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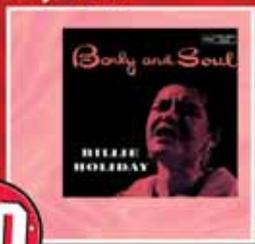
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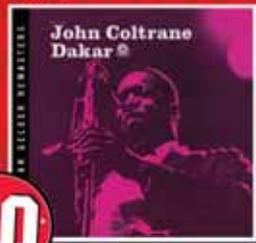


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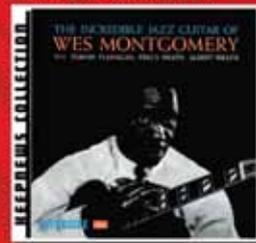


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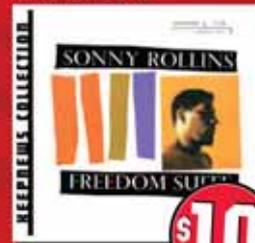
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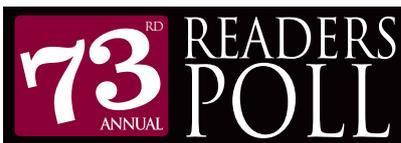
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'What Am I Doing?' | HALL OF FAME | By Ted Panken

The newest inductee into the DownBeat Hall of Fame is 63 years old, and is still creating new chapters in a career of timeless music. In the middle of his fall concert schedule celebrating the 25th anniversary of his trio with Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette, the pianist reminisced about some of the highlights and turning points in his career, and what directions he envisions his art going in the next decade.

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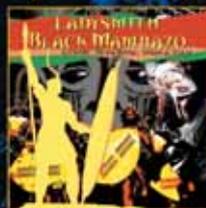
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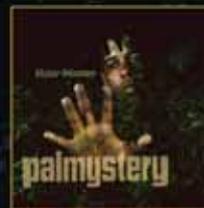
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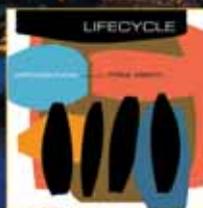
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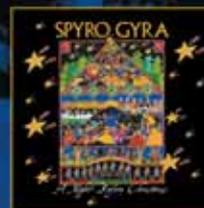
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First Take

By Jason Koransky

Sonny's Take

Sonny Rollins did not look forward to scouring through his audio archives to find material for his new live compilation, *Road Shows, Vol. 1* (Doxy). DownBeat readers love listening to Rollins' concerts, as shown by his double win as Jazz Artist and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year in the 73rd Annual Readers Poll featured in this issue (Benny Golson writes about Rollins on Page 38). But the saxophonist sets high musical standards for himself, which can make it painful for him to revisit his shows.

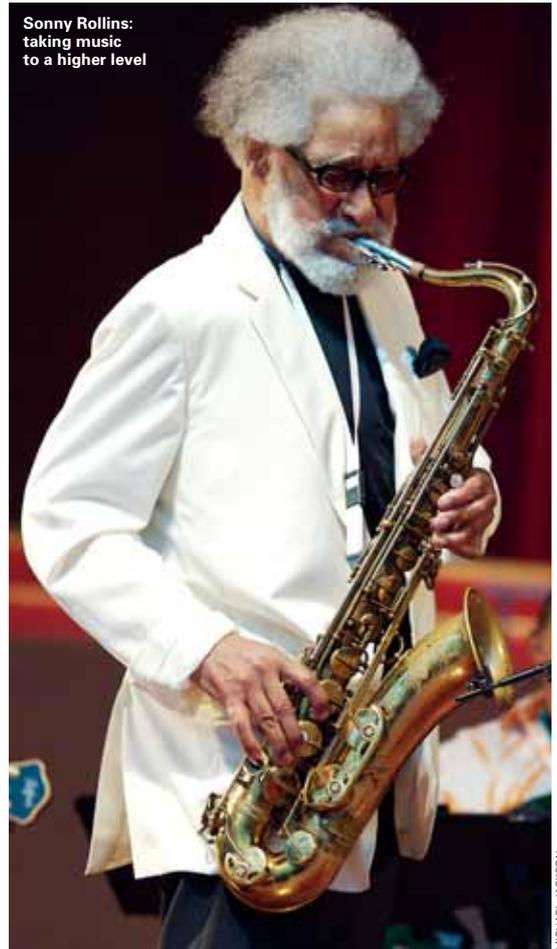
"Especially since I lost my wife, I trusted her judgment so I didn't have to listen to a lot of my music," Rollins said from his home in upstate New York. "I listened to it after she gave me preliminary approval. Now I have to do this by myself, mainly, and it's not easy. You hear all of the mistakes, things that could have been done, that should have been done. I ask, 'Why didn't I do it?' I'm looking at myself from a critical point of view. It's hard listening and saying, 'Oh, that sounds good.' But I have to do it."

Road Shows, Vol. 1 features seven tracks, four from Rollins' archives—including "Some Enchanted Evening" from his 2007 Carnegie Hall trio show with Roy Haynes and Christian McBride—and three from archivist Carl Smith's collection. Of course, Rollins did not listen to all of his archives, which he has built since he started recording his shows in the late '80s. He first tried to remember concerts where he thought the music achieved a particularly high level. Does he think that any "perfect" shows exist in his archives?

"I think so," he replied. "I have these nights when everything seems to work out perfectly. If I go back and listen to it, I might not think so. But at the time, it's good. These are rare occasions, but every now and then we have transcendent performances, where I think they are perfect.

"It has to go to a higher level," he continued. "That's the idea of music, to take us away from the world, to take us to a higher level, different places. That's what I'm always trying to do. It's not always a success, but that's the point. The closer I get, it's a better performance."

We are living through tumultuous times. It's reassuring to know that artists such as Rollins—and all of the other artists who won and placed in the Readers Poll—are on stages in clubs and



Sonny Rollins: taking music to a higher level

MICHAEL JACKSON

concert halls, creating music night after night, injecting some creativity into the world. Plus, music is much more than a respite from the day to day—it is a necessary part of our society, something that gives our world its heartbeat.

On *Road Shows*, Rollins appears to be a musical diplomat, as the cuts were culled from shows in New York, Canada, Japan, France, Sweden and Poland. Does Rollins feel that he had a heightened purpose to his music, given the anticipation of his crowds to be taken on an improvisational journey of the highest order.

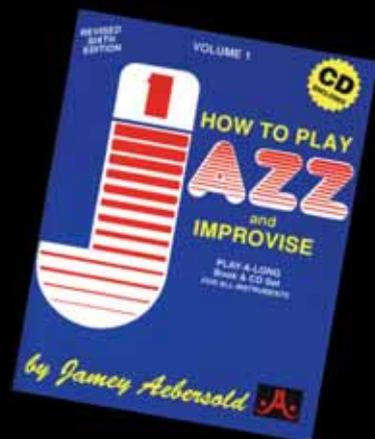
"When I go out to play for other people, I don't want to think of myself in such lofty terms—I want to be more modest in my self-appraisal—I'm sure I bring some respite to people around the world," he said. "I see myself as having an obligation to be a decent human being, to do to others as you'd want them to do unto you, to be a caring person for other people. This is the philosophy that brings me the most personal peace and happiness."

And it's the philosophy that makes Rollins such a deserving recipient of the Readers Poll Jazz Artist and Tenor Saxophone of the Year awards.

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Chords & Discords

Respect for Beck, Bullock

I have quite a number of recordings of the late Joe Beck and Hiram Bullock—as leaders and sidemen—and I was sad to see that these musicians are no longer with us (“The Beat,” October). I was further saddened that Beck’s death received only three sentences and Bullock’s passing had only two.

Travis Franklin
travis@franklinbbop.com

Trombonist Sets it Straight

Many thanks to Peter Margasak for his great review of my band Fight The Big Bull’s *Dying Will Be Easy* (“Reviews,” October). But I have to correct him on one small point: I’m playing distorted trombone on the title track. Many writers have understandably attributed the sound to a slide trumpet or guitar, and I wanted to set the record straight.

Bryan Hooten
bryan.hooten@gmail.com

Blanton Arrived Earlier

John McDonough writes that after Jimmy Blanton joined Duke Ellington in September 1939 “it took seven months before his impact materialized on the band’s records. It was almost as if Ellington was saving Blanton for his switch to Victor” in March 1940 (“Veterans Committee Hall Of Fame,” August). But two of Blanton’s most important recordings with Ellington—“Blues” and “Plucked Again”—were recorded for Columbia in November 1939, before the switch to Victor.

Joe Adams
jdams@optiononline.net

McPartland Research

I’m working on a biography of Marian McPartland and would like to interview musicians who studied with her in the National Stage Band Camps, as well as other players who feel that McPartland influenced their careers—directly or indirectly. Please contact me if you are such a musician.

Paul de Barros
pdebarros@comcast.net

Craft Remains Crucial

In the August issue, I responded to Kurt Rosenwinkel’s devaluing of “craft” (“Chords,” August). I still believe that. But I also understand that everyone has their own journey to attend.

Rosenwinkel is on his path and doing what he needs to do for his music. He has always

Melody Gardot at the 2008 Montreal Jazz Festival



DIANE MOON

Montreal Fest Lacks Jazz

Your article regarding the Montreal Jazz Festival (“The Beat,” October) is only partially correct. I have been attending the festival since its inception, and it is no longer a real jazz festival. More than 50 percent of its content is made up of all kinds of music, such as rock, folk, African and klezmer, so the name of the festival should be changed to “Montreal Music Festival.” The conditions of the free shows have also deteriorated—people have to stay on the street, packed like sardines, and the sound coming out of the various stages is also bad. Maybe this is due to the length of the festival, as this extension has led to the detriment of its quality.

Nicolas Andreescu
naacl1973@yahoo.com

seemed to be in touch with that, although he has to keep in mind that when he speaks about music, there are many ears listening. My reaction to his July interview was meant more for those musicians with less-developed voices. I don’t want them to throw away their metronomes just yet.

Douglas Weiss
doogala@earthlink.net

Correction

A photo of the Agoura High School Studio Jazz Band in the story “Win Or Go Home” (“Student Music Guide,” October) was misidentified as the Roosevelt High School Jazz Band.

DownBeat regrets the error.

Have a chord or discord? E-mail us at editor@downbeat.com.

An advertisement for Vic Firth American Classic 5A drumsticks. The background is a collage of black and white photos of various drummers. At the top, the words "FAMILY VALUE" are written in large, bold, white letters. In the center, a pair of wooden drumsticks is shown vertically, with a red band around the middle that says "VIC FIRTH" in white. The words "AMERICAN CLASSIC 5A" are printed on the sticks. At the bottom, the Vic Firth logo is displayed in large white letters, with the tagline "WHEN IT MATTERS, ASK FOR VIC" and the website "VICFIRTH.COM" below it. On the left side, the text "GET THIS PAIR FREE" is written in large, bold letters, with "FREE" in red. Below this, a smaller text block reads: "For a limited time, buy 3 pair of our #1 selling American Classic® 5A and receive the 4th pair FREE. Just go into your favorite retailer and ask for the Vic Firth 5A Value Pack. It's that easy!"

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Scene

Post-Blue Note Rhapsody Greg Osby Launches His Inner Circle Label

When Blue Note Records pink-slipped Greg Osby in 2006 after recording 15 CDs for the label in 16 years, the alto saxophonist bristled at the sudden cease of contract. "I had seen things turning at the label after Norah Jones, where they were signing old pop musicians," Osby said. "I was bracing myself for the inevitable, but it was still rather abrupt, like a sitcom getting canceled without having the chance to film a final episode."

While he was hurt by the drop, Osby decided not to wallow when there were new possibilities to explore.

"I had to figure out the next step to take," Osby said. "I did not want to go 20 steps backward. I couldn't go to another jazz label because I figured Blue Note was the best. I didn't want to seek out an indie or sign with a European company. So I decided to create my own label on the Internet, rising from the ashes of the old guard with new energy, new vigor to conjure up fresh concepts on the threshold of innovation."

Hence Inner Circle Music—the homegrown label Osby named after his 2002 Blue Note CD, *Inner Circle*—which was unveiled in August with *9 Levels*, his first album since *Channel Three* in 2005. Released initially as an online download and then as a hard-copy CD available at gigs and at the label's web site, *9 Levels* features Osby fronting a new band of young musicians, including guitarist Nir Felder, pianist Adam Birnbaum, bassist Joseph Lepore and drummer Hamir Atwal, as well as a singer, Sara Serpa, who deftly follows the alto saxophonist's lead with wordless vocals.

"I had been looking for a new foil to bring a different color to my music," said Osby, who discovered the Portugal-born, Boston-based vocalist through MySpace. "I was fishing around and checking out a page of a friend who worked with Sara. I went to her page and her singing was so melodic, so perfect. Her music sounded like it should have sounded—not manufactured, not overproduced."

Osby e-mailed her about working with him and she replied right back. They hooked up in 2006 at Berklee College of Music when Osby, during a residency there, invited Serpa to sing his music. In 2007, Osby invited her to perform with his band at two more shows.

"Singing in his band is a work in progress, but Greg is a musician with a long career who has experienced many different things in music," Serpa said. "My aspiration is to absorb all I can while I share the stage with him as a singer, composer and improviser. He's giving me the opportunity to be exposed to challenging musical environments."

Serpa added that early in their working relationship, Osby also brought up another topic of discussion. "There was the emerging idea of creating a new label, and he suggested that I could be a part of it," she said.

So, instead of Inner Circle being a vanity project, Osby chose to make it a bona fide label that would expand its roster to new musicians he scouted. "I decided to record myself as well as find hot, young talent," Osby said. "People are always coming to me with their demos. They're storming my dressing room because they know I'm keeping my ear to the street. I'm always on the lookout for the best."

That's been Osby's track record over the years, with his '90s bands



Greg Osby
at Chicago's
Green Mill
on Aug. 29

MARK SHELDON

providing the launching pads for such artists as Jason Moran, Stefon Harris, Tarus Mateen, Nasheet Waits and Rodney Green. "It's always been a revolving door where people move on to work on their own or with other musicians," Osby said. "I give them rope and let them run."

To develop Inner Circle's roster, Osby used the knowledge he acquired while recording for Blue Note. He singles out Bruce Lundvall, the label's head.

"Even when I was dropped by Blue Note, I felt the decision came from on high and not from Bruce, who was always a soldier for the music,"

Osby said. "Even with all the outlandish experiments I recorded, Bruce never intervened in my creativity, my sense of adventure and integrity. I observed Bruce, which primed me to do what I'm doing now."

So far, Osby has assembled seven artists to record for Inner Circle, including Serpa (who recorded *Praia*), alto saxophonist Logan Richardson and vibes player Mike Pinto. Richardson, who just completed his first Inner Circle album, *Ethos*, also met Osby for the first time virtually. His friend, Tommy Crane, who was Osby's former drummer, passed on Richardson's first album, *Cerebral Flow*. Osby was impressed and e-mailed the saxophonist to invite him to join Inner Circle.

"Working with Greg allows me to see how specific he is, all in the same breath of being a true believer in the first take," Richardson said. "Greg creates a breeding ground of creativity, to allow the freshest content of improvised life to flow and breathe."

Pinto, who has been transcribing Osby's music since college, agrees. "The greatest thing in working with Greg and Inner Circle is freedom," Pinto said. "I can play any music and use any musician I want to create my projects. Greg picks you because he trusts your musicality, and with that trust comes freedom."

Pinto is releasing his debut album, *Prologue*, on Inner Circle with Serpa and Richardson in his band. It includes two early Osby tunes from *Season Of Renewal*, as well as a piece that features Serpa layering three vocals above a vibrant rhythmic section. "There is no piano or guitar playing chords, just the vibes laying down some harmony with the vocals," Pinto said. "It's a chamber-like sound that came out beautiful, but I don't believe I would have been given such an opportunity on a different label."

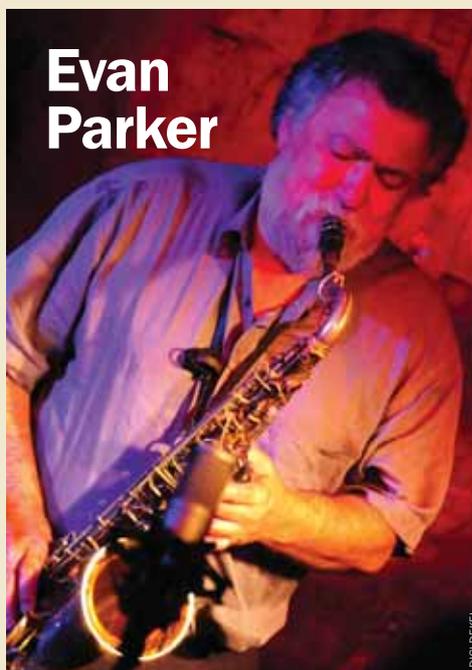
That's music to Osby's ears, who wants his label mates to seek adventure. But he also expects his crew to have their feet firmly planted when it comes to getting the word out on their albums. "Each artist will have stock in his or her own product," he said. "They won't be able to bellyache when nothing happens because of their record company's lack of support. You've got to use e-mail blasts and grassroots marketing. This is a great education for them, forcing them to be entrepreneurs as well as artists."

Pinto recognizes this in light of the rise of virtual record stores. "The Internet has created a new world where an artist doesn't need large companies to promote, distribute and record their products," Pinto said. "Inner Circle is taking advantage of all of this and allowing the artists to take back control of the music."

As for Inner Circle's future, Osby is not short on ideas beyond music. "I'm thinking literary works, film, spoken word, dance choreography," Osby said. "I want to look at the bigger artistic picture. It used to be that people from the different art worlds knew each other and mingled. I'd like to see that happen again." —Dan Ouellette

Backstage With ...

By Barry Davis



British reedist Evan Parker has been at the forefront of European free improvisation for more than 40 years. He still maintains a crowded performing and recording schedule all year round. In August he appeared with Spanish pianist Agustí Fernández and Israeli reedman Assif Tsahar at the latter's Levontin 7 club in Tel Aviv before heading off to Berlin to take part in the Globe Unity Orchestra's celebration of pianist Alexander Von Schlippenbach's 70th birthday.

Where do you think free improvisation is heading?

Free improvisation always heads for the unknown, but as more of the acoustic universe is mapped, the harder that is to find. The work with the Electro-Acoustic Ensemble is the most radical of the musics that I am involved in. After the new record *The Moment's Energy* is released early next year, I hope there will be more chances to play with the latest version of the group, but it is up to 14 pieces now. That requires a different level of financial commitment from promoters. Nevertheless, even the simplest option—playing solo—still provides a challenge, and I am working on the next solo record at the moment.

Which musicians have you enjoyed/do you enjoy working with most?

Without being evasive, it is often true that

the ones that you enjoy playing with most are also the ones who can irritate the most. A certain amount of friction is necessary to get the best out of one another.

Do you still use circular breathing a lot? What does that add to the way you play?

I used the technique more in the solo concert. In a group situation it is more important to phrase with the other players, although it can sometimes be useful to set up a ground tone or something.

Do you feel you bring something non-American to what you do?

This music transcends nationalisms. The only imperative is for a musician to find his or her own sound.

Do you feel that coming up mostly in Europe, away from New York, allowed you more freedom to develop as an artist?

The absolute bedrock of my survival has been the German scene. I have been sustained through [the late double bassist Peter] Kowald, [saxophonist Peter] Brötzmann and Schlippenbach. None of the other scenes, beautiful as they are, have been as consistent or supportive.

Does your technique develop all the time?

Yes, but at a slower and slower pace.

Do you absorb ethnic, or other cultural influences, in your playing and composing?

My period of research in those areas is less active than it used to be, but I hope the lessons I learned, especially from Korean traditional music, are adequately disguised. I am not interested in faux ethnicity.

How do you compose?

The short answer is by improvising. In certain situations I may jot down a few notes or suggestions about structure, but I have never been fluent in notation. I have had the pleasure of working those who are—Kenny Wheeler, Barry Guy, Django Bates, Anthony Braxton and Richard Barrett come to mind and their skills in that department only serve to remind me of my limitations. I am working on a book of studies, but there is no great pressure. I am better when I can take my time.

