evening had very few dead spots, and even those—which occurred during a couple of Carter’s blander, less distinctive numbers—were never less than pleasant.

For the most part, things were exhilarating. Carter played with a vitality that belied his age (he turns 80 later this year), and the other soloists—notably tenor saxophonist Lew Tabackin, trumpeter Peter John Eckert, and the orchestra’s two pianists, Dick Katz and musical director John Lewis—were almost as impressive. The highlight of the evening was the premiere of a suite, “Central City Sketches,” which Carter described, almost apologetically, as “a work in progress.” It did have an unfinished sound to it, and one didn’t so much build to a big finish as stop, but parts of it seemed, at first listening, as good as anything else Carter has written.

A studio album documenting much of the music played at the concert will be released later this year on the MusicMaster label.

PETER KEENWPS

JIMMY BUFFETT & THE CORAL REEFER BAND
State Theatre, Sydney, Australia Tickets: $23

FIVE SONGS in this concert, Buffett scratched his head, summed up as much sincerity as his casual personality allows, and asked the obviously devoted audience: “Why the hell has it taken me so long to get here?”

A reasonable query considering the generous affection being offered by followers who had waited 15 years for the son of a sail- or to wend his way Down Under. Except for Crosby, Stills & Nash, he is the only music figure of his era who had resisted the temptation to discover the lesser continent.

Buffett’s current formation of the Coral Reeder Band includes drummer Russ Kunkel, former Little Feat percussionist Sam Clayton, pianist Mike Utley, former Eagles sideman Vinny Vnelman, and Neil Young bassist Tim Drummond.

At times their relative lack of experience as a unit became apparent, though the audience appeared to care as much about this minor shortcoming as the reappearance of the signature riff of “Changes In Latitude, Changes In Attitudes” in a half-dozen other songs.

The qualities that rendered Buffet- 
tt’s show so entertaining had much to do with his personality, which struck a responsive chord with natives of a nation obsessed with outdoor leisure.

The patter and the flow built a rare moment of swift audience recognition for the likes of “Banana Republics,” “Cheeseburger In Paradise,” “A Pirate Looks At Forty,” “If The Phone Doesn’t Ring, It’s Me,” “Havana Daydreamin’,” Van Morrison’s “Brown-Eyed Girl,” and the John Lennon-esque favorite of the night, “Why Don’t We Get Drunk And Screw It?”

Much is made of Buffett’s lack of animation; it was the inevitable vest of body work exhibited by this long-neglected Sydney audience, it doesn’t seem to have done him any harm at all. GLENNA BAKER

YELLOWJACKETS
The Blue Note, New York Tickets: $15

AT this RECENT show—one of five consecutive dates at the Blue Note—the Yellowjackets rewarded an enthusiastic crowd with 70 minutes of bright, energetic, and downright friendly fusion.

The quartet opened confidently with “Out Of Town,” a selection from its new MCA album, “Four Corners,” due in May. That the band has “swingability” is probably news to some, but this composition’s barrelling bass line should convince even nonbelievers. Also new and impressive was “Postcards,” making its debut with a host of rhythmic ploys. If this live performance was any indication, the new album comes equipped with two built-in crowd pleasers.

Of course, Yellowjackets dipped into their catalog, “Imperial Stout” and “One Family” stood out, the former boasted a neatly crafted arrangement and Russell Ferrante’s keyboards. The latter had a moving lyric enhanced by the warm bass embers of Jimmy Haslip (who also serves as the band’s wry and laid-back spokeman). New member William Kennedy also deserves mention for his self-assured drumming, which brims with versatility.

But that was the theme of an encore, and despite the absence of the studio version’s vocal group, this gospel rocker lost none of its power. With upper-register testifying, alto saxophonist Marc Russo fervently filled the void.

BOB BIEGNER