

and ultra-modern haircut (combination short-back-and-sides and dreadlocks). His band Living Colour with Carl James on bass and J.T. Lewis on drums packs a clobbering funk *whump*. Reid had played Moers before, with old boss Shannon Jackson, and knew the barriers of snob prejudice he'd have to meet. Finally he decided just to steamroller them. Vernon can play *anything* on the guitar: from Wes Montgomery good taste to Hendrix *waul*, from Mike Hampton Funkadelicisms to Jordanian two handed tapping, Santana's long sustains, Steve Vai's blitzkrieg speed, even Merthy's country lilt . . . it's all grist to Living Colour's windmill. Stardom seems an inevitability, if Brooklyn's record moguls ever move their fat asses. For Vernon, ablaze with talent, is contractless. He could swing a deal in Europe but wants to stand up on his own turf and rail against the blandness of the American airwaves. He says that AOR stands for "apartheid oriented radio".

Toshinori Kondo, meanwhile, releases more records than his current band IMA really merits. There's a third one on the way and still Kondo hasn't sorted out the concept. It doesn't make sense. It's part Miles, part industrial-funk wall of sound, but rhythmically too sluggish to support Kondo's jazz trumpeter. His two guitar players are both very cute and I'm sure they would like to be Sonny Sharrock or Blood Ulmer or Pete Cosey or even Arto Lindsay but they lack even a hint of such intensity and try to compensate with sheer volume. I'd probably find them diverting at a pop event but, alongside the heavies at Moers, they didn't make it.

Nor did supposedly "serious" pianist John Fischer and saxophone partner Mark Whitecage. They can keep their Third Stream variations on "Jingle Bells", thanks.

The Chris McGregor-organized South African Exile Thunderbolt was also rather flaccid. I was ready to rave but, apart from Lucky Ranku's tough guitar and Harry Beckett's typical carefully-considered trumpeter, nothing really *happened*. There was much miniskirted dancing, which gave the photographers hot flushes, but the music barely got off the ground. Johnny Dyani played interminable Dollar Brand impersonations at the piano and Dudu Pukwana seemed to be in a catatonic trance. Moreover they arrived late, outstayed their welcome by about an hour, and threw the festival schedule seriously out of kilter. The final outcome was that an African Dance Night, scheduled to begin at eleven, finally kicked off at three in the morning. By which time even the best-willed hoofers, your correspondent included, were beyond even semi-objective judgements.

Steve Lake