DB

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Riffs



Toledo Honors Tatum: Art Tatum's hometown of Toledo, Ohio, will honor the pianist with a memorial sculpture that will be unveiled in October 2009. Sculptor Cork Marcheschi designed the 27-foot spiraling tower, which is made of black and white stainless steel glass and represents a piano's 88 keys. Details: arttatummemorial.org

Alaska Air Saves Portland: Alaska Airlines has stepped in to sponsor the Portland Jazz Festival, which had faced cancellation next year. The 6th Annual Alaska Airlines Portland Jazz Festival presented by The Oregonian A&E will take place Feb. 13–22, 2009. Details: pdxjazz.com

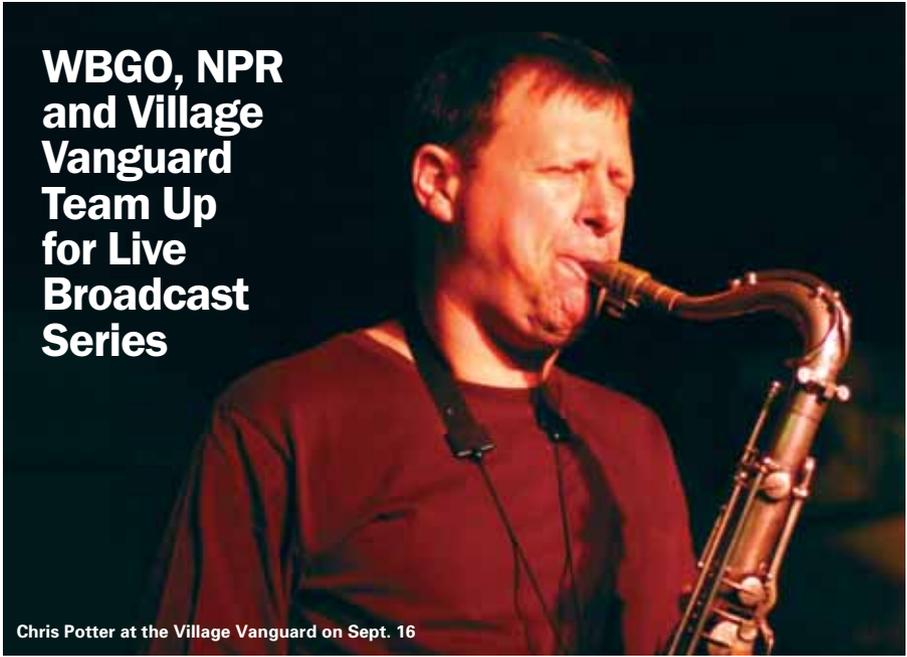
Victoriaville Postponed: The Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville in Victoriaville, Quebec, will move its 26th event from next year to May 2010. Details: fimav.qc.ca

Ertegun Compiled: Rhino Handmade is releasing a five-disc box set to commemorate the artists that Nesuhi Ertegun produced at Atlantic Records. The collection of recordings from Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus and others was the late Joel Dorn's last production. Details: rhino.com

White Lauded: Clarinetist Dr. Michael White received the 2008 NEA National Heritage Fellowship award in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 17. Details: basinstreetrecords.com

RIP, Al Gallodoro: Saxophonist Al Gallodoro died on Oct. 4 at his home in Oneonta, N.Y. He was 95. Gallodoro played saxophone and clarinet with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and later performed classical music with the NBC Symphony. After he moved to New York in 1981, Gallodoro continued playing with local jazz groups until shortly before his death.

WBGO, NPR and Village Vanguard Team Up for Live Broadcast Series



Chris Potter at the Village Vanguard on Sept. 16

JOHN ROGERS

When guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel plays New York's Village Vanguard on Jan. 7, 2009, music fans around the world will be able to hear the show live, despite the historic club's 135-seat capacity. They'll be able to see the Vanguard's cozy red room and look closely at details like the speed of Rosenwinkel's fretwork. They'll even be able to chat about the show with another audience member: WBGO Special Projects Producer Josh Jackson.

Since September, Jackson and a team from National Public Radio, Newark, N.J.-based WBGO and the club have broadcast a different show every month live, for free, and with an interactive user interface that is permanently archived on NPR's music web page. This year's performance series included Guillermo Klein, Bill Frisell, Paul Motion, Joe Lovano, Brian Blade, Uri Caine, Kenny Barron, Bill Charlap, Chris Potter, Ravi Coltrane and Cedar Walton. Plans are in the works for more shows well into 2009.

Potter, who has already developed a strong online audience through his work with ArtistShare, Bloomido and Chris Potter Radio, said the benefits of participating in the broadcast far outweighed any downsides to offering free music.

"Few people are going to avoid purchasing our CD just because they heard us on the radio," Potter said. "It just might introduce the music to some people who wouldn't otherwise have known about it. Like most musicians these days, the lion's share of my income comes from performing live, so anything that might help to grow the audience is worth a shot."

Jackson and his colleagues at WBGO had been considering for some time developing a live series at the Vanguard, hoping to offer what he calls "a day in the life of the historic club." With the advent of NPR's new music page and

their increasing prioritization of jazz programming, it made sense for Newark's jazz radio giant to partner with a national affiliate and make the idea a reality.

"The Vanguard is the pillar of jazz," said NPR Music Executive Director Anya Grundmann. "It's one of our goals to become a location for people who love jazz and who are new to it," something the Vanguard's varied programming and trusted name makes easier.

Meanwhile, the success of the station's new music page—Grundmann estimated traffic there to be two-and-a-half times higher than that of the original site—makes the music accessible for a wider audience.

While Jackson said that it's hard to determine how many people are tuning in, and where they're tuning in from, there's a remarkable contrast between the potential size of this audience and the limitations his team is faced with while recording.

"Creating and maintaining transparency is difficult for a radio/concert recording crew in a small space like the Vanguard," Jackson said. "We keep the need for space to a bare minimum. I have a temporary office in the Vanguard kitchen and recording assistant Josh Webb mans the mic preamps from stage left near the drummer. Recording engineer David Tallacksen mixes on the coat check room. That's going to end soon, and we'll be jammed between the ice machine and the men's room."

Rosenwinkel's upcoming performance will not only be streamed live but will be recorded and available for download, signaling change in the way jazz is consumed. It's about time, according to Jackson.

"While this idea is de rigeur in the indie blogosphere," Jackson said, "we're literally on the bleeding edge of new media distribution for jazz." —Jennifer Odell

Owl Studios Documents Rising Wave of Indiana Musicians

Owl Studios is writing a new chapter for Indianapolis jazz history, as it records jazz artists from its home state and searches for talent from beyond Hoosier borders.

Label founder J. Allan Hall started laying the groundwork for the business three years ago. During the day, he runs an insurance firm in Indianapolis. But he also has a love for jazz and a basement recording studio for his keyboard and drum playing sons.

"Having been a fan of the Jazz Kitchen, saxophonist Rob Dixon and the Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra, we recorded them in our basement," Hall said. "Rob had not recorded. He's one of the great musicians in town and he didn't have a CD. That was our first project."

Owl Studios' roster now includes trumpeter Derrick Gardner, pianist Steve Allee, the Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra, bassist Bill Moring and Garaj Mahal. The label recently signed pianist Monika Herzig and next year's plans include a solo project from guitarist Fareed Haque.

As co-leader of Owl's A&R team, Dixon has helped make the label artist-driven. He's also been busy as a sideman for the company. Besides his own releases (like this year's *Reinvention*), Dixon appeared on Owl albums from vocalist Cynthia Layne, Gardner, Allee and the Buselli-

Wallarab Jazz Orchestra. He also can put the label in a broader perspective, having spent time playing in New York before returning to Indianapolis to raise a family.

"It's not the same jazz of yesteryear of Indiana Avenue," Dixon said. "It's a new version of music from Indianapolis. Those guys learned by playing in all those great clubs. We're getting the experience in the clubs and in the studio now."

Hall said that the art of producing CDs has been more of an education than running a record business.

"You could record an album in your garage and get software for your computer," Hall said. "We've learned more about mixing, mastering and artwork to make a professional product. We want to put out a product that we are all proud of."

Allee, a longtime friend of Dixon, has recorded two albums for Owl (*Colors* and *Dragonfly*) and the label also picked up Allee's four previous albums he self-produced.

"I had my fingers crossed that someone might be willing to do it," Allee said. "To be associated with people who love the music and come to all the gigs, it's another musical direction."

Dixon added that the homegrown nature of



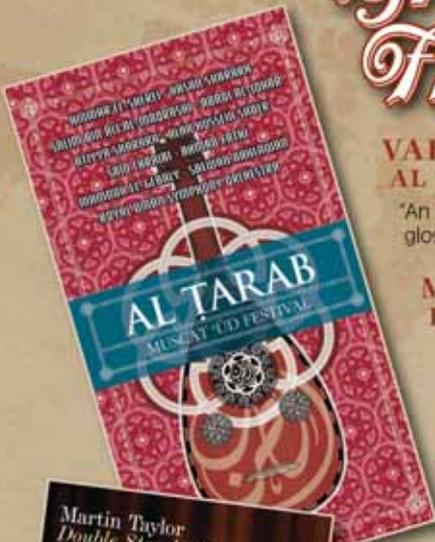
Rob Dixon

MARK SHELTON

Owl Studios is the reason for its future potential.

"We are a family, much like the early Blue Note or Chess labels," Dixon said. "There's a good vibe for the label. We're like a team cheering each other on."
—Matthew Socey

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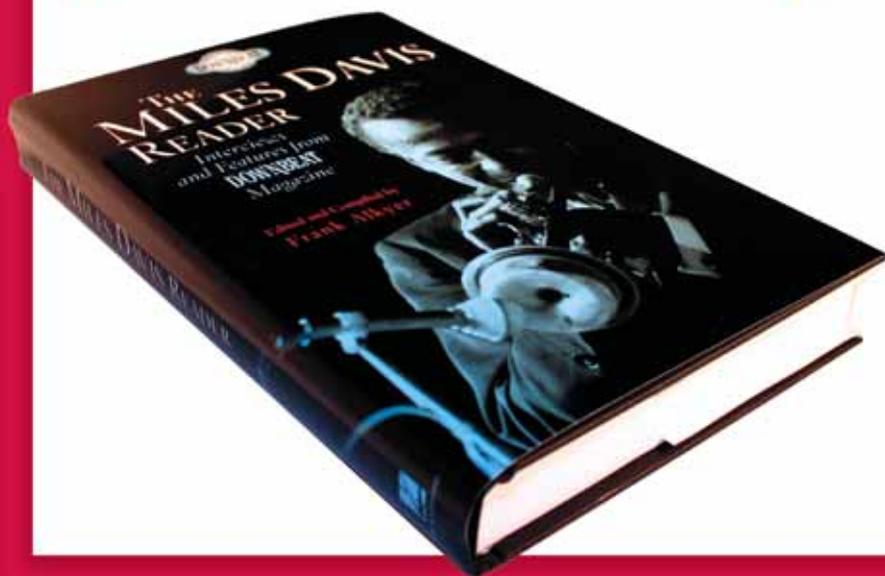
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EUROPEAN SCENE

By Peter Margasak

Jazz's roots in Europe are strong. This column looks at the musicians, labels, venues, institutions and events moving the scene forward "across the pond." For questions, comments and news about European jazz, e-mail europescene@downbeat.com.

Punkt Brings Live Remixes to Europe's Festival Landscape

Any weekend it seems there are a handful of jazz festivals happening somewhere in Europe. The Punkt Festival in Kristiansand, Norway, has a programming esthetic that makes it stand alone.

The brainchild of electronic musicians and producers Erik Honoré and Jan Bang, the fourth annual installment of Punkt this September found it reaching a new high-water mark. Punkt focuses on the live remix. Groups and individuals give a live performance at the Adegger Theater, and immediately afterward a number of electronic producers and musicians transform elements of that set in real-time in a smaller, more intimate space in the building's basement. When the minimalist Swiss band Nik Bärtsch's Ronin played a monotonous if sharply executed set, a subsequent remix featuring Bang, trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer and guitarist Eivind Aarset improved it, adding new instrumental textures and melodies while sampling specific sections of Bärtsch's piano work and manipulating them into something more compelling.

Bang and Honoré have been working on and off together for more than two decades. They recently produced and provided much of the material on Norwegian trumpeter Arve Henriksen's *Cartography* (ECM). According to Honoré, the live remixing, "had become an important part of the way



Erik Honoré

we approached the production process, even to the extent that it became an esthetic ideal, which is the opposite of the photographic approach to producing records."

In 2000 the pair experimented with some concerts using the live remix process in a series of concerts at Sørlandets Art Museum in Kristiansand, but they yearned to make the concept central to the event, so after several years of brainstorming and organizing they launched Punkt in 2005.

"The big question was will this merely be a technical gimmick, an idea that looks good on paper, or will it actually bring interesting musical results?" Honoré said. "After the first festival in 2005, we saw that it worked, and, of course, this had to do with what we 'fed into the system.'"

What the system has been fed is a dis-

parate cast of musicians working in a wide range of genres and approaches. Most of those artists routinely blur stylistic lines, from the worlds of electronic music (Scanner, Phonophani), traditional folk (Marie Boine, Nils Okland, June Tabor), experimental (Bernhard Günter, Rafael Toral), art pop (Hanne Hukkelberg, Anja Garbarek), jazz (Hakon Kornstad, Iain Ballamy, Molvaer), and contemporary classical (Gavin Bryars, Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra)—with plenty of figures that reside in the cracks between them (Jon Hassell, David Toop).

Honoré understands that the experimental nature of the remixes doesn't guarantee success, which is why he and Bang don't charge admission for these performances here. Punkt has grown each year, adding new components as it goes on. This year included an installation by Brian Eno, seminars and a showcase for young, upcoming groups. Bang and Honoré have also been taking Punkt on the road, including a three-night stand in London's King's Place with some of the festival's core collaborators.

"A network of brilliant and generous musicians are willing to take part in the experiment," Honoré said. "The experience and musicianship that we hopefully have gathered along the way can make it more than an experiment." **DB**

More info: punktfestival.no

Brady Attacks Los Angeles with 20-Guitar Army

Montreal-based guitarist Tim Brady blends the discipline of a classical player with the abandon of a rocker as leader of his own Bradyworks ensemble. So it wasn't a huge leap for him to deal with the unorthodox concept of creating the piece "20 Quarter Inch Jacks" for 20 electric guitarists. In January, he'll spend a month in residency at CalArts, giving master classes and preparing the guitar-wielding troops leading up to the performance of that piece at Los Angeles' REDCAT theater in the Disney Concert Hall.

In the score, which was originally commissioned in 2002 by Montreal's Festival Les Coups de Théâtre, Brady combines notated and improvisational tactics. He explains this approach as, "a more natural way of using electric guitars as notation is usually not the strong point of an electric guitarist's background.

"There are also tons of great sounds you can get out of an electric guitar which are poorly

suited to Western-style notation," Brady continued. "I had to find ways around that. There are even a few spots where the guitarist must speak and yell. It was commissioned by a theater festival, so I explore the theatricality of the project."

Working with multiple electric guitars triggers comparisons to guitar army pioneer Glenn Branca, whose 100-guitarist "Hallucination City" was performed outside New York's World Trade Center in 2001 (a few months before 9/11) and at Disney Hall in 2006.

"Glenn's music is more about texture and hypnotic states than my music, which is more about creating a sense of a dramatic sound play, a sonic theater without a specific narrative," Brady said. "With 20 guitars I get the best of both worlds. We have enough guitars that we can go for the 'big guitar' texture thing at times, but we can pull it down to small groups to create a more intimate, detailed chamber-like quality." —Josef Woodard

Tim Brady



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JAAP VAN DE KLONP

Jazz Grave Shots Compiled for New Book

Dutch photographer Jaap van de Klomp's recent book, *Jazz Lives*, takes unique approach to honoring the music's great heroes. Rather than featuring their portraits, the book amasses his photos of their final resting places.

"The idea came when I read Jimmy Smith's obituary," Klomp said. "I told a friend of mine, 'Before you know it, there will be only headstones left.' That's when I knew that this would be something great to do."

With more than 150 color photographs of headstones, unmarked graves and one cremation urn/living room shrine (for Clifford Jordan), *Jazz Lives* is the end result of the photographer's worldwide research. Klomp said a friend paid for the first part of the project while his publisher, V.I.P., and other foundations supported the latter stages of its production.

The photos in *Jazz Lives* show that while some celebrated musicians are memorialized with ornate headstones (Miles Davis) others have surprisingly plain markers (Frank Sinatra). Albert Ayler and Joe Henderson's grave sites mention their military service, but not their music. Dizzy Gillespie's grave is unmarked.

"I heard later on that Dizzy's family decided to leave it unmarked so it would not turn into a place that a lot of people visited," Klomp said. "It is strange—he was a famous musician, why wouldn't you want people to pay their respect?"

Klomp said the most difficult grave to locate was Jimmy Blanton's, as the bassist died at 23 in 1942 and he could only find one obituary from that time. Klomp used that information to track down an African-American cemetery in Blanton's hometown of Chattanooga, Tenn. After making a few contacts, he located the Blanton family plot.

"I saw the names of his father and mother on headstones, and then I saw his little headstone," Klomp said. "I wanted to find it because he meant so much for modern bass playing."

While the photos of these grave sites lend a sense of serenity to several musicians who led such turbulent lives, Klomp said he had a more simple purpose.

"I was just happy to make trips, take photos and put them together and thought the end result would be interesting."
—Aaron Cohen

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New Commissions Highlight Chicago Jazz Festival @ 30

This past Labor Day weekend, the Chicago Jazz Festival celebrated its 30th anniversary. Recognizing the magnitude of this accomplishment, the Jazz Institute of Chicago, which programs the festival, pulled out all the stops. Perhaps the most welcome components were the energy and resources put into original commissions.

Veteran Los Angeles bandleader Gerald Wilson and Chicago trombonist T.S. Galloway (a veteran of Count Basie's Orchestra as well as the homegrown soul-jazz combo The Awakening) presented new works, but the most impressive new works came from pianist Vijay Iyer, trumpeter Dave Douglas and Chicago-based multi-reedist Edward Wilkerson, Jr., who was this year's artist-in-residence.

Although Iyer's composition was instrumental, his seven-part suite "Far From Over" was nonetheless charged with meaning. Inspired by a quote by a relative of Sean Bell after his killers, New York policemen, were found not guilty, Iyer broadened the work's meaning by referring to the upcoming election. Indian classical music has long been a crucial if rigorously integrated reference point for Iyer, but he made the connection explicit here through electric guitarist Prasanna, a dazzling musician who's found a

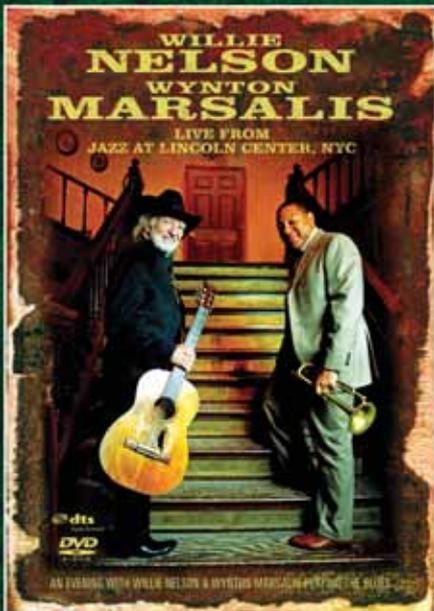
way to adapt Carnatic music to his instrument without the use of slides or jerry-rigged drone strings. His fluid, quicksilver improvisation snaked through Iyer's jagged, rhythmically dense compositions like a double-speed sitar. Bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Marcus Gilmore did a bang-up job navigating the tough grooves, and while all of the pieces were impressive, a particular highlight was "Out The Tunnel," Iyer's liberal rewrite of a tune called "Buzzin'" by the British electro-rock band Asian Dub Foundation. The pianist, Prasanna and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire blurred the line between propulsion and melodic elaboration.

Douglas used his work to salute prominent Chicagoans, although "Chicago Calling: Bowie, Barack And Brass," made its most overt tribute to trumpeter Lester Bowie. The trumpeter's five-piece Brass Ecstasy is modeled on Brass Fantasy, with tubaist Marcus Rojas laying down rubbery fatback lines and drummer Ben Perowsky ranging into expanded hip-hop breaks and blues grooves. Trombonist Luis Bonilla and French horn player Vincent Chancey, both vets of Bowie's band, and Douglas blew pinpoint riffs and alternated solos that touched on the pop sounds that Bowie transformed, but the entire set was comprised of original material.



MARK SHELDON

On the closing night, 8 Bold Souls, Wilkerson's long-running octet, gave a terrific performance, including a pair of tunes with vocalist Dee Alexander, a Chicago singer on the verge of a breakout. The pieces with Alexander took a stripped-down approach, putting the focus on the singer—including the brisk and humorous "What The Heck," which sounded like a lost Lambert, Hendricks & Ross gem à la "Twisted." The group's strong new tunes played to its contrapuntal strengths. —Peter Margasak



WILLIE NELSON & WYNTON MARSALIS "Live From Jazz At Lincoln Center New York City"

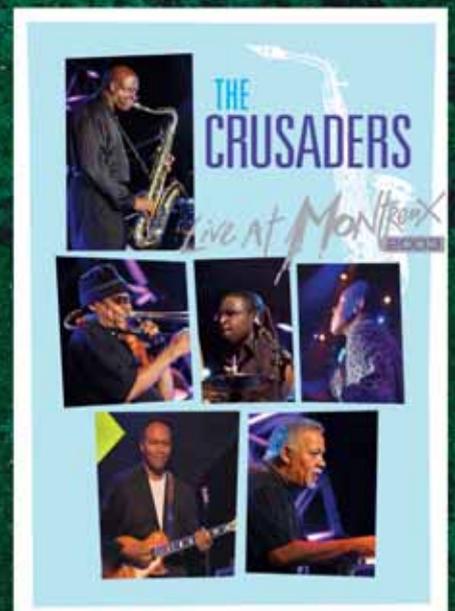
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Saxophone Legends Set Pace at Vitoria

In the era of Rafael Nadal, Carlos Sastre and a Euro Cup trophy, it's not unusual to hear Spaniards filling a sports arena with lusty chants of players' names. But after a second set of championship proportions, it was Sonny Rollins' name that filled the Mendizorroza basketball arena—the primary venue for the 32nd Vitoria-Gasteiz Jazz Festival, which ran July 13–19. The capacity crowd of 3,700 was enthusiastic after his first set, one of those collections of standards that the giant can toss off with regularity. They especially loved the second set, which began with a calypso romp and ended with an extended funk vamp, with good reason. It was filled with moments that remind you that Rollins remains an improvisational colossus when the spirit moves him.

Vitoria-Gasteiz also hosted tenor titans Charles Lloyd and Wayne Shorter in a matinee performance at the gorgeously preserved Art Deco Teatro Principal. Lloyd proved the stronger, fronting his quartet with Jason Moran, Reuben Rogers and Eric Harland. From his opening soulful incantation on soprano to the concluding headlong tumble through Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing" on tenor, Lloyd was energized by his young band. He even danced rapturously during a particularly dynamic Moran solo.

