

bandleader who passed away Aug. 6 at age 88, before this album was released, was nothing less than a titan of salsa, Afro-Caribbean music and jazz. *Reflections* (recorded in 2020) is unique in both his and Herwig's discographies, eccentrically but brilliantly creating a program of Afro-Latin jazz without any percussion instruments or trumpets. The band: just Herwig's trombone, Palmieri's piano and Luques Curtis' bass.

The unique set-up allows Palmieri to remind us that the piano, too, is a percussion instrument. He uses it to create the Afro-Caribbean rhythms usually expounded by various drums, bells and cymbals. He also riffs on the piano, as horn sections would in a salsa band, and on "C'mon (Mi Guajira)" he incorporates tombao and montuño figures usually supplied by percussion and horn sections. Throughout the album, Palmieri's comping combines jazz-style accompaniment with Afro-Latin rhythms, while the solid bottom of the beat is firmly established by Curtis' rock-solid bass playing. As a soloist, the pianist contrasts markedly with Herwig. The trombonist favors a fluid, bold, open tone and his jazz solos flow melodically. Palmieri, conversely, brings the avant-leaning jazz modernism exemplified by pianists such as Thelonious Monk, McCoy Tyner (he's cited both as influences) as well as touches of Cecil Taylor, into his solos. The Monk debt is unmistakable on the opening of "Augmented Blues", but then he retreats into Afro-Latin clavé behind Herwig's lead and solo, before he begins his solo with dissonant notes from his right hand and rolling chords from the left, all becoming disjointed before resolving back into clavé. Yet Palmieri can also match the trombonist's lyricism with his own, bringing subtlety and grace to solos on the ballads "Cuando se Habla Amor" and "Monica".

Reflections - Facing South was a one-off, an eccentric but triumphant reimagining of the essence of Latin jazz in a chamber jazz setting and perhaps Palmieri's final recording.

For more info visit jazzdepot.com. "The Eddie Palmieri Experience" is at Jazz at Lincoln Center Jan. 9 (part of Unity Jazz Festival). See Calendar.



Floating World Live
Soft Machine (Moonjune)
by Marc Medwin

Founding member of Soft Machine, English keyboardist and flute player **Mike Ratledge (1942-2025)** passed away last year on Feb. 5, at the age of 81. In 1976, he was the longest-tenured Soft and was also the final original member to have left the group. As annotator Sid Smith observes, *Floating World Live* captures Soft Machine in transformation, one moment of so many for a band always intent on metamorphosis. Yet, recorded one year prior to Ratledge's departure, this 1975 concert broadcast (now lovingly remastered by Mark Wingfield) also demonstrates an astonishing unity of purpose.

In typical Softs fashion for the period, the Bremen performance comprises a connected suite. The album opens with one of the group's most synergetic concert-captures as they "float" a breathtaking version of the titular piece. Ratledge and Karl Jenkins share keyboard duties as the music rises, spectral, capped by Alan Holdsworth's guitar sustains, John Marshall's gong invocation and sizzling cymbals,

all of which leads directly into a scorching version of "Bundles". If Holdsworth is afforded much of the solo space, including an exquisite violin contribution to "The Man Who Waved at Trains", the others are given spots that demonstrate the group's increasing sonic diversity. Roy Babbington's effected bass narrates its way through "Eaeling Comedy" and "J.S.M." at ten minutes and change gives John Marshall room to stretch out, his timbrally melodic drum kit in full effect. Ratledge crafts an astonishing synthesizer solo, building it from a few motives as he would later construct portions of his soundtrack to *Riddles of the Sphinx*.

Unlike that "minimalist" score, "North Point" uses repetition and expansion to push against tonal boundaries until all that remains are squalls of varying speed and register, though a logical progression governs the whole. Marshall joins when Ratledge's solo fades out, and the group slams into the modally-charged, felicitous riffage of "Hazard Profile". Even to posit that the album is a winning mixture of classic Softs fusion and then-current experimentalism would be to render it glib beyond reason. A testament to those now gone, especially to the late Ratledge, the concert also demonstrates just how flexible the band could be. They blurred the boundaries they originally erected, and, as always, Moonjune presents an exemplary package in glorious sonics.

