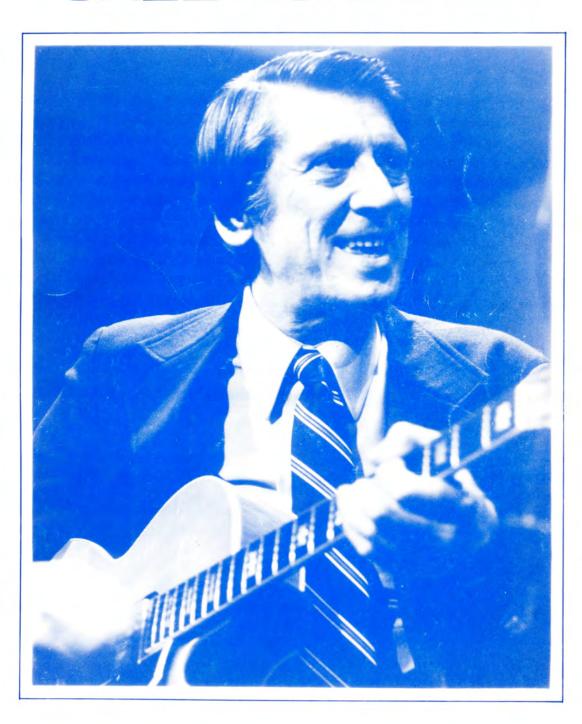
TO MY FRIEND SHANE HILL, WITH VERY BEST WISHES, ALWAYS! / al Tarlow VERY BEST WISHES, ALWAYS! LONDON - NOV. 11, 1988

# TAL FARLOW JAZZ GUITARIST



SHANE HILL

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE U.K. in 1987 by RAZZAMAJAZZ PUBLICATIONS LTD. 34, Woodhouse Road, Wheatley, DONCASTER DN2 4DG.

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Designed by Chris Burden
Printed in Great Britain by Cosign Printers Ltd; 11, Netherall Road, DONCASTER DN1 2PH.

#### **ACK NOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank three musicians whose help in the preparation of this book has far exceeded the call of duty:-

ADRIAN INGRAM, DR GRAHAM HEARN AND WILLIAM KINGHORN

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

J.Bradley; O.Hill; J.Mullen; D.Smith; M.Watson; D.Hamilton; D.Page; B.Brayben; C.Burden. E.Smith, K.Fitch, O.Ralph, M.Creswell, E.Selwyn, G.Wade, T.Austwick, G.Menzer, M.Bale and M.Walker for his invaluable help with 'Autumn In New York'.

Shane Hill September 1987

We would like to acknowledge the following for their invaluable assistance with the supply of photographs for this edition:-

Gordon Wright of Gordon Wright Publishing Ltd; Ken Williams

Many thanks for buying this and taking the trouble to support an attempt to increase comprehensive jazz guitar literature.

Many thanks also to Mark Creswell, Andre Emond and Peter Dyke for their encouragement, particularly at the time when I was first drawn to jazz and the guitar.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The impact of Charlie Christian's arrival on the jazz guitar world was indeed immense, initiating a new era for the guitar in jazz.Of the many guitarists who felt the ripples of this impact at firsthand, few seem to have launched such a highly individual style as Tal Farlow. For this reason he was perhaps the first post Christian innovator in the world of jazz guitar. At the least, he was one of the few, for after all, many players were never to re-cover from Christian's influence, merely developing his 'words' rather than adding a vastly different 'grammar' to his musical language.

Whilst there has been a plethora of articles written about Farlow, little in depth analysis appears to have surfaced, perhaps due to the fact that the results of rigorous analysis are always highly subjective. Therefore, in assessing Farlow's influence, I have abstained from enforcing speculation on such issues as, for instance, the exact theoretical nature of Tatum's or Christian's musical influence on him. This is because such influences could perhaps contain more general elements similar, for example, to Paganini's influence on Franz Liszt where, amongst other things, the sheer command of one man's technique astonished another - sometimes the very spirit of his music asserting influence rather than the notes employed.

I have concentrated for the most part on Farlow's work during the early fifties as this part of his career seems to have established a great deal of his mature style and therefore seems to be especially significant to this leading figure in the world of be-bop jazz quitar.

Shane Hill July 1987



Photography courtesy of Brian O'Connor

#### FORMATIVE YEARS

Talmedge Holt Farlow was born in Greensboro, North Carolina on the 7th June 1921. His interest in music, which started at about the age of nine, was shared and encouraged by the rest of the family. His father, an engineer in a local textile company, dabbled with many instruments, including the guitar and mandolin. Farlow's mother played gospel music on the piano, and his sister developed into a fine classical pianist. Therefore, from an early age, Tal was exposed to a wide variety of music, thus preventing him from becoming solely entrenched in the local music of the area. This was essentially 'hillbilly', the forerunner of Country and Western. Although he was not fond of this music. there are still traces of 'hillbilly' influence in certain of his passages, in particular in his execution of note bending and choking, which is reminiscent of certain bluegrass banjo techniques.

Farlow's first efforts at music making were at the age of nine. However, it was the fact that he started learning chords on a mandolin which his father tuned like a ukelele, that in hindsight had a profound effect on his approach to playing the guitar. The chordal knowledge he had gained from what was basically a four string guitar in pitch, but actually was a retuned mandolin, physically opened up a highly personalised style, both in musical, and technical terms. In fact initially, all he did when he actually started to play the guitar was retain many of the four note and triadic sounds he already played, incorporating his thumb to negotiate the fifth and sixth strings. The grouping of the fourth interval which this technique gave, meant that a potential to achieve many triadic formations on the bass strings of the guitar was waiting to be discovered. This element of his basic approach was the beginning of his bi-tonal concept. His extremely large hands enabled him

to do this, and one feels that there was a degree of pure convenience behind its birth. From the melodic angle, the fact that his father played jigs and reels could well have given him some visual and theoretical insight regarding pitch relationships on the guitar.

Farlow in his early teens discovered that he had a good ear for music, figuring out chords and tunings with very little help. Although at this stage he considered music a hobby and had no thought of becoming a professional musician, his ability was steadily growing. In fact, it would be true to say that his already individual fingering approach, and the exposure to jigs, gospel, classical and many other forms of music, were already going to affect his style with regards to jazz, and surely contribute to the great harmonic 'maverick' he was to become in his musical maturity.

In his teens, Farlow feels he must have heard the guitarists Carl Kress, Dick Mc-Donough, Eddie Lang and Lonnie Johnson, but feels sure that a lot of musicians used to use different names whilst keeping the same initials. This was done so that they could make records but still safeguard their contract with their main label. Nevertheless, the styles they played did not seem to trigger a passion for jazz within him at that stage, although they certainly elucidated the guitar's potential in Farlow's eyes.

After finishing his schooling, Tal entered into the signwriting business as an apprentice in a local shop. After working there for a few years, his employer allowed him to work at night. This enabled him to listen to the radio and hear what they called 'remotes' — outside broadcasts of the Big Bands of the day. He heard the bands of Artie Shaw, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman. During this period, Farlow heard the Benny Goodman Sextet with Charlie Christian playing electric guitar. Tal explains his reaction:—

" I was totally floored by Christian. It was the first time I had heard jazz lines played on a guitar and played loud enough to be heard through the band."

(1978 pp 95)

Farlow's conversion to Christian's playing at that time is further outlined by his advice to his pupils now:-

"It sounds like larceny in a way, but I just stole the things right off of Charlie Christian's records. I don't play them, but it got me to understand how he did it and why he played a certain phrase at a certain point in the harmony."

(December 1982 pp 24)

His ambient enthusiasm for Christian's style substantiates the belief that the passion for jazz guitar arrived at this stage of his life. Farlow's ear for chords helped him to come to the conclusion was basically Christian out of chord positions and embellishing with some diatonic and chromatic extensions. Farlow had played these sounds as chord forms, 6ths, 9ths and 13ths, but Christian was basing his lines on the arpeggios these extended chords. His hunger to learn at this point drove him to the awesome task of learning all Christian's recorded solos up to that date. He became aware also of the fact that a great attraction of Christian's playing was in the actual tone quality produced by the electric quitar. He bought himself a more suitable quitar and proceeded to build a magnetic pick-up, using a pair of his father's radio headphones. Finally, acquired an amplifier for \$20.00, so as to approximate the Christian sound.

Farlow's pre-occupation with single-line jazz improvising was joined by another fascinating area of study when he heard the great jazz pianist Art Tatum on the radio.

"I was immediately fascinated by his virtuosity and harmonic approach. To this day he has remained one of my biggest influences and idols".

(1978 pp 95)

He was particularly drawn to Tatum's music because the tunes he was playing were the pop tunes of the day - the work of Cole Porter and George Gershwin to mention but two. Farlow knew their harmonic content very well and Tatum's changes,

although totally different from the printed sheet, were absolutely appropriate to his ears.

"I just heard so much more music when he did it, and that really got me into listening to harmonies".

(1982 pp 24)

He noticed that the pianist would sometimes make quite radical changes to the harmony. These harmonic tensions seemed not just to be accompanying the single-line improvisations, but giving 'birth' to them. This fired Farlow's interest in harmonic substitution and re-structuring. perhaps most important of all, he realised that in a lot of cases, Tatum was playing two chords in juxta-position, and so he continued to investigate his early bitonal concept. It was perhaps only really at this stage that Farlow's physical approach was crying out to be applied to his new found musical discoveries, and some of the characteristic facets of his style started to evolve. In his words:-

"I started thinking in those terms. Like you can play a phrase against either one of the two chords and it fits. It sort of simplifies analysing things I think".

(December 1981 pp 24)

So it would seem that Christian and Tatum were the biggest influences in Tal's early experience of jazz. Moreover, he became interested in which players had influenced Christian. Perhaps hearing these players could give him some fresh, nonquitaristic approach to improvising. had a friend in Greensboro who played clarinet, and who was also very interested in jazz. He was particularly fond of Lester Young's style and played Farlow some old Basie albums. It was immediately clear that Christian owed much to the great saxophonist. Farlow started studying learning Young's solos and realised that his style was pretty easily adapted to the guitar. As he said:-

"It sort of fell into place".

(December 1963 pp 18)

During this time, he listened sedulously to jazz on other instruments, which helped him to aspire to musical goals unrelated to the accepted limitations of the guitar. The seperation a pianist can get between his bass and treble register really appealed to Farlow. Already at this stage, he was drawn to the harmonic subtleties operating within an improvised line, and his own lines are rich in this area. Christian did play some involved ideas, but they were all pretty much in chord positions, and like Young, he stuck near to the tune most of the time. Even Ben Webster, another of Farlow's influences, was not so far removed from this style. However, when Tal heard Coleman Hawkins, that was a different matter. explored the changes a little more thoroughly, and seemed more capable of wandering away from the tune. It was this freedom interested Farlow. In historic terms, what he was attesting to was the move away from the melody being the most important vehicle for improvising, and the harmony becoming an emenating force behind improvisational statements. This of thought played an important track role in the synthesis of be-bop music, a style of jazz in which Farlow was to become a major exponent. Tal didn't confine his listening to just records and the radio. His signwriting enabled him hear some great music at source. There were dances in the area for coloureds only, whites not being allowed in except for an area reserved for spectators. Tal did all the signs for these dances, thus hearing Hampton, Basie, Andy Kirk, the Trenier twins and Jimmy Lunceford others. Tal remembers amongst Irving Ashby's playing in the Lionel Hampton Band, and later with Nat Cole.