As always, Shorter moved to his own beat, sometimes choosing to engage in the harmonic gambits proffered by pianist Danilo Pérez, and passing others by. Playing mostly tenor, he concentrated on vertical phrasing rather than melodic development, building to climactic moments of release that were accentuated by drummer



Charles Lloyd

JOSU ZARBA

Brian Blade. On soprano, Shorter created an ecstatic pointillism, sounding less fully engaged than he has on other occasions with this quartet.

Herbie Hancock's River of Possibilities project followed Shorter. Although Hancock's show gave Dave Holland more time on Fender bass than he's had since leaving Miles Davis in 1969 and concluded with a high-volume workout on "Chameleon," the long, virtuosic, acoustic solos by Holland and Hancock were the highlights as they had been on previous tour stops.

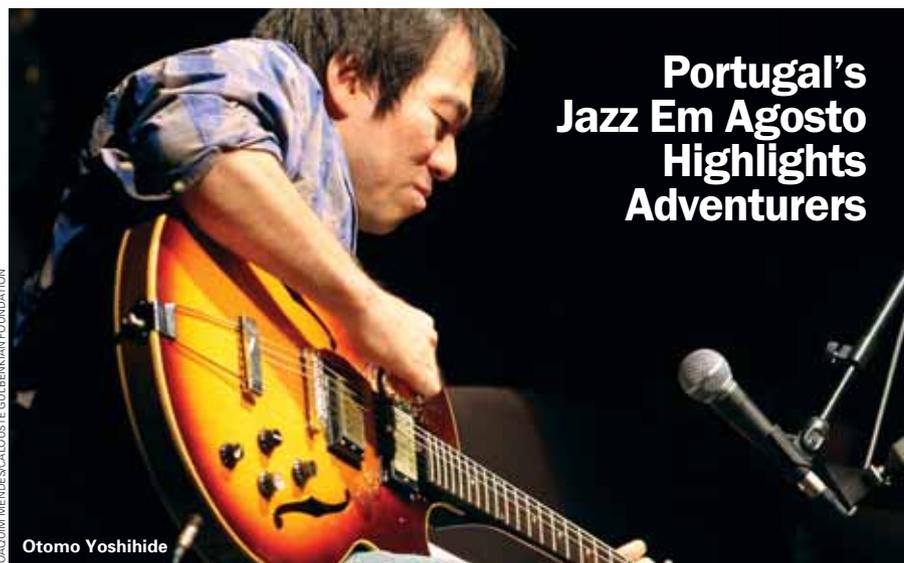
The Maria Schneider Orchestra is also a tour-hardened group—hitting Vitoria-Gasteiz after more than a solid week of dates—with Brazilian accordionist Toninho Ferragutti well-integrated into the band. Ferragutti and guitarist Ben Monder created a rich sound tapestry on "Green Piece," and Ingrid Jensen moved lithely between trumpet, flugelhorn and electronics to paint watercolors on Schneider's "The 'Pretty' Road."

Madrid guitarist Javier Limón drew an enthusiastic response, leading a strong tentet that featured versatile drummer Horacio "El

Negro" Hernández, hard-driving bassist Daniel Noel and the energetic, rough-edged Spanish singer Buika.

Only a guest during Limón's set, Buika was more impressive in her brief time onstage than either star vocalist Cassandra Wilson or Milton Nascimento. Wilson gave her band—albeit a high-profile one with drummer Herlin Riley and bassist Reginald Veal—much of the spotlight as she coasted through eight songs. While a show earlier in the tour had illustrated her bluesy side, her meager Vitoria-Gasteiz set leaned heavily on standards like "Sweet Lorraine," "Caravan" and "Them There Eyes," and was the weaker for it. Nascimento, whose voice was once a supple, lyrical instrument, has lost much of his range at 65 and acquired an unappealing Elvis-in-Vegas attitude. His performance seemed rote and remote.

At the other end of the spectrum, young Belgian pianist Jef Neve's enthusiastic performance with his trio in the Teatro Principal was a festival standout. —James Hale



Portugal's Jazz Em Agosto Highlights Adventurers

Otomo Yoshihide

Lisbon's Jazz Em Agosto festival is that rare bird in the world of jazz festivals: a high-profile event that operates free of the strictures imposed by corporate sponsors and huge ticket sales. It's a testament to artistic director Rui Neves that the broad range of challenging music he programs attracts a solid audience. Generous financing from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation—which also houses a wonderful art museum that served as the festival's site—also helps.

The 2008 installment of Jazz Em Agosto—which ran during the first two weekends in August—embraced "extensions" as its thematic organizing principle, with that notion twisted in two directions, one for each weekend of music.

Music from Japan got the spotlight on the opening days—only the closing concert, a fantastic improvised duo of alto saxophonist John Zorn and electric guitarist Fred Frith, lacked players from that country, and both of these

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American-based musicians have long been advocates for Japanese music.

That night started with guitarist Otomo Yoshihide presenting his dazzling New Jazz Orchestra in a program featuring Eric Dolphy tunes. This group has already recorded an end-to-end cover of Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*. The 10 Japanese musicians—including Sachiko M on sinewaves, bassist Taisei Aoki and pop singer Kahimi Karie contributing hushed, wordless vocals—teamed up with Swedish reedist Mats Gustafsson, Dutch pianist Cor Fuhler and German trumpeter Axel Dörner who blended right into the sumptuous ensemble. The arrangements took plenty of liberties with tunes like "Hat And Beard" and "Straight Up And Down" without surrendering their singular essence. Yoshihide placed a premium on shifting textures and densities, allowing garrulous solo passages to rise out of the simmering din briefly, before receding into the rich sonic fabric.

Satoko Fujii's quartet was less satisfying. Her Min-Yoh Ensemble, with husband and trumpeter Natsuki Tamura, trombonist Curtis Hasselbring and accordionist Andrea Parkins, drew upon Japanese folk music. But the transformations felt half-baked, and the music never achieved lift-off despite Hasselbring's fine playing. Still, Fujii eclipsed the clumsy collage of styles doled by the sax-bass-piano trio Paap.

Much of the music during the fest's second weekend was connected to a pair of veteran figures, one present (Peter Brötzmann), one not (Anthony Braxton). Brötzmann's mighty Chicago Tentet closed out the festival in grand, cataclysmic fashion. This free-jazz orchestra continues to gain power and discipline without sacrificing spontaneity. Braxton acolyte and bandmate trumpeter Taylor Ho Bynum led a superb sextet that eclipsed its debut recording, with small sections of the band providing yin-and-yang contrasts and blends, none more excit-

ing than the clean but wonderfully tangled strings of notes picked out by guitarist Mary Halvorson dancing with effects-heavy fluid lines from Evan O'Reilly. The following day, Bynum's reedist Matt Bauder, another Braxton product, led his wonderful, minimalist trio *Memorize The Sky* patiently and slowly, carving out spontaneous meditations luxuriating in the sheer beauty of sound.

Pianist Sylvie Courvoisier's excellent Lonelyville band gave a terrific performance, with the elegant, almost virtuosic lines of violinist Mark Feldman and cellist Vincent Courtois counterbalancing the texture-oriented output of drummer Gerald Cleaver and laptopter Iku Mori, as the leader split the difference. Percussionist Fritz Hauser and the duo of bassist Barre Phillips and French accordionist Pascal Contet also gave lovely, intimate performances where small sounds and gestures were the main focus.

—Peter Margasak

Diverse Sets Keep Monterey Exciting

It was hard not to anticipate a letdown after last year's 50th anniversary blow-out at the Monterey Jazz Festival. But this year's festival, which took place Sept. 19–21, was a strong one.

The Maria Schneider Orchestra topped the Arena shows in a sumptuous Saturday night set showcasing the festival-commissioned premiere, "Willow Lake," featuring trombonist Marshall Gilkes. Slowly developing and reprising inner voices like church bells, the pastoral yet intricately dream-weaving piece built to a joyous climax. A close second-best came Sunday night, when Wayne Shorter played a dizzying river of shape-shifting music with few familiar landmarks but indisputable internal logic.

In a smart Saturday afternoon booking that brought in new, young listeners, British pop/jazz spark plug Jamie Cullum flattened the crowd with kinetic stage moves and cheeky lyrics. This year's artist-in-residence, bassist Christian McBride, debuted a percussive, chattering new quintet with take-no-prisoners young vibist Warren Wolf. Raspy crooner Kurt Elling, sometimes wont to excess, turned in a respectfully engaging tribute to the great Johnny Hartman—John Coltrane collaborations, with pithy solos by tenor saxophonist Ernie Watts and creative arrangements by Laurence Hobgood for the string quartet ETHEL. Herbie Hancock, who closed the Arena Sunday with a sort of greatest-hits groove set—complete with keytar, "Chameleon" and an intriguing re-do of "Watermelon Man" in 17/4 time—felt like an underachiever, though his vocalist, Amy Keys, gave a gospel twist to Joni Mitchell's "River."

Out on the grounds, Anat Cohen astonished a full house with her clever ideas and agility on clarinet, playing "Jitterbug Waltz" with a Latin



beat. Junko Moriya played superb, post-bop piano, and the Bill Frisell–Matt Wilson duo waxed witty and playful, swinging with abandon on Charlie Christian's "Seven Come Eleven."

Monterey was a drummer's feast. Wilson and Brian Blade seemed to turn up everywhere; Carl Allen played with McBride; Antonio Sanchez displayed his sizzling and creative new pianoless quartet, *Migración*, with saxophonists Miguel Zenón and David Sánchez; and the great Herlin Riley drove Cassandra Wilson—or at

least tried to. Wilson's Arena set sparkled when New Orleans pianist Jonathan Batiste showed his stuff and when she dove into "Dust My Broom," but devolved into all-too-familiar territory where she seemed merely to be luxuriating in her own voice. Nancy Wilson's set at the Arena, however, was a forgivable disaster. Having lost her husband just weeks before, she turned her show into a self-pitying confessional, mixing up lyrics until folks shyly slipped away.

—Paul de Barros

Sophie Milman Trans-Continental Reflections

The evening before the 2008 Juno Awards, singer Sophie Milman performed at Earl Klugh's "Weekend of Jazz" at the Broadmoor resort in Colorado Springs, Colo. The next day, Milman was in Canada to snag that award for her second CD, *Make Someone Happy* (Koch), which was named the top jazz vocal album of the year. Both stops were a long way from her origins in Ufa, the capital of Russia's Bashkortostan Republic.

Milman was born in 1983 in the industrial city that sits on the western slope of the Ural Mountains. She lived there until she was 7 years old before emigrating to Israel. Being Western-oriented Jews, life in the former Soviet Union was particularly hard on her parents. Her father started collecting jazz albums at a young age and there was an element of rebellion in his love of the music.

Milman listened to Russian children's music that she labeled "dark and melancholy." She then added with a smile, "What in Russia isn't? The key for the songs was always a minor one so when I heard jazz I immediately thought that's cool."

With the Soviet Union crumbling, her family made a giant leap, moving to Israel. During her decade-long stay in the country, the singer studied classical piano, quickly learned English and got closer to her Jewish identity.

At 16, she moved to Canada. The journey had an enormous impact on the young singer and her music.

"When I was growing up in Israel, especially in Haifa, there was no jazz," she said. "I was a freak." That judgment may seem strange given the number of Israeli players who have made a name for themselves recently on the American jazz scene. Yet she contends that's a handful of players in a country of some 7 million.

"If there had been a jazz club, my family, who went to the symphony every week, would have been there," she said.

In Canada, Milman became a performer with a global reputation. After she was discovered in a Toronto club in late 2002, she released her first CD in 2004. That self-titled effort sold well and received critical praise, including a Juno nomination. It also earned the self-taught vocalist a devoted audience in far-flung places like Japan. In a flash, the business



ALEX COLLADO-SUNINEZ

student at the University of Toronto, who sang as a hobby, became an international touring artist while still continuing her studies.

She released *Make Someone Happy* in 2007, influenced by Carmen McRae's version of that tune recorded 20 years before Milman was born. "Carmen connects with people who know jazz in the most authentic way. Her music is real, honest and has balls," she said.

On the disc, Milman, who speaks four languages (Russian, Hebrew, French and English), also pays homage to her idol Stevie Wonder on

"Rocket Love" and to her Jewish roots on "Eli, Eli (A Walk To Caesarea)" by Hannah Senesh.

When it comes to her Wonder lust, Milman laughed and said that "it's chemical." For her, Wonder "has the most spectacular voice" as well as the ability "to do covers of songs that are better than the originals." Milman is in no rush to write her own original material.

"I don't want to write songs just for the sake of writing them," she said. "I'd rather do good covers than bad originals. There is an art to interpretation."
—Norman Provizor



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- Rufus Reid



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Grant Stewart Swing Sans Nostalgia

Tenor saxophonist Grant Stewart has been recording since he was 21, but it was a listener's comment that spurred him on as much as his studio accomplishments. He can't recall when it was, but does remember being told, "how shitty my sound was."

"That's when I started working on my tone," Stewart said this summer on the eve of his 37th birthday, which he spent flying to Japan with fellow tenorist Eric Alexander for a tour with their two-tenor unit Reeds and Deeds. "I love people like Don Byas and Coleman Hawkins, who had huge sounds, and I tried to emulate them. I'd read that Bird tried to make his horn sound like a violin, and that Coleman Hawkins played cello, so I started visualizing a stringed instrument, making the horn vibrate and resonate, filling it out, hollering into the horn."

Prompted by a crackling quartet a few hours



JOHN ABBOTT

later at Smalls—where he plays Tuesday nights when in New York—Stewart centered each note with a warmth and heft reminiscent of Sonny Rollins, Johnny Griffin, Lucky Thompson and

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, without playing any of their licks. The repertoire evoked a cusp-of-the-'60s lounge aura—less-traveled bop-era lines from Elmo Hope and George Shearing, sound-

The Curtis Brothers & Albert Rivera Litchfield–New York Continuum

Every year, the best and the brightest young jazz musicians are drawn to New York's glow. Recent arrivals include Albert Rivera with the Curtis brothers—Zaccai and Luques. They are three young artists who are part of the next wave in this jazz ritual, but rather than bonding at clubs, their team focus was forged in sunnier environs—at camp.

Saxophonist Rivera and Luques Curtis, a bassist, are 25. They met a decade ago as students at the Litchfield Jazz Camp in Connecticut. Zaccai Curtis, 26, is a pianist who became active at the camp a few years later when all three began teaching there. There, they forged a friendship that has grown into a loose network that makes life in the jazz mecca a little easier.

"Before Luques got to camp, someone said, 'You two should meet up,'" Rivera said, adding with a laugh, "I don't know why, maybe it was just because we were both minorities. So we got together the first day and I said, 'Wanna play?' The first tune we did was 'Impressions' and I thought, 'This is it!' That night, I told Luques,



Albert Rivera (left),
Luques Curtis and
Zaccai Curtis

JASON GOODMAN/PHOTOS.IG.COM

"If we ever live in the same state, or in New York, we're going to make a band together."

They're living that dream now. Rivera's latest recording, *Re-Introduction* (Turnaround), features the Curtis brothers and Ralph Peterson on drums, alongside guest appearances by trumpeters Christian Scott and Nick Roseboro, as well as saxophonist Jimmy Greene.

"Ralph is literally one take, two takes," Rivera said. "He was almost like a producer. It was my record, but I wrote it with him in mind—with him in the center of it."

The relationships with Peterson, Greene, Scott and Roseboro show the Curtis/Rivera network in full swing. Zaccai and Luques have worked in Peterson's trio as well as with Scott.

track fare, stompers and ballads drawn from the American songbook and adult pop from decades ago—but the improvisations contained no retro moments. Rather, Stewart, who describes himself as more of a note-to-note player than one who works from phrase to phrase, channeled the essence of his role models, exchanging postulations with pianist Michael Weiss, while never losing sight of the melodic core.

These esthetics imbue Stewart's recordings, including this year's *Young At Heart* (Sharp Nine), which follows 2007's *In The Still Of The Night* for the same label. Throughout the past four years, he also recorded *Shadow Of Your Smile* (Birds), *Estate* (Video Arts) and *Tenor And Soul* (Video Arts) for the Japanese market, along with two inspired Reeds and Deeds tenor dialogues—*Wailin'* and *Cookin'* (Criss Cross). On all of these discs, Stewart has carved out a distinctive niche while following an influence tree that diverges from his peers.

"It's better to see who Michael Brecker checked out than to imitate him," Stewart said. "Most of these guys, at an impressionable age, took on Michael Brecker's take on eighth notes. I chose to check out people like Sonny Rollins, Sonny Stitt, Prez and Don Byas, to see where I

wanted my eighth notes to be. There's a whole world of nuances in there, and these details are more important than playing harmony that's more abstract and outside. Those subtleties are what jazz is. The other things are more easily taught, which is why people go to schools to focus on them."

Out of Toronto, Stewart learned the nuances early on from his father, an English teacher and club guitarist who transcribed solos by Wardell Gray, Charlie Parker and Lester Young for his pre-teen son, and jammed with him in impro-

vised duets. A gigging musician from the age 13, Stewart moved to New York in 1990 with funds from a Canadian Arts Council grant.

"I couldn't decide to play another way—that's the way I hear it," Stewart said. "Fashion comes and goes. Every year, all the kids imitate the hot player at the moment, they all end up playing in his concept, then it goes out of style. But they're stuck playing that way. I always tell people to be careful who they choose to imitate. Things have to stand the test of time before they show their true color."

—Ted Panken

Greene is a mentor to all three and Roseboro, a fine young trumpeter, is another Litchfield alum.

"We all play together," Zaccai said. "It doesn't matter how."

"It's cool because we've got to keep each other working and keep each other sane," Rivera said.

In addition to his own quartet, Rivera often teaches and works with the likes of drummer Winard Harper. Zaccai subs for about eight different bands, from jazz to Latin to hip-hop. Luques is in demand as a bassist, playing most recently with trumpeter Sean Jones.

"I'm lucky," Luques said. "Everybody needs a bassist. I work all the time."

In addition, the Curtis brothers have two other projects. Insight, their promising next-wave Latin jazz septet, released *A Genesis* (Curtis Brothers Music) in 2007. The recording highlights Zaccai's compositional skills and Luques' rock-solid bass lines. It also features Greene. Their other project, the Rhythmic Prophecies Quartet, has toured Bangladesh, Mubai, Bangalore, Sri Lanka, Calcutta and Maldives as part of the U.S. State Department's "American Music Abroad" project.

Now that they've been part of the New York jazz scene for a few years, all three musicians see increased opportunities. They show reverence for every jazz musician who has helped them along the way.

"When you're just getting into jazz, every little thing that's said from an artist who you respect, it stays," Zaccai said. —Frank Alkyer

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Johnathan Blake Upstart's Ubiquity

As a teenager, Johnathan Blake received a blessing from the late high priest of jazz drumming: Max Roach.

"He came up to me and he's like, 'You're the 17-year-old boy wonder,'" said Blake, who met Roach at a jazz camp. "He had a lot of encouraging words. He's like, 'Man, I've been hearing a lot about you. People have been talking.'"

People still talk about Blake these days, but the discussion centers less on his age (he's now 32) than on his ubiquity. His ferocious drumming backed such recent releases as Donny McCaslin's *Recommended Tools* (Greenleaf) and Joe Locke's *Force Of Four* (Origin).

Blake's journey from promising adolescent to first-call pro bears all the markers of a classic coming-of-age jazz tale—including guidance from seasoned mentors before later forays into composition and band leadership. It just so happens that one of those mentors was his father, jazz violinist John Blake, Jr.

The younger Blake initially followed in his father's footsteps, starting on the violin at age 3. He soon added percussion to his musical arsenal, going on to play drums in youth bands around

Philadelphia. Blake's musical vernacular expanded when he harnessed up for his high school drumline, and it became clear that his heart laid with the drums. He decided to hang up the violin for good. His father acquiesced, but only under the condition that he begin piano lessons, which Blake now considers a blessing. "It helped me be more conscious of melodies and learning how to phrase tunes," he said.

Still, he struggled with self-control. Then came a lesson in fundamentals from Rufus Reid, when Blake studied with him at William Paterson University.

"For a month, this cat didn't let me play anything except for the cymbal and the hi-hat," Blake said. "The reason he did that was so I could get the clarity of my cymbal sound. Later on, I was like, 'I want to thank you, because it helped shape my playing.'"

Having made these strides in his early college days, Blake developed a reputation as a gifted musician, and opportunities abounded. Saxophonist Oliver Lake hired the 20-year-old for a weekly gig at the Knitting Factory. Then, John Stubblefield, a sax player in Lake's band,



MICHAEL JACKSON

took a liking to Blake's ride cymbal playing and introduced him to the Mingus Big Band. He was hired for a European tour and manned the drum chair in the band for the next 10 years, along the way recording with Randy Brecker and Conrad Herwig.

While Blake has become a mainstay on the New York scene, he also recently finished his master's degree in composition at Rutgers University, and he'll showcase his writing in the studio this winter with a quintet that includes pianist Robert Glasper and saxophonist Jaleel Shaw. He plans to put out the album himself.

—Eric Bishop

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Keith Jarrett

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By continually questioning, reexamining and reinventing his music, Keith Jarrett has a developed Hall of Fame jazz career

By Ted Panken Photo by Rose Anne Jarrett

‘What Am I Doing?’

Hall of Fame

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Awards usually don't mean much to Keith Jarrett. But to be the newest member of the DownBeat Hall of Fame resonates deeply. "I got DownBeat as a teenager, and I'm aware of the magazine's history and deep roots, and of the people I'm joining," Jarrett said. "So it's meaningful, as far as people viewing my work as important."