This is Soft Machine at its finest and sounds like no one else.

For more info visit moonjune.com



Love Is Here
Pharoah Sanders (Transversales-Elemental Music)
by Pierre Crépon

Drummer **Greg Bandy (1949-2025)**, perhaps best-known for his association with saxophonists Pharoah Sanders and Gary Bartz, passed away last year on May 23, a few months after turning 76. Here he appears on one of what are many albums with his former employer, Sanders. And though this release represents new old-Pharoah Sanders, it is not necessarily brand-new.

Love Is Here (The Complete Paris ORTF Recordings) is an expanded, complete edition of a 1975 French radio concert released on LP by the Transversales label in 2020 as *Live in Paris (1975)*. This current, limited edition, 180g double album edition (also available as a 2-CD set), however, adds one full extra hour of music. The re-release of this material in such short order calls for attention to details. Packaging-wise, there's not too much to remark: veteran writer Kevin Whitehead's liner notes provide contextualization and quotes from the concert's pianist, Harlem native Danny Nixon, and although the cover inexplicably uses a mid '60s image of the bandleader, the booklet does include a few nice photos from the actual concert. The main thing here is therefore the music.

As Whitehead points out, the concert comes from an under-documented period in Sanders' career. The tenor saxophonist made his most impactful leader dates during his work with the Impulse! label (1966-73). It was often written, back then, that the quality of his output had starkly declined during those years. He only recorded again in 1976, taping *Pharoah* (Bandy's second-ever recording), an India

Navigation LP that achieved cult status many years later and reissued in 2023 as a boxed set by Luaka Bop. This 1975 Paris concert predates *Pharoah* as Bandy's first-ever recording with Sanders, but seems to confirm that the saxophonist had indeed hit a creative block. The original material ranges from his certified classic, the crowd-pleaser "The Creator Has a Master Plan" to "Love Is Everywhere", from his downward Impulse! period, to the title track, which he would later record with singer Phyllis Hyman for *Love Will Find A Way* (Arista), a largely decried crossover album. Several John Coltrane-related tunes are included, as is a somewhat generic vocalized blues. Length is a dominant aspect. Bassist Calvin Hill joins Nixon and Bandy and all solo extensively, while allowing the laid-back grooves and minimal vamps to stretch.

The fact that editing often was an issue for Sanders is on plain display here. Unfortunately, the overlong selections highlight the safety-net devices and gimmicks Sanders used while waiting for the right inspiration. Something is not working, and the single-disc Transversales Disques LP arguably makes a smoother listen. But there is a catch: the one standout from this 1975 Paris tape is the use of the radio studio's pipe organ on "The Creator Has a Master Plan". The instrument was large enough to eventually be moved to a cathedral, and it adds unexpectedly great texture to a well-known classic, including Bandy's crescendoing, rhythmic undercurrent and interplay. Attentive listening to this new edition reveals that several minutes of this highlight's ending had been deftly edited out of the Transversales disc. Take your pick.

For more info visit elementalmusicrecords.bandcamp.com

NEW
USED



Jazz
RECORD CENTER

236 West 26 Street, Room 804
New York, NY 10001

Monday-Saturday, 10:00-6:00

Tel: 212-675-4480
Fax: 212-675-4504

Email: jazzrecordcenter@verizon.net
Web: jazzrecordcenter.com

LP's, CD, Videos (DVD/VHS),
Books, Magazines, Posters,
Postcards, T-shirts,
Calendars, Ephemera

Buy, Sell, Trade

Collections bought
and/or appraised

Also carrying specialist labels
e.g. Criss Cross, ECM, Enja, ESP,
Fresh Sound, High Note, Pi, Savant,
Sunnyside, Venus and many more.