

PULVERIZE THE SOUND

Eponymous
Pulverize The Sound (Relative Pitch)
by Andrey Henkin

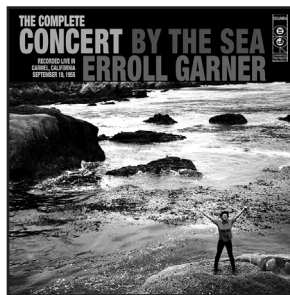
For those of a certain age and experience, Pulverize The Sound (PTS) recalls the heady hardcore days of the mid '80s in its name and the stark white block lettering on a red background of its eponymous debut's cover (though the album's 60+-minute running time exceeds a dozen 7" EPs). That the band's acronym is also used for Post-Traumatic Stress is probably not a coincidence. All you really need to know about the trio—trumpeter Peter Evans, electric bassist Tim Dahl and drummer Mike Pride—is that they were nearly booed off the stage of the 2011 Vision Festival for their blaring freneticism.

PTS has the precision of a nail gun, and its subtlety as well. While Evans is responsible for half of the album's six tracks, this should not be misattributed as a leader-and-rhythm section-type of band, instead a collaborative project that often swallows Evans' flights into a morass of effects-laden bass and pummeling drums. One reason why the Vision attendees may have reacted poorly is that there is no attempt at bluesy warmth, not a moment of spiritual cry; this is grim, apocalyptic music.

Mostly PTS works with unisons and repetitions, ostinatos flying at the listener like shards from a broken

window. The segments of looser improvisation that come between these are hardly calming. Evans' "Echo", a tune he also plays much differently with his Zebulon Trio, is a series of manic blasts sewn together by the 'jazziest' improvisations to be found herein. A hilarious moment is the opening to Pride's "Pools", jackbooted bass and fluttering trumpet coasting above whimsical glockenspiel before turning into a Deep Purple deep cut. While Evans and Pride's improvisational prowess is well known in a variety of contexts, Dahl's contributions are the revelation here. His is such a forceful approach to the instrument that the higher-pitched trumpet and louder drums often genuflect before it. But whatever facet is your focus, don't forget the band-aids.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. This project is at *The Stone Sep. 24th*. See *Calendar*.



The Complete Concert By The Sea
Erroll Garner (Columbia-Legacy)
by Mark Keresman

Even in the world of jazz, excellence can sometimes be sorely underrated. Take Erroll Garner—while, like contemporary George Shearing, he preceded the bebop era, he adapted to it famously, playing on Charlie Parker's 1947 Dial sessions. His career spanned 1944-74 and his popularity extended beyond the jazz sphere. Garner appeared nine times on *The Tonight Show* as well as many other TV shows in the '60s-70s. He composed "Misty", which became a jazz standard and figured in Clint Eastwood's 1971 film *Play Misty for Me*. The self-taught Garner had amazing, virtually orchestral technique and a powerful sense of swing, gaining the respect of pianists then and now.

Why then isn't his name in the pantheon with Bud Powell and McCoy Tyner? One writer's opinion: like Shearing (a Garner admirer, by the way), Garner achieved popularity among those that were not necessarily devotees of jazz, which for some purists is well-nigh deplorable. *Concert By The Sea*, recorded and released in 1955, was a million-seller within a few years of its release and continues to be popular. Now, thanks to the wizards at Legacy Recordings, it gets the deluxe 60th Anniversary reissue treatment (recorded Sep. 19th, 1955), expanded to three discs: the first two present the complete concert with 11 unreleased selections while the third is the album as it was originally issued in the '50s, plus a post-concert interview with Garner.

Garner's approach is so genial, swinging, richly melodic and warmly lyrical it's easy to see why *Concert By The Sea* strikes such a chord (no pun intended, honest) with non-jazz listeners. His methodology was aimed at capturing the richness of a big band at the 88s—he maintains a joyfully cogent rhythm while melodies intertwine and counter-melodies ensue, lightheartedly quoting jazz and pop standards throughout. His stylistic influences emanated from the boisterous stride pianists of the '20s-30s (Fats Waller, James P. Johnson), steady rumble of boogie woogie (Pete Johnson, Albert Ammons), unassuming elegance of Duke Ellington and a percussiveness that paralleled but did not really resemble that of Dave Brubeck.

Among the previously unreleased highlights, "Night and Day" features a heavy touch that buoys rather than impedes the rollicking feel of this rendition. Garner alternates speeding and slowing the tempo slyly, making this standard both jovial and somewhat reflective. "Spring is Here" finds Garner expanding this

evergreen, maintaining its wistful feeling yet enriching it with a judicious April-showers cascade of keyboard runs. Bebop standard "Bernie's Tune" has some effervescent, melodramatically urgent piano, with plenty of thrusting, bobbing-and-weaving jabs, Garner occasionally vocalizing along with his playing.

Disc Two has a heretofore-unissued and incredible take on the Gershwin gem "S'Wonderful", Garner judiciously splaying rapid-fire single-note runs, ending with a dazzling, unexpected change in tempo, slowing it then blazing to a fare-thee-well conclusion. "Laura" is given a whimsical, Debussy-flavored reading, in the manner of an Impressionist artist delicately applying paint to a canvas. Before sinking his proverbial teeth into the classic melody of "Caravan", Garner plays what might be considered an affectionate parody of it, giving it an angular, slightly dissonant interpretation, before remaking it entirely, reharmonizing it until almost all that remains is that rolling rhythm, until it's more after-midnight-on-52nd Street than North African exotica.

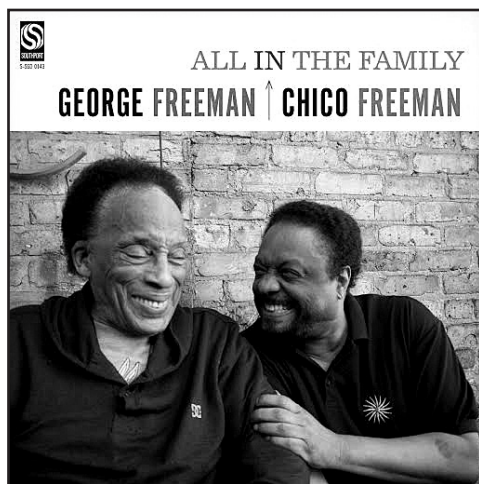
If there is any flaw in this otherwise fabulous collection, it's that Garner's accompanists, drummer Denzil Best (who also played with George Shearing on a live recording in which Shearing "introduced" himself as Garner!) and bassist Eddie Calhoun are rather distant in the mix. This might be explained as this set, ironically, was not originally recorded for official release but by and for a private collector. It was only after Garner's manager played the tape recording for George Avakian, then head of Columbia Records' jazz division, that it became a legitimate release and made history. If this writer had influence over music education in the U.S., every aspiring pianist (jazz or not) would have a copy of *The Complete Concert By the Sea*.

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