

JAZZ

---- Pick of the month ----

EXPLOSIVE MYTHS

Discs from Greek and Bosnian musicians explore different aspects of the region's varied culture, says **IAN CARR**

DIMITRIOS VASSILAKIS

Labyrinth, Daedalus Project

Dimitrios Vassilakis, David Liebman, Andy Sheppard (ss, ts), Marc Johnson (b), Ralph Peterson (d, t), Jamey Haddad (d, perc), Theodosii Spassov (kaval), Emmanuel Saridakis (p, hammond org), George Contrafouris (p)
Candid CCD 79776 58:23 mins **£££**

I first encountered the Greek myth of the Labyrinth and Theseus's slaying of the Minotaur at the age of seven, and it has stayed with me because it is a tale in which triumph and tragedy seem to be held in equal balance. In 1973 I wrote and recorded my own album on the same subject and with the same title, *Labyrinth*, so I was intrigued to know what a Greek musician would do with it today. Vassilakis is an excellent saxophonist and a fine composer, and seven of the nine compositions are his own. The remaining two, 'Epitaph' by Fripp, MacDonald, Lake, Giles and Sinfield, and 'Blue in Green' by Miles Davis and Bill Evans, are not directly connected to the myth but contribute to the atmosphere. All of the musicians are superlative soloists, and it was a touch of genius to include Spassov's kaval, which is a traditional Bulgarian wooden flute with a husky and appealing human sound. Ralph Peterson on drums and trumpet is quite a find and he and Spassov are great presences on the

BOJAN ZULFIKARPASIC

Solobsession

Bojan Zulfikarpasic (p)
Label Bleu LBLC 6624
55:14 mins..... **£££**

urgent and powerfully rhythmic title track. 'Ariadne's Thread' has evocative suspended chords and fluctuating tempi. In the booklet notes David Liebman comments, 'It may be getting to the point now where it is obvious that jazz is truly an international language,' and he goes on to cite this album as proof of that. Infinite grace, poetry and passion inform this labyrinthine music.

Bojan Zulfikarpasic is a Bosnian pianist now resident in Paris. He has a style of his own, which ranges from massive orchestral pianism with gritty harmonies and wayward melodic notes and phrases to minimal music of great simplicity and lyricism. The opening piece,

'Fingering', is a quite abstract performance in the free jazz vein – he creates a percussive rhythm by banging on either the foot pedals or the wood of the piano and also the piano wires. 'Who's Bob' is a minimalist piece with ecstatic right-hand improvisations over a chugging left-hand rhythm, a fascinating choice of notes and dramatic bass line. He brings a compelling Slavonic intensity to every performance. The title track has references to jazz history with boogie, wit and echoes of Keith Jarrett. Henri Texier's 'Don't Buy Ivory Anymore' is an exquisite Satiesque performance in the *Gymnopédie* vein. There seems no limit to Zulfikarpasic's talent.