

# My Jazz Fusion Roots

Contributed by Vince Waldon  
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I've been listening to jazz fusion since my early teens, and a few years ago I decided to play the old game: if you could only take one CD to a deserted island, what would it be ??

Artists  
I Grew Up With

I

I'm not entirely sure what initiated this project; it was likely a blend of several things. Turning 40, perhaps, and thinking that (a) I don't recognize anything on the radio anymore and (b) I don't care anyways &lsquo;cause all of the good music I love has already been recorded. Or perhaps the rise and fall of Napster, the music trading system that made it possible to connect with like-minded music fans anywhere in the world and trade esoteric tracks that will never make it to CD.

No doubt underlying it all was the realization that MP3 compression technology was one of those "this changes everything" inventions. My 500+ CD collection is now nestled comfortably on a hard-drive in my basement where I can access it from any computer in the house, download tracks at will into a cassette tape-sized portable to take running with me, burn onto CDs to play in the car, or queue it up from my audiophile-caliber Audiotron attached via fiber-optic cable to my home stereo system. Yes, the purists will argue that "audiophile" and "MP3" don't belong in the same sentence (some additional info on the lossy characteristics of the MP3 process appears near the end of these notes) but at the compression rates I've chosen and the codec I use my 40+ year old ears can't tell the difference, so there you have it. Besides, some of this stuff was transferred directly from cassette tapes recorded from public library LPs over 25 years ago.

In any event, this project is

a new look at the old "if you could only take one CD to a desert island" game. Thanks to MP3 technology I could take at least 65 tracks as I leapt into the lifeboat rather than the 8-10 as found on the average audio CD, and I've attempted to gather together a sample from each of 60+ artists that shaped my musical tastes. Where possible I've chosen a selection that not only represents some of the best each artist has to offer but also the tracks that evoke the strongest personal memories of that era.

As always with these sorts of collections the choices were hard to make and there's a good chance I've left some artists out... hey, the boat is sinking fast and the deserted island isn't getting any closer.

### The Technology:

MP3 is a lossy compression technology that uses mathematical models of the ear to compress music by removing components of sound that the ear theoretically ignores anyway. Like most things in nature nothing comes without a cost; in the case of MP3 the higher the compression the more the algorithm throws away and the more the sound quality degrades.

Compression rates are measured in kilobits-per-second (kbps). MP3s in general circulation today are typically sampled at a rate of 128 kbps, which translates into the average tune requiring 4MB of disk space. With a state of the art codex most professionals have a hard time discerning between the original and an MP3 version at a compression rate of 192 kbps. Being the engineer that I am, my collection is sampled at 256 kbps just to make sure. The average tune requires 8MB of disk space at this compression rate, twice what's required at 128 kbps, but my ears could detect a slight difference between 128 and 192 kbps and disk space is cheap.

### Recording Notes:

(I've always wanted to write some of these)

The vast majority of this collection was sampled completely in the digital domain from my CD collection using AudioGrabber V1.81 and a Compaq CR589 CD-ROM.

Analog sampling, when required, was done via either a Dual 701 turntable with a Shure M21 stylus or a Yamaha KX-500U cassette deck. The resulting analog signals were channeled via a Soundcraftman PE2217 preamp to a Creative Labs SoundBlaster Pro using AudioGrabber V1.81 in conjunction with Nero WaveEditor V1.0. Pops and clicks were removed using Algorithmix Easy Declicker with a threshold of 85%.

Conversion to MP3 was done using version 3.98 of the LAME codex at a conversion rate of 256 kbps in joint stereo mode. Volume normalization was set to 98% on a per-album basis, which accounts for the slight differences in track-to-track volume levels in this compilation.

Vince Waldon

January 2006

The Musicians:

1.  
Al  
Di Meola - Splendido Hotel - Dinner Music Of The Gods (1980)

Few would argue that Al Di Meola was at the top of the heap when it comes to fusion guitarists, and I've had the pleasure of seeing him live a few times. "Seeing" being a bit tricky, since his chops tend to be faster than the human eye can follow.