He felt that Ashby was getting outside the instrument. This encouraged Farlow and it started to dawn on him that the guitar's potential as an improvising instrument was merely at the tip of the iceberg, even in Christian's hands. In the years just before the outbreak of World War Two, Tal made great efforts to play the kind of jazz the Goodman Sextet was playing, and to grasp precisely what Christian was producing. Some work

at local venues made him feel justified in buying a more worthy guitar to assimilate his knowledge.

When the Second World War started, government built a large army base in Greensboro through which they many men overseas. Many of these men were musicians who played with the famous bands. This depletion of musicians created new employment opportunities for the established players, and Tal was booked for jobs he may not have had a chance at earlier. In passing, he worked with some very fine players. He became friendly with the pianist Jimmy Lyons, who came from New Jersey and who was stationed more permanently at the base. These musicians, and especially Lyons, schooled Farlow in professional musicianship. Tal's following comment confirms Lyon's influence:-

"He has a magnificent harmonic sense. It stimulated my interest".

(December 1963 pp 18)

Around this time, Greensboro base would try to entertain the soldiers by sponsoring dances for them and Farlow would get the call to play at these. Sometimes the dance bands were comprised of local and army musicians. This was in fact, a violation of army regulations and union rules, but nevertheless invaluable experience Tal. At a later date, a small travelling group from Philadelphia had their bass player drafted, and they asked Farlow to replace him for a change of sound. This outfit played throughout the East Coast, and was Farlow's initial excursion as a professional travelling For a few years he alternated between playing guitar and working in the signwriting business, even having his own shop in Greensboro.

In 1944, Farlow joined a trio led by the female vibist, Dardanelle. During this time, her trio moved to New York, at that time a major centre for experimental jazz activities, and Tal and the bass player, Paul Edenfield, frequently visited 52nd Street on their nights off. They were mesmerised by the total musical command of Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillepsie and their coterie, Bud Powell, Max Roach,

Tommy Potter and Al Haig amongst them. The effect of hearing Parker frequently and at closr range was to prove decisive for Farlow, and his work began to incorporate aspects of Bird's harmonic richness and rhythmic freedom. He noticed that chromaticism was playing a large part in the integral make-up of the music, and was drawn to this smooth, harmonic language which gave root position chord movement a new attraction.

"All my musical interests were channelled into understanding and learning to play be-bop".

(1978 pp 96)

It was to be some years however before Farlow's be-bop guitar playing was to adorn the world of jazz guitar, partly due to what was expected of him to comply the commercial interests of danelle's trio. Dardanelle seemed have patterned her trio on that of Nat 'King' Cole, at that time one of the popular outfits in jazz. Cole's guitarist was Oscar Moore, whose abilities were excellent in terms of drive, sensitivity, invention and technique. Rhythmically, his style exercised less of the fragmentation of Christian and the beboppers (especially Parker). Farlow's use of the guitar in the Dardanelle group strongly reminiscent of Moore's in Cole's trio. It is perhaps also true to say that this outfit was important to Farlow from the point of view of developing into a full and complete guitarist, the trio situation making great demands on him, and tailoring his abilities in a medium in which he was to work a great deal in the future. The album 'Gold Braid' (Audiophile AP-32) that he recorded with Dardanelle in 1945, demonstrates swing-trio playing. early His rhvthm playing is rather characteristic 30's guitar style highlighting the Freddie Green or Carl Kress type vamp, as opposed to comping. His single-line improvising shows a Christian influence in its basic little sign of his construction, but own special musical fingerprint, needed a different music containing greater harmonic and rhythmic freedom to thrive successfully. The recording of ı C

Blues' on this album shows the slight 'hillbilly' flavour in Tal's blues playing, as well as the chord of the dominant 9th being greatly exploited in punchy rhythmical figures. The album gives us the evidence that Farlow's technique was of fairly humble means at that time, and that certainly there were a number of jazz guitarists, Arvin Garrison, Chuck Wayne, Remo Palmeiri, Barney Kessel and Bill de Arango for instance, who were more accomplished both technically and stylistically.

Farlow moved back to Philadelphia worked at clarinettist Billy Krechmer's club in a trio that included the owner and pianist Freddie Thompson. The outfit had no bass player, and Tal would play a bass line on the guitar. A drummer would sit in on snare-drums and the sound was reasonably complete. Playing bass was an invaluable experience for Tal's quitar style, which was to incorporate much bass activity in his solo playing. This musical situation did not last long and after a few months Farlow, Jimmy Lyons and Lenny de Franco (clarinettist Buddy de Franco's brother) set off for New York. The three musicians intended to get their local 802 cards and form a trio. During the first three months of waiting out his 802 membership, the applicant musician is permitted to work only one-night engagements. Lyons and De Franco could do this but not Farlow. The demand for a guitarist who could not read music or, worst still, could not sing, was non-existent, so Tal's musical aims were somewhat hindered.

Once again therefore, the guitarist returned to the signwriting business and did all the display work for a large department store. In fact, because of the work-permit rule, the trio never did get the chance to play together professionally. Tal did however do some freelance guitar playing and for a while worked at a holiday resort in Southampton, Long Island. It was a trio without drums, and so Farlow's rhythm playing was once again heavily drawn upon. They mostly played show tunes and, because it was for dancing, they required a very audible beat. Tal's feelings about this rather commercial job were the following:-

"It was a valuable experience as

I got to respect the original changes. I had been doing some things that for me seemed far out at the time, and sometimes I had missed the logic behind what the composer had written."

(December 1981 pp 34)

Shortly afterwards, Tal worked with the Marjorie Hyams Trio. Again, it was with vibes. The band worked opposite Charlie Parker's group at a Manhattan club called 'The Three Deuces'. Parker's group had (trumpet), Curly Miles Davis Russell (bass), Al Haig (piano) and Stan Levey (drums). Levey was to be replaced later by Max Roach. After his association with Hyams, Tal played with various other jazz groups in New York. This was 1948, and in that year Farlow joined Buddy de Franco, whose playing he greatly respected. It was an inspiring outfit containing Milt Jackson on vibes and bassist John Levy. Farlow was by now well equipped to cope with the fact that there was no drummer. In Farlow's words:-

"I had to lean heavily on my rhythm playing and develop it more".

(1978 pp 96)

At this time, Farlow lived in an apartment house on 93rd Street in Manhattan. It became something of a meeting place for guitarists as both Jimmy Raney and Sal Salvador also lived in the building. Raney and Farlow became good friends and jammed a lot together. Sal was by that stage already working a good deal and out on the road much of the time. Other guitarists such as Johnny Smith and John Collins would come and demonstrate their latest musical discoveries. Ial has fond memories of that time and said:-

I must say that nobody has been kinder to me than Johnny Smith in offering his time to help me read music better. Not only is he a musical genius, but a kinder, more humble musician doesn't exist."

(1978 pp 96)

The experience gained in these formative

years between 1945 and 1949 was, in retrospect, very important to Farlow's style. The small band situation, and especially the trio unit, had led his playing right from the Dardanelle days into replacing a piano in a number of situations. In assessing his work throughout this period, we realise that the next outfit that was to bring him world-wide recognition, after stretching his abilities to incredible musical standards, was greatly assisted by this gestation period.

That outfit was the Red Norvo Trio, and Farlow's work with the band really announced his arrival as a major improviser, as well as a brilliant accompanist. His tenure with Norvo lifted him from average status to the calibre of revered jazz artist. Indeed, to some jazz critics, he took on the mantle of the world's leading jazz jazz guitarist shortly after joining Norvo late in 1949.

### INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

A deciding factor in why Norvo's band was so important to Farlow's development as a major force in jazz was the immense ability of Norvo himself, not only as a soloist of considerable experience, but as a forward looking jazz instrumentalist. In his early career during the 1940's, he played a leading role in establishing the xylophone as a respectable jazz instrument and one which could safely take its place alongside kevboards. sundry horns, quitars other instruments of the jazz world. Later, 1945, he led an all-star sextet with himself on vibes, and which included both Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, through a generally satisfactory mainstream bop record date 'Fabulous Jam Sessions' (Spotlite). Norvo was strongly attracted to be-bop, and during this time was often found in the presence of young bop style musicians such as Gerry Mulligan with whom he recorded.

Farlow's arrival in the trio finally meant that he was in a position to play the music that he loved. However, at this stage, Norvo's musical objectives made him somewhat of the Paganini of the vibraphone. He was uncompromising in certain musical areas - in particular in his desire to play very fast, which was a strongly prevalent trait right from the start of the unit. The colossal stamina he seemed to possess at fast tempos was to prove a milestone in Farlow's career - just keeping up with Norvo was a major challenge. It was this situation that applied the pressure to Tal's musical resources which had to, over a period months, undergo severe re-dressing in the area of technical command. This chance was a sink or swim situation, and from a practical point of view, there was little time to rise to the occasion. as the music would not have allowed this. To many players, this haste would have crippled their enthusiasm and in effect severely hampered their musical development. However, after Mundell Lowe had recommended him to Norvo, Farlow's attitude to making the grade is clarified by his following comment:-

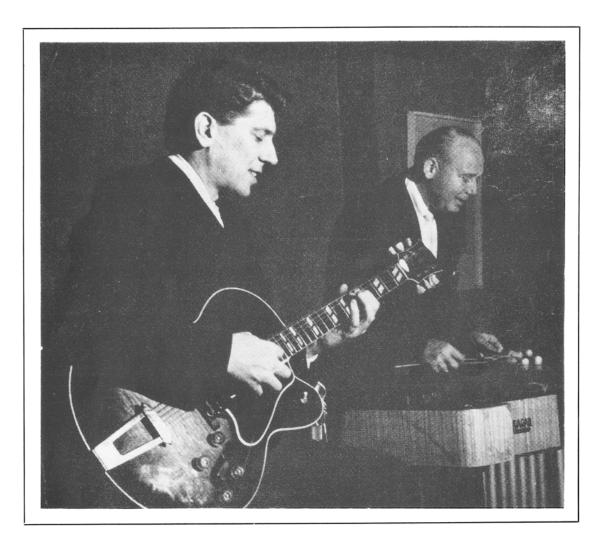
"Red liked to, I guess he still does, play real fast tunes, things on which he was featured with Woody Herman's band, like 'I Surrender Dear' and 'The Man I Love'. When I first went with him, it was embarrassing because I couldn't keep up with him, and it was a question of its having to be done. I worked om my technique so I could make the tempos."

