

Sunday Independent

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JAZZ

GRAINNE FARREN

George Shearing trio four-CD set
LOUIS Stewart was only in his 30s at the time of these recordings, but he had already perfected his characteristically flowing style. What he shares here with Shearing and Niels-Henning Orsted Pederson is a subtle creativity that makes even the most sophisticated interplay sound natural. The English-American pianist is among the most immediately recognisable piano-players in jazz, while both he and the Danish bass-player have the kind of spot-on rhythm that suits the drumless trio format.

The four-CD set is made up of tracks from four LPs, plus several tunes that were not released at the time. Beginning with Oscar Pettiford's *Tri-cotism*, the trio goes on to play a varied selection of tunes by everyone from Gordon Jenkins to Dizzy Gillespie. Highlights include the Bach-like treatment of *No Moon At All*, the quiet power of the bass solo in *Old Folks*, the bouncing *Jordu*, and the interweaving of piano and guitar in *Invitation*. Original numbers include three by Shearing and two by Orsted Pedersen.

On CD Four the trio is accompanied by the Robert Farnon orchestra, whose lush strings and boring arrangements dilute the jazz content, but the first three CDs more than make up for it. Congratulations to the Improvised Music Company on its recent festival *12 Points*. Pascal Schumacher (vibes) from Luxembourg was especially impressive, as was Justin Carroll's quartet, *Togetherness*.