We once took off for a week of backpacking in the mountains and were about an hour out of town when we realized, to our horror, that our 25 carefully chosen CDs for the trip were sitting on the kitchen table. Luckily this CD was already in the deck, and thus we made our way through the mountains (at fairly illegal although completely safe velocities, I must admit) to the Dinner Music Of The Gods...repeatedly. Somehow we didn't get tired of it

2.  
Allan  
Parsons - Tales Of Mystery and Imagination  
- The Telltale Heart (1976)

#### Allan

Parsons is a prolific studio producer, having working with many of rock's early superbands including the Beatles and Pink Floyd. He also produces his own work, and this album tribute to the work of Edgar Allan Poe was a favorite of mine from the second I heard it.

#### When

Allan remastered this album for re-release on CD he invoked producer privilege and made many subtle changes to the mix, including completely replacing the guitar solo on this track, thus invoking the ire of thousands of fans who had anxiously awaited this release.

Recently he was NOT chosen to redo Pink Floyd's Dark Side Of The Moon and was reportedly extremely pissed.... coincidence ?

#### 3.

Beetles - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts  
Club Band - Within You Without You (1967)

The second LP I bought (the first was a Black Sabbath, never mind!) and this album has of course stood the test of time. It's an amazing work both musically and from a studio engineering point of view...George Martin did some amazing things using the new genre of "stereo". This track is a George Harrison tune and my favorite on the album.

#### 4.

Bill  
Evans - The Alternative Man - The Alternative Man (1985)

Bill is a saxophone player who hit the big time playing with Miles Davis and then went on to a successful solo career.

I first heard this particular album on a pair of speakers that cost over \$10K... the sound was amazing and I can still hear it in my head whenever I spin this album

#### 5.

Billy  
Cobham - Stratus - Stratus (1975)

Billy's an amazing drummer who has the annoying habit of starting most of his earlier work with a 10 minute drum solo. Once he gets past the solo he can drive some serious jazz, and this track (with the drum solo edited out) is testament to how good things sounded in 1975.

6.  
Breckers  
Brothers - Heavy Metal Be Bop - Sponge (1978)

The Breckers are the upper echelon of jazz studio musicians, each with a list of "Played With" longer than most other living legions. They also play very well as their own group, and I wore the oxide off this tape. Like several other groups here they kicked off jazz-fusion with their own band, spun out and did their own thing for 20 years, and then got back together again for some more joint studio work. This track is from their third album.

7.  
Brothers  
Johnson- Stomp-Thunder Thumbs And Lightning Licks (1976)

Quincy Jones discovered these funky boys while he was in the studio making his "Mellow Madness" album and went on to produce many of their albums. This track comes from an era of basement parties and driving from place to place with a freshly minted driver's license. A bit disco-ish but still wearing well.

8.  
Bruce Cockburn- Inner City Front- Inner City Front (1984)

Most of my music has no words, but with Bruce it's mostly about the words. His early albums were not something you'd listen to if you needed to be cheered up, but he's good for provoking a thoughtful evening in front of a fire.

9.  
Cat Stevens - Buddha And The Chocolate Box - Oh Very Young (1974)

My parents had a Cat Stevens or two that I listened to, but I didn't take him too seriously until a Grade 8 English teacher assigned some of his work in Poetry class.

10.  
Chick  
Corea and the Elecktic Band-Eye Of The Beholder- Passage (1990)

Chick  
has many guises in my collection: founding member of Return To Forever, solo  
work, and two "Bands", one acoustic and one electric. This track makes me want to buy a piano.

11.  
Commander  
Cody And His Lost Planet Airmen-Don't Let Go (1975)

A  
favorite in high school... Ken and I listened to this relentlessly. Commander Cody is an Arkansas university professor who  
would rather play  
honky-tonk than grade sociology papers.