(December 1963 pp 19)

Much of this change in Farlow's playing was carried out in Santa Monica on the West Coast. Every afternoon, the trio would meet at Norvo's house to rehearse, and Farlow would work on devising some way of saving face during his own solos. Rather than learning scales and speed exercises, he tried to find a more ready source of music. There were certain phrases he could play quite quickly, and gradually these were expanded. Farlow has always seemed to be concerned with performable music rather than the acquisition of less practical knowledge of a purely theoretical or technical nature. His memory has always been heavily utilised because his music reading ability is slow. This situation has produced a musician with a very personal approach to harmony and single-line playing. and one whose playing seems, above all else, to exercise a great sense of freedom. In Tal's case, Norvo s demands accelerated his development and caused him to take perhaps the most substantial steps which lead to the maturing of his style. The fact that there were no drums or keyboards positively fostered this growth. His harmony and rhythm were not hindered by having to compete with these instruments. The bass player, Red Kelly, was replaced in the early fifties by Charles Mingus. This change allowed Farlow to experiment even more with the be-bop idiom, as Mingus has strong associations with that movement and a great interest in changing harmony. In the words of Jim Mullen:-

"Tal's blistering solos were played with super-clean articulation and displayed a maverick approach which set him apart from other players."

(Jan 1987)



Around this time, Farlow made an alteration to his guitar which involved the shortening of the string scale by the length of the first fret. This was like tuning the guitar a half-tone flat and then putting a capo on the first fret. He did this because it made the strings softer and looser. The fret-board was now smaller and therefore he could reach a greater span which enabled certain fingerings to be implemented which would have been uncomfortable previously. It really allowed greater facility at high speed something very appropriate to the Norvo trio, which exploited ridiculously fast unison passages between vibes and guitar. It is hard to believe when listening to some of these up tempo tracks that the band was fond of the George Shearing sound for a time. This sound was popular, and Norvo tried to

imitate the style by using block chords on the vibraphone and Farlow doubled the melody down an octave. This no doubt helped them gain the popular jazz enthusiasts' attention early on. However, their arangements never sounded bland or lacking in commitment. Each member of the trio had thought of ways of utilising the space normally occupied by piano and drums, thus adding somewhat novel musical effects to their sound. This gave the outfit a highly personal sound, with Tal, for instance, making percussive sounds high up on the finger board. Using both hands to tap the board in a certain way, with the correct amplification, produced the sound of a bongo drum. So realistic was this imitation that a well known English record critic informed his readers that a bongo player had been added for certain tracks. Tal had used this effect as early as the Dardanelle Trio days, but made it somewhat of a trademark during his time with Norvo. he got the effect from a group of guitarists in Philadelphia who had used it in another, less modern context. As Tal said:-

"I've almost always worked with trios, and I've just considered that anything appropriate you can offer is okay — get as many sounds, as much variety as you can."

(December 1981 pp 21)

Mingus used an interesting texture produced by bouncing the bow on the strings to give a special percussive quality to the note. Indeed, the rhythmic impetus this trio displayed excites the listener to the point of forgetting the fact that there was no drummer. In fact, one almost feels that the drummer would have upset the compact swing Mingus and Farlow generated between Norvo's solos. In the words once again of Jim Mullen:-

"The first time I became aware of Tal Farlow's genius was during the late fifties in the Red Norvo Trio with Charlie Mingus. I was instantly amazed at the rhythmic drive of the vibes, guitar and bass trio."

(January 1987)

This rhythmic momentum os one of the main Farlow fingerprints. However, despite musical objective, Farlow has a basic softness in his playing - sometimes slightly frenetic in phrasing, but never elephantine in execution. His approach is essentially of the quieter kind because he seldom had to fight to be heard above certain musical instruments. For Farlow, trio setting, the culmination which was the Norvo outfit, was greatly responsible for this stylistic and makes one realise that Farlow had become a sort of specialist in this field. A practitioner, who had been fortunate to be called upon to perform similar operations each time, and then found himself the leading consultant in his field, would be a perfect way of describing Tal's history as a small band guitarist at that point in time.

The sensitive touch of Farlow was shared

by Norvo and Mingus, and Norvo himself feels sure that it worked to the band's commercial and artistic advantage. he recalls:-

"We used to do a lot of things harmonically and get away with it because it was soft. It wasn't shocking people, whereas if we'd done it with brass and saxes, it would have been pretty hard to take."

(pp 140)

Nevertheless, much of the really innovative music was not recorded due to difficulties envisaged in marketing the product afterwards. In fact, with regards to the band's actual potential, the trio was far from happy with the nature of the music it recorded. The record companies wanted to make them an enormous commercial success, and Norvo's feelings were as follows:-

"We were never satisfied with what the group got down on record."

(pp 140)

Whatever the trio actually thought of these records has little effect on their actual significance to the history of jazz. This was not only enormous, but in the process produced some beautiful listening. of this music was recorded on the 10" '78', with such popular tunes as 'God Child'. 'Cheek to Cheek' and 'Zing Went the Strings of my Heart' being re-vamped. The track entitled 'Move' really means just This track, to be discussed later, is an arrangement displaying the band's characteristic precision throughout. These '78' tracks were recorded on the Discovery label, which also recorded a 10" album running at 33 1/3 rpm, with such tunes as 'I Get a Kick out of You', 'I'll Remember April'. 'I Can't Believe', 'September Song' and 'I've Got You Under My Skin'. These early recordings date from 1950. Slightly later in 1953, the Brunswick label issued an album featuring such standards as 'I Remember You', 'Tenderly' and 'Skylark'. This record date has additional interest owing to the fact that Jimmy Raney actually finished the session playing the last five titles recorded. This gives the listener the opportunity of hearing two masters in a similar setting. There are obvious similarities

in both styles due to the fact that they both considerably influenced both Christian and Parker. However, the main difference in ability is in the of rhythm playing, where Raney's essentially traditional approach is overshadowed by Farlow's modern and unique chordal ideas. With regards to the singleline playing, Raney is as equally effective as Farlow. Problems arise in Farlow's playing when he creates tension with rhythmic displacement of a phrase which sometimes ends up too rubato. However, Raney achieves his high spots through the melodic contours of his lines as opposed to playing around with the time. stemming no doubt, from his interest in Baroque music, whose employment of counterpoint often fascinated him. Farlow's playing sometimes demonstrates a raw quality which appeals to the more primitive instincts within us. Raney appears very refined in many cases, and exploits beautifully constructed ideas with a delicate touch. His lyrical approach makes one feel as though one is listening to a honed composition rather than a well spontaneous musical idea.

At this stage, Farlow and Raney were both relatively young musicians whose shared interests had led them in similar directions. However, Farlow was to develop and exploit various techniques which would further his individuality and set him aside from Raney, Kessel, Ellis and others.

Farlow stayed with Norvo until late in 1953, during which time he and the trio appeared on America's first colour 'telecast' - historically quite a milestone for a trio more accustomed to working in the jazz clubs around Los Angeles. However, Tal perhaps wanted a change, and so decided to move back to New York. He was replaced in the trio by Jimmy Raney. Despite this move in 1954, Farlow did record again with various other Norvo outfits, for example The Red Norvo Quintet, which, in addition to Norvo and Farlow, contained Buddy Collette (flute), Monty Budwig (bass) and Chico Hamilton (drums). The standard of the tracks is very high with Farlow and Norvo demonstrating their rapport the different musical despite personnel in the group. A month later,

The Red Norvo Septet, consisting of Norvo, Shorty Rogers (trumpet), Jimmy Guiffre (clarinet), Pete Jolly (piano), Red Callender (bass) and Larry Bunker (drums), recorded four titles. Each player abdicates his own ego and thus the overall unity of the group ensures that the ensembles are well integrated. Nevertheless, the solos are uniformly excellent, with Tal inventing a compulsive, swinging solo on the track 'Blue Rose'.

New York was to bring Farlow into contact with one of the greatest of all jazz clarinettists, Artie Shaw. The great band leader asked Tal to join a group of players who had all played at the famous 54th Street club, The Embers. The other musicians involved, apart from Shaw and Tal, were Hank Jones (piano), Joe Roland (vibes), Tommy Potter (bass) and Denzil Best (drums). It was a band modelled on Shaw's old Gramercy Five sound, playing a good many of his original hits. Farlow was not overjoyed with the material that this band was expected to play. Shaw himself was greatly concerned with the total perfection of his material which was difficult for Tal, a weak reader of music. The record that the band cut together 'Artie Shaw and His Gramercy Five' (Clef 33C9006) is not particularly significant from the point of view of showing Tal at his best. There are some interesting moments, with some excellent guitar solos, but one senses that Tal was not really at home in this band setting. This unease not readily betray its prescence in his solos which are on the whole, sparse, thoughtful and even relaxed, although he does seem to have been somewhat inhibited, tending towards caution rather than invention. The best part of the Shaw episode was perhaps his chance to play with two of his favourite musicians. In his own words:-

"I enjoyed working with Tommy Potter and Hank Jones — you can't do much better than that."

(January 1982)

Around this time 1953/4, Farlow did some work as a sideman working with various outfits. These different settings strengthened his versatility. For instance, he recorded an album with Anita O'Day as leader, providing a beautiful backing in harmonics

to Miss O'Day's vocal on 'You Don't Know What Love Is'. He does take some single-line solos, but his main contribution here is in the role of accompanist, an area in which he shows himself to be most adept, providing some tasteful chord voicings and single-note traceries without in any way overshadowing Miss O'Day's singing. These recordings make it clear that Farlow was a good listener and adept at anticipating the musical requirements of others — vital qualities for any accompanist.

In 1953, Farlow recorded with Howard McGhee (trumpet/leader), Gigi Gryce (flute/ alto sax), Horace Silver (piano), Percy Heath (bass) and Walter Bolden (drums). He obviously had to edit his rhythm playing as his dense voicings would have made it a problem to integrate his style with Silver's piano. His solo on the Gordon Jenkin's tune 'Goodbye' is short, fluent, mellow and economical. This side of Farlow's which exercises considerable playing. reserve, is unfortunately all too often forgotten by critics. It must however be said that Farlow will never be remembered for this area of his ability, because people had already fallen in love with another, more vivacious side of his playing.

In 1954, Tal participated in a Gil Melle recording session, the others involved being Urbie Green (trombone), Joe Morello (drums) and Clyde Lombardi (bass). Melle played tenor and baritone sax in a style owing much to Stan Getz. This group gave Farlow the chance to substitute for the something he always did with piano distinction. His solo on 'Loverman' is fast moving, but relaxed and nicely constructed. The arrangements that they played, which in style sound very 'cool' in places, offer a side of Farlow's playing not so far removed from Raney's 'laid-back' touch. This similarity is often present in the of these two players, especially work when each is playing in the other's musical camp. Raney was classed more as a coolbop player and Farlow as hard-bop. Interesting things happen when they change musical situations, often leading the listener to wrongly identify the guitarist.

French pianist Henri Renaud organised a sextet session in New York under the leader-ship of cellist/bassist Oscar Pettiford, another of Farlow's idols. This album gives us the chance to consider Farlow's statement that:-

"Pettiford plays more Charlie Christian than most guitarists around at present."