The pianist's spoke from his New Jersey home on a Tuesday afternoon in September, two days before he commenced training for a Chicago concert on the upcoming Saturday night by his trio with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette. Such preparation is necessary as Jarrett, 63, engages in a rigorous regimen to stave off the effects of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, the illness that almost cut short his career a decade ago.

Jarrett's fall concert itinerary celebrates his 25th year working with Peacock and DeJohnette. They first convened in January 1983 for a three-day recording session that produced the ECM albums *Standards (Volumes 1 and 2)* and *Changes*, recently reissued as *Setting Standards: New York Sessions*. The group's 18th date, *My Foolish Heart*, documents a 2001 concert of songbook repertoire at the Montreux Jazz Festival; its 19th, *Yesterdays*, a similarly programmed 2001 concert in Tokyo, comes out in February.

Had Jarrett only recorded and performed with this interactive supergroup over the past quarter-century, he would be a major signpost on the jazz timeline. But his ECM catalog over this span also includes original compositions for baroque organ, clavichord, harpsichord, string quartet and the trio; interpretations of the keyboard music of Bach, Mozart, Handel, Shostakovich and Arvo Pärt; and six improvised solo concerts (the seventh is



scheduled for a late-2009 release) in which Jarrett creates cogent musical architecture from a tabula rasa. He first posed this challenge for himself in 1971, while still in the employ of Miles Davis, and pursued it with increasing frequency through the following dozen years. During the '70s, Jarrett also led and composed enduring books of music for two quartets—the “European” Quartet, organized at the instigation of ECM head Manfred Eicher, comprised Scandinavian musicians Jan Garbarek, Palle Danielsson and Jon Christensen, and the “American” Quartet, which Jarrett formed by adding Dewey Redman to his cusp-of-the-'70s trio with Charlie Haden and Paul Motian.

The solo concerts earned Jarrett international celebrity. But transgenre popularity in no way cost him peer-group respect—pianists in the jazz and classical arenas consider him iconic for a variety of reasons. Eicher himself refers to “his phrasing, touch, quality of suspension, way of rubato playing and the influences from Chopin and Debussy that I grew up with as a European.”

Then there’s the rhythmic ingenuity and the bottomless well of melody that characterize Jarrett’s improvisations, and the seemingly infallible chops with which he executes them. However, it is arguable that Jarrett’s most enduring contribution to the sound of jazz today lays less in pianistic derring-do than the expansive compositional strategies that he deployed for the quartets, which such pan-generational luminaries as Joe Lovano, Branford Marsalis, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Robert Glasper cite as crucial to the way they think about music.

“I don’t sense it,” Jarrett said. “But possibly one reason is because the quartets were so personal. I took into account everything about those guys while I was writing the pieces. For example, Dewey didn’t like to play on chords. Another example is *Luminescence*, where I got inside what I thought was Jan’s way of playing—something like a minor second, then a third down, then a second, then another third, so it was completely out of a key. When we rehearsed, I played his part on the piano, and he said, ‘Do I play like this pattern?’ I said, ‘Yeah, you do it all the time.’”

Jarrett’s determination to eschew his own patterns and predictable pathways can be traced to his late teens, when he turned down an offer to study with piano guru Nadia Boulanger.

“I was looking to study with Nadia,” he said. “I couldn’t have explained why I said no. But I always had good instincts about who I was. My ears were going to guide me. Whatever musical story I tell is not all jazz; sometimes it’s uncategory-able. Inclusion has always been what it’s about for me. If someone had said, ‘OK, this sound fits with this sound,’ I might have believed it and might never have experimented putting together different sounds. If you make a map of something, and that map isn’t changeable, you’re stuck with the map. For driving,



that’s good, but for music, I’m not sure.”

One way to keep things fresh, Jarrett said, was “to get as close as possible to subtracting the mechanism of the piano from the whole affair.” Early on, he paid attention to pianoless units—Ornette Coleman, Gerry Mulligan’s small groups—and off-the-beaten track pianists like Thelonious Monk (“I’d call his bands pianoless—he wasn’t always comping, and when he was, it was more like orchestral comping, plus his solos were not pianistic”) and Paul Bley.

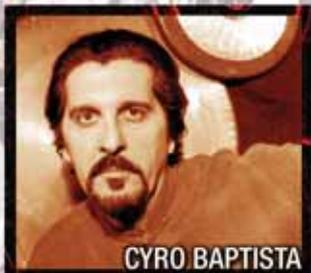
“People whose ears were open always attracted me,” he said. “It’s something about the quality of sound that a player puts out in the air. Pianists in jazz do not work on touch. I was lucky that I started with classical. I was also lucky, or smart, to continue to play Mozart around the time that I was playing ballads with Jack and Gary, because Mozart demands a refinement of touch that I had not developed until I started to play Mozart. Only since that time—the last five to seven years—has my ballad playing been closer to what I hear.”

It is Jarrett’s opinion that his investigations with the Standards Trio and the earlier “three free spirits” trio with Haden and Motian stand “in defiance of the norms of the time” in which they performed. “We were in the midst of that revolution period,” Jarrett said, referencing the Haden–Motian unit. “Now, most free players couldn’t play time, or might not even be able to play their own instruments, but they could be influential because they did things that no one was willing to try. If we wanted to swing, we could; if we didn’t want to, we didn’t.

“One night at the Village Vanguard, Max Gordon said to me, ‘Keith, you guys could get a lot more people in here if you’d swing,’” he continued. “I said, ‘Max, it’s going to take a while, but the people will come, because we’re doing exactly what we know we should be doing.’ How did I know that? If you follow your instincts, words come out of your mouth and you don’t even realize it. You don’t remember, ‘Gee, I’m not sure when I’m going to eat my next meal.’ But I wanted to be free of everyone’s bullshit, and that included my own. So I wasn’t going to be sparing. I was going to be merciless on myself. If I could write something that could find its way to a different place than everything else, and I still felt close to it, then that would be successful.”

Although Jarrett has recorded no original compositions with Peacock and DeJohnette for close to two decades, he asserts that this trio, which recently has deviated from their custom of solely interpreting songbook repertoire by presenting collectively improvised suites in their concert performances, as documented on *Inside Out* and *Always Let Me Go*, from 2001, continues to occupy a singular niche.

“We are trying to hold onto this precious thing,” he said. “If I think of one thing that it is, it’s how Miles attacked the beat on his trumpet. When we did our so-called Miles tribute, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, a couple of weeks after he died, I said to Jack and Gary, ‘We’re not doing a tribute album. My idea is to play as though I were Miles, not play like a pianist who would play Miles.’ In doing standard material, we’re trying



CYRO BAPTISTA



GARY BURTON



MINO CINELU



JACK DEJOHNETTE



TERRY GIBBS

TALENT RUNS IN OUR FAMILY

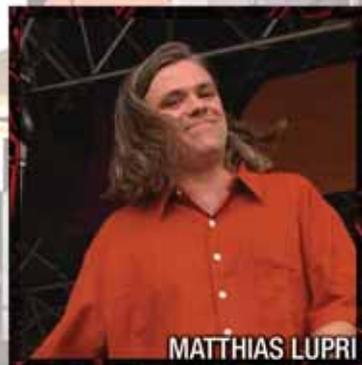
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STEFON HARRIS



SUSIE IBARRA



MATTHIAS LUPRI



AIRTO MOREIRA



JEFF "TAIN" WATTS

Manfred On Keith

Before ECM, when I was a student and playing in an orchestra in Berlin, I heard Keith Jarrett at festivals with Charles Lloyd and was curious about his playing. When I had the label, I wrote Keith, and sent him test pressings of Chick Corea's solo record as well as Jan Garbarek's *Afric Pepperbird*. Keith wrote back that he liked this music and the sound. When he came to Munich with Miles Davis, we met, and decided to make a recording. I'd actually suggested a trio with Jack and Gary, but Gary wasn't playing bass at the time. Keith said he would like to do a solo record first, which he did in Oslo in 1970. That was *Facing You*.

The trio was always the wished-for combination, and in 1977 we did a remarkable recording (*Tales Of Another*) under Gary's leadership, with his compositions. The first time they went into the studio to do standards, the idea was to make one record, but we had booked three days, and by the time we came out, we had recorded and mixed three records. In the reissue, *Setting Standards*, you can hear how closely they already understood each other, how beautifully their exposition of each piece came out.

In the '70s and '80s, Keith played differently, especially in the solo concerts. He always played piano on a high technical level, but his touch has changed over all these years, small nuances first, then more fine-tuning. In the early days, I was at every recording, and we were close in deciding every little thing. It's not always possible for us to be in the same place now. He trusts his engineer and manager, and when the music is done, Keith sends it, and then we decide together what to release. He needs the interaction with the audience. The risk of going to the edge is more appropriate there than in an intimate studio. It's important to assist a musician in his needs and his ideas, and then get the best out of it.

Keith was the ideal partner for my esthetic with the label, a wonderful musician with talents other than playing the piano. From the beginning, it was clear that whenever I could work with Keith, I would like to. He's one of the best musicians I know. "Best" is always a strange term, but his musicianship and personality, and his influence on music-making, means a lot to me.

—Manfred Eicher (told to Ted Panken)

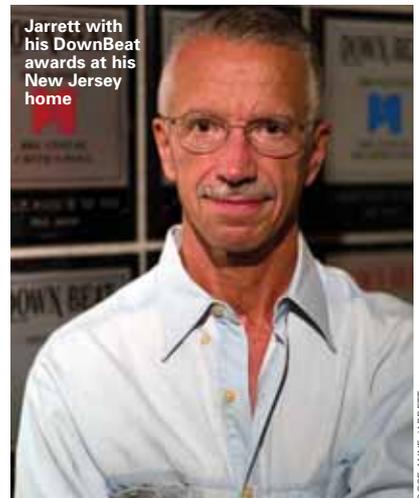
to take away a personality other than ourselves, to find this place that we don't hear many people coming from. We don't often hear young players swinging. There's a lot of wasted energy."

A gigging professional musician from his mid-teens, Jarrett burst into public consciousness before his 21st birthday on an April 1966 cross-country tour—and the album *Buttercorn Lady*—with a short-lived edition of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Then he embarked on a two-year run with Charles Lloyd's popular quartet. During this period, Jarrett studied the philosophical-musical writings of Gurdjieff, and developed an interest in applying to his musical production the ecstatic rituals of Sufi ceremony as well as the elemental emotions of contemporary pop.

"There was a whole rough mix of ingredients in the '60s and '70s that we don't have now," said Jarrett, citing unrealized projects with Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, and an association—"I would roll cigarettes for them"—with the Animals. "I never took drugs; I didn't need that," he added.

"We might call this the 'information age,' but I consider that complete bullshit. What is the information? Of what value is it if it doesn't attach itself to something? In the future, I can foresee an audience that literally thinks all music is equal, and there's no such thing as good or bad."

Jarrett expressed ambivalence about the legacy of his contemporaries. "My generation's impact should have been greater, because there were a lot more great players," he said. "But fusion somehow ate them up. Keyboard players got enamored of electric instruments, and never could go back. These are artistic decisions, and you can't make them lightly. It's like a painter throwing away their paint, saying, 'Well, I want to get these,' but they're all monotone, and then, 'Well, no, I want my old paints back.'



Jarrett with his DownBeat awards at his New Jersey home

ROSE ANNE JARRETT

Sorry. They went out in the garbage."

Jarrett did make a considerable splash as an electronic musician with Davis during 1970 and '71. "There was an understanding that this was temporary, that I had this other direction that had nothing to do with electronic keyboards," he said. "We felt that I was meant to be a part of this. Around 1967, he brought his whole band to a little basement club in Paris where I was playing with Aldo Romano and J.F. Jenny-Clark, and later, every now and then, he would show up to hear the trio with Charlie and Paul. I'd walk past his table, and he'd say, 'When are you going to play with my band?' Once after a set with Paul and Charlie, he said, 'Keith! You play the wrong instrument.' What could I say? So my comments about horns and voice, he was hearing that already, even though we were playing this strange music. A couple of times, he asked me how I could play from no music. I said, 'I don't know. I just do it.'

"Once I heard the band with Wayne, Herbie, Ron and Tony at the Village Gate, and Miles played a beautiful short solo—he played all short solos—and then the rest of

Hall of Fame

Legends in jazz, blues and beyond can be elected into the DownBeat Hall of Fame by way of the annual Readers Poll (designated by "R"), Critics Poll ("C") or Veterans Committee ("V"). It all started in 1952 with the readers; the critics got into the game later, in 1961. The Veterans started this year. With this month's addition of Keith Jarrett, there are 115 DownBeat Hall of Famers, listed below in chronological order of their induction.

1952 Louis Armstrong (R)	Sidney Bechet (C)	1978 Joe Venuti (R)	1988 Jaco Pastorius (R)	2000 Lester Bowie (C)
1953 Glenn Miller (R)	Fats Waller (C)	Rahsaan Roland Kirk (C)	Kenny Clarke (C)	Clark Terry (R)
1954 Stan Kenton (R)	1969 Ornette Coleman (R)	Ella Fitzgerald (R)	1989 Woody Shaw (R)	2001 Milt Hinton (C)
1955 Charlie Parker (R)	Pee Wee Russell (C)	Lennie Tristano (C)	Chet Baker (C)	Joe Henderson (R)
1956 Duke Ellington (R)	Jack Teagarden (C)	1980 Dexter Gordon (R)	Red Rodney (R)	2002 John Lewis (C)
1957 Benny Goodman (R)	1970 Jimi Hendrix (R)	Max Roach (C)	Mary Lou Williams (C)	Antonio Carlos Jobim (R)
1958 Count Basie (R)	Johnny Hodges (C)	1981 Art Blakey (R)	Lee Morgan (C)	2003 Wayne Shorter (C)
1959 Lester Young (R)	1971 Charles Mingus (R)	Bill Evans (C)	John Carter (C)	Ray Brown (R)
1960 Dizzy Gillespie (R)	Roy Eldridge (C)	1982 Art Pepper (R)	Maynard Ferguson (R)	2004 Roy Haynes (C)
1961 Billie Holiday (R)	Django Reinhardt (C)	Fats Navarro (C)	James P. Johnson (C)	McCooy Tyner (R)
Coleman Hawkins (C)	1972 Gene Krupa (R)	1983 Stephane Grappelli (R)	Gerry Mulligan (R)	2005 Steve Lacy (C)
1962 Miles Davis (R)	Clifford Brown (C)	Albert Ayler (C)	Ed Blackwell (C)	Herbie Hancock (R)
Bix Beiderbecke (C)	1973 Sonny Rollins (R)	Oscar Peterson (R)	1994 Dave Brubeck (R)	2006 Jackie McLean (C)
1963 Thelonious Monk (R)	Fletcher Henderson (C)	Sun Ra (C)	Frank Zappa (C)	Jimmy Smith (R)
Jelly Roll Morton (C)	1974 Buddy Rich (R)	1985 Sarah Vaughan (R)	1995 J.J. Johnson (R)	2007 Andrew Hill (C)
1964 Eric Dolphy (R)	Ben Webster (C)	Zoot Sims (C)	Julius Hemphill (C)	Michael Brecker (R)
1965 John Coltrane (R)	1975 Cannonball Adderley (R)	1986 Stan Getz (R)	1996 Horace Silver (R)	2008 Joe Zawinul (C)
Earl Hines (C)	Cecil Taylor (C)	Gil Evans (C)	Artie Shaw (C)	Harry Carney (V)
1966 Bud Powell (R)	1976 Woody Herman (R)	1987 Lionel Hampton (R)	Nat "King" Cole (R)	Jimmy Blanton (V)
Charlie Christian (C)	King Oliver (C)	Johnny Dodds (C)	Tony Williams (C)	Harry Carney (V)
1967 Billy Strayhorn (R)	1977 Paul Desmond (R)	Thad Jones (C)	1998 Elvin Jones (C)	Erroll Garner (V)
Bessie Smith (C)	Benny Carter (C)	Teddy Wilson (C)	1999 Frank Sinatra (R)	Jo Jones (V)
1968 Wes Montgomery (R)			Betty Carter (C)	Jimmie Lunceford (V)
			Milt Jackson (R)	Keith Jarrett (R)

the band played long solos,” he continued. “He walked off the stage, went to the bar, had some water, stood there for a long time and then finally went back on stage and played a tune, and then went out. I heard that happen each tune, and I thought, ‘You know, I’d like to help out somehow, but I’m not sure what that means yet.’ When I joined him, the band started turning electric, and I wasn’t sure what my role could possibly be. What he needed was someone on keyboard who could be challenging and funky, and that’s what I contributed. Once that band started, Miles was staying on the stage the entire time, and going into his crouch. I made him happy for a while.”

Jarrett’s aversion to plugged-in acoustic phenomena is one reason why so few studio recordings appear in his discography of the past two decades. “I hate studios,” he said flatly. “Also, what I do is for a public actually in the space.”

Does performing for an audience facilitate his focus? “It’s harder to be focused then. However, given that, I have the valid feeling that there are people there who are ready for whatever happens—it’s not just me.”

“He used to like the studio very much,” said Eicher, whose meticulousness with sonic detail is part and parcel of ECM’s identity. “Earlier recordings like *Belonging* and others that we made in studios with great balance and sound couldn’t easily have been made in live concert. Later on with the trio, it flew into other directions. He also needs the interaction with the audience, and probably the risk of going to the edge there is more appropriate than being in an intimate studio.”

In distinction to Davis’ predisposition to follow the straight line, never looking back, Jarrett’s journey traces a circular path, as he periodically reinvents himself by revisiting, recontextualizing and refining previously explored materials. Consider his 21st century solo recordings *The Carnegie Hall Concert*, from 2006, and *Radiance*, drawn from 2002 concerts in Osaka and Tokyo, and how different the sound is than even on *La Scala*, from 1997.

“Manfred and I talked about doing another solo thing in the studio, and I’m open to it,” Jarrett said. “Originally, I was curious about the process. As far as I knew, nobody was investigating it. Perhaps after *Facing You*, I played a concert at a festival in Heidelberg after Friedrich Gulda. I started playing a song, then, without stopping, I attached it to another song. Then there was some transitional material, and it ended up being whatever amount of minutes of that. That led me to wonder whether those transitions themselves were something, which led me to investigate that. I wasn’t even ready for this discovery—only in the last six or seven years did I become a good enough player to use both hands properly under those circumstances. So whatever amount of years I spent doing it, it was as an inferior player to who I am when I play now.”

“When I was sick, I had a great opportunity to sum up my work,” he continued. “I’d listen to

my solo stuff and think, ‘What am I doing? There are too many notes here. If I did this again, no, I’d never play this, I’d never play that.’ I realized that if I ever returned to playing solo, I’d have to do it differently. Now, when you’re sitting at the same 88-key instrument with the same two hands and trying to undo the architecture you’ve built up over a couple of decades of doing this thing you thought you understood, it’s a freaky experience to have to go through. However, the freakiness only lasts a second, and then you realize, ‘Man, if I ever have the energy to do it again, at least I know where to start.’”

Jarrett keeps a tight schedule, and he had to end the interview to take his CFS medications and eat dinner. “If I were a different kind of artist, I think I’d use found objects,” he said. “I wouldn’t go looking for new technology. I remember seeing Herbie Hancock backstage somewhere when he’d just started getting seriously into electronics. Instead of having a conversation, he was saying, ‘Wow, have you heard this wire, this thing, connected to this and this over here?’ I said, ‘Herbie ... no. I don’t want to talk about wires. I hate seeing them on the stage.’”

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SONNY ROLLINS

Jazz Artist & Tenor Saxophonist of the Year

By Benny Golson

Deep Are The Roots

During my adult life I've used the word "genius" sparingly. That is, with two exceptions—when speaking of Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane. Over a period of many years, Sonny has brought a glory and refinement to the saxophone because of his unusual ability and intense love affair with it. A love affair, a confederacy that has permitted him to view the Earth and all the goings on from far off in his solitary airspace. He's had little difficulty in meaningfully coaxing his own human existence into and through the bowels of his saxophone.

Rollins has long since become his own well-oiled cognoscenti, allowing his concept and archipelago of ideas to endlessly stream forth as a manumission from his boundless imagination, an imagination mercifully shared with awaiting ears and hearts throughout the Earth. He has dignified his free will with creative and articulated accomplishments, which undeniably identifies him as *e pluribus unum* (one out of many). Not ever being creatively satisfied, he continues to be just as persistent and dedicated as the guy around the corner who engages himself in patiently and painfully building a little ship in a bottle.

His creative playing represents the elastic tenacity of powerful rhetoric—not the rhetoric of words, but of well-chosen notes to which he has always brought honor and esteem. His thoughts materialize as sounds that invade the air, caressing that air as they journey effortlessly to our ears and hearts. And as they do, they go well below the surface of human skin, side-stepping mere aural capabilities—touching sinews, bones and marrow—permitting us entry into his musical universe.

Sonny recorded the rustic tune "I'm An Old Cowhand" on *Way Out West* with Shelly Manne many years ago. I listened to it then and I listen to it now, and I'm still convinced that his playing here represents the full extent of his instrument's voice. He doesn't play an endless stream of flying missiles. Rather, he offers a steady flow of contemplative, soul-emanating "right"

notes with tactile, probing hands that make your heart say, "Yes, Lord!" This proves he has the unchallenged ability to bring profundity, a new life, to any obscure and forgettable tune that might be forgotten or purposely thrown away. He's done this many times over.

He could arise from a deep sleep at 3 a.m. on any day and go right into something musically soulful and deep. How so? Because he plays not only with his fingers and mind, but with his heart, which is ever beating and awaiting the opportunity to speak. Yes, Sonny is a giant of a tree in a forest of trees, getting broader and taller with the passing of each day. While night and day fight for domination over the skies, he indefatigably plies the sea of his vast imagination with his hydraulic thinking, which has no quadrilateral boundaries whatsoever. He has no palate for warmed over dishes because of the myriad possibilities that exist and await his discovery. Being driven, his sails never set, and he settles into no port.

