

What Velvet Under

JAZZ

■ If you remember Pat Metheny for endless crescendos and long-lined electric guitar solos and bassist Charlie Haden for far-left and far-out political jazz, think again. The Missouri natives team up for a beautifully performed album of ballads called "**Beyond the Missouri Sky (Short Stories)**" (Verve 314537130). Mostly acoustic, but with some overdubbing, highlights include Henry Mancini's "Two for the Road," Jimmy Webb's "The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress" and a nice treatment of Roy Acuff's country classic "The Precious Jewel."

■ The Detroit pianist Kirk Lightsey, former sideman with Dexter Gordon, is one of the overlooked middle-aged generation of jazzmen. "Goodbye Mr. Evans" (Evi-

dence 22165) may be his best album. With the cavernous sound of Tibor Elekes' bass and sensitive drumming of Famoudou Don Moye, the trio pays tribute to Bill Evans but also says hello to Dave Brubeck, Jimmy Heath, Monk, Coltrane and Chopin in an emotionally varied album full of musical surprises.

■ Only Bill Evans could pull it off. "New Conversations" (Warner Bros. 2-3177), recorded in 1978, was his third album of piano overdubs, refining the technique he developed on "Conversations With Myself" and "Further Conversations" for Verve. Playing four originals and Ellington's exquisite "Reflections in D," the CD reissue sounds more spacious than the LP and the music even more imaginative and poetic.