(March 1960 pp 161)



The group had Max Roach (drums), also a leading figure in Tal's eyes, Kai Winding (trombone) and Al Cohn (tenor sax). Farlow's memory regarding this session is slight, but if one listens to his solo on 'Burt's Pad', or the beautiful accompaniment behind Pettiford's solo on 'Stardust', it is hard to believe that something so well constructed could become so remote to the architect concerned.

mid-fifties. Farlow Sometime during the under the nominal leadership recorded leadership of trumpeter Clark Also involved were Urbie Green (trombone), Lucky Thompson (tenor sax), Horace Silver (piano), Oscar Pettiford or Percy Heath (bass) and Kenny Clarke (drums). This group, collectively called 'The Cats', were pitted on this album against 'The Chicks', an all female unit which included guitarist Mary Osborne. The significance of this date with regards to Tal is the finale 'Anything You Can Do', in which he and Miss Osborne indulge in a brief, but enjoyable duet. Despite the short duration, there is enough music to illustrate the markedly different approaches of the two guitarists. Miss Osborne is greatly skilled and shows here that the Christian legacy was still very much alive. Farlow on the other hand shows just how far he had, at that time, advanced beyond the Christian influence in terms of harmonic complexity.

Farlow teamed up with Norvo once again for the final time late in 1954. In that year he received the first of many awards, Downbeat's 'New Star' honour. However. his last recordings under Norvo's leadership were with the trio in 1955. In this group, Red Mitchell had replaced Mingus as bass player. Listening to the album 'Red Norvo With Strings' (Fantasy 3218), one is struck by certain points. Firstly, Farlow's incredibly long lines, which build tension by sustaining the listener's attention for many bars at a time, and secondly, the use of more complex harmony, the strong use of Tal's bi-tonal concept on such compositions as 'How Am I to Know', and finall the intricate changes of time within many of the arrangements. Farlow's celebrated harmonics are beautifully integrated with vibes the

unison and in counter melodies. The tunes 'Let's Fall In Love' and 'Cabin in the Sky' are fine examples of this subtlety. This outfit also used various of Farlow's percussive sounds of which he had added more variants which I will discuss later. By 1955, he had integrated the fruits of various influences into his style proper and established and established a good deal of his mature facility.

#### The following techniques are representative:-

- 1. He uses his thumb to play single-line phrases in an attempt to sound like Oscar Pettiford when he played pizzicato passages on his cello.
- 2. He also at times used his thumb to strum the strings. This was a technique Red Mitchell had used to play the guitar whilst convalescing in hospital, and Tal was impressed with the sound that was obtained.
- 3. Farlow also stops various notes., especially on the first and sixth strings, by using his plectrum hand. In this way, he is able to add a low bass note to the chord or achieve a high pedal note on the first string whilst changing the lower harmonies. His aim with this technique, was presumably to achieve the seperation obtained by piano players.
- 4. Where the inspiration to play solos in harmonics came from cannot be traced. However, most of the harmonics he uses in his solos are stopped (false harmonics), dividing the string in half to go up an octave, in thirds to go up another fifth and quarters to go up two octaves. One has to be very accurate on the strings as one runs out of fret-board rapidly. By the mid-fifties, Tal was very fluent indeed in applying these bell-tones, as they are sometimes called. He was actually able to play full improvised choruses using them.
- 5. Another percussive sound Tal uses is one he calls 'combing', which sounds remarkably like a drummer using brushes. This appears to result from playing on deadened strings with some amplification. Nevertheless, a good deal of experimentation is needed to find the right condition for this.



A poly-chord formation by utilising his thumb.



This is the method Tal uses to add a low bass note.



Technique used to achieve an upper pedal-note.



method for stopping strings for various classes of harmonics.

Farlow has an interesting method of constructing his single-line improvisations which he calls 'Playing out of boxes'. A box is the pattern of a barre chord and all the notes within that chord, plus all of the notes extending for four frets from the root fret. However, he always thinks in terms of intervals and not specific note names. I think it would be foolish to imagine nevertheless, that all of his lines could be traced back to boxes. In his own words:

"I base my playing on interesting sounding intervals between notes. My ear tells me if I'm playing the major 7th note or the third or the augmented. But I'm not thinking in those terms. I'm just thinking of the sound of the note and its relationship to the other to follow it."

(1978 pp 97)

According to Tal, if he had to improvise over the following progression, for example G7, G7b9, G6 and G+, he would merely play out of a G position box because the basic classification of the sound would be G. Such a box system would certainly offer a strong visual aid to storing ideas, and ones ability to store patterns would be greatly assisted. It must be said however, that this rather basic explanation could be combined with a considerable amount of harmonic conversion so as to avoid leaping from box to box. The progression Em7, A9, Gmajor 7, B7b5#11 for example, might be thought of as GMajor 13, GM9b5, GM7, G9#5. Such groups of notes could be viewed in many different ways to suit the occasion. Now this progression could be approached from a G position box. Such analysis is really just to show how Farlow's knowledge of chords could play a decisive role in the success of this rather rigid sounding method. The early familiarity he gained with four-note melody chords could certainly be of importance to his mental processes in this area of his style. Despite the fact that this system of improvising sounds strongly positional. his solos are never merely in one register. Moreover, because his solos are so musical, utilising glissando slurs, bends

various other textures, the freedom the music displays gives us no intimation that any such system is in operation. This then is surely the mark of a great jazz improviser, when the music demonstrates such craftsmanship yet the tools cannot readily be traced.



TAL FARLOW IN GLASGOW 26TH MAY 1986 Photograph courtesy of Gordon Wright

The following are illustrations of some of Farlow's chords, and show how incorporating the thumb gives so much more potential in lower triadic formations. I have also described the chord as he might. These are just a few of the voicings Tal could use. Many of these are impossible without the use of the thumb, and to many guitarists, some of his voicings are impossible whatever they use. This ability has earned Tal the nickname of 'The Octopus' in jazz circles.

It serves well to illustrate his style between 1950-55 using three transcriptions. Two of these represent his work with Norvo which gained him world-wide recognition, and the third is of a solo played on the Gil Melle album which is a fine example of Farlow the sideman. Dating from 1950, the transcription of the first 32 bars of his solo on 'Move' shows how his lines were constructed, and other qualities attained at the time. His style at this stage is still strongly indebted to Christian. However, this solo is played at approximately 150

to the minim and that is impressive even by today's standards. This then shows the initial progress and direction of his mature style. The improvisation is often diatonic, although in passing, the use of the flattened 9th, flattened augmented 5th and augmented 9th as well as the 11th is quite frequent. There is some use of triads being superimposed for example, line 5 bar 1 (Eb major over B7). Nevertheless, the solo is melodious, partly due to the fact that the 9th and 6th are often employed and sometimes melodically stressed. This early work is significant therefore, as it represents the initiation of Tal's incomparable drive. However, some interesting musical points are certainly present. These include the following. The phrase beginning on the last beat of bar 10 is very similar to that found beginning on the second beat of bar 2. This type of development, where the basic idea is re-stated either adding or subtracting notes, is a feature of Farlow's style. The phrase at bar 14 is very similar to the phrase starting at bar 25 it is simply modified to imply the harmonic impetus. The idea at bar 31 is then expanded in bars 32 and 33.



A sixteen bar solo transcribed from the track 'Spellbound' illustrates some long lines (example 2). This feature was to become more and more present as Tal's playing developed. His light touch, comparable to that of Raney, is also discernable on this track. Interesting musical ideas include the repeatable figure (in brackets) in the last line, where a static motif is combined with a moving line - a technique often employed by Farlow. Many upper and lower neighbour notes are also employed. example, the last beat of line 2. both the Ιn discussed transcriptions. the lines are harmonically strong, very often stressing the third, root or fifth of the chord as the first note of the phrase. Farlow sometimes plays the flattened seventh note against a major 7th chord giving the line a slight blues quality. He does this in bar 4, and then in a very similar phrase in bar 12. Bar 11 has rhythmic similarities to bar 1. Bars 6 and 7 contain idea where an inner line moves from Db to D natural to E and finally to F.

The next example is the track 'How Am I to Know' from the album 'Red Norvo With Strings' (Fantasy 3218) - (example 3). Dating from 1955, it is an example of Tal's later work with Norvo. The solo is rich in the chromatic devices already mentioned. However, Farlow's displacement of phrases is particularly well heard on this track and the swing is in large part due to his interesting accents. The track also contains Farlow's distinctive chord voicings. He had advanced considerably in this area and was the most original guitarist of all in approach to harmony. Another attraction within this track is Tal's bongo imitation. The track contains much of his overall ability, and is especially significant from that point of view. Other points of interest regarding this solo include the following. Certain fragments are restated up the octave as in (1), later utilised in (1a). More often, he just re-states it at the actual pitch as for example in (2) and (2a). A more general observation is that his phrases are often of a similar shape, and one gets the feeling that he is good at modifying patterns to fit the harmonic needs at any given moment. For example, the last two beats

### Single line improvisation on the chord progression of Move



\* Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.

## Single line improvisation on the chord progression of **Spellbound**



<sup>\*</sup> Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.

# Single line improvisation on the chord progression of **How am I to Know**



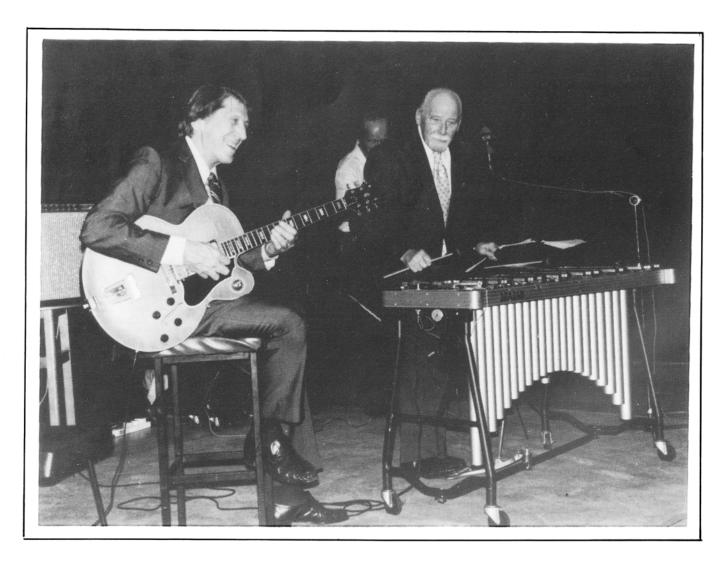
\* Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.

of bars 13 and 22. The bracketed area in bar 20 is similar to the ideas in bar 18, and then it appears in bar 27.

late 1954, Farlow had realised much of his potential, a great deal of which obviously been achieved with Norvo. The setting had allowed him considerable scope for development that if logical therefore hе to achieve even greater musical growth, would have to be as leader of his own group. In this way, he could totally personalise the musical content and push himself to his own personal limits. Realising that the Norvo group was perhaps inhibiting his style, he recorded under own name whilst still with Norvo. When he eventually left the Norvo group, he did a considerable amount of recording his own name, entering another important area in the development his solo guitar style.



Photography courtesy of Brian O'Connor



TAL FARLOW AND RED NORVO.

Photograph courtesy of GORDON WRIGHT.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### FARLOW AS LEADER

I would now like to examine a selection of recordings issued under Farlow's own leadership. The earliest of these were made for Norman Granz and appeared on the Norgran, Clef and Verve labels. However, the first album under his own name 'The Tal Farlow Quartet', was on the Blue Note label (B.Note BLP 5042). and included fellow guitarist Don Arnone, bassist Clyde Lombardi and drummer Joe Morello, whose drumming was to become legendary. Tal's gentle, yet firm touch is well displayed on every track. The jazz on this record surely swings on the tune 'Rock 'n Rye', and 'Flamingo' with a short but perfectly commences executed tremolo played by Tal on the low E string. This is followed by a statement of the tune in harmonics. Tal's improvisation throughout points to the harmonic twists he activates around the changes.