His metier is jazz, underscored with the physical attributes of his saxophone, which has eternally proved to be his loyal and obedient servant. Though time tends to be corrosive in nature, it has mellowed him and his music like a fine bottle of Dom Pérignon ... getting better and more valuable with the passing of time. He's a dreamer, as is the case with most creative people, but his dreams are imperial ones, and they have never retired. Does true genius ever retire?

JAZZ ARTIST

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- 183 Wayne Shorter
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- 131 Maria Schneider
- 129 Keith Jarrett
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- 107 Hank Jones
- 96 Charles Lloyd
- 92 Ornette Coleman
- 90 Chris Potter
- 80 Dave Douglas
- 76 Joe Lovano
- 76 Branford Marsalis

TENOR SAXOPHONE

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- 260 Joe Lovano
- 234 Wayne Shorter
- 210 Joshua Redman
- 177 Branford Marsalis
- 156 Charles Lloyd
- 120 Eric Alexander
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- 72 James Carter
- 67 Donny McCaslin
- 59 David Murray



MICHAEL WEINTROB
Sonny Rollins playing the 2008 Newport Jazz Festival

There exist countless saxophonists, but the most convincing explanation I can adduce for the majesty that Sonny brings to his instrument and to the very nature of jazz liturgy, is his superior talent underscored with a kleonexia-like pursuit—and Spartan practicing—of things inherent to the constitutional character of him alone.

I've always contended that two outstanding features of any jazz musician should be the originality of his sound and his style. Unfortunately, today this is not necessarily the case; one tends to sound like others in concept, sound and articulation. But at the same time, the abounding technique and freedom of velocity is absolutely astounding. Yes, brilliant with surgical precision, but leaving little room for deep feelings of the heart. Sonny, however, holds fast to the older tradition of being a distinct individual. You immediately know it's Sonny after



hearing only a note or two, because his musical persona is entwined with no one else's.

When he plays intuitively, yet affirmatively, he plays centerstage in his theater of imagination: often musically quoting directly from past history; articulating in unsuspecting ways; mentally and symbolically dancing and prancing to the sound of his own music; using a period where one might possibly use a question mark.

Though there are some who consistently play patterns, Sonny rarely does this, unless it accomplishes what he has in mind at that moment only. He has too much talent and sense of adventure to lock into something so vague. One who includes patterns in his repertoire of creativity is not really giving evidence of his creative skills, but only his ability to memorize.

We all possess valuable things of one kind

or another. They might include our health, financial abilities or perhaps our natural mental abilities. Sonny, like the rest of us, also possesses valuable things. But aside from the affirmed valuable things, within that realm he has set a standard for himself that majestically supports those things. With a declarative voice, he repudiates valueless things. He doesn't pursue non-realities relative to his creative thinking. We seldom hear these valueless things from Sonny. The word "seldom" leaves room for a mutual imperfection. When mistakes do happen (as Thelonious Monk said: "You've got to make mistakes to discover the new stuff"), Sonny's mistakes are often fodder for discovering new frontiers, or at least an introduction of intent.

Sonny's glorious style of playing often accommodates unsuspecting imaginations as he replaces the ordinary—or circumvents it—as if

a breath of fresh air to an asphyxiating world. He is acutely aware that there is always the next "something," which is why one foot is planted in the present and the other firmly planted in the future as his mind collates the past and present, and contemplates the faceless future.

With the undeterred determination of Herman Melville's Captain Ahab, he moves forward relentlessly—dense with purpose as he intuitively ascribes to the musical folklore of giants like Chu Berry, Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins, who have taken up residence in his psyche, the workings of which has given birth to a not so invisible face of tomorrow today.

Though the world intuitively wishes there were more Sonny Rollinses, time and reality say, "There will only ever be one Sonny Rollins."

DB

Bandstand Democracy

The score is in 4/4," said Wynton Marsalis as he shifted his feet in time to the accentuated triplets that seem never to stop running through his head. He was simultaneously in the midst of a rehearsal with his orchestra and Ahmad Jamal for the Jazz at Lincoln Center season program opener, and a standing chess game with his onstage wingman, saxophonist Walter Blanding, Jr., which has been four years in the making.

"Lots of decisions happening here, lots of decisions," he said, his voice echoing in the wood-paneled rehearsal hall like an "airball" chant during a basketball game. In an extended period of quiet, Marsalis clapped out a rhythm. Then, with nine black and nine white pieces still standing on the chess board, Marsalis and Blanding put down the game. Marsalis took a seat in the back row as Jamal resumed running the rehearsal. It was time to get back to work.

Virtually everything Marsalis does seems to come out of what his long-time colleague in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra Joe Temperley called a "sense of democracy." Marsalis' latest release, *Two Men With The Blues* (Blue Note), a live album recorded with Willie Nelson at J@LC's intimate Allen Room, underscores the foundations of blues rhythms in American music, whether the end result is classified as country or jazz. Marsalis composes and arranges with his band's individual skills in mind. And for decades, he has espoused the concept "all jazz is now," an idea that plays an important role in the new book he wrote with Geoffrey Ward, *Moving To Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life* (Random House), and in the programming he oversees as artistic director of the most prominent jazz venue in the world.

"Twenty-two years ago, he persuaded Lincoln Center to put on three concerts and a classical jazz series," said J@LC Executive Director Adrian Ellis. "I don't know the extent to which the longer-term goal was clear, but it's a linear progression to adapt to an organization like that and now the next chapter."

In his early 20s, Marsalis was a more controversial figure, and some of the things he said at that time (he has admitted he would sometimes say things he knew would incite the press) are still quoted back to him all these years later. But then, as now, his agenda has remained intact: to swing and help more people in this country hear the music that is part of its history.

"For all of Wynton's reputed combativeness, you don't achieve things like he has if you're a solo prima donna," Ellis said. "You can only make those things work through creating effective coalitions of different sorts of people. He has managed to mobilize a whole gang."

The way he's done that is not by fighting, but by uniting them. Band



TRUMPET

326 Wynton Marsalis

- 233 Dave Douglas
- 227 Roy Hargrove
- 197 Terence Blanchard
- 133 Clark Terry
- 130 Tom Harrell
- 116 Randy Brecker
- 106 Nicholas Payton
- 90 Kenny Wheeler
- 80 Jon Faddis
- 80 Enrico Rava
- 80 Wallace Roney
- 80 Terell Stafford

members and staff stay together on the road. All band members discuss the situation together before a new member comes into the orchestra. Artists like reed player Ted Nash share the duties bestowed on the orchestra as a whole, teaching appreciation courses at J@LC and penning their own works for the orchestra.

Marsalis relies on a democratic ethic when it comes to the development of his music, too. "I never try and divorce myself from me," he said. But he surrounds himself with players who understand how to wrap the history of his musical ideas into the present and future. "On my first record, *Father Time*, we have an African 6/8 rhythm. We put that 6/8 rhythm on the first track of *From The Plantation To The Penitentiary*. It goes into four and then uses all the kinds of time changes that we've used before. All the musicians who play know the music of the musicians that came before them [in the band]."

Two Men With The Blues and the DVD about the development of that performance use history in a similar way. As Marsalis explains in the film,

an underlying rhythmic connection exists between country music, blues and jazz, and working with Nelson was a natural choice. "His phrasing is free," Marsalis said. "There is a lot of freedom in his phrasing. So we're used to that and it's a lot of fun to play with him."

The album, which debuted at No. 20 on the Billboard 200—making it the highest-charting album of Marsalis' career—is another part of the linear progression he has been working toward for two-and-a-half decades. The film explicates some of the more technical aspects of the music, and recruiting Nelson probably helped bring a few new ears to the music.

The 2008-'09 J@LC season, which Marsalis and his programming staff booked years ago (they are currently about five years ahead of the game), continues in that vein. Jamal opened the season in September. "We're also hosting the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, in the old style of big bands when they would get together," Marsalis said. "And we're playing the music of Monk, and writing new arrangements for a lot of his music. If you look across the season, you'll see we do some things that are from different eras of jazz. We write all new arrangements for them, and we address all aspects of the language. We have a saying that all jazz is modern and that's what we live by."

Other elements of the program build on that idea by giving listeners new access points for the music, like a 50th anniversary celebration of *Kind Of Blue* and *Giant Steps* that features Take 6 as the musical directors.

"We can't re-create an album, so the thing we try to do is draw attention to the album, and speak of some of the implications in the album and give us a way to hear the achievement of the music on the album in a different light," Marsalis said. "Trying to re-create is a waste of time. We always try to figure out how to come up with a show that will be good, not boring for the audience and will allow musicians to use their different techniques to illuminate some of the aspects of the music on that album or show."

Marsalis' new book takes that familiar idea and shows how the musical legacies of the greatest players espouse lessons that can be applied to life as well. He discusses the importance of recognizing what sets you apart and bringing that to the fore instead of trying to be more like others. He talks about John Coltrane's perseverance, and he discusses how an obsessive version thereof can be dangerous. He looks across America and across a swath of history and explicates in direct, specific terms why so much of what he sees in jazz has to do with life in general.

"This is the future and the past at once, that is what the present is," he said. "When I said, 'all of history is now,' I meant all of it. Not just Bird. Right now is now, too. So the desire to script that which is away from what is becoming, that is the thing that I am not a fan of. Take them all with you, you don't need to leave anybody behind. You don't need to leave your great grandma behind. You don't have to leave your newborn baby behind."

The book came together because of Marsalis' friendship with co-author Ward, a historian who learned to retool his assessment of some aspects of history from Marsalis.

"I'm a zealous believer in the power of jazz to unite people," Ward said. "Wynton wants Americans to understand the music they ought to understand. [Jazz is] who we are and who we will be if things work out right."

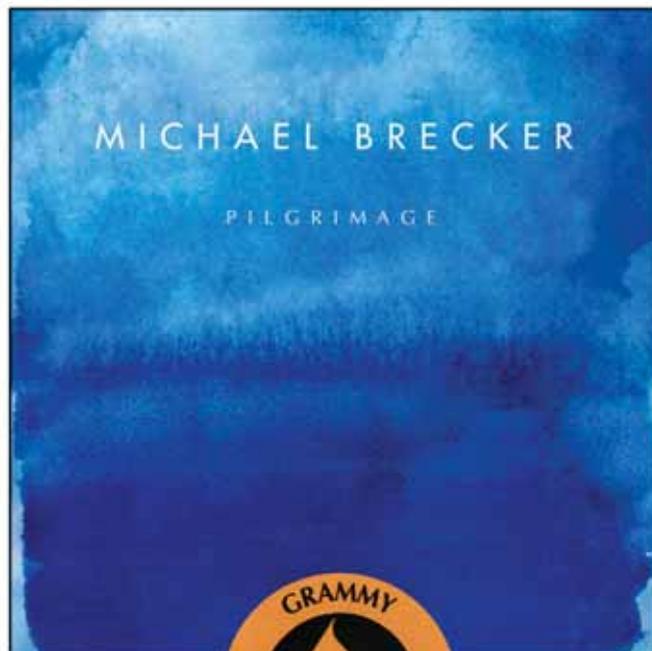
While promoting the new book, album and season, Marsalis has also been working on material for a new album, *She And He*, due out next spring. Based on an original poem, the album deals with numbers. All the songs are in three, which speaks to the lesson being taught in the poem—the importance of the notion of ourselves and the additional importance of the entity that is "us." The new album exemplifies Marsalis' group-centric thinking and his interest in how music can underscore some of the most important aspects of being human.

"There is an identity in our music, and I like that identity," Marsalis said. He paused and switched back to his pronoun of choice to speak from the perspective of the band. "We function in both arenas: We love to do new things around the world but we love being ourselves. And we don't know if we're going to find the most modern version of ourselves in the image of somebody else."

DB

Pilgrimage was perhaps the most powerful artistic statement of Michael Brecker's brilliant career.

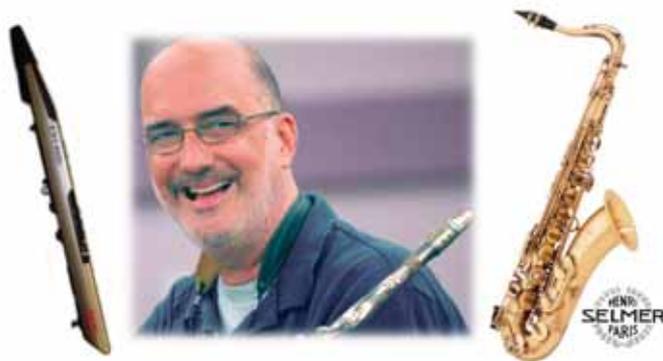
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Ornette Coleman
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Doing Is Believing

Ornette Coleman Establishes Contact With Life

By John Corbett
Photo by Michael Jackson

Ekkehard Jost's description of Ornette Coleman's music—despite being a little too academic for such a soulful and organic art form—seems to ring true: motivic chain association. Coleman strings together melodic clusters, eschewing an overarching harmonic framework but retaining the immediacy and clarity of a tonal center. His music moves in bursts of thought, changing abruptly, returning to an earlier motif, not culminating or cresting so much as staying in the moment.

Conversation with Coleman runs much the same way. Quick shifts in topic, frequent loops back to motifs-du-jour—in this case themes of death, birth and the primacy of the idea recurred, as did a childlike delight in the reversibility of “dog” and “God”—linked together in an exploratory, sometimes difficult-to-follow associative chain. Soft-spoken, but talking at an amazing clip, Coleman struggles to articulate his observations, reaching for a comprehensive cosmic analysis that centers on the human being and its main aspects—love and life. As the Sunday night headline act at the Chicago Jazz Festival in September, Coleman demonstrated the depth and fluency of his music, extending the new sound he first introduced 50 years ago. A day before the gig, wearing a colorful, slightly threadbare vest and doodling on a notepad filled with musical sketches, the 78-year-old saxophonist, composer and band-leader was concentrated and engaged over the course of two hours. At particular moments Coleman fingered invisible keys, as if he'd be better able to express himself on the horn than in words.

You paint as well as make music.

I try. Music is something that is valid. It's never something that can talk. You can only hear and feel it. So you don't need to have lots of conver-

sations that are not equal to the results of what you are talking about. But when you hear it and feel it, you know what you are experiencing.

I've been playing music since I was a teenager, and I've gotten better, I've gotten clearer but the timing is still the same. You still have to stay up, work, make mistakes and clear them up. That's not gonna ever change because the idea doesn't have an agenda. The idea is just in you, the same thing that your brain is doing. You can't cure it in a moment, you can't change it. You have to deal with it as well as you can if it

makes logic about something you believe. It's not dangerous, it's just human. The human being is the only form of life that has been fruitful to humanity. Regardless of how much knowledge you can learn, the human being is still more accessible and has more to enjoy. Like we're sitting here talking. That's gotta be much more real and important than something that you can't see or talk to or all you can do is express how it makes you respond. Whatever created human beings had a good idea. The human being has something built in their soul that makes them

want to add to the quality of life more than destroying it.

That's part of what makes following music and following the arts so enriching, that we get to see that.

And the fact that the human form, which also has a quality of knowledge built in their structure emotionally and physically, which we call the brain and the love, and, what is it called? The science. Humanhood, marriages, they just feed your brain. Sometimes a meal is not right, sometimes you have to start over. But the quality of life is conducive to what humans do with it. Imagine that life doesn't have any description, form, shape or sound, but we know what it is when we're speaking. Don't we?

We do. We can imagine it even though we can't exactly define it.

You can kill people, but you can't kill life. That's pretty good, isn't it? That's about as good as you can get it. The thing about life is that it comes in different forms. That has made the Earth the most advanced planet in the sky. Imagine that whatever decided there should be human, all they've done is expanded the eternity of what life can become. If you are trying to learn how to relate to how you got into existence, then you have to start with life. It doesn't end there, it starts there. The only thing that ends is time. Time doesn't end, the quality of time makes you know you have done this for so many years and this is what affects you since you've been doing that. Plus, the idea is all there is for human beings to make a decision about something that means something today, and in 20 years they'll have even more value, if the quality keeps rising.

I've been playing music since I was a teenager, and now I call myself [someone who] composes music, which is putting it in a form where it makes other ideas beside itself. The notes themselves carry a form of what you'd call sound power. There are 12 notes, basically. Whole steps and half steps, but they have names. Sound, can you imagine? I was born in the '30s. This stuff existed way before the '30s. Humans have always been raising the ante of how life could be expressed in so many different forms. It's never going to die, it will only get better. I'm sure that one day there will be a cure for all the things that kill humans, there will be an advanced knowledge for humans, taking more chances on going to other planets. Imagine how many human beings there are. And every one of them has the ability to be the way they wish they can be, seeking out the knowledge they want to bring to the surface, to be able to be judged because of that. The definition of life starts with human and it ends with human, as far as I'm concerned.

Is that because of consciousness?

No, it's because there's something in the human



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body that makes you think, feel and sometimes makes you sad. It acts in your nervous system for you to know that you've been affected by it. What is so eternal about human is the idea. The idea is to human what the sky is to life.

I like that.

That's not too bad, is it? There's no piece of paper anywhere that says one day there are going to be humans. They just are. The knowledge of human seemed to be so concerned with life and love. You can't get any closer to what you enjoy. People are getting married because they love one another or they enjoy life because they have grown to want to live longer to enjoy it. And you're not required to prove why. Nobody says, "why do you want to do this?"

That's true, there's no scientific proof for life or love.

There's no formula that's going to show you. What's amazing about humans, even the word doesn't describe it; it's beyond that. We have legs, arms, head, a frame. Imagine how many races make up the human race. And we have the same exact reasons for being, which is to find a way to believe in something that has something to do with the way you are and the way you don't want to be. So there's the way you do want to be, but if everybody doesn't agree with

it, you're not going to be so satisfied. But you don't choose life, life chooses you.

Human is probably the most precious thing in existence as far as the word "life." It has the most advanced form of love, knowledge, experience and even death. Everybody who dies, they don't die because of death, they die because something kills them. Here we are on a piece of existence called life. We're in the sky somewhere, and we're not going anywhere, but where we are we're making progress about why we're not going anywhere.

I'm just a simple human being. Two things I believe in: knowledge and truth. I wonder who created the word "human." They got it pretty accurate. The only thing they missed is that it doesn't have the same freedom of change and experience because the conditions of what we call poverty and wealth, race and knowledge, science and illiteracy. These things are just titles. Every human being is affected by one or the other.

You mentioned the word "truth," and I wanted to ask how that word is related to the word "music"—two abstract ideas that take a concrete form as we experience them.

That's the same word. The name of what we call eternity that we can't see or touch is "God." But God spelled backwards is "dog." So God



JOSS KNAEPPEN

wouldn't give himself that name. God would be dumb. That doesn't sound right.

We all grew inside of someone else. Isn't that something else? Woo! Can you imagine, it's not something that you planned, not something that you heard about, it's something that you brought about. It creates people. You can say that what we call race is different, but it doesn't change you from having to go to the bathroom or eat.

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You talk about “sound grammar,” a commonality between people, and your music seems to be oriented that way, trying to get away from the elements that are exclusive of one another and toward things people can share.

That’s amazing because what you are expressing is the thing that is the reason why we are sitting here. It’s called an idea—human being, but most of all it’s called the creation of what exists that represents what we call life. Life is not an object, it’s not a form, you can’t see it, you can’t talk to it or at least it can’t talk back. But it allows you

to know that there is something eternal, and you didn’t create it. You can’t prove that you created life. Human beings don’t spend enough of their love for life to understand why the quality of life is so easy to be made into anger, disappointment. Whatever it is, someone can say something to you and you want to fight. But that’s not life doing that, that’s jealousy, envy, dishonesty. Those things come into being because of value and wealth. When someone says they love you, that’s like someone saying you’re worth all the money in the world and they ain’t got a penny.

We know that there is something that doesn’t die, can’t be killed. That’s life. And there’s nothing that says you’ve got to die. You die because you get sick. But nothing says you gotta die.

Sun Ra expressed much the same set of concerns. He said death is an option, it’s not something that we have to do.

When you make things the way that you believe them, the one thing you cannot do is make all the decisions for yourself and not think about anyone else. Yet, the reverse of it is that someone will come along and hire you to do something that they want you to do and if you do it to the point of satisfaction it becomes different because knowledge works socially and financially.

Life is eternal. There don’t have to be people for it to be eternal. If we didn’t have what is called a mother and a father, our definition of life would be different. The sexual act has created a lot of people. The only thing it hasn’t done is that it hasn’t made them any better or worse. The human form is there to acknowledge life. If the human form didn’t have life, then life would need it.

One of the great joys in your music is that it presents a model of being together as musicians that is open-ended. It doesn’t say I’m the leader, it doesn’t say I’m the sideman. Not just in terms of who is at the top of the bill, but in the structure of the music.

Not only are you describing it to the “T,” but the main thing is that the idea cannot be killed. If you have an idea that the world has not experienced, it will come into existence.

You’ve offered us so many new ideas and new feelings.

Yeah and it’s not going away. It is the essence of what we call love. You don’t have to have a diploma to know that you love. It’s in you because without it, there’s no you. If you don’t care about yourself, how can you care about anything else?

The last time I heard you play I was shocked at how strong and fresh your playing was, even though it was definitely you.

What you’re speaking about lives in every human being, it’s called an idea. The idea is as new as being born. The only thing that’s different about it, nobody knows it’s an idea, they think it’s an emotion. They respond to it like that. As human beings we haven’t found a way to know how love and creativity can do without each other but they’re equal when they get together.

John Cage said that we haven’t yet solved the problem of how to be together.

Uh huh. That’s definite, that’s good. Do you realize the individual that’s responsible for you being there is your mother?

