

## The Sydney Morning Herald

**RECORD REVIEWS: JAMES MORRISON, KATE CEBERANO, VINCE JONES, MAX ROACH**

by Gail Brennan/John Clare

**JAMES MORRISON: Snappy Doo** (WEA all systems 903171211)

**KATE CEBERANO: Like Now** (Festival CD & LP TVL 93331)

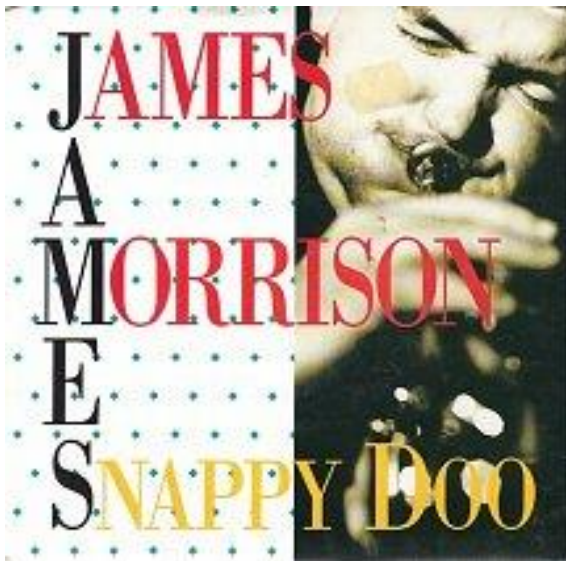
**VINCE JONES: One Day Spent** (EMI all systems EMX794792)

**MAX ROACH PLUS Four** (EmArcy CD 822 673-2)

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**JAMES MORRISON: Snappy Doo** (WEA all systems 903171211)

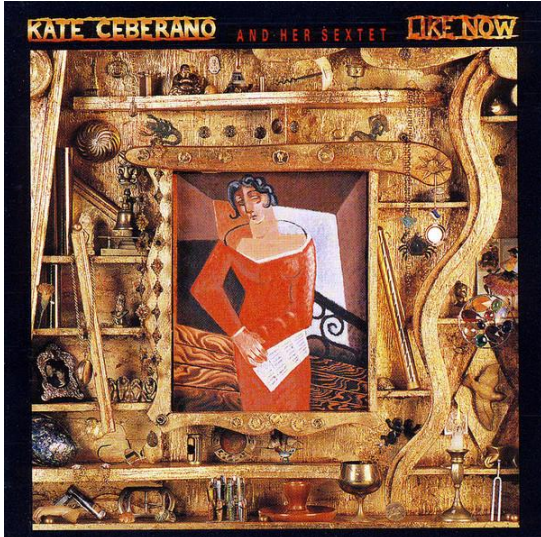


At last, James Morrison's outstanding competence on a number of instruments has been channelled into a good, mainstream to middle-of-the-road album. Far from being a quick elimination, as the excruciating title might suggest (and which certainly applies to his previous two efforts), this is the product of intelligent planning.

When I heard that Morrison had overdubbed a complete big band consisting of himself (except for the guitar, bass and drums of Herb Ellis, Ray Brown and Jeff Hamilton), my immediate response was, "But to what end, dear boy? *Tubular Bells* goes jazz?". In fact, the big band tracks are not only impressive but well-arranged and enjoyable.

The album does carry Morrison's customary cornball compendium of gee-whiz clichés on trumpet, which, like paintings of blue Eurasian ladies and flights of china ducks, are beyond my aesthetic comprehension, and therefore none of my business.

**KATE CEBERANO: Like Now (Festival CD & LP TVL 93331)**



Kate Ceberano sings like a bird. While her sexpotisms and breast fetishism are a major irritation when she is on stage, the disembodied voice is honey. Her sextet (it would have to be a sextet!) frames her with neat arrangements and spare, stylish solos (pianist Jex Saarelaht's are masterpieces in the genre), to create the kind of cool-textured but far from unfeeling album that would have been well-received in the 1950s when this kind of music was at its height. Well, it's not *Helen Merrill With Clifford Brown*, and it's certainly not *Sarah Vaughan At The Tivoli*, but it is a delight for here and now, and it helps give Australian jazz a quality commercial edge.



*Kate Ceberano: her sexpotisms and breast fetishism are a major irritation when she is on stage...*

**VINCE JONES: One Day Spent (EMI all systems EMX794792)**



Vince Jones's new album also helps give Australian jazz a quality commercial edge. Because Jones has an ear for the sophisticated harmonic variation, some have seen him as a cold, technical singer. Exposed in an intimate trio setting with top New York musicians (with fine solos and obligati from Australian saxophonist Dale Barlow), Jones sings nothing that is not felt, nothing that is forced.

This "cool" approach is much misunderstood. Its true essence is found when the singer or instrumentalist rides with the music, rather than imposing histrionics upon it, and lets the emotion rise naturally from the song. Jones does this with impressive assurance and unfailing sensitivity.

On the one track recorded in Australia, he sings uncertainly, but it is interesting to hear how well the local musicians stand up, particularly bassist Lloyd Swanton. The difference is that we have a handful in this class, while they have hundreds.



*Vince Jones (left) with bassist Lloyd Swanton at Montsalvat in 1993... PHOTO CREDIT JOYCE EVANS*

**MAX ROACH PLUS Four (EmArcy CD 822 673-2)**



The Max Roach reissue from 1957 could easily have filled this column with a gush of enthusiasm to make Bill Collins blanch. The Roach band preceding this was one of the most celebrated of the era. After Clifford Brown and Richie Powell were killed in a car crash, Roach briefly carried on with replacements Kenny Dorham and Ray Bryant, a configuration that should have been just as widely celebrated. Roach could not get over the loss, particularly of trumpeter Brown, soon disbanded and went on the booze for a while. At least we have this CD.



*Sonny Rollins (left) and Max Roach, pictured in 1966... PHOTO COURTESY PINTEREST*

Sonny Rollins is in tremendous form, but if anyone wears the pants on *Max Roach Plus Four*, it is Kenny Dorham. Like Miles Davis, Dorham had a style that in some ways disguised technique. Like Davis, he was an architect in brass, creating a unique presence and an uncanny depth-of-field with contrasts in volume and tonal colour. Light, fast passages that flicker in and out of the harmony sometimes lead to fat, hard, sustained notes that loom towards the listener, or to spitting flairs into the higher register, or legato expositions of poignant melody.



*Kenny Dorham: like Miles Davis, he had a style that in some ways disguised technique...*

Dorham's feeling for time allowed him to create apparent accelerations and retards without disturbing the pulse. When everything dances together, as it does in each of these marvellous solos, Dorham creates magic.

He may not yield everything to you on a first hearing, but once you get on to what he is doing, you will see why James Morrison's solos sound shallow and antiquated to me. Dorham, in 1957, is positively avant-garde by contrast.