During this period, he recorded with quitarist Barry Galbraith. However, as with the previous album containing another guitarist, it is by no means a duet album. The other two members were Oscar Pettiford (bass) and Joe Morello once again on drums. These two musicians seemed speak Tal's musical language and give him excellent support throughout eight tracks. Barry Galbraith's was mainly supportive, although he took a solo on 'Blues in the Closet'. Nevertheless, the best playing to be found is on such tracks as 'My Old Flame' and 'With the Wind and the Rain in Your Hair'. These early recordings, taken overall, were an auspicious debut for Tal Farlow as leader.

As far as I am concerned however, the recording 'Autumn in New York', the title track from the album of the same name recorded in 1954, is Tal's most moving work. The standard of the music is outstanding, making a useful vehicle for the study of Tal's early small group approach. The sidemen were Gerry Wiggins (piano), Ray Brown (bass) and Chico Hamilton (drums). The arrangement is particularly

rich in Tal's unique chords and contains a hauntingly beautiful single-line solo. The transcription shown illustrates perfectly these musical gems. I will begin by studying Tal's statement of the tune in his, by now, highly developed solo guitar style. It becomes clear that, apart from using tri-tone substitutions, as in the case of bar 26 (D9 leading to Dbm7), he actually substitutes, in the few available places, the written tri-tone dominant using the secondary tri-tone. For example, bar 24 (Eb7 instead of Gb7) or, a similar but less concrete substitution, Bb7#9 for Db7. Farlow's interest in composers such as Ravel perhaps gives us a clue regarding his use of parallel harmony. The best example is in bar 16, where the transformation of the dominant to the minor keeps the texture of the harmony unbroken. His treatment of the melody includes interesting twists of rhythm and passing notes, not to mention his characteristic re-iteration of a melody note whilst changing the harmony. This was a device much favoured by Art Tatum, and the last two beats of bar 2 illustrate this trait. Lastly, bars 26 and 30 shows how Tal often uses the cycle of 4ths, either proper or alternate, to fill out a basic progression. These substitutions are tastefully incorporated into his solo guitar approach.

To illustrate Tal's single-line approach, I have quoted his first chorus from the same tune. This solo, where the ideas gently swing and then, at times, embody the mood of the blues, even has a pathetic quality in places. A sense of melody, as well as rhythmic and melodic displacements of the tune, plus phrases of unusual length and elegance, are just a few of its endearing qualities. However, from an analytical point of view, it is rich in content. with the resources of the guitar being well tapped. Interesting musical points include the following. Bar 6 contains a sequential idea which uses a lower register neighbournote to decorate the third of the chord. Imitation, both real and rhythmic, also occurs. Bar 3 demonstrates the rhythmic version; and the first and last beats of bar 20 the real imitation. This solo is particularly rich in the use of rhythm and para-phrasing of the original melody. The phrases which occur over bars 9 and 10 are an example of how Farlow, using

# Harmonic improvisation on the chord progression of **Autumn in New York**



\* Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.



### Single line improvisation on the chord progression of **Autumn in New York**



\* Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.

rhythm, creates tension and then releases it just as effectively. In contrast, the album also contains a version of 'Cherokee' - a worthy display of Tal's stamina at fast tempos.

album 'The Interpretations of Tal Farlow! (Norgran MGV 1027) combines Farlow with Red Mitchell (bass), Claude Williamson and Stan Levey (drums). session was recorded in Los Angeles in 1955. Farlow plays an excellent arrangement of 'Autumn Leaves', showing many of his transient harmonic twists. Such use of rapid modulations was frequently used by Art Tatum. Farlow also has a habit combining the inverted pedal transient harmonic This such movement. album also included the standard 'I Remember You', and the solo on this track is going to be used as an example of Tal's medium 'country' influence swing playing. His shows its presence in the way he executes, during his second chorus, the one instance of string bending. Much can be learned from this transcription of his treatment of the melody. His first improvised chorus really illustrates his use of the long line to build tension. From an analytical standpoint, there are some musical ideas of particular interest. Once again, motifs often stated and re-modified. The phrase starting at bar 27 is similar to the idea at bar 63. An almost exact repetition of the idea in bars 51 and 52 is to be found in bars 66 and 67. The fragment starting in the last beats of bar 35 is modified at the end of bar 57, and yet another variation occurs in bars 35 and 36. These then, particularly good examples of Tal getting a good deal of mileage out of certain ideas throughout the solo.

Farlow, Eddie Costa (piano) and Vinnie Burke (bass) formed the regular Tal Farlow Trio which played at the Composer Club in New York for four years until it closed in 1958. The trio recorded two albums Norman Granz. These albums have a tendency to exploit Tal's heavier touch which he uses to cut through Costa's quite forceful comping. His lines perhaps even more strongly related to than concepts previously. powerful swing of this band is well demonstrated by 'Yardbird Suite' and 'Meteor'

on the album 'The Swinging Guitar of Tal Farlow' (Verve MGV 8201). There are occasions when Tal's brilliant ideas at high speed surpass even his technique, and his time-keeping suffers slightly as a result, but that would be my only criticism.

The album also contains a less exhilarating version of 'Like Someone in Love'. Indeed, Farlow's improvisation at less breakneck speeds is particularly satisfying because it grants the listener time to digest his more elaborate ideas. It serves well therefore, to study his treatment of the tune, as well as first improvised chorus. Tal's paraphrasing of the melody is craftsmanship best, and the small interpolated at its employed to decorate the melody phrases also inject a good deal of impetus. The ideas to be found on the last two beats of bars 3 and 4 are fine examples of this. feel that Farlow is, above all else, aware of just what acutely constitutes great music. He has never forgotten the of such ancient compositional importance techniques as repetition and contrast, or at times stating the simple but effective idea. Bearing such points in mind can help us appreciate why he has had such an appeal over the years, despite this individuality.

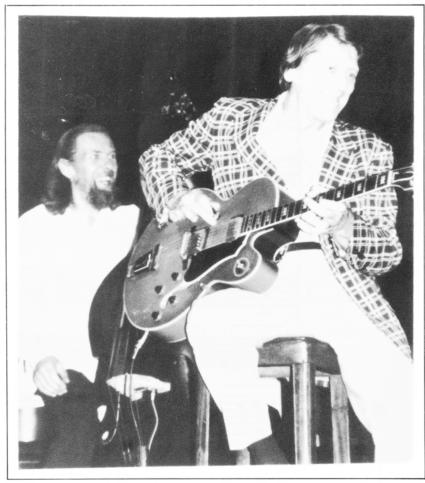
points of interest concerning this solo include the following. The last four notes of bar 16 are re-stated to start the phrase beginning at bar 31, and then finally recur at bar 55. It would perhaps be foolish to imagine that the lesser trained musical ear would immediately detect such repetition, although it may well register at a less concious level. At bar 33, Tal's chorus starts with a four note motif which is exploited with imitation before he finally abandons the idea by breaking the pattern with a flowing quaver line. The bending during bars 25-26 is typical of 'hillbilly' overspill that is still today discernable in his style. The idea used in bar 17 to decorate the melody is modified and continued in bar 18. Such repetition of notes and rhythms gives the listener something to sink his teeth into. This solo then, like so many of Tal's solos. is cunningly and intelligently constructed without forgetting the most simple formulae employed by so many of the great improvisers. It is the fact that Tal's highly developed musical language retains such colloquialisms Single line improvisation on the chord progression of **Like Someone in Love** 

Amin7 65 A 67 E6 Cmin7 Fmin > Amin7 D7 Gmin ? Gmin7 67 136min 7 E67 A6maj 7 Cmay 7 9 Cmin 7 Gmin7 19 Amin 7 D7 Gmin7 C7 Fmin 7 Bomin 7 E67 Abmay 7 pond Dmin (maj 7 Fmin 7 E626 32 Gmin7 C7 Fmin7 B6min7 E677 A6mai 7 Cmin 7 Fmin 7 (6 Fmin 7 Amin 7 D7 GMIN7 Fmin 7

<sup>\*</sup> Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.







### Single line improvisation on the chord progression of I Remember You





\* Transcription of solo excerpt for analysis.

that no doubt maintains and increases his popularity.

The album 'Tal' (Verve MGV 8021) contains some fine examples of Farlow's relaxed lighter touch. The track 'You Don't Know What Love Is' shows how motifs can be decorated and developed. Everything Tal plays on this track seems so full of form. In fact, the solo seems to reach its climax very close to the golden section. By this stage, Farlow's lines obviously contained a more liberal approach to dissonance. However, this solo presents a beautiful blend of melodic improvising with harmonic twists and various reminders of the blues. It represents the less sensational side of Farlow's playing from a technical standpoint, but from a musical one, it is to my ears some of his most satisfying work.

In July 1955, Tal cut four tracks with Red Mitchell (bass) and Claude Williamson (piano) which resulted in 'The Tal Farlow Album' (Norgran MGN 1047). This also included some of his first sessions for Norman Granz. On the standard 'Lullaby of the Leaves', Farlow dispenses with the plectrum and uses his thumb, resulting in a round, warm sound in contrast to his usual attack. In December 1956, Tal, Eddie Costa and Vinnie Burke were the quests of Ed.Fuerst, a New York jazz enthusiast. and whilst there recorded 'Fuerst Set' albums entitled 'Second Set'. Both of these albums demonstrate the unity and interplay that was present in Tal's Norvo days. The trio is splendid on these records with Farlow artfully combining chords and single notes in lengthy, driving improvisations. There is some improvised counterpoint between guitar and piano on 'All the Things You Are'.

Another album from that period was 'A Recital by Tal Farlow' which combines tenor and baritone saxes with trombone, piano and bass. This was a rare digression away from the small band sound as far as Tal's history is concerned, but is otherwise of no great significance.

During 1956-57, Tal appeared on two Buddy de Franco recording dates which were issued on the album 'Cooking the Blues' (Verve MGV 8221) and 'Sweet and Lovely'

(Verve MGV 8224). These recordings could have easily fallen prey to excessive technical exhuberance, both musicians being well known for their high velocity approach. Thankfully, this does not happen, and although the superb technique of both musicians is never hidden from the listener, the music never sinks to vulgar 'note spinning'.

Tal recorded with his quartet in June 1958. The other musicians were Bill Takas (bass), Eddie Costa (piano) and Jimmy Campbell (drums). Stylistically, this record falls somewhere between the joyous abandon of a few years earlier and the incraesed tension manifest in his work with his regular trio. The tempos tend to be fast and there are some outstanding tracks. For example, 'Lean On Me' and 'Topsy', in which Tal's lines flow smoothly with his usual rhythmic drive. Unfortunately, his liberty with rhythm, where he plays either side of the beat as opposed to on it, was to become a criticised area of his style over the next few years. Nevertheless, his were never to have an adverse effect on the music, and the version of 'How Long Has This Been Going On' incorporates a fine section played in harmonics.