Wishing you the
best sounds of this
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That's true. I'm going to think a little differently about Mother's Day this year. I'm going to say: "Ornette told me to think about it!"

And they're not going to make it any worse, any better. It's just the way it is. And it's not going out of style any time soon.

Something called truth. I wish I was pure enough to explain how I experience what I believe it is. Truth is not light, darkness, high or low, sadness, happiness, good or bad. Truth means conviction about whatever it is; I'll stand for the punishment. There is a truth that is not required to prove anything, but there is a truth that just has to do with one thing: Human.

Love does exist. Love doesn't have any goals. It only has causes and effects, to be happy or to not be sad. The thing that is amazing, life doesn't have enough truth in it to represent the quality of what everyone is going through because they're alive. There is no way humans can exist without need and want. Not because it's human, it's because the quality of need and want causes so many things to change and you can't replace it because of who you are or who you aren't. You can only replace it if you have something greater or if you are able to help someone to bring them to the level of who they want to be. It's hard to sleep, eat and do all these things and want to be happy because of just being human, but it's hard to know how to

approach something without using something as a reference. That is not a cure for any knowledge. Whatever knowledge is, it has only two purposes: to exist and to have a reason why it can change something or activate something.

There's only one human being, and we're all imitating that same person. That person who we're imitating knows something that we don't know. I don't think that person is ever going to show. I guess what I'm trying to get to is that you don't have to die. It's not required.

No, but lately you know what I've been thinking? I've got high blood-pressure ...

You and me both.

... and I've been thinking about my heart, and the fact that I have a car, and my car's motor is going to die. It's running, and if you run it a lot, it's going to stop, to break down. I thought to myself, we don't give our hearts a break.

From when the minute you pop out, you don't ever let it even cool down for a minute.

Oooh! That's true! But think about who created it, what about that? How did they know that would do what it does? Not only that but the heart and the brain, this is something that humanity has dissected, written about. I used to love chemistry. We as human beings, the life that's in us becomes purer the more you under-

stand the less you need, but the more you want to give. I don't claim to be in control of anything. I would say I like science—and sound is like a science—but the one thing about sound that's so amazing, it doesn't have any goals. It doesn't say: "I'm going, I'm leaving." It's just there.

One of the great contributions you've made is to get away from functional harmony, and functional harmony is about goals.

Yes. As you sit there, do you know what's causing you to say what you say? The idea. The name of the idea is just that, but what is it? It's *everything that can be known can be found*. I'm getting a chill. It makes me realize that the quality of God is close to the quality of idea. I'm trying to figure out how to put it in words without making it seem like I know what I'm saying. I can visualize it in my head, but I don't know what it is. But the thing that causes me not to say it is that it changes things. It raises the status of life in a human way. Not only does it calm you and make you appreciate what you want to express yourself, but it makes you know that you are the person you think you are. Think of women. Not only are they more advanced, they can make their own people. Men can't do that. I do wish to learn to know what I see as clear as I'm looking at this. (*lifts up his notepad*) But I

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haven't. The only thing I see that clearly is sound. I see sound.

You see sound?

Uh huh. What I mean is that sound is invisible, but the more invisible it gets the clearer the sound is. All these qualities we have—our heart, knowledge, brain—I'm sure there's a guy who can take out your brain and put it back in your head and you'll never even know it. But life allows them to learn how to do that. Which goes to prove that life is not scared of anything you

learn. The chances are that something will come along to date it. I'm a victim of that. I have tried my best to get as eternal as I could. But for what reason? I'm already there! Why would I be trying to get somewhere where I am already? The only thing that gets me is that I want to learn and know, but not to replace something, depress something or make something less to get there. I don't want to do that.

In order to make a statement, you don't have to deny somebody else's statement. You once

told me that harmolodics was the idea that people playing together could all have their own statements.

That's true. I'm just human. We all have the same structure. There is an idea, that creation idea, but it's not because of need or want. It's because of what it does. I have tried to get more eternal by contemplating an idea that doesn't need to be replaced, doesn't have to be right or wrong, doesn't have to be erased, doesn't have to be an emotion, doesn't have to be a thought, just what it is itself. It *does* exist, honest to God. I have experienced it. I'm trying to materialize it in the form of knowledge. I'm beginning to do it. Let me see if I can explain it the way it happens to me. (*lengthy pause*) What bothers me is that this part (*points to his heart*) and this part (*points to his head*) are connected, but are not relating. That comes from my ability to remember that I have experienced things that are eternal, good and valuable, and I can't find a way to call upon them when I need them.

That seems to be what people are looking for in enlightenment.

Take music. I know the structure of music, these 12 notes. The order of those notes will never change, but the idea will change in the twinkle of an eye. It's a function that's like imagination, whatever imagination is.

What you would like to do, make sure that it is not something that you need or want. If you find that in your heart, it will show you who you don't have to ever become. I'm close to getting there. The only thing that I don't know how to do is share it. I don't know how to do that yet.

It's the same as in the music. You have a thing that you know about, how to get to it, but then you have to find a way ...

... to activate it.

People who are working at a high level, they're struggling to take what they would like to do and bring it out. I can hear it in your music. It's also a quality of vulnerability. That's one of the only exclusively human qualities. You're not trying to dominate something, as you've said.

What's so free about it, you don't have to hunt for it, it will appear. It's not coming there because of you, it's coming there because it exists. Life itself is dealing with those problems every minute. The quality of knowledge is not class, race or sex. It's creation. If you have an idea and you put it down and materialize it, that's as good as you can do.

I'm sitting here speaking to you and I know that if I got my horn out and played it, I would be doing that for the same reason I'm speaking to you: to bring something that has a meaning to the surface. We are all living, breathing, working, supporting each other, but there's no human being up here and down here. That's not human.

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Doing is believing. That's one way you know you exist.

That's such a beautiful statement, and it seems to relate to the long musical relationship with your son, Denardo Coleman, which shocked many listeners when you debuted him as a child. But it showed how people could work together, be a parent, a band-leader, but also just be together.

There's nothing in the way of it getting better. Nothing! Just you, your heart, your brain and the love that you wish to express because of what it means to you. Doing is believing. It's the whole thing. Doing doesn't get destructive, doesn't have to be above or below, it's right there.

Like surfing. When a surfer gets right where the wave breaks, everything is suspended. The fact of riding the wave has consequences, comes from someplace, but for that moment everything is halted. Your music can do that to me. On alto saxophone, in your hands, the act of doing is an act of belief.

You couldn't say it any more clearly, eternally, how you describe things, you describe them in an eternal way, and you don't have to describe things, you only have to activate it. It has to do with two things: Love and life. There's nothing in between. I'm trying to free myself from sur-



viving, but I'm not sure if I'm going to survive, because I'm not clever enough. Who knows my weaknesses? I don't even know them. I want to

find the idea before it's thought of, so I can be prepared for it. When I take my instrument, I know it too well; when I get ready to execute, I know the way I have to move my fingers, and I know that too well. Because of that, I'm not sure I want to do it that way. I'm only trying to make contact with life. We can make contact with life. It exists.

Was that behind your choice to move to violin and trumpet, instruments you didn't have training on?

Those things have another way of adding to what the idea could replicate. I'm glad you brought that up. Suppose you couldn't read or write, but you could pick up a horn and play everything anyone has ever heard? That can exist. That does exist. Trust me! Life doesn't send you any bills.

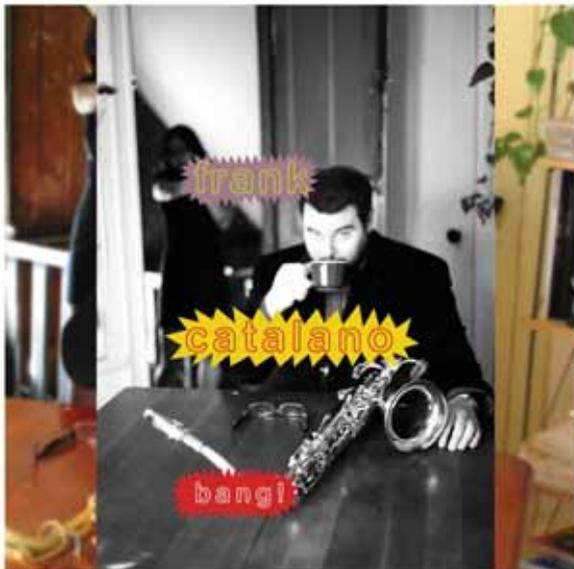
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UNDENIABLE SOUND

Tim Ries Traveled the Globe to Record *Stones World*

SALT OF THE EARTH

By Ken Micallef
Photo by Jimmy Katz

As a 10-year member of the Rolling Stones' touring band, saxophonist Tim Ries has a great gig. He stays with the legendary rockers in five-star hotels. If Mick Jagger and Keith Richards want to spend the day floating on a yacht in the Mediterranean, Ries grabs his trunks and towel. If Ries needs artwork for a CD project, guitarist Ronnie Wood is happy to oblige. And if Charlie Watts is in the mood for backstage banter, he and Ries blow bebop on Charlie Parker heads.

So what better way for Ries to pay tribute to his employers than cover their material? Ries' second CD of Rolling Stones music goes beyond simple flattery. The double-disc *Stones World: The Rolling Stones Project II* (Tames/Sunnyside) is a 13-song world music feast recorded around the world with musicians as diverse as Milton Nascimento, Eddie Palmieri, Bill Frisell, Badal Roy, Terumasa Hino, Portuguese fado sensation Ana Moura, African group Tidawt and the Rolling Stones themselves.

Ries said the project was the result of sleep deprivation, and of the fact that his touring with the Stones has led him all around the globe. "I don't sleep much," Ries said from Aarhus, Denmark, while prepar-

ing for a concert of *Stones World* material with the Klüvers Big Band. "Usually, when the Stones are in a new town, I will find the nearest jazz club or call my friends and set up gigs. I realized I should record with my friends around the world. I've loved fado and flamenco for years. Brazil is one of my favorite places to play, and the roots of all music are in Africa. So I picked the music that has inspired me for the past 30 years and infused that with Stones' compositions."

Stones World includes Eddie Palmieri performing "Under My Thumb," Moura singing "Brown Sugar," Watts and a France-based group swinging "Miss You," Tidawt kicking it with Jagger, Watts and Wood on "Hey Negrita" and a global choir exulting in

"Salt Of The Earth." Ries' skills as arranger, producer, saxophonist and location scout were tapped to pull *Stones World* together, but that doesn't surprise Rolling Stones guitarist Wood.

"I love the way Tim mixes and matches nationalities, ethnic rhythms and styles," Wood said from London. "He loves to pick obscure songs that I've written, too. We recorded 'Hey Negrita.' I love the way that he treated it. And I like Bernard Fowler's vocal and Mick's harmonica. Our version was more reggae, Tim's is more African."

"If you are in Portugal he'll have a fado band, if you're in Europe he'll have an African or Spanish band," Wood continued. "Wherever you are, he'll have some ethnic

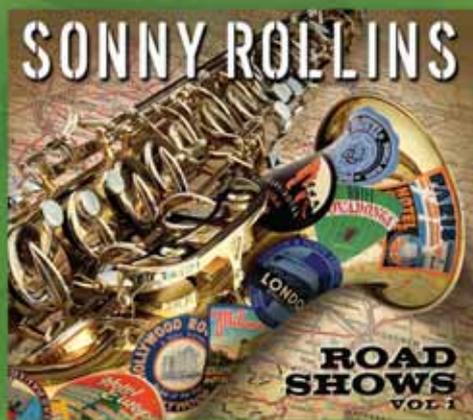


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gathering shining a different light on the song he has chosen. I'd think, 'I would've never thought that song would lend itself to that kind of treatment.' Tim can make a melody out of anything, but when there is a nice melody there in the first place he makes a meal of it."

Sessions for *Stones World* began in 2005 and were completed this summer. Unlike the informal atmosphere of most cash-and-carry independent jazz recordings, the challenges Ries faced for the album were enormous.

"In years past, with any record I would do," Ries said, "I'd hire the musicians, maybe get a rehearsal, record eight tunes in six hours, mix it and that's it. This was more being the producer, arranger and coordinating studios in every city. I would get studio time, find the musicians, find the right song for the right person and arrange the song. In every instance there was no rehearsal—it was just show the musicians the arrangement and record. We recorded live, one take, often in the same room, no overdubbing."

An atmospheric "Brown Sugar" typifies Ries' guerilla recording approach.

"We had a day off in Portugal, with a Stones concert the next day," Ries recalled. "So I rented the studio and we were in a big circle with Charlie Watts, flamenco musicians from Spain, and Ana Moura and her two guitarists. What I wanted to do was mix all these different elements together. These two musicians from Spain, Ana with her Portuguese fado musicians, Charlie Watts, me, a bass player from France, all recorded in Portugal, but with five different countries involved. That was the beautiful part of this whole project, not only every track being recorded in a different country and genre, but that some of these tracks were simultaneous. Like the African Touaregs on 'Hey Negrita,' with Charlie playing with those guys. Just mixing it all up was my ultimate goal."

Jazz mixes with Rolling Stones r&b for a swinging 3/4 waltz on "Miss You," performed by Ries, Watts, French musicians pianist Franck Amsallem, bassist Thomas Bramerie and guitarist Frederick Favarell, and Stones' backing singer Fowler.

"That was weird," Ries laughed. "Charlie is always cool. Every time I've asked him to do a session he said yes and he played on half the record. My initial idea was to do this ballad 'Fool To Cry' with Charlie and some of these great musicians in Paris. Charlie has spent a lot of time in Paris and has an apartment there. Then Tony King with the Stones asked to film the session. He asked that I come up with something other than 'Fool To Cry,' so I suggested 'Miss You.' This was the night before the session, so I arranged it in two hours. The final film shows Charlie playing 'Miss You' on stage with the Stones, then cut to the version we did in the studio, with Charlie talking about it. That was on their DVD *The Biggest Bang*."

For a Latin taste, Ries asked Palmieri and his band to record "Under My Thumb" in New York. Performed as a firecracker salsa number,

the melody is almost unidentifiable but the cooking is undeniable.

"Eddie Palmieri didn't know the song," Ries said. "And we didn't have a chance to rehearse with Eddie's band [which includes Brian Lynch and Conrad Herwig]. At least I had a working unit of cats who knew each other; with them it's almost like pushing a button. I had played with Eddie, but this was my first time arranging for him. I was sure he would get the red pencil out and correct everything. The original Stones' arrangement is cool, with vibraphone. So we picked up the tempo and went from there, adding horn parts and changing some chords. With the help of Brian, Conrad and Robby Ameen, we pulled it off."

"The CD Tim put together is amazing," Palmieri said. "Tim's arrangement was excellent, and he left it to our discretion to give it whatever flavors we were looking for rhythmically. We had a good time doing it."

For the New York recording of "You Can't Always Get What You Want," Ries employed Jack DeJohnette, Larry Goldings, Bill Frisell, James Genus and Michael Davis. The blistering version of the *Let It Bleed* classic has all the exhilaration of a lost Michael Brecker session. Initially recorded for Ries' forthcoming *Life Changes* album, the track was instead used for *Stones World*.

"Jack had played a lot with Mike [Brecker], as had Larry and even James Genus," Ries said. "I was close to Mike; he was my hero. I wanted to do at least one take in New York with those cats. It is a New York-sounding arrangement. Those are some of my favorite musicians."

"Tim wrote some amazing arrangements," DeJohnette said. "The interaction of all the players is a thread throughout the project. It's spirited, with a lot of material to sink your teeth into. That song [might recall a Brecker session] due to the way Tim arranged it. It has different sections for different players. I just tried to keep the spirit moving, stoke it and keep it going. We were all familiar with the piece and we put our own individual stamp on it."

Ries' first *Rolling Stones Project* release featured his tenor with vocals by Norah Jones and Sheryl Crow. *Volume II* raises the ante.

"The first album was just taking the songs into instrumental jazz," Ries said. "This was a notch above that: thinking about the tune, who would play or sing on the tune and if the singers would be cool with it. 'Salt Of The Earth' is all these different singers from different parts of the world singing in different languages together in a New York studio, for instance. That was the culmination of all this recording. This song was my dream, to have singers from Israel, Africa and Germany together singing Hebrew, Portuguese and French with this world-ish band in the same studio. All these elements coming together and people having the freedom to do what they do at the same time. It created something unique. I was just there to capture it."

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It all started in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry...

I'd slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. Yet somehow she always shined as the star performer at our school. It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, bragged on and on to me, adding more fuel to my fire.

"You could never be as good as Linda," she would taunt. "Linda's got Perfect Pitch."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated about Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name *exact notes and chords*—all BY EAR; how she could sing any tone—*from memory alone*; how she could play songs—*after just hearing them*; the list went on and on...

My heart sank. *Her EAR is the secret to her success* I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But it bothered me. Did she *really* have Perfect Pitch? How could she know notes and chords just by *hearing* them? It seemed impossible.

Finally I couldn't stand it anymore. So one day I marched right up to Linda and asked her point-blank if she had Perfect Pitch.

"Yes," she nodded aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied.

Now she would eat her words...

My plot was ingeniously simple...

When Linda least suspected, I walked right up and

challenged her to name tones for me—*by ear*.

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made sure other classmates could not help her. I set up everything perfectly so I could expose her Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

With silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play. (She'll never guess F#, I thought.)

I had barely touched the key.

"F#," she said. I was astonished.

I played another tone.

"C," she announced, not stopping to think.

Frantically, I played more tones, skipping here and there all over the keyboard. But somehow she knew the pitch each time. She was AMAZING.

"Sing an E#," I demanded, determined to mess her up. She sang a tone. I checked her on the keyboard—and she was right on!

Now I started to boil.

I called out more tones, trying hard to make them increasingly difficult. But each note she sang perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And that was all I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me like a ton of bricks. I was dizzy with disbelief. Yet from then on, I knew that Perfect Pitch was real.



"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled. (age 14, 9th grade)

I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* recognize and sing tones by ear?

Then it dawned on me. People call themselves *musicians*, yet they can't tell a C from a C#? Or A major from F major?! That's as strange as a portrait painter who can't name the colors of paint on his palette. It all seemed so odd and contradictory.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it out for myself. With a little sweet-talking, I got my three brothers and two sisters to play piano tones for me—so I could try to name them by ear. But it always turned into a messy guessing game I just couldn't win.

Day after day I tried to learn those freaking tones. I would hammer a note *over and over* to make it stick in my head. But hours later I would remember it a half step flat. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't recognize or remember any of the tones by ear. They all sounded the same after awhile; how were you supposed to know which was which—just by *listening*?

I would have done anything to have an ear like Linda. But now I realized it was way beyond my reach. So after weeks of work, I finally gave up.

Then it happened...

It was like a miracle... a twist of fate... like finding the lost Holy Grail...

Once I stopped *straining* my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the simple secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

Curiously, I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors, but colors of *pitch*, colors of

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sound. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever really "let go"—and listened—to discover these subtle differences.

Soon—to my own disbelief—I too could name the tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F♯ sounds one way, while B♭ has a totally different sound—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart

could mentally envision their masterpieces—and know tones, chords, and keys—all by ear!

It was almost childish—I felt sure that anyone could unlock their own Perfect Pitch with this simple secret of "Color Hearing." Bursting with excitement, I told my best friend, Ann (a flutist).

She laughed at me. "You have to be born with Perfect Pitch," she asserted. "You can't develop it."

"You don't understand how Perfect Pitch works," I countered. I sat her down and showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. With this jump start, Ann soon realized she also had gained Perfect Pitch.

We became instant celebrities. Classmates loved to call out tones for us to magically sing from thin air. They played chords for us to name by ear. They quizzed us on what key a song was in.

Everyone was fascinated with our "supernatural" powers, yet to Ann and me, it was just normal.

Way back then, I never dreamed I would later cause such a stir in the academic world. But when I entered college and started to explain my discoveries, professors laughed at me.

"You must be born with Perfect Pitch," they'd say. "You can't develop it!"

I would listen politely. Then I'd reveal the simple secret—so they could hear it for themselves.

You'd be surprised how fast they changed their tune! In college, my so-called "perfect ear" allowed me to skip over two required music theory courses. Perfect Pitch made everything easier—my ability to perform, compose, arrange, transpose, improvise, and even sight-read (because—without looking at the keyboard—you know you're playing the correct tones).

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Oh, you must be wondering: whatever happened with Linda? I'll have to backtrack . . .

Flashback to my senior year of high school. I was nearly 18. In these three-and-a-half years with Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. And I had. But my youthful ambition wasn't satisfied. I needed one more thing: to beat Linda. Now was my final chance.

The University of Delaware hosts a performing music festival each spring, complete with judges and awards. To my horror, they scheduled me that year as the grand finale.

The fated day arrived. Linda gave her usual sterling performance. She would be tough to match, let alone surpass. But my turn finally came, and I went for it.

Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out with selections from Beethoven, Chopin, and Ravel. The applause was overwhelming.

Afterwards, I scoured the bulletin board for our grades. Linda received an A. This was no surprise.

Then I saw that I had scored an A+. Sweet victory was music to my ears, mine at last! —D.L.B.



