

DENNY ZEITLIN

TIDAL WAVE—Palo Alto Jazz 8044-N: *TIDAL WAVE*; *PROMENADE*; *CHELSEA BRIDGE*; *COUNTRY FAIR*; *BILLIE'S BOUNCE*; *WHEREVER YOU ARE*; *HOTLINE*.

Personnel: Zeitlin, piano; John Abercrombie, electric guitar; Charlie Haden, bass; Peter Donald, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DON THOMPSON

A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP—Concord Jazz 243: *EVEN STEVEN*; *MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE*; *BLUES FOR JIM-SAN*; *I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE*; *A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP*; *FOR SCOTT LAFARO*; *EASE IT*; *DREAMS*.

Personnel: Thompson, piano, bass; John Abercrombie, guitar; Dave Holland, bass; Michael Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

One of the connecting threads between these two albums is, of course, guitarist John Abercrombie. The other, loosely, is the fact that both leaders are pianists—however, Thompson is really better known for his bass work. Thompson is a Canadian resident and probably one of the more visible jazzmen on a world level, having appeared in clubs and on many albums with George Shearing and others, as well as leading groups of his own.

Zeitlin, who makes his home in northern California, is too seldom heard from, either on

record or in person. Surrounding himself with a stellar group of associates and turning in five of his own compositions, Zeitlin demonstrates his total command and unique personality on *Tidal Wave*.

Abercrombie, on electric guitar here, is in mostly characteristic form—electrifying, spacy, and identifying strongly with the leader's playing as well as the material. Even on a rather slow, moody piece like *Country Fair*, a duo for piano and guitar, the instrumental personality of both Zeitlin and Abercrombie is highly evident. There's also a superb pairing of Zeitlin and bassist Haden on Billy Strayhorn's ballad *Chelsea Bridge*, and a live solo version of *Billie's Bounce* from Zeitlin. The rest of the program is either trio or quartet, making excellent use of Peter Donald's prodigious percussive talents.

By contrast, the Don Thompson set is extremely laidback, with Abercrombie light and mellow throughout. It is interesting to hear how the guitarist can sound so empathetic with two such disparate players as Thompson and Zeitlin—the mark of a truly versatile musician. For example, on *Blues For Jim-San* Abercrombie echoes and amplifies the gentleness and subtlety of Jim Hall, to whom this is a tribute. And Thompson's bass support is fittingly guitaristic.

That empathy is again noticeable on the title

track, with both the guitarist and pianist delivering long-lined, inventive solos. Abercrombie, showing that he has imbibed some of the definitive jazz styles, interprets the boppish *Ease It* with fluency and vigor.

Though the Zeitlin album is definitely the more exciting and adventurous of the two, bass players and guitarists alike will undoubtedly be fascinated with the Thompson/Abercrombie digitations. Both albums are well worth any discriminating listener's attention.

—frankie nemko

MAX ROACH/ CECIL TAYLOR

HISTORIC CONCERTS—Soul Note 1100/1:
DUETS, PARTS I-IV.

Personnel: Roach, percussion; Taylor, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In theory, jazz' generational divisions had been reconciled by what could be called a philosophy of continuum long before the instantly historic Max Roach/Cecil Taylor duo concerts of December 15, 1979. Almost exclusively, that philosophy had been espoused by the avant garde in an effort to minimize their isolation. The signal of the Roach/Taylor summit, how-