The last sessions Farlow recorded for Verve took place in New York in 1959, and were issued on two consecutive but seperate albums, 'The Guitar Artistry of Tal Farlow' and 'Tal Farlow Plays Harold Arlen'. Three tracks on 'Guitar Artistry' are unique in that Tal plays acoustic guitar. His accompanist on these numbers, 'Telefunky', 'Sweet Lorraine' and 'A Foggy Day' are Bobby Jaspar (flute, tenor sax) and Milt Hinton (bass). The tone that Tal obtained on the acoustic guitar may be criticised as being rather insipid compared to the much fuller tone of Eddie Lang or Django Reinhardt, showing that his touch was perhaps best suited to the electric instrument. However, there are some typical Farlowesque phrases - long, rhythmic and interesting. Jaspar's two instruments provide a contrast in sound quality to that of the guitar, but apart from that, his actual contribution is negligible. Hinton, however, is an excellent bassist and offers some fine support. The other tracks on this and the second album mentioned show Tal playing his usual electric guitar. personnel on both albums is the same, with

Dick Hyman on piano, Benny Powell on trombone, Frank Wess on flute, alto and tenor sax, Joe Benjamin or Wendell Mar shall on bass, Charlie Fowlkes on baritone sax and Osie Johnson on drums. This collection of fine musicians would seem to guarantee high quality jazz, but sadly this is not the case. In fact, the music lacks commitment. The drumming is par ticularly unsympathetic and this obviously debilitates the rest of the party concerned. One gets the impression also that these sessions were intended to be highly viable commercially, in comparison to Tal's usual offerings. Thus we find that his final albums for Verve are somewhat inconsistent and disappointing, Farlow at a point rather below the virtuosity that he had so often demonstrated.

By this stage, Farlow had married, and during 1958 had moved out to Seabright, New Jersey. It has often been said that this period was the beginning of his retirement. This is not really true, although he did much less work from this time onwards for a number of years. He had made his mark on the history of jazz guitar and the effort of touring was becoming a little hard to bear. However, he did continue to practise and perform, playing in the various clubs and colleges which were local jazz venues. His thoughts concerning the rumours of his retirement were:

"I do a lot of playing, but people don't hear of it because I'm not working the big jazz rooms in the country."

(1978 pp 97)

Despite this comment, many critics felt that after this period, he never regained the absolute technical command that he once had.

Even though Tal was then out of the lime-



TAL FARLOW AND MARTIN TAYLOR.

light, the Gibson Guitar Company introduced the now famous Tal Farlow archtop model to the public in 1962. The guitar was strongly connected with the design forwarded to the company by Tal, after it's own pre-production model was to his liking. Over the years, Tal has involved himself in various areas of design, at times producing many of his own accessories. These include a stool with built in electronics. This is box shaped, narrow at the top and covered with plywood all the way round. Tal's right foot fits into an indentation and rests on a rubber covered pedal that controls the volume. Near the floor there is a small trigger for flicking the divider on and off. This noctave divider was also built by Tal himself after hearing a recording of Eddie Harris using one. Tal realised the potential of this device but at the time they were not commercially available. His interest in various gadgets was significant because it allowed him to realise more in terms of tonal range than the more traditional jazz guitar purists. However, this is simply another attempt to search for ways of broadening the guitar's application, just as had always done.

After almost a decade away from recording, Tal made an album in 1967 entitled 'Up Up and Away' (Prestige 7530) with alto saxophonist Sonny Criss as leader. Cedar Walton (piano), Bob Cranshaw (bass) and Lennie McBrowne (drums) completed the quintet. The four tracks on which Tal solos demonstrate that his ability had remained mostly intact. His tone is rather brighter than usual due to the studio amplifier that was provided for the session. On 'Scrapple From the Apple', the exciting alto and guitar chase sequence is an added bonus to the all-round well executed material presented throughout the various tracks.

Some two years later, Farlow was a participant in the album 'George Wein's Newport All Stars' (Atlantic SD1533). Amongst the others involved were Ruby Braff (cornet) Red Norvo (vibes) and Barney Kessel (guitar). The presence of both Farlow and Kessel on the same album adds special interest to devotees of the jazz guitar. If one compares their respective abilities,

the obvious difference is Kessel's close relationship with the spirit of Christian, which reflects deeply in his playing. His harmonic knowledge does not appear to be utilised to the same extent as Farlow. This is particularly true in their single-line playing, where Tal's lines are more daring. Neither guitarist attempts to overshadow the other, but Farlow's abilities certainly convey to me, a more unique approach. The track 'Topsy' effctively demonstrates their similarities and points of departure.

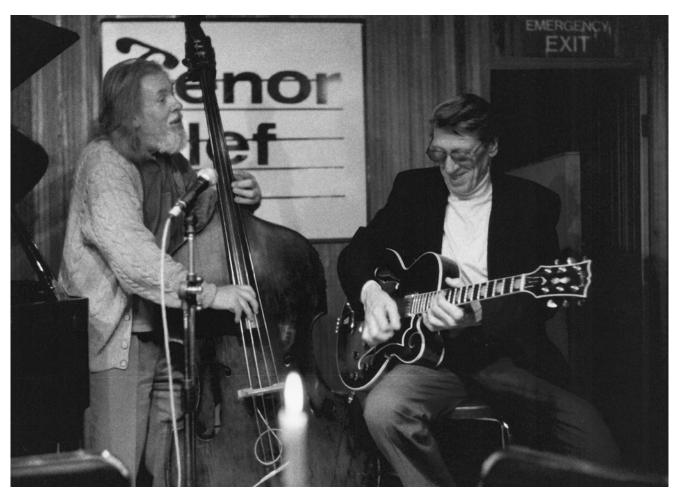


'The Return of Tal Farlow' (Prestige 7732) was released in 1969, and must be regarded as something of a disappointment compared with Farlow's earlier work. This statement does not apply however to his solo on 'Straight, No Chaser', which swings in the fashion of his Norvo days — very rhythmical, with the ever present characteristic drive. However, it is worth mentioning that Tal's health was none too good at that time as a result of repeated asthma attacks, and such an attack could well have affected this session.

In May 1976, he was involved in a rather polishes session led by Sam Most (flute,

clarinet), resulting in the album 'Mostly Flute' (Xanadu LP133). The others involved were Duke Jordan (piano), Sam Jones (bass) and Billy Higgins (drums). Both 'Body and Soul' and 'Street of Dreams' are duets for guitar and flute for which Farlow provided the bass line., the backing chords and generally anything to enhance the flute's part. Indeed, one gets the impression that a small ensemble is playing. In this area, Farlow was to be very effective over the next few years and much of his concentration went into developing his skills in that particular medium.





Peter Ind and Tal Falow at the Tenor Clef March 1993 Photograph by Berit Bolt

# **CHAPTER 4**

# MORE RECENT ACTIVITY

"A major fascination of course, is that Tal Farlow has pursued his music with very little regard for public acclaim. In this, he seems almost the image of American genius – self directed, coming to its own solitude and travelling its own road. From Hawthorn to Ives to Pynchon and Harry Partch, such quirky individualism has been the bedrock of much American art."

(1984 pp 197)

This statement by James Sallis is an excellent evaluation of that rare strain of artist we often consider to be innovators. The fact that Farlow was perhaps the first post Christian innovator in the world of jazz guitar gives him a very special place in jazz history, and is a prime reason why he still remains today in the vanguard of great jazz players.

In recent years, Farlow has once again re emerged as a major figure on the jazz guitar scene, undertaking several world tours, including sell-out appearances in Britain. The first of these British tours was with Red Norvo in the autumn of 1981. This was followed by a weeklong residency at The Canteen in London in the spring of 1982. Tal's first British tour as leader however, was in April 1985, and this rather more substantial sojourn took him to such places as London, Glasgow, Dublin, Leeds and Brighton. Throughout the tour, he used local rhythm sections who were sometimes complimentary, sometimes not. Nevertheless, the was a success, despite the fact that Farlow is not overly fond of impromptu rhythm units, and his highly individual solo guitar style never failed to shine through.

Apart from touring, Tal has become active in a number of areas, and the enthusiasm with which he has been received will no doubt have shown him just how avid a following he still has.

At the fore-front of these activities has been an excellent video about his life by film-maker, Lorenzo de Stefano.

This documentary gives us a rare opportunity to see Tal in a variety of recreational settings, whilst of course ellucidating his musical career. The film was notable for an impressive appearance by the late Lenny Breau playing alongside Tal at a jazz club, and in duet at Tal's home. Here, they not only played, but also discussed various techniques including an informative insight into the execution of harmonics, a speciality of both players.

The same film gave us a captivating performance by Tal, Tommy Flanagan on piano and Red Mitchell on bass. Flanagan and Mitchell, apart from being great friends of the guitarist, appear to have a special empathy with him. The fact that Mitchell was also, at one time, a member of the Norvo trio at the same time as Tal, was no doubt a great asset. Thus we became party not only to a superb private performance but also to an obviously happy social event.

Jazz education is another aspect of the profession that Tal has become more active in in recent years, with the inclusion in magazines of tutorial columns and the making of an instructional tape. However, his desire to play a more active part in music education has at last culminated in the presentation of master-classes. This has finally given us a chance to digest some of his more complex theories.

Tal has still found time to record, and his recent output on the Concord label, a company he has found to be well suited to his musical objectives, has helped sustain his return to the jazz scene.

Farlow has made six albums for the Concord label, and initial impressions show that his harmonic approach has aged somewhat less than a good many of his contemporaries, possibly due to the fact that he was always ahead of his time. This is particularly evident on the album 'Tal Farlow '78' (Concord CJ 57), where the track 'Autumn Leaves' shows how this aspect of his style has continued to flourish. Cluster chords, Stravinsky type clashes of tonality and modal flavoured harmonisation tend to support the feeling that the application of chords and harmonic textures have been uppermost in his mind in more recent years. Indeed, many of these themes are first stated in chords, bringing fresh appeal to such classics as 'Here's That Rainy Day' and 'Satin Doll'. Tal's single-line solo on 'Autumn Leaves' exploits many glide-stokes, in the Kessel fashion, as well as a great deal of poly-rhythm in many of the harmonised lines, his solo seeming to incorporate a multitude of textures rather than just chords or alternate single lines. The trio setting, with Gary Mazzaroppi on bass and Tom Sayer on drums provides, as usual, the right conditions for Farlow to use his full ability and, at times, explore some rather abstract ideas.

Many of the arrangements on Tal's recent recordings exploit the elaborate changes of harmony and rhythm for which the Red Norvo Trio was renowned. This suggests that Farlow's contribution to the writing for that trio was considerable. The revamp of the standard 'You Don't Know What Love Is', from the album 'A Sign of the Times' (Concord CJ 26) is an arrangement that typifies this aspect of Tal's style.

Farlow's single-line improvisation employs a fairly heavy and percussive attack. This is especially true of his faster soloing, and the prediliction for long flowing lines has remained a discernable feature of his playing. However, in more recent times, Tal has begun to impress more with his highly melodic and well controlled improvising throughout demanding tempos. This has been highlighted in these slower solos by the use of his thumb to achieve a full-bodied, round tone. The version of 'You Are Too Beautiful' from the same album 'A Sign of The Times', and the fine treatment 'Everything Happens to Me' from the album 'The Legendary Tal Farlow' (Concord CJ 266). are both excellent examples these relaxed and well constructed slow tempo solos. 'The Legendary Tal Farlow' also contains some equally fine chord solos, the best of which is perhaps the solo on 'I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good)'. This album also provides us with a superb illustration of Tal's up-tempo, single-line improvisation on the tune 'When Lights are Low' which swings in fashion of his Norvo days.

