the extra effort necessary to make up their academic work."

Dr. William A. Nolen writes in *Mademoiselle* that mono can sometimes be used as a crutch: "College students who are bored with studying, afraid of examinations, fed up with the whole college scene will sometimes use mono as an excuse to drop out of the rat race. Studies show that athletes, anxious to get back to their teams, recover from mono much more quickly on the average than do students with no comparable ambitions."

Some students may have mono without knowing it. The incubation period is anywhere between three weeks and three months, Hoffman says. "I've seen three patients who I'm sure had been incubating mono for six months. I don't know whether there are precipitating stresses that bring mononucleosis to the front after the incubation period; that's a questionable area."

Holden says the onset of mono is indefinite, similar to the beginning of other infectious diseases, and lasts three to five days.

Next comes the active stage in which the patient begins to complain of the typical mono symptoms. "I went to my doctor at home," Lockerby says, "I thought I had a throat infection. I was sleeping something like 15 hours a day. I usually eat like a horse, but at that time, I was down to normal-sized meals. That was a telltale sign."

How long the fatigue remains after the other symptoms disappear varies from patient to patient. "Your body will tell you very well what you can do," Dr. Richard H. Meade, chief of pediatric infectious diseases at Boston Floating Hospital, was quoted in the *New York Times*. "Pay attention to what your body tells you. When you feel able to do something, there's no harm in it."

FOR THE RECORD

Democrats low in consumer protection

A *Daily Tar Heel* editorial noted Monday that all members of the N.C. Congressional delegation who were ranked at the bottom of a Congress Watch consumer protection scale, with the exception of Walter Jones, were Republicans. We should have pointed out that L. H. Fountain and Charles Whitley were Democrats at the bottom of the scale.

Three centuries old?

Jethro Tull fans and English history scholars shrieked when they read the outline in the *DTH* Monday with a picture taken at the Tull concert in Greensboro Wednesday. The caption identified a nattily dressed, flute-bearing character as Jethro Tull. The flutist-vocalist depicted was actually Ian Anderson. Other than a popular rock group, Jethro Tull was an English agriculturalist who lived in the late 17th century. He is dead, but the group still survives and, as evidenced by their performance, is doing well.



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Russell Danielson — UNC Class of '76 — will be on campus Tuesday morning, November 29, to meet with students interested in the 2-year MHA program. Contact Career Planning and Placement at UNC for more details and to sign up for an information session.