12.  
Dale  
Jacobs - Cobra - Scouting Party (1978)

A classmate in High School lent me this tape after  
hearing I was "into that jazz crap"... Dale was another of those Canadian  
musicians that rose from obscurity and disappeared into oblivion, but I  
particularly enjoyed the analog synth and sequencing work... in my view a bit  
ahead of their time.

13.  
Dire  
Straits - Brothers In Arms - Ride Across The River (1985)

This is as close to "country" as I get..  
Mark Knopfler is an amazing guitarist and lyricist and I've got every Dire  
Straits album and most of his solo work as well. Most people would select  
"Sultans Of Swing" as the definitive track, but I'm partial to this one.

14.  
Dixie  
Dregs-What If-Take It Off The Top (1978)

I rarely listen to the radio, but one night I was testing out a FM receiver that I had just repaired and heard this track. The DJ went on to play the entire album... he hadn't planned to, but became totally enamored. I don't blame him.

The Dregs are no longer together, but Steve Morse now plays with Deep Purple where he has added fresh perspective to Smoke On The Water. The rest of the band, in conjunction with a couple of ex-Grateful Dead, now call themselves "Jazz Is Dead"... very punny.

There's just something about an electric violin.

15.  
Doobie  
Brothers-Living on the Fault Line-Living on the Fault Line (1977)

Most people think of the Doobies as a rock-and-roll band, but they are incredible musicians that, for me, often cross into jazz-fusion territory. This particular album sold very poorly and nearly caused the band to dissolve, but they stuck to their guns and are still at it today. Victor Feldman on vibes.

16.  
Eagles-  
Hotel California - Hotel California (1976)

OK, so dangerously close to county, but featuring one of the best and most beloved guitar solos of all times. I've done a ton of research on this, and as far as I can tell the band has never fessed up to what this tune really means.

17.  
Earth  
Wind and Fire - Gratitude - New World Symphony  
(1975)

These guys are an amazing funky gang with incredible musical energy... part fusion, part disco, part funk. I don't mind the disco part too much

This track features one of their trademark sounds: a kalimba or African thumb piano

18.  
Fleetwood  
Mac- Rumours - The Chain (1977)

One  
of Ken's claims to fame was that he "discovered" Fleetwood Mac... evidently he  
heard them first. Not sure if that's  
true, but we knew every bar on this album..

19.  
George  
Benson - Breezin' - This Masquerade (1976)

George  
is one of those musicians who started out with the blues, moved to jazz, and  
ended up with pop. His albums in the  
70's are some of the finest guitar there is.

Four  
of us drove straight thru to Vancouver one weekend to catch him in concert,  
then turned around and drove back the next morning. 16+ hours one-way, worth every minute.

20.  
George  
Duke - Don't Let Go - Dukey Stick (1978)

George  
has played with all the greats at one time or another, and also does his own  
thang. Surely he must be a blast to  
play with..

21.  
Grover  
Washington Jr-Feels So Good-Knucklehead (1975)

Another  
old, old, old tape that I wore out.  
Grover's later stuff sounded a lot like Kenny G to me (ack!) but the  
early stuff is pure gold to my ears.

22.  
Harvey  
Mason-Funk In A Mason Jar-Space Cadets (1977)

Harvey

is an incredible drummer who was one of the more sought-after jazz sessionists during the jazz-fusion's early hey-day.

I was never big on his solo efforts, but this rather silly tune was a favorite bombing around in a certain yellow Rabbit... I think the fact that we liked it made us feel a bit less like jazz geeks.

23.

Herbie

Hancock-VSOP-Hang Up Your Hang-ups (1977)

Herbie

has played many different styles, but I enjoy him best when he's being funky. This live track is him at his

funky jazz best. This group reformed 25

years after this album and put out another funky album, but this is where it started.

24.

Hummingbird-We

Can't Go On Meeting Like This-Fire And Brimstone (1976)

We

used this old Max Middleton number to test car cassette decks before purchase, and the salesman usually wanted a copy for himself.

25.