Farlow and Norvo can be heard once again on the album 'On Stage' (Concord CJ 143) with Tal playing particularly well on 'My Romance', his statement of the tune in chords, and the bridge passage before the piano solo, being most moving. Throughout this bridge passage, he initially

inverted pedal-note embellished uses an a somewhat ethereal cyclic harmonic with which culminates in the piano movement, solo proper. Finally, Tal's greatly coloured improvised solo, which never lacks vitality originality, finishes the rendition. these ideas are occasionally marred bν difficulties incurred in attempting to realise them, we should remember that occasionally fall prey true improvisers to human error this being the price they pay for taking risks.

Listening to Farlow's latest record output is certain assurance that the maestro has been seeking new territories rather than simply being content to rest on his laurels. In 1950, he astonished the world of jazz guitar with his incredibly fluent singleline improvisations and now, years later, he draws attention to his equally amazing ability with chords.

Since its inception, the world of the jazz guitar has rarely seen so natural and complete a musician. Talmedge Holt Farlow remains to this day, one of the true giants of the instrument and long may he remain so.

Shane Hill

November 1987

### DISCOGRAPHY

Compiled by CHRIS BURDEN.

The albums listed are shown in alphabetical order. Where possible, both British and Japanese alternative issue numbers are shown.

## Norgran 1097 (MV2585) "AUTUMN IN NEW YORK" Tal Farlow (Guitar); Gerry Wiggins (Piano); Ray Brown (Bass); Chico Hamilton (Drums). 'I like to Recognise the Tune': 'Strike Up the Band'; 'Autumn in New York'; 'And She Remembers Me'; 'Little Girl Blue'; 'Have You Met Miss Jones'; 'Tal's Blues'; 'Cherokee'. Debut DLP 15 (OJC 1701) "ADA MOORE - JAZZ WORKSHOP" Ada Moore (Vocals); Tal Farlow (Guitar); John La Porta (Tenor Sax); Oscar Pettiford (Bass) 'The Man I Love'; 'Something to Live For'; 'Lass'; 'That Old Devil Moon'; 'Fascination'; 'St.Louis Blues': 'Summertime'. Recorded New York June 27th 1954. Re-mastered 1985. \_\_\_\_\_ A SIGN OF THE TIMES Concord CJ 26 Tal Farlow (Guitar); Ray Brown (Bass); Hank Jones (Piano) 'Fascinating Rhythm'; 'You Don't Know What Love Is'; 'Put on a Happy Face'; 'Stompin' at the Savoy'; 'Georgia'; 'You are Too Beautiful'; 'In Your Own Sweet Way'; 'Bayside Blues'; Recorded 1977. \_\_\_\_\_ "AN EVENING WITH ANITA O'DAY" Norgran MGN 1057 (Verve MGV 2050 Jap. Verve 2526) Anita O'Day (Vocals); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Leroy Vinnegar (Bass); Larry Bunker (Drums) Jimmy Rowles (Piano) 'Getting To Be a Habit With Me'; 'From this Moment On'; 'You Don't Know What Love Is'; medley: 'Just Friends/There Will Never Be Another You'. Recorded Los Angeles February 1955. "COOKING THE BLUES" (Buddy de Franco) Verve MV 2513 Buddy de Franco (Clarinet); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Sonny Clarke (Piano and Organ); Gene Wright (Bass); Bobby White (Drums) 'I Can't Get Started'; 'Cookin' the Blues'; 'Stardust'; 'How About You'; 'Little Girl Blue'; 'Indian Summer'. "CHROMATIC PALETTE" Concord CJ 154 7al Farlow (Guitar); Tommy Flanagan (Piano); Gary Mazzaroppi (Bass)

'All Alone'; 'Muages'; 'I Hear a Rhapsody'; 'If I were a Bell'; 'St.Thomas'; 'Blue Art Too'; 'Stella By Starlight'; 'One For My Baby'.

Recorded New York January 1981.

#### COOKIN' ON ALL BURNERS"

Concord CJ 204

Tal Farlow (Guitar); James Williams (Piano); Gary Mazzaroppi (Bass); Vinnie Johnson (Drums)

'You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To'; 'If I Should Lose You'; 'I Wished on the Moon'; 'I've Got the World on a String'; 'Love Letters'; 'Why Shouldn't I'; 'Lullaby of the Leaves'; 'Just Friends'; 'I Thought About You'.

Recorded New York August 1982.

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" CATS v CHICKS"
                                             MGM E225. E3614. E3611
The Cats: Clarke Terry (Trumpet); Urbie Green (Trombone); Lucky Thompson (Tenor Sax);
Horace Silver (Piano); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Percy Heath (Bass); Kenny Clarke (Drums).
The Chicks: Norma Clarson (Trumpet); Corky Hetch (Harp); Terry Pollard (Vibes); Mary
Osborne (Guitar); Bonnie Wetzel (Bass); Elaine Leighton (Drums).
'The Man I Love'; 'Mamblues'; 'Cats v Chicks'; 'Anything You Can Do'.
Recorded New York June 2nd 1954.
"EARLY TAL"
                                                Blue Note BNP 25.104
Side 1: Tal Farlow (Guitar); Howard McGhee (Trumpet); Gigi Gryce (Alto Sax/Flute); Horace
Silver (Piano); Percy Heath (Bass); Walter Bolden (Drums)
Originally issued on BLP 5024
                                                Recorded New York 8th June 1953
Side 2: Tal Farlow (Guitar); Don Arnone (Guitar); Clyde Lombardi (Bass); Joe Morello (Drums)
Originally issued on BLP 5042
                                               Recorded New York 4th November 1953
'Jarm'; 'Goodbye'; 'Futurity'; 'Shabozz'; 'Tranquility'; 'Ittpanna'; 'Lover Come Back to
Me'; 'Flamingo'; 'Splash'; 'Rock n' Rye'; 'All Through the Might'; 'Tina'.
"FUERST SET"
                                               Xanadu 109
Tal Farlow (Guitar); Eddie Costa (Piano); Vinnie Burke (Bass); Gene Williams (Vocals)
'Jordu'; 'Have You Met Miss Jones'; 'Out of Nowhere'; 'Opus de Funk'.
Recorded December 18th 1956
"GEORGE WEIN'S NEWPORT ALL STARS"
                                               Atlantic SD 1533
George Wein (Piano/Electric Piano/Vocals); Ruby Braff (Cornet); Red Norvo (Vibes); Tal
Farlow (Guitar/Guitar Bass); Barney Kessel (Guitar), Larry Ridley (Bass); Don Lamond (Drums)
'Blue Boy'; 'These Foolish Things'; 'In a Little Spanish Town'; 'Am I BLue'; 'Ja-Da'; 'Topsy'
'My Melancholy Baby'; 'Sunny'; 'Nobody Knows You'; 'Exactly Like You'.
 "GIL MELLE QUINTET"
                                               Blue Note BN EP 203 (BLP 5020)
 Gil Melle (Tenor Sax); Eddie Bert (Trombone); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Clyde Lombardi (Bass)
 Joe Morello (Drums).
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'Cyclotron'; 'October'; 'Under Capricorn'; 'Venus'.

Recorded New York January 31st 1953.

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"HOWARD McGHEE SEXTET"
                                           Rive Note RIP 5024
Howard McGhee (Trumpet); Gigi Gryce (Alto Sax/Flute); Horace Silver (Piano); Tal Farlow
(Guitar); Percy Heath (Bass); Walter Bolden (Drums).
'Jarm'; 'Goodbye'; 'Futurity'; 'Shabozz'; 'Tranquility'; 'Ittapanna'.
Recorded New York June 8th 1953.
 "MOSTLY FLUTE" (Sam Most)
                                              Xanadu 133
 Sam Most (Flute/Clarinet); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Duke Jordan (Piano); Sam Jones (Bass);
 Billy Higgins (Drums).
 'Rio Romance'; 'Street of Dreams'; 'Bus Ride'; 'Body and Soul'; 'The More I See You';
 'Solitude'; 'Poor Butterfly'.
 Recorded May 27th 1976.
 "ON STAGE"
                                              Concord CJ 143
 Tal Farlow (Guitar); Hank Jones (Piano); Ray Brown (Bass); Red Norvo (Vibes); Jake Hanna
 (Drums).
 'The One I Love'; 'My Romance'; 'Lullaby of Birdland'; 'My Shining Hour'; 'The Very Thought
 of You'; 'Rose Room'.
 Recorded Concord California August 1976.
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 "POPPIN' N' BURNIN'"
                                              Verve 815 236-1
 Side A: Tal Farlow (Guitar); Claude Williamson (Piano); Red Mitchell (Bass); Sam Levey (Drums)
 'Autumn Leaves'; It's You or No One'; 'Tenderly'; 'There Will Never Be Another You'; 'Just
 One of Those Things'.
 Recorded January 17th 1955.
 Side B: Tal Farlow (Guitar); Eddie Costa (Piano); Bill Takas or Knobby Totah (Bass); Jim
 Campbell (Drums)
 'Lean On Me'; 'Wonder Why'; 'Night and Day'; 'Stella by Starlight'.
 Recorded Feb/March 1958 New York.
 Side C: Tal Farlow (Guitar); Oscar Pettiford (Cello); Hank Jones (Piano); Ray Brown (Bass)
 Henry Bellson (Drums)
 'Swinging till the Girls Come Home'; 'Jordu'; 'The Way You Look Tonight'.
 Recorded February 11th 1956 New York.
 Side D: Personnel same as Side C.
 'Bernie's Tune'; 'I Wished on the Moon'.
 Recorded February 11th 1956 New York.
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"RECITAL BY TAL FARLOW"
                                               Norgran 1027 (Verve MV 2586)
Tal Farlow (Guitar); Bob Gordon (Baritone); Bill Perkins (Tenor Sax); Monty Budwig (Bass);
Bob Enevoldson (Valve Trombone); Lawrence Marable (Drums)
'You Came Along (From Out of Nowhere)"; 'Walkin''; 'Moonlight Becomes You'; 'On the Alamo';
'Will You Still Be Mine'; 'Lorinesque'; 'Bye Bye Baby'.
"SECOND SET"
                                               Xanadu 119
Tal Farlow (Guitar); Eddie Costa (Piano); Vinnie Burke (Bass).
'All the Things You Are'; 'I Remember You'; 'Yesterdays'; Lets Do It'.
Recorded December 18th 1956.
                                               Re-issued Xanadu 1977.
"THIS IS TAL FARLOW"
Tal Farlow (Guitar); Bill Takas or Knobby Totah (Bass); Jimmy Campbell (Drums).
'Lean on Me'; 'Wonder Why'; 'Night and Day'; 'Stella by Starlight'; 'The More I See You':
'All the Things You Are'; 'How Long Has this Been Going On'; 'Topsy'.
"THE TAL FARLOW ALBUM"
                                               Norgran 1074 (Verve MV 2584)
Tal Farlow (Guitar); Oscar Pettiford (Bass); Barry Galbraith (Guitar); Joe Morello (Drums).
'If There's Someone Lovelier Than You'; 'With the Wind and the Rain in Your Hair': 'My Old
Flame'; 'Gibson Boy'; 'You and the Wight and the Music'; 'Love Nest'; 'Blues in the Closet'
'Everything I've Got'; 'Lullaby of Birdland'; 'Stompin' at the Savoy'; 'This is Always';
'Tea for Two'.
"TAL"
                                               Verve 8021 (MV 2565)
Tal Farlow (Guitar); Eddie Costa (Piano); Vinnie Burke (Bass).
'Isn't It Romantic'; 'There Is No Greater Love'; 'How About You'; 'Anything Goes';
'Yesterdays'; 'You Don't Know What Love Is'; 'Chuckles'; 'Broadway'.
"TAL FARLOW - GUITAR PLAYER"
                                               Prestige 4042
Sides 1 and 2: Tal Farlow (Guitar); Red Mitchell (Bass); Red Norvo (Vibes).
'Who Cares'; 'Lets Fall In Love'; 'That Old Devil Moon'; 'Cabin in the Sky': 'How am I to
Know'; 'That Old Black Magic'; 'What is This Thing Called Love'; 'I Brung You Finjans for
Your Zarf'; 'My Funny Valentine'; 'Lullaby of Birdland'.
Sides 3 and 4: Tal Farlow (Guitar); John Scully (Piano); Jack Six (Bass); Alan Dawson
(Drums).
Straight, No Chaser'; 'Darn that Dream'; 'Summertime'; 'Sometime Ago'; 'I'll Remember April'
'My Romance'; 'Crazy, She Calls Me'.
Sides 1 and 2 recorded October 1955 and originally issued as "Red Norvo with Strings"
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Sides 3 and 4 recorded September 23rd 1969 and originally issued as "The Return of Tal

