



JAZZ REVIEWS

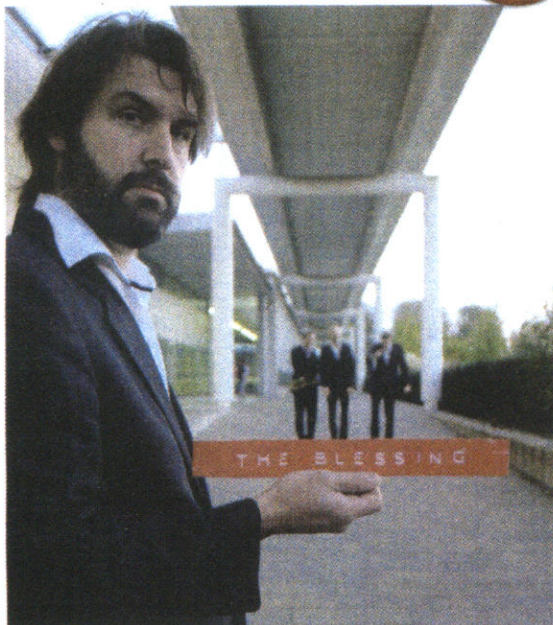
## JAZZ

**THE BLESSING** strike a chord with their exuberant jazz-rock debut disc; newcomer **MELODY GARDOT** delivers an uplifting programme for late-night listening; plus ECM sets new standards with a **KEITH JARRETT** reissue

### A gift of a debut

**BARRY WITHERDEN** exalts *The Blessing's* first disc

BBC  
**MUSIC  
CHOICE**



**SEEING RED?:** jazz-rock bassist Jim Barr offers his blessing



#### THE BLESSING

**All Is Yes**

Pete Judge (trumpet), Jake McMurchie (saxophone), Jim Barr (bass), Clive Deamer (drums)

Candid CCD 79851 45:42 mins

BBC Music Direct £12.99

The Blessing is, I believe, big in Bristol, but deserves to be celebrated more widely. They make a gloriously powerful sound for a quartet, even when not cheating with a little overdubbing to fatten the ensembles. Clive Deamer and Jim Barr (above), perhaps best known as members of excellent

trip-hoppers Portishead, import their crisp sound and add an extra edge for this band.

*All Is Yes* reminds me strongly of two of my favourite fringe-jazz outfits of the late-'80s/early-'90s, Dr Umezū and Xero Slingsby & The Works. If there's nothing experimental or innovative here, they still sound fresher than most hands around, and less contrived than critical faves like the Bad Plus or Acoustic Ladyland. The tunes, mostly simple but potent, are arrestingly realised by Pete Judge and Jake McMurchie.

Funk, Ornette Coleman-inspired free-jazz, punk and a dash of the East add spice without muddying the flavour, earning a five-star benediction for sheer exuberance.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**SOUND** ★★★★★