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- "It is wonderful. I can truly hear the differences in the color of the tones." D.P., student
- "I heard the differences on the initial playing, which did in fact surprise me. It is a breakthrough." J.H., student
- "It's so simple it's ridiculous. M.P., guitar
- "I'm able to play things I hear in my head. Before, I could barely do it." J.W., keyboards
- "I hear a song on the radio and I know what they're doing. My improvisations have improved. I feel more in control." L.B., bass guitar
- "It feels like I'm singing and playing MY notes instead of somebody else's—like music is more 'my own.'" L.H., voice/guitar
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- "Although I was skeptical at first, I am now awed." R.H., sax
- "It's like hearing in a whole new dimension." L.S., guitar
- "I started crying and laughing all at the same time. J.S., music educator
- "I wish I could have had this 30 years ago!" R.B., voice
- "This is absolutely what I had been searching for." D.F., piano
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Wanting It All

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE JAZZ FAN WHO SEEMS TO OWN EVERYTHING

By Yoshi Kato

Setting aside personal budgets and real-world concerns about the state of the economy, what can one get the jazz fan who already seems to own a comprehensive CD collection and wants something more personal than a concert experience? Here are some higher-end holiday gift ideas, with a few only-in-a-dream purchases thrown into the mix.

LIMITED-EDITION MONTEREY BOOK

The Art Of Jazz: Monterey Jazz Festival/50 Years is an impressive collection of stories and art work. The limited edition, numbered to 250, elevates the book itself to a piece of art. MJF Board member Clint Eastwood signed each edition, which sells for \$300 through montereyjazzfestival.com.

LIVE BIG BAND FOR A DAY

For a fan who also plays, there's nothing like soloing with the backing of a big band. But who has the resources to assemble and maintain one these days? Prices to bring one to a private gig tend to range from \$3,000 to \$10,000, depending on the band and the job.

ART TATUM'S AUTOGRAPH

"Of the half dozen scarcest autographs by jazz musicians, Art Tatum's has to be the rarest," said Jim Neumann, who is donating his extensive memorabilia collection to Oberlin Conservatory. Meanwhile, there's an ongoing Internet-fueled trade for other historic jazz musicians' signatures, with prices related to rarity and the player's historic role.

THELONIOUS MONK'S UNDERGROUND LP

Trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis suggested this one: First put out by Columbia in 1967, the pianist's final studio effort with his 1960s quartet was rereleased on vinyl, cassette and CD in 1990 and went through a remastered treatment in 2003. But to true collectors, only the original vinyl will do. As of late October, copies of that original version could be found for sale online on netsoundsmusic.com for \$196.56 (in "Very Good+" condition).

PRODUCE AN ALBUM

ArtistShare allows fans to become patrons through supporting artists at various contribution levels, including Executive Producer, Gold, Silver and Bronze. The company's project manager, Andrew Hardro, said the company intends to launch a gift-giving option through its web site. The slots can range from around \$150 to \$12,500.

HERMAN LEONARD PRINT

Many jazz fans have commercial prints of photographer Herman Leonard's iconic work. But the photographer also sells limited-edition gelatin silver prints of his photos through his web site. The site also lists galleries that sell his prints, and some are available through auction houses, like Bonhams & Butterfields (B&B), which in 2004 sold a print of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie at Manhattan's Royal Roost in 1948 for \$1,293.

SATCHMO GOLD

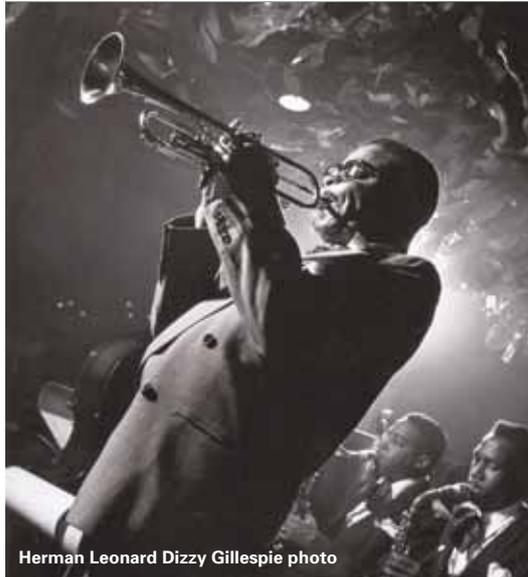
On eBay, a seller has posted an uncirculated 1982 Louis Armstrong commemorative coin, which is part of the American Arts series and consists of a full ounce of gold. While the cost may be subject to the site's bidding process, its opening bid is in the \$820 range.

JAZZ MANUSCRIPTS

"Jazz manuscripts are undervalued, for a variety of reasons, including a scarcity of material that prevents the development of a real following and perhaps a long-standing prejudice against popular music by those who collect classical composers," said Catherine Williamson, B&B books and manuscripts director. This could be pricey if you try to tie this purchase to a holiday theme: Three years



The Art Of Jazz: Monterey Jazz Festival/50 Years



Herman Leonard Dizzy Gillespie photo

Cab Calloway's autograph on a Cotton Club program



Mulligan Mosaics Big Band

ago, Guernsey's Auctions in New York sold a hand-printed score of Thelonious Monk's little-known "Merrier Christmas" for \$11,800, according to *Antiques And The Arts Weekly*.

SOUVENIER PROGRAM

Another eBay seller offers a 1957 Newport Jazz Festival program at the "Buy It Now" price of \$299.99. Such a program is not only a collectible object, but could offer historic insights.

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HOLIDAY MUSIC

by Frank-John Hadley

Sleigh Bells

Over many wintry Decembers, Mr. Claus has built up a nice little cottage industry sledding holiday music from his North Pole digs to folks everywhere, not slowed by melting ice floes and sluggish CD sales. The jolly fat fellow outed himself as a jazz fan back in 1953 when Louis Armstrong serenaded him with "Zat You, Santa Claus?" and he's since stayed alert to all types of holiday music.

Béla Fleck & The Flecktones:
Jingle All The Way (Rounder 11661; 61:36) ★★★★★ Not inclined to play it safe, the Fleck-tones run wild with abundant technique and musical imagination on their first holiday album. As if this gang wasn't enough to command our attention, Tuvan throat singers show up in Santa suits and merrily traumatize us by interpreting "Jingle Bells" and "What Child Is This/Dyngyldai." Though far more staid, guest Edgar Meyer on double bass also helps out decorating the Fleck tree, and Andy Statman supplies serpentine clarinet to "The Hanukkah Waltz." Perfect music for a holiday feast with Dali, Fellini, Moondog, Earl Scruggs and Naftule Brandwein all seated around the three-legged dining table.

Ordering info: rounder.com

Spyro Gyra: *A Night Before Christmas* (Heads Up 3145; 53:25) ★★★ Presents wrapped and holly strung, the popular band takes a surprising straightahead acoustic jazz turn and indulges its quiet enthusiasm for the season on this nice little stocking-stuffer. Familiar carols and standards make up the program, along with sax player Jay Beckenstein's engaging "It Won't Feel Like Christmas," sung with faux-melancholic smoothness by actress Christine Ebersole. Throughout the album, Julio Fernandez's guitar solos please like hot buttered rum. Singing drummer Bonny B slathers sweet glop all over "The Christmas Song" and frolics with Manhattan Transfer's Janis Siegel on "Baby It's Cold Outside."

Ordering info: headsup.com

Various Artists: *A Jazz & Blues Christmas* (Putumayo 285; 33:14) ★★★ The Putumayo holiday party doesn't lack good cheer. B.B. King delivers "A Christmas Celebration," Ray Charles smiles his way through "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Rein-

deer" and Charles Brown, a third American music great, puts his charming touch on "Santa's Blues." Mere mortals dipping their cups into the wassail bowl include sensual Canadian jazz songbird Emilie-Claire Barlow, Chicago's jump-blues outfit Mighty Blue Kings and ace New Orleans r&b singer Luther Kent with the Dukes of Dixieland. Who invited Riff Ruffin? Was it B.B.? The little-remembered 1950s r&b guitarist takes perverse satisfaction in Santa hauling his "Xmas Baby" down the chimney.

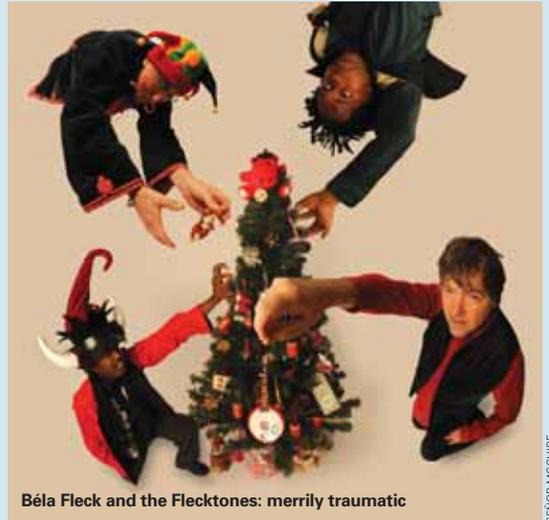
Ordering info: putumayo.com

Al Jarreau: *Christmas* (Rhino 512527; 53:39) ★★½ Jarreau accents the good-will-to-man message of famous carols and the liturgical piece "Gloria In Excelsis." He's so sincere and exact with his calibrations of feeling he'll make you better appreciate the redeeming qualities of the season ... or he'll make you wish you never heard such sentimental mush. Holiday music haters will rejoice over this album as an unintended travesty of the conventional.

Ordering info: rhinorecords.com

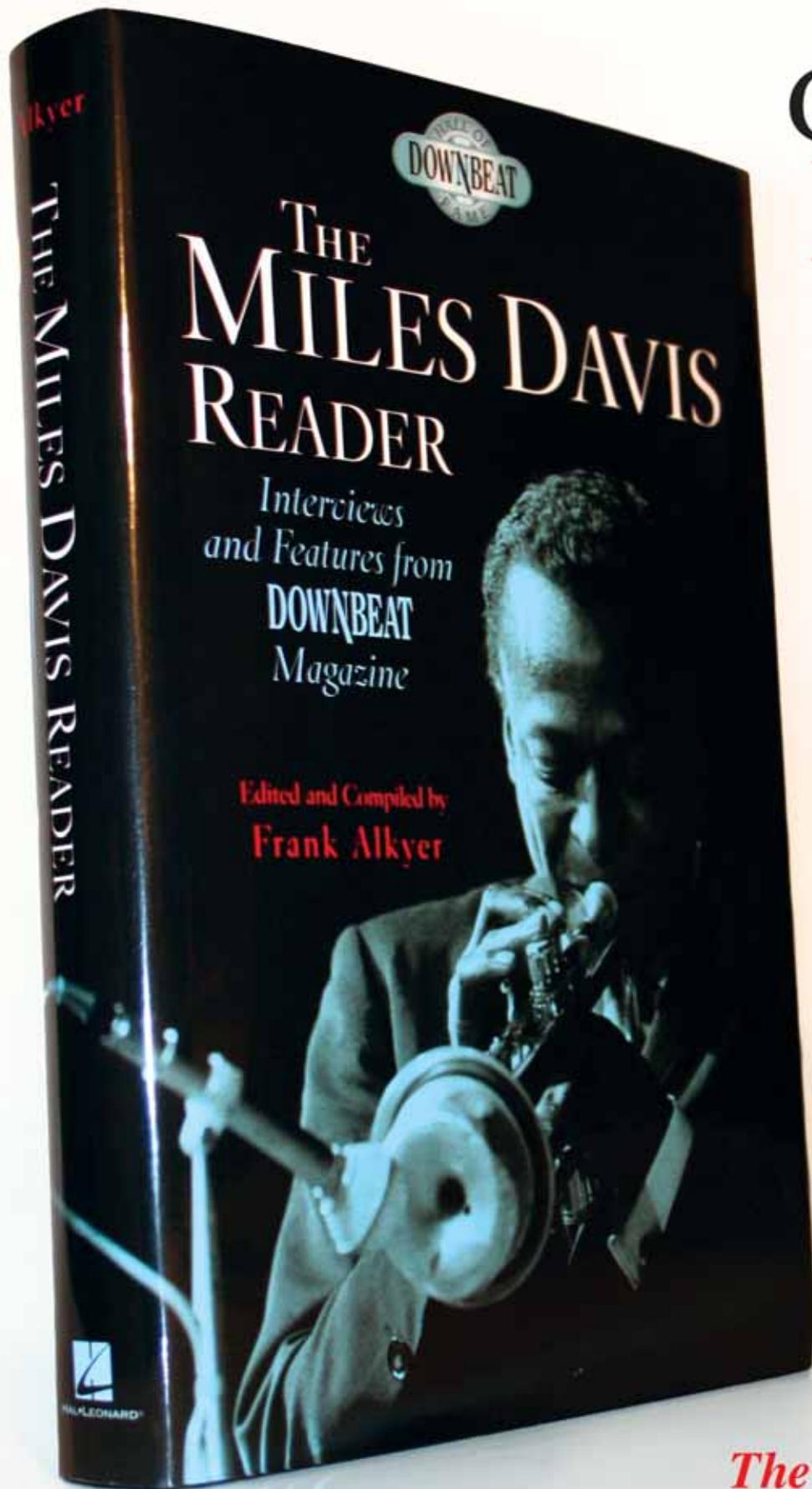
Ledisi: *It's Christmas* (Verve Forecast 01608; 51:04) ★★★ The ultimate Xmas album by this dynamite singer would have her and the Count Basie Orchestra (they've worked together recently) in an ear-exploding phantasmagoric spectacle. This pop-r&b outing isn't that (that pairing comes on Tony Bennett's new holiday disc, *A Swingin' Christmas*), but it'll do. The two-time Grammy nominee appears totally involved with the lyrics of pleasing originals and classics identified with the Jackson 5, Luther Vandross, Lou Rawls or Armstrong. But bah, humbug: Ledisi should have sang "Silent Night" without the obtrusive eggnog-gooey bass.

Ordering info: verveforecast.com



Béla Fleck and the Flecktones: merrily traumatic

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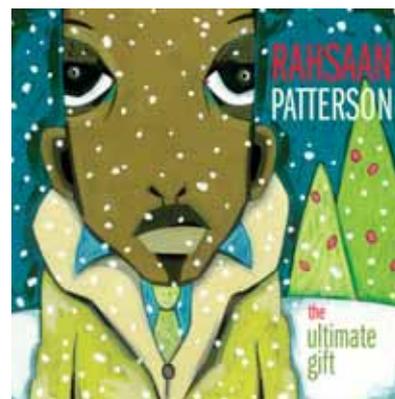
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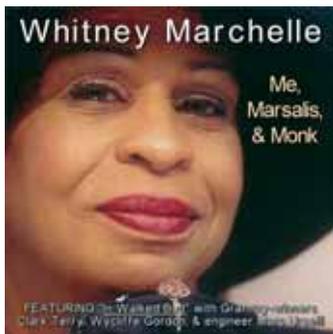
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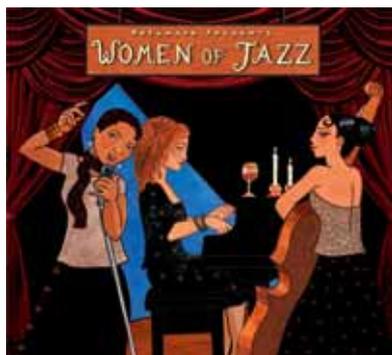
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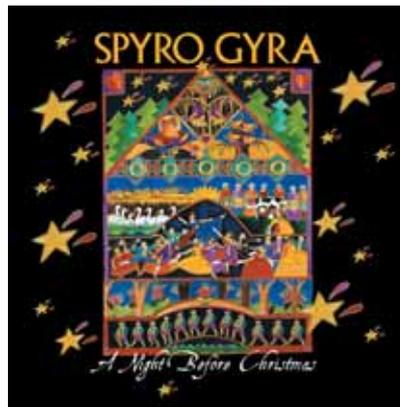
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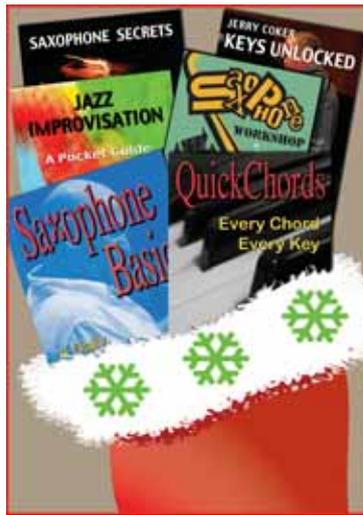


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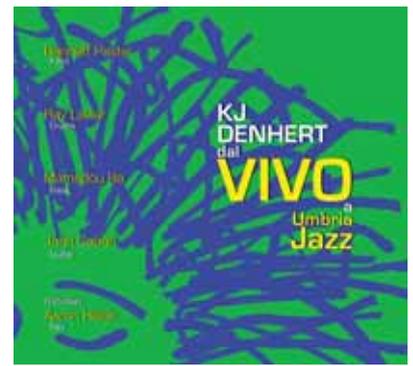
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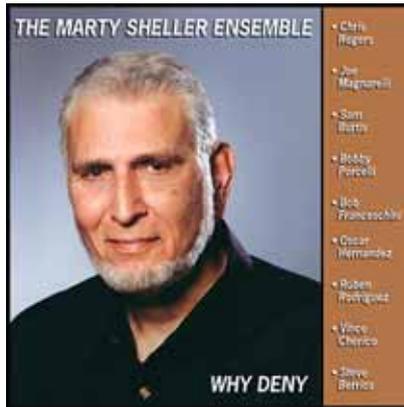
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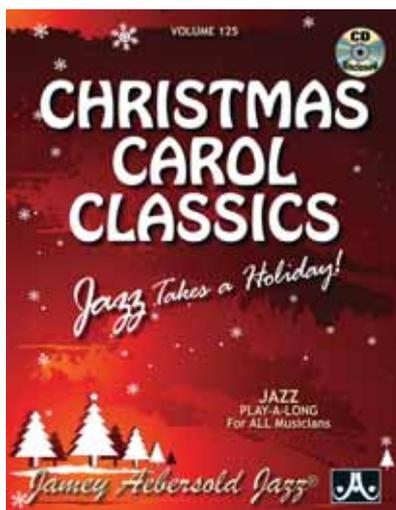


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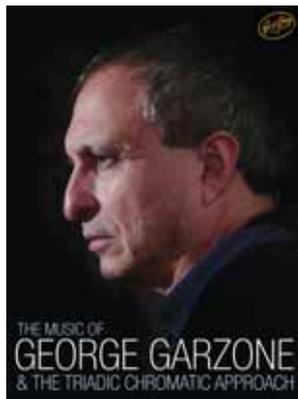


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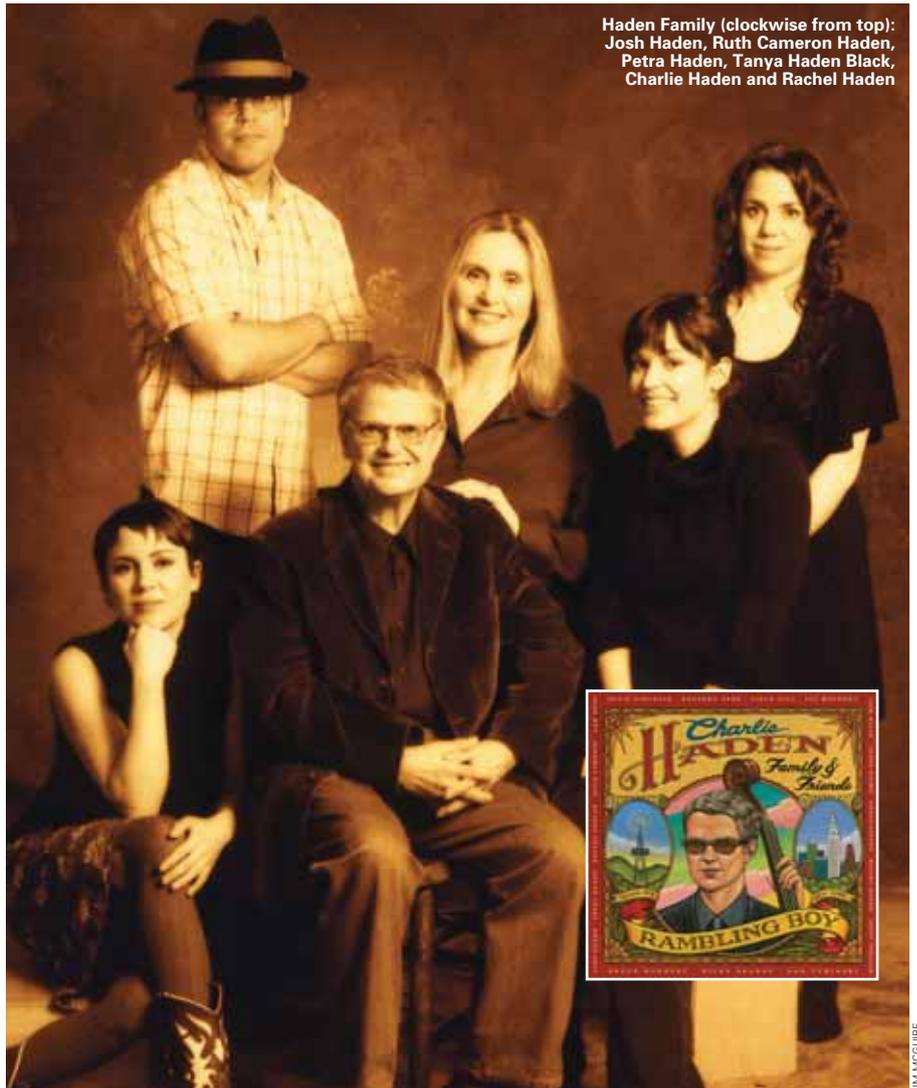
DECCA B0011639

★★★★★

If you love jazz but your ears are also tickled by the high lonesome sound of the Carter Family, honky-tonk and bluegrass, bassist Charlie Haden's new disc will be a wonderful surprise. Though you may know Haden as the avant-gardist with Ornette Coleman or the politically outraged leader of the Liberation Music Orchestra, Haden came up playing what was called "hillbilly music" in a family band. Hearing Haden play this music today—especially with the celestial sister harmonies of his triplet daughters, Petra, Tanya and Rachel—is a revelation. It is not only a homecoming, but a brave illumination of the source of the soulfulness Coleman would hear in him so many years later in Los Angeles. Though the disc is freighted with the kind of all-star cast that sometimes sinks corporate Nashville gambits, in this case, the guests come in, do their job and lift the music even higher.