(Fantasy 3218)

Farlow" (Prestige 7732) Re-mastered 1974.

#### "THE RETURN OF TAL FARLOW"

Prestige 7732

Information as per sides 3 and 4 of "Tal Farlow - Guitar Player"

#### "THE SWINGING GUITAR OF TAL FARLOW"

Verve MGV 8201 (2304 211)

Tal Farlow (Guitar); Eddie Costa (Piano); Vinnie Burke (Bass).

'Taking a Chance On Love'; 'Yardbird Suite'; 'You Stepped Out of a Dream'; 'They Can't Take That Away From Me'; 'Like Someone In Love'; 'Meteor'; 'I Love You'.

Recorded New York June 1956.

#### "TAL FARLOW '78 "

Concord C.L 57

Tal Farlow (Guitar); Gary Mazzaroppi (Bass); Tom Sayek (Drums).

'Mahoney's 11 Ohms'; 'Here's That Rainy Day'; 'Autumn Leaves'; 'With the Wind and the Rain in Your Hair'; 'Perdido'; medley 'Ill Wind'/Invitation'; 'Satin Doll'; 'Gymkhana in Soho'.

Recorded 1978.

#### "THE LEGENDARY TAL FARLOW"

Concord CJ 266

Tal Farlow (Guitar); Sam Most (Flute/Tenor Sax); Frank Strazzeri (Piano); Bob Maize (Bass) Al 'Tootie' Heath (Drums).

'You Stepped Out of a Dream'; 'When Your Lover'; 'I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good)'; 'When Lights Are Low'; 'Who Cares'; 'I Can't Get Started'; 'Prelude to a Kiss'; 'Everything Happens to Me'.

Recorded Hollywood September 1984.

#### "TRINITY"

CBS 25 AP 597

Tal Farlow (Guitar); Mike Nock (Keyboards); Lynn Christie (Bass);

(d) on 'Funk Among the Keys".

'My Shining Hour'; 'If I Should Lose You'; 'No Greater Love'; 'But Not For Me'; 'Falling In Love'; 'Angel Eyes'; 'The Wolf and the Lamb'; 'Funk Among the Keys'.

Recorded CBS New York September 14th and 21st 1976.

#### "THE INTERPRETATIONS OF TAL FARLOW"

Verve MV 2542 (4GV 8011)

Tal Farlow (Guitar); Claude Williamson (Piano); Red Mitchell (Bass); Stan Levey (Drums).

'These Foolish Things'; 'I Remember You'; 'How Deep is the Ocean'; 'Fascinatin' Rhythm'; 'Manhattan'; 'Autumn Leaves'; 'Its You or No One'; 'Tenderly'; 'There Will Never Be Another You'; 'Just One of Those Things'.

\*\* This album was also known as "Fascinatin' Rhythm' MGV 8011.

#### "THE GUITAR ARTISTRY OF TAL FARLOW"

Verve 6143 (MV 2588)

- (a) Tal Farlow (Guitar); Bobby Jaspar (Flute/Tenor Sax); Milt Hinton
- (b) Tal Farlow (Guitar); Frank Wess (Flute/Tenor/Alto Sax); Dick Hyman (Piano); Osie Johnson (Drums); Wendell Marshall (Bass)
- (c) same as (b) but Joe Benjamin replaces Marshall.

'A Foggy Day' (a); 'The Man in My Life' (c); 'Sweet Lorraine' (a); 'Wess Side' (b); 'Telefunky' (a); 'Blue Funk' (b); 'Saratoga' (c).

#### "THE MUSIC OF ARLEN - TAL FARLOW PLAYS THE MUSIC OF HAROLD ARLEN"

Verve MV 2589 (MGV 8371 and CSD 1357)

- (a) Tal Farlow (Guitar); Frank Wess (Alto/Tenor and Flute); Dick Hyman (Piano); Wendell Marshall (Bass); Osie Johnson (Drums).
- (b) same as (a) but with Joe Benjamin (Drums).
- (c) Tal Farlow (Guitar); Frank Wess (Alto/Tenor and Flute); Benny Powell (Trombone); Charlie Fowlkes (Baritone Sax); Dick Hyman (Piano); Wendell Marshall (Bass); Osie Johnson (Drums).

'Blues in the Night' (a); 'Hit the Road to Dreamland' (b); 'For Every Man There's a Moman' (c); 'As Long As I Live' (a); 'Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea' (a); 'Petticoat High' (c); 'One Step, Two Step' (c); 'Lessons In Love' (b).

Recorded 1960.

### "THE TAL FARLOW QUARTET"

10" Blue Note BLP 5042

Tal Farlow (Guitar); Don Arnone (Guitar); Clyde Lombardi (Bass); Joe Morello (Drums).

'Lover,Come Back to Me'; 'Flamingo'; 'Splash'; 'Rock n' Rye'; 'All Through the Night';

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#### "THE RED NORVO TRIO"

Savoy SJL 2212

Red Norvo (Vibes); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Charlie Mingus (Bass).

'Swedish Pastry" Take 1; 'I Can't Believe You're in Love with Me'; 'Time and Tide'; 'Little White Lies'; 'Prelude to a Kiss'; 'Godchild' Take 2; 'Move'; 'Godchild' Take 1; 'September Song'; 'This Can't Be Love'; 'I'm Yours'; 'I Get a Kick Out of You'; 'Zing Ment the Strings of My Heart'; 'Cheek to Cheek'; 'Night and Day'; 'Godchild' (Master); 'Mood Indigo'; 'This Can't Be Love' Take 2; 'If I Had You'; 'Deed I Do'; 'I'll Remember April'; 'This Can't Be Love (Master); 'I've Got You (Under my Skin)'; 'Swedish Pastry' (Master); 'Have You Met Miss Jones'.

'Swedish Pastry' / 'Cheek to Cheek' / 'Night and Day' / 'Time and Tide' – recorded Los Angeles May 3rd 1950.

'If I Had You' / 'This Can't Be Love' / 'Godchild' / 'I'm Yours' - recorded Los Angeles 13th April 1951.

'Mood Indigo' / 'Prelude to a Kiss' / and 'Deed I Do' – recording dates and location are unknown.

All other tracks - Chicago 31st October 1950.

#### "THE RED NORVO TRIOS"

#### Prestige

Red Norvo (Vibes); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Jimmy Raney (Guitar); Red Mitchell (Bass).

Sides 1 and 2: 'Can't We be Friends'; 'Blues for Tiny'; 'Somebody Loves Me'; ''Deed I Do'; 'Our Love Is Here to Stay'; 'Signal'; 'You Are Too Beautiful'; 'The Best Thing of You'; 'Bernie's Tune'; 'J9 Hate K9'; 'Out of Nowhere'.

Sides 3 and 4: 'Crazy Rhythm'; 'Prelude to a Kiss'; 'Puby La Keg'; 'Everything I've Got'; 'Just One of Those Things'; 'Farewell to Alms'; 'Tea for Two'; 'Lullaby of the Leaves'; 'Sweet Georgia Brown'.

Sides 1 and 2:recorded september 1953.

Side 2 tracks 3 and 5 and side 3 recorded March 1954.

Side 4 recorded October 1955.

Side 1,side 2 # 1-2 and side 4 originally released as "Red Norvo Trios" (Fantasy LP 3-244) Side 2 # 3-5 and side 3 originally released as "The Red Norvo Trio" (Fantasy LP 3-19). Additional material from October 1955 session originally released as "Red Norvo Trio with Strings" (Fantasy LP3-218) and re-issued Prestige twoofer "Tal Farlow - Guitar Player" (Prestige P-24042).

Re-mastered 1982.

#### "UP, UP AND AWAY" (Sonny Criss)

Prestige PR 7530

Sonny Criss (Alto Sax); Tal Farlow (Guitar); Cedar Walton (Piano); Bob Cranshaw (Bass); Lennie McBrowne (Drums).

'Up,Up and Away'; 'Willow Weep For Me'; 'This Is For Benny'; 'Sunny'; Scrapple from the Apple'; Paris Blues'.

Recorded December 1967.

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Shane Hill and Howard Alden

Shane Hill was born in 1961 near Reigate in Surrey. He started to play the ukelele at the age of nine, taking lessons from his father, who also played the guitar. Shane started on the guitar himself at the age of 13. His enthusiasm for jazz started about a year later, fostered by a local guitarist, Brian Barnard, a Barney Kessel fan, who also instilled in him the rudiments of jazz phrasing and chords. Another local musician, Brian Gibbs, was also responsible for a great deal of inspiration in Shane's early days on the instrument.

Shane met Peter Dyke, well known in the London area, who taught him from the age of 15 to the time when he entered The Leeds College of Music. Peter's idol was Tal Farlow, whom he always referred to as the 'God Guitarist'.

At the age of 17, Shane started an intensive study of the classical guitar which lasted for three years. Around that time, he started classical harmony and theory lessons with a local pianist/composer, Peter Jennings.

Shane studied at Leeds for three years and has recently graduated with a First Class Honours Diploma in Jazz and Light Music. During his time at the college, he was fortunate to be able to play with Tal Farlow, Barney Kessel and George Van Eps. More recently, he has been receiving further coaching from Jim Mullen who, like Farlow, has had a tremendous impact on Shane's style from his earliest years.

At present, Shane is working professionally at Alton Towers, and will be returning shortly to his local area where he will be gigging and teaching.

www.shanehill.co.uk