Jack

Green-Humanesque-Babe (1980)

I

fixed lots of cars in high school... my friend's sister had an old Toyota that she was planning to take cross-country and she gave me some Jack Green in exchange for a tune-up. Jack cut three albums in the 70's and then disappeared into oblivion. My girls love dancing to this one.

26.

James

Taylor- Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon - People In My Past (1971)

My dad brought this album home from a business trip to Toronto when we were little, and we listened to it repeatedly for

months. In university I filled out my James Taylor collection and his albums kept me company while studying for many exams, but I often return to this particular album. Carole King on piano.

27.

Jean-Michael  
Jarre- Magnetic Fields- Magnetic Fields (1981)

I'm not a huge listener of so-called new age electronic stuff, but this guy seems to be more than the ordinary. He's exceptionally prolific, but this is his best work, in my humble opinion.

28.

Jean-Luc  
Ponty - Mystical Adventures Suite I, II, III (1982)

Jean-Luc was the first jazz artist where I said "I have got to have everything this guy has ever done"... arguably the world's best jazz violinist. I could listen to his stuff for hours, and always hear things I haven't heard before.

I've had the privilege of seeing him live several times, and although his recent stuff has kinda lost my interest I can listen to any one of his first 10 albums any number of times.

29.

Jeff  
Beck-With Jan Hammer Live-Freeway Jam (1977)

The original track that got me started down the jazz/jazz-fusion road, and my first jazz cassette. We'd tapped into the 12" speaker in the old TV in the student lounge at school and spent our breaks listening to jazz through a crummy little cassette portable patched though the "big" speaker.

Jeff Beck, of course, is the quintessential fusion guitarist, having paid his dues in the rock and roll school with Eric Clapton and the Yardbirds before moving towards the jazz side of the spectrum. In this track he's playing live with keyboardist Jan Hammer.

30.

Jethro  
Tull-A-Caught In The Crossfire (1980)

To my ears, Ian Anderson is a fusion-ish flute player. I played this album a lot whilst laid up in bed for a couple of weeks after surgery during university, and I liked this track in particular due to the wry humor coupled with Ian's trademarked scatting... scatting being no mean feat for a flutist.

31.  
Jimi  
Hendrix-In The West-Red House (1972)

Unless your ears are caulked over you likely know at least one Jimi Hendrix tune. A babysitter introduced me to this album, and it continues to be my favorite Hendrix... this bluesy live version of Red House knows no equal.

32.  
JJ  
Cale - Troubadour - Cocaine (1976)

A university colleague introduced me to JJ Cale... the poor guy had a habit of having other people's versions of his tunes go platinum, including this track made popular by Eric Clapton.

33.  
John  
Abercrombie-Getting There-Sidekicks (1988)

Another Miles Davis alumni. One of my earlier careers was as a research associate at the University of Alberta where I designed and build electronic gadgets. My first assignment was an extremely challenging project that required many evenings and weekends to perfect... John kept me company while I scratched my head and squinted over the solder fumes trying to be "getting there" with the project.

34.  
John  
Scofield - Electric Outlet - Filibuster (1984)

John is one of jazz's most prolific and constant guitar presences who was a solid contributor to Miles Davis's band. Peter Erskine on drums.

35.  
Joni  
Mitchell (w/ Jaco Pastorius)-Mingus-The Dry Cleaner From DeMoine (1979)

This  
is Joni's album but for me it's Jaco at his best...in my opinion better than he  
sounds on most his solo albums. There  
are many, many Jaco stories, and Joni tells one about this album: evidently  
Jaco was always reaching over and turning up his track on the mix... everyone  
thought he and Joni were dating & cause Joni put up with it. Jaco's ego was legendary but mostly  
deserved. Wayne Shorter on sax.

