

















Who remembers jazz before Wynton Marsalis? Blue Note does. From 1939 to 1970 the classic

record label was synonymous with the best in jazz, bringing out timeless albums by everyone from Sidney Bechet and Thelonious

Monk to John Coltrane and Herbie Hancock.

Since Blue Note's February revival under the aegis of Capitol EMI, its president, Bruce Lundvall (with the help of resident historian Michael Cuscuna), has reissued a steady stream of vintage recordings. The latest series-twenty discs out this month-includes such peak-period essentials as Jimmy Smith's funky House Party and Bobby Hutcherson's Total Eclipse. There's not a musty museum piece in the whole batch-further proof that the original Blue Note's delicate balance of experimentation and accessibility has yet to be matched.

But Lundvall is certainly trying. Decisive new signings include guitar phenomenon Stanley Jordan, premier flutist James Newton, and up-and-coming saxophonist Bennie Wallace.

The new-old label also knows how to celebrate in style. By bringing together over thirty current and former labelmates, their welcome-back concert at Town Hall in New York City instantly became the jazz event of the decade. "The new Blue Note is a label of the eighties," says Lundvall, "but we have to live up to old standards." -Steve Futterman

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