36.  
Kiss-Live-100,000  
Years (1974)

For  
the record, I don't own any Kiss albums.  
However, there's no denying I grew up with these boys. Late one Saturday  
evening Ken and I went to visit one of his friends who had just set up his new  
color organ... you know... boxes that looked like speakers but had translucent  
panes in the front with colored lights that flashed in time to the music. This friend had built the thing himself and  
was serious about it... I could tell because he'd even unplugged the grow lights  
surrounding his favorite...er... plant.  
He'd tuned the colors specifically for this drum solo: the red lights  
were the floor tom, blue was the snare,  
and yellow was the hi-hat. Even without  
pharmaceutical help I was transfixed.

37.  
Klaatu-Hope-Long  
Live Politzania (1977)

These  
Canadians enjoyed huge popularity due to a rumor that they were the Beatles  
back together again in the studio. This  
album is in rock opera format, and I always smile listening to this  
thinly-veiled poke at the good ole Red, White, and Blue.

38.  
Larry  
Coryell - Aspects - Ain't It Is (1976)

This was on the flip side of my Jeff Beck cassette and is another album that got me started. Sadly this album has not (yet) been remastered on CD... this track was ripped directly from my old original cassette... a 98 cent blank purchased from Army and Navy dubbed from a scratchy old library LP. Larry's licks still sound hot, though.

39.  
Lee  
Ritenour - Captain Fingers - Captain Fingers (1977)

Lee is an amazing dexterous guitarist I used to play in the van on my way to DJ gigs... facing several hours of wedding-related shlock I always felt the need to bulk up on good jazz... sort of an antidote against the stuff I was about to play.

40.  
Lenny  
White-Astral Pirates-Stew, Cabbage and Beans (1978)

Lenny was a huge part of the success of the early Return To Forever, but he can stand on his own two feet as well. Actually, on this album, he sounds like he's standing on his head.

41. Mahavishnu Orchestra-Birds of Fire-One  
Word (1973)

I used to dance baby Shelby to sleep with this amazing early fusion track featuring John McLaughlin, Jan Hammer, Billy Cobham, and Rick Liard. .It always seems like they "just don't make music like this any more", however, last year someone found an old Mahavishnu tape while cleaning out a studio vault and so a band that broke up 25 years ago has a new album out.

## 42. Manteca - Perfect Foot - Big Bear (1989)

Manteca is a Toronto-based jazz group I had the privilege of seeing in the early 80's at Edmonton's Jazz City. Lots of percussion and lots of horns; in particular, this track makes great use of the EWI (the Electronic Wind Instrument invented by Michael Brecker)

43.  
Maynard  
Ferguson - Chameleon - Chameleon (1974)

"Someone and his Orchestra" is usually a polite euphemism for polkas and a bubble machine. Maynard, however, can blow some serious horn and recruits fine talent to boot. This track is his version of a Herbie Hancock tune... I happen to like Maynard's treatment of it better. At the time I was playing trumpet myself in a stage band and got a kick out how well Maynard seemed to do considering he was breaking every rule my trumpet teacher had set for me.

44.  
Michael  
Franks-The Art Of Tea-Jive (1976)

The day after I got my driver's license four of us piled in an old VW van and headed to a Scout Jamboree in PEI. The van threw a crankshaft in Ontario and we laagered for a day at a friend's house in Mississauga where I heard this album.

Michael always surrounds himself with top-of-the-line studio jazz musicians; in this case he's rounded up the Crusaders, Michael Brecker, and Dave Sanborn, another great horn player.

45.  
Mike  
Oldfield- Tubular Bells - Tubular Bells (1973)

Nearly everyone has heard Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells, and he's gone on to Tubular Bells II and Tubular Bells III. This one was one of my first CDs... with headphones on; it's an amazing experience. In today's digital era these instruments and the concept of one artist playing all the tracks himself is not unusual, but in the completely analog world of 1973 this was a remarkable accomplishment.

46.  
Mike  
Stern - Time In Place - Gossip (1988)

I  
was introduced to Mike Stern fairly late in life... found him by tracking some of the artists he hangs out with (guys like Miles Davis, Daryl Jones, Bob Berg, and Dave Weckl to name a few). In this track he's teamed up with Mike Brecker and drummer Peter Erskine (who is quietly putting on a drum clinic, in my humble opinion).

47. Miles Davis - Tutu - Splat (1986)

What can you say about Miles that hasn't already been said? Jazz historians usually point to his Bitches Brew album as one of the beginning salvos of the jazz-fusion movement and by Tutu he had it down pretty much perfect.

48. Monks-Suspended Animation-I Can Do Anything You Like (1983)

These  
British lads were all the rage in Camrose where a friend of mine went to university, and their albums are tight and to the point. This politically incorrect tune was probably popular 'cause lots of us had, at one time or another, fanaticized about being good enough to give Mr. EMI a call ourselves.

49.  
Passport-  
Ataraxia - Ataraxia Part 2 (1978)

This  
German group is extremely prolific but quite hard to find on CD. I had two of their albums growing up and generally listened to both back-to-back... they invoke a mood that's hard to explain... but it's perfect while reading Frank Herbert's Dune series.

50.

Pat  
Benatar - Crimes Of Passion - You Better Run (1980)

Pat has amazing pipes and surrounds herself with excellent musicians... I like her over-riding sense of spunk... kind of an original Josie and the Pussycats. Another album I traded for a tune-up.

51.  
Pat  
Metheny - Offramp - Are You Going With Me (1982)

I own as much Pat Metheny as I do Jean-Luc Ponty. My two best friends shared an apartment during university, and this track takes me there every time... it's a Saturday morning, the sun is shining, it's -40C, and freshly-ground coffee is about to be brewed in a Bodem.

52.  
Police  
- Zenyatta Mondatta - Shadows In The Rain (1979)

The Police continue to blow me away, and now my kids are enjoying their music as well. According to Sting the group made a point of ensuring that only one person played any given note at any given time... if he's playing an E on his bass then Andy will damp the E on whatever chord he's playing at the time. Meanwhile, Stewart Copeland is doing the same rhythmically... staying off the beats provided by the bass and injecting his stuff in between. It still amazes me how tight a bass, guitar, and drums can sound. All three have gone on to highly-successful solo careers, Andy being the one to stay truest to jazz fusion including some cutting-edge work with Robert Fripp and saxophone player Bill Evans.

53. Queen - News Of The World - Sleeping On The Sidewalk (1977)

Again very difficult to pick a single Queen track... so much to chose from. In the end I picked one about one of my personally favorite themes (being "discovered" as a trumpeter) and one that doesn't really have the classic Queen sound.

54.  
Quincy  
Jones - I Heard That - Midnight Soul Patrol (1976)

## Quincy

would have to be one of the world's best known producers and a man of amazing dexterity: from pop like Michael Jackson's Thriller to great jazz with his own gang. Here he's assembled an amazing cast including Louis Johnson on bass and Billy Cobham on drums

55.

Return

To Forever-Romantic Warrior-Medieval Overture (1976)

RTF

went thru several lineups, but the version with Lenny White/Stanley Clark/Al DiMeola/Chick Corea is my favorite, and this was one of my favorite tracks of that gang. This entire album is vintage fusion.

56. Rickie Lee Jones - Pirates - We Belong Together (1981)

Rickie Lee comes from Brooklyn which explains why some may have great difficulty understanding what the hell she's trying to say, but she's a first rate musician who always has great musicians with her... perhaps because Walter Becker produces her albums when he's not busy being half of Steely Dan.

For a whole bunch of reasons my third year of university was perhaps one of the toughest I've faced then or since and this album got a lot of playtime... again, for various reasons.

57.

Rufus

& Chaka Khan-Rags To Rufus-You Got The Love (1974)

Chaka

has amazing pipes, and her work with Rufus is some of the funkiest funk there is. This track was a favorite warm-up piece of our school's basketball team and was best served extra loud in the gymnasium to a crowd of fans as the team roared out of the dressing room and practiced lay-ups before attempting to kick Ainlay's ass.

58.

Santana-Santana

III-Jungle Strut (1971)

My friend Ken introduced me to this album in junior high... we played it relentlessly. Carlos has enjoyed a huge resurgence in popularity of late, but his early stuff is still the high water mark for me.

59. Shadowfax - Too Far To Whisper - The Orangutan Strikes Back (1986)

Windham Hill was a record label formed in the 70s that focused on jazzy new-age music., and Shadowfax one of their front-line jazz ensembles. I know now that their name comes from a famous Lord Of The Rings horse, and I must admit that this might be some of the music one would listen on a deserted island of Middle Earth.

60.  
Stanley  
Clarke - Stanley Clarke - Lopsy Lu (1974)

Next to the trumpet the bass is the instrument I've spent the most time attempting to play. Stanley Clarke was undoubtedly the original jazz-fusion master of this particular instrument. His trademarked harmonics, chords, and thumb hammering set the pace for a generation of bass players. Featuring drummer Tony Williams and the unmistakable keyboard chops of Jan Hammer, Stanley made the unusual move of releasing this particular track as a hit 45 single.

61.  
Steely  
Dan-Aja-Home At Last (1977)

It's extremely hard to pick just one Steely Dan... I chose this from an album that I listened to endlessly one summer while rebuilding a friend's racecar in preparation for a 24 hr endurance road race at the local speedway. We lost the race, but it certainly wasn't the fault of the music. These guys are still at it, in fact, they've just released another album entitled "Everything Must Go".... hopefully they're not referring to the band itself. This entire album makes me want to take piano lessons again.

62.

Tom

Scott And The LA Express-Tom Cat-Mondo (1975)

Tom

Scott is another world-class studio musician who is equally at home with his own group. His first two LA Express albums are fantastic and difficult to cull one track from... I picked this one because of the dissonance and John Griern's amazing drum work including a 5 minute solo, which you don't often get on a jazz album.

63.

Toto-Hydra-Mama

(1979)

More

studio musicians that also have their own group. Steve Luthicar has unmistakable chops, and Jeff Procaro was unstoppable on drums until his untimely death from a heart defect at the age of 34. For me, one of the hallmarks of a good group is how well they can use silence... this track is a great example.

64.

Tys

Van Lear - Nice To Have Met You - Hocus Pocus (1978)

Tys

is a Dutch jazz flute player who scats when he gets funky. In this track he's working with Eric Gale, Steve Khan, the Breckers, Tom Scott, and Ralph McDonald.

65.

Weather

Report-Night Passage-Night Passage (1980)

Weather

Report is another group with several lineups, and in my humble opinion this is the best of the best: Joe Zawinul, Wayne Shorter, Jaco Pastorius, and Peter Erskine. I've always felt this entire album would have been a good soundtrack for Bladerunner... surreal and ethereal.

The Comedians:

66.  
Bill  
Cosby- Noah (1963)

I  
flew into Vegas one year for an Electromyography conference and just missed  
seeing this guy by 1 night... what a pity.

67. Bob And Doug McKenzie: Twelve Days Of  
Christmas

Second  
City was the "SNL" of Canada, and Bob and Doug were two quintessential Canadian  
rednecks who hosted a re-occurring skit based loosely on the National Film  
Board's various nature shows.

In  
this track they recount the classic 12 days of Canadian Christmas.

68.  
Monty  
Python- The Argument - (1974)

Most  
everyone has heard some Monty Python, and as kids we memorized every word so  
that we could repeat them, ad nauseam, at the supper table. Still can, too.

69.  
Steve  
Martin - Let's Get Small (1977)

Steve's  
stuff cracks me up every time... I listened to this album with the same passion I  
had had during my Monty Python days... like most Monty Python skits I was able to  
repeat the entire album verbatim. I  
never got to the point of building an arrow-through-the-head, although I know  
someone who did.

Note

the reference to the ticket price... I wonder what he would charge today if he was still doing standup.

70.

Woody

Allen- The Nightclub Years (1969)

Woody got his start doing the nightclub circuit in the 60s and wrote some extremely funny books as well. Being a bit of a self-depreciator myself I've always had a soft spot for his humour.