The Haden sisters sing the Carter Family's stoic, plain-style "Single Girl, Married Girl," Bill Monroe's supplicating "A Voice From On High" and the Louvin Brothers' swinging waltz "Seven Year Blues." The gals soar on their own, as well. Rachel reminds us, as Hank Williams once did, that the scorned "Tramp On The Street" might have been Jesus himself; Tanya wails—forn and vibratoless—on the Haden/Pat Metheny original "He's Gone Away," with Bruce Hornsby contributing a fine piano solo; and Petra—with a lush Metheny arrangement—recalls the Irish famine in the ballad "The Fields Of Athenry." Son Josh Haden gets in on the act, as well, rendering his own plea for salvation, "Spiritual," with haunting beauty.

Beyond the family circle, Elvis Costello takes a refreshingly restrained turn on Williams' "You Win Again"; Dan Tyminski applies his raw, nasal sound to Jimmy Martin's ultimate declaration of love in three-four time, "Ocean Of Diamonds"; Ricky Skaggs, who plays mandolin on two tracks, offers Cowboy Copas' "Road Of Broken Hearts"; country star Vince Gill hits just the right tone on the Maybelle Carter classic and title track; and Rosanne Cash does just as well by Carter's signature "Wildwood Flower." Tanya's husband, actor Jack Black, lays into the banjo barn-burner "Old Joe Clark," with Béla



Haden Family (clockwise from top): Josh Haden, Ruth Cameron Haden, Petra Haden, Tanya Haden Black, Charlie Haden and Rachel Haden

Fleck, no less, plying the five-string, along with Jerry Douglas on dobro, Sam Bush on mandolin and Bryan Sutton flat-picking guitar. Nearly all the tracks are liberally peppered with the licks by these and other Nashville cats.

A brief, 1939 air check of the "Haden Family Radio Show," the next-to-last track, features 2-year-old Charlie Haden being prodded by his father to sing "Roll Us Over The Tide." The adult Charlie closes the album, singing the nostalgic lament "Oh Shenandoah." This is sentimental music, but, like Charlie Haden himself—and like American country music—it tells a story straight from the heart—plaintive, honest and true—with nary a trace of irony. And it works, from start to finish.

—Paul de Barros

Rambling Boy: Single Girl, Married Girl; Rambling Boy; 20/20 Vision; Wildwood Flower; Spiritual; Oh, Take Me Back; You Win Again; The Fields Of Athenry; Ocean Of Diamonds; He's Gone Away; A Voice From On High; Down By The Salley Gardens; Road Of Broken Hearts; Is This America? (Katrina 2005); Tramp On The Street; Old Joe Clark; Seven Year Blues; Old Haden Family Show; Oh Shenandoah. (73:13)

Personnel: Charlie Haden, bass, vocals; Jerry Douglas, dobro; Sam Bush, Dan Tyminski, Ricky Skaggs, Mary Elizabeth Haden, mandolin; Stuart Duncan, fiddle; Bryan Sutton, Russ Barenberg, Pat Metheny, John Leventhal, Bryan Stuart, Carl Haden, Sr., Carl Haden, Jr., Mary Jane Haden, Carl Haden, Jr. (18), guitar; Ricky Skaggs, fretless banjo; Béla Fleck, banjo; Tanya Haden, cello; Bruce Hornsby, piano; Buddy Greene, harmonica; Rachel Haden, Petra Haden, Tanya Haden, Vince Gill, Bruce Hornsby, Rosanne Cash, Josh Haden, Elvis Costello, Dan Tyminski, Ruth Cameron, Ricky Skaggs, Jack Black, Jim Haden, Mary Elizabeth Haden, Carl Haden, Jr., Jimmy Haden, vocals.

» Ordering info: deccarecords-us.com

Milton Nascimento & Jobim Trio

Novas Bossas

EMI 50999

★★★★½

Every time I've tried to get on board Milton Nascimento's trip, I've chosen one of his lesser efforts and been scared off by gaudy arrangements or sugary sentiments. For a guy with an impeccable rep, he sure has his share of so-so recordings. As the origins of bossa nova would suggest, less is often more. So it's a pleasure to report that this overtly jazzy outing is without a garish moment, instead stressing the lilt that's central to the style while focusing on the natural drama that has become Nascimento's signature trait.

Even though the singer has spent the last three decades working within a form built on breeziness, his sound has a distinct gravity. That natural depth juices all the action here. The disc opens with a handful of tunes elaborate enough to bend the tradition and give the album's title some veracity. Dorival Caymmi's "O Vento" is an eerie item with a slightly chant-like design. The opening to Nascimento's own "Cais" has a ghostly vibe, too. For a second it made me wonder if he's going through his Robert Wyatt phase.

The band makes this elaborate action seem so buoyant. Pianist Daniel Jobim (Antonio Carlos Jobim's grandson; his father Paulo is on guitar here) is the trio's lead voice, and he nurtures esprit from even the darkest hues. It's not until the middle of the program that the classic Brazilian groove emerges on a string of Tom Jobim tunes. The group (Paulo Braga on drums and Rodrigo Villa on bass) is just as polished



with these. A hush delivered by the rhythm section defines the bittersweet nature of "Esperança Perdida," trumping the plush spin Jobim and Nelson Riddle gave it years ago, and making way for some cooing falsetto.

All this rule-bending doesn't feel iconoclastic; Nascimento's dedication to finesse prevents any deep rebuff of the past. But along the way, twists and turns head toward unexpected vistas. Nascimento's voice is a bit smokier than I recall, but still on-target. Now in his mid-'60s, the singer's agility remains fluid. That trait becomes obvious on one of the disc's more fetching anomalies. "Dias Azuis" finds him floating around the melody as if he were part of the Beach Boys circa *Sunflower*. Novas bossas, indeed. —Jim Macnie

Novas Bossas: Tudo Que Você Podia Ser; Dias Azuis; Cais; O Vento; Tarde; Brigas Nunca Mais; Caminhos Cruzados; Inútil Paisagem; Chega De Saudade; Medo De Amar; Velho Riacho; Esperança Perdida; Trem De Ferro; Samba Do Avião. (54:47)

Personnel: Milton Nascimento, vocals; Daniel Jobim, piano; Paulo Braga, drums; Paulo Jobim, guitar; Rodrigo Villa, bass.

» Ordering info: bluonote.com

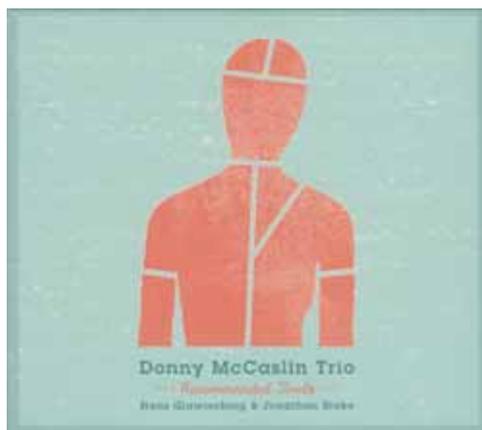
Donny McCaslin Trio

Recommended Tools

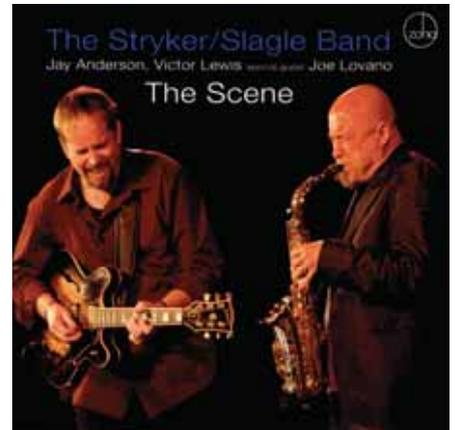
GREENLEAF MUSIC

★★★★

Tenor saxophonist Donny McCaslin has been around a deceptively long time, since he played with Gary Burton at the end of the 1980s. Soon thereafter he settled in New York, and has quietly become one of the great go-to soloists, often raising the stakes in other peoples' bands, including Dave Douglas' recent quintet. On *Recommended Tools*, McCaslin is at the wheel, joining the brave few who have ventured into the tenor trio after Sonny Rollins made his heroic and hard-to-top forays in the format. It's a terrific outing, with solid original material at the service of a ferocious



player and great rhythm section. There's nothing frivolous, no errors of judgment—just energizing jazz in a lean setting with lots to love.



The Stryker/Slagle Band

The Scene

ZOH0 200810

★★★★

The fourth CD of this quartet is fine work on all counts. The group moves through a program of relatively simple but often clever original themes designed to set up a platform for blowing, and then step aside. Some are more interesting than others—Steve Slagle's staccato "Six Four Teo," for instance, or the more intricate "Two Sense." But like all the best jazz, it's up to the players to paint in the colors. Joe Lovano joins in on four of the tunes on tenor to fatten up the ensembles and add muscle to Slagle's alto. Both players are well matched by temperament, style and their roots in the granite-hard '60s John Coltrane sound, which Slagle has transposed to alto, sometimes more overtly than others. But the old sheets of sound still flap conspicuously.

Perhaps the real contrast comes in the warmer fluency of Dave Stryker's excellent guitar, which acts as Slagle's front-line partner when Lovano isn't around. He fills the comping roll of the absent piano and solos with steady, brittle assurance, typically after the more flashy saxophonics.

Though McCaslin offers plenty of rollicking and burning rubber, a good measure of the record's merits can be found in the Bill Frisell-inspired ballad "Late Night Gospel" or the introspective "Margins Of Solitude." On the former, McCaslin delivers the sweet melody as a singer would, concentrating on his sound but not overdoing the radiant tone or fussing over his attractive vibrato. He's got restraint and knows how to use it, even when he turns from a more straight approach to something conjuring early David Murray (the exhaustive unaccompanied cadenza on "The Champion") or Air-era Henry Threadgill ("Excursion"). The setting leaves him exposed, which makes it a good thing he's got so many plusses. On a gorgeous reading of Billy Strayhorn's "Isfahan," McCaslin is deliciously all over the horn, but he remains relaxed.

The uptempo tunes are marvelously unfet-

The HOT Box

Slagle and Lovano open with a nice original for two saxes, "Skee," which moves between alternating time signatures, giving the piece a variety but also indecision. The back-and-forth pattern persists through the solo sequences, which seems to restrain the horns. But Stryker's guitar moves through the thicket with a sleek confidence.

The music turns wee-small-hours romantic on Slagle's lovely "Hopewell's Last," which begins with a scooping soprano-tenor arpeggio played in octaves and lays out the most listener—and lyric—friendly theme of the CD. Solos are fittingly restrained all around. "Brighter Days," which follows, is a more open and relaxed, mid-tempo excursion with hints of "You've Changed" embedded in a gentle sax ensemble.

Slagle moves to flute on "Fingers In The Wind." Despite his attempts at a little grit, flutes sound alike to me. It's an instrument that seems to invite a high flutter factor. Note for note, I suppose, this is probably no more true of a flute than on alto or tenor. But because its sound is so resistant to the kind of mischief and malleability that can be wrung from a reed, the instrument seems locked in a kind of immutable avionic twitter, marvelous for invoking images of sunlit springtime innocence but little else.

The CD ends on an impressively climactic and hard swing note. "Strikology" would have been a kicker of an opener if the rest of the CD had delivered at this level, which it doesn't. But that's OK. It's always better to end with a bang than a whimper, and this offers plenty of old-fashioned drive, including a peppy round of fours, wrapping up a superior snapshot of the contemporary center of jazz. —John McDonough

The Scene: Skee; The Scene; Six Four Teo; Two Sense; Kindred Spirits; Hopewell's Last; Brighter Days; Fingers In The Wind; Strikology. (65:21)

Personnel: Steve Slagle, alto and tenor saxophone, flute; Joe Lovano (1, 3, 6, 7), tenor saxophone; Dave Stryker, guitar; Jay Anderson, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

» Ordering info: zohomusic.com

tered, and also laid back, even in the course of sprinting. Having such a reliable team on hand as bassist Hans Glawischnig, who's got the elasticity and punch to push a piece like "Fast Brazil," encouraging skeins of sound from the saxophonist, while staying locked in with the on-target drumming of Johnathan Blake. Blake likes to float loose-limbed, rather than hemming in McCaslin by bearing down. This results in an extraordinary amount of space. How confidently they place shapes, lines and volumes in that space. Expert sculptors, one and all. —John Corbett

Recommended Tools: Recommended Tools; Eventual; Late Night Gospel; Excursion; Isfahan; The Champion; Margins Of Solitude; 3 Signs; 2nd Hour Revisited; Fast Brazil. (65:20)

Personnel: Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; Hans Glawischnig, bass; Johnathan Blake, drums.

» Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com

CDs	CRMCs »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Charlie Haden Family and Friends <i>Rambling Boy</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★½	★★★★★
Milton Nascimento & Jobim Trio <i>Novas Bossas</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★½	★★★½
The Stryker/Slagle Band <i>The Scene</i>		★★★★	★★★½	★★★	★★½
Donny McCaslin Trio <i>Recommended Tools</i>		★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★

Critics' Comments

Charlie Haden Family and Friends, *Rambling Boy*

Haden's smorgasbord of hillbilly Americana only falters on a couple of occasions (Jack Black, Petra Haden solo), but his daughters' high-lonesome harmonies, the spotlight on son Josh, the stunning ensemble and Haden's own thrumming, pedal-heavy bass make for a well-stocked table. The closing two tracks are worth everything: 2-year-old Charlie and his elder self meeting in the CD's fantasy mirror. —John Corbett

Haden has achieved his goal of crafting a fine transgenre CD. The music has all the simple sorrows and flat, nasal twang of a WPA field recording or a Dorothea Lange Dust Bowl image. It will find an audience that has probably never before heard of Haden. —John McDonough

Great tunes, playing and lots of diversity—the program plays out in engaging ways, and any record containing "Ocean Of Diamonds" is jake with me. But there's something too prim, too buttoned-down about the music. I've gotten over it—the eloquence of Rosanne Cash's "Wildwood Flower" vocal helped me. I just wish it was a bit more blue collar. —Jim Macnie

Milton Nascimento & Jobim Trio, *Novas Bossas*

To a Yankee, hearing a Jobim classic like "No More Blues" in its native tongue ("Chega De Saudade") is like finding a Coke machine in Morocco: an exotic variation of a familiar trademark. The album is for those who prefer roots, here in a combination of whispered Portuguese pastels and festive energy, although Nascimento seems unsteady here and there. —John McDonough

The classic Jobim material, presented with a light, brisk touch by Jobim's son Paulo and grandson Daniel, is heavenly; the cast, pure Brazilian royalty. But Nascimento's brooding, crooning tracks are muddied up with rippling keyboard, echo, falsetto, vocoder and other pop paraphernalia. —Paul de Barros

Gorgeous performances by the Brazilian singer—his sweet, high, sweeping voice in all its glory. I'm used to listening to him (and some of these songs) in a more highly orchestrated setting, so it's a treat to hear him against a stripped-down ensemble. You hear decades of collaboration in their interplay. —John Corbett

The Stryker/Slagle Band, *The Scene*

Lovely that Joe Lovano offered to enliven this session with solos and nicely textured ensembles, but the unintended consequence is that it makes guitarist Dave Stryker and reed man Steve Slagle sound that much less imaginative and more derivative. Slagle's "Six Four Teo" and "Hopewell's Last," and Stryker's "Brighter Days" stand up nicely, though. —Paul de Barros

I've always been partial to the Stryker/Slagle working concept; the longstanding pair emphasizes depth of communication over all. This isn't the most scintillating program they've put together, despite Lovano's presence on four tracks. Consistency of partnership can lead to growth or exhaustion; the latter seems a definite tendency these guys will want to avoid. —John Corbett

Obviously they're capable players, oft-inspired even. But I haven't always heard them as individualistic—somehow they've blended into the background. The grace and esprit on this date helps upend that opinion. Though the tunes aren't that memorable, what they do with them is engaging. —Jim Macnie

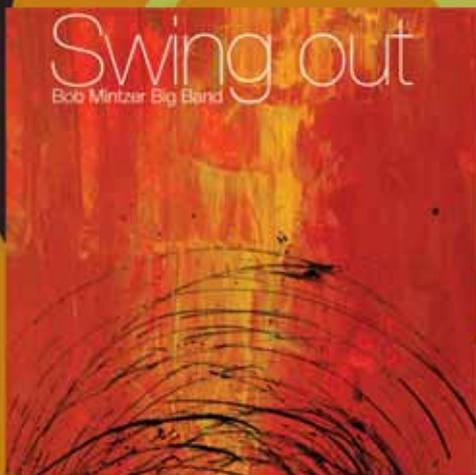
Donny McCaslin Trio, *Recommended Tools*

The action never stops. The saxophonist has plenty of ideas—micro riffs that plump up into tiny melodies that live within the solos themselves—that are more organized than ever. But organized in a way that allows for the rambunctious and nuanced rhythm section to grab onto his every lead. That's a decent definition of a tight band, and these guys are cohesive. —Jim Macnie

With drums and bass nipping on his flanks, McCaslin sometimes sounds trapped in an endless coda and can't find the exit ("Eventual"). But when he chooses to ("Excursion"), he can move with decisive force; he wanders the limits of the tenor scales with more ease than apparent purpose. —John McDonough

It's a cliché to say that pianoless trios offer horn soloists more "freedom," but this album, though technically impressive, often has the opposite effect. Perhaps because the lead instrument comes off as a third percussive voice rather than a broadening harmonic one, there is a shrinkage of the emotional and textural canvas rather than an expansion of it. I often found it hard to stay with McCaslin's excursions. —Paul de Barros

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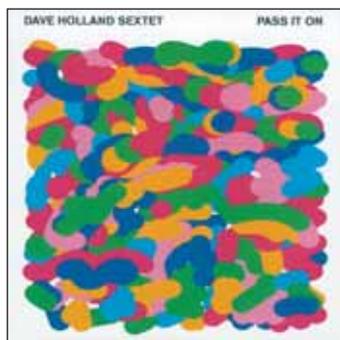
BORDERS.

Dave Holland Sextet

Pass It On
DARE2/EMARCY 00188
★★★★

Since stepping out of academe and recommitting himself to full-time music-making in the early '90s, Dave Holland has launched and nourished three bands, each with distinctive personalities. His newest creation—a sextet that returns to the trumpet/alto sax/trombone frontline of his early-'80s band—provides him with the elements to explore some of his favorite directions. To highlight the band's personality, six of the nine pieces on *Pass It On* are remakes of Holland compositions from earlier recordings.

One of the components of his writing that is often overshadowed by his love of patterns-within-patterns and off-kilter rhythms is his fondness for gospel. Drummer Nate Smith brings some of that to Holland's quintet, but in this new sextet gospel and soul get their full due, thanks to the presence of pianist Mulgrew Miller. Not only does he add his distinctive Memphis sound to "Fast Track" and the title track—both of them new Holland composi-



tions—but the addition of a pianist provides a broader, chordal approach to tunes like "Equality," which made its first appearance on the 1995 album *Dream Of The Elders*.

The other element that puts Holland's writing in a new light is the presence of alto saxophonist Antonio Hart. His sound provides a rougher edge than many of the

bassist's usual sidemen, and he uses his raw urgency effectively on the sinewy "Lazy Snake" and a reprise of "Rivers Run," a piece Holland wrote for his longtime partner Sam Rivers in 1988. At almost 14 minutes, the suite-like piece illustrates how well Holland writes in long form, his melodic and rhythmic ideas stretching and overlapping as new themes develop.

Given the promise this new band holds, one looks forward in keen anticipation of the music it will inspire Holland to write for it.

—James Hale

Pass It On: The Sum Of All Parts; Fast Track; Lazy Snake; Double Vision; Equality; Modern Times; Rivers Run; Processional; Pass It On. (74:20)

Personnel: Dave Holland, bass; Antonio Hart, alto saxophone; Alex Sipiagin, trumpet; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Eric Harland, drums.

» Ordering info: deccarecords-us.com

Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band

Act Your Age
IMMERGENT 81147
★★★

Few bands are as eager to be liked as the Big Phat Band, and this, its fourth CD, is unlikely to send young fans away disappointed. Peppered with guest cameos, the Los Angeles band carries all its essential resources in house and bursts at the seams with zeal and fervor. Outsiders enter this crack strike force at their own risk, and had better be ready.

Though introspective or contemplative musings don't stand a chance in this heated environment, some degree of nuance is permissible when the band isn't delivering its procession of knockout punches. Leader-arranger Gordon Goodwin has concocted an ingenious wrapping that contains a 1949 Art Tatum solo performance of "Yesterdays," restored from a recording and reperformed on a live piano. In following Tatum's lead, the band swings lightly in a way it rarely does. "Watermelon Man" also has a looseness about it that contemporary Count Basie might be comfortable with. "Chance Encounters," a tribute to Oliver Nelson, is about as low as the temperature gets on this CD.

But Goodwin's normal stock and trade is a



controlled shock and awe. It's evident from the first tune, "Hit The Ground Running," where altoist Eric Marienthal marshals the bravado and chops to ride this funky bronco of a big band. On "Backrow Politics," the band's murderers row of trumpet hit men dazzles with unmitigated force. The solos and ensembles represent some sensational playing; catch Dan Fornero's sampling from "Rhapsody In Blue."

There are countless ways to measure excellence in an orchestra. But by building a band from a cherry-picked pool of players in one of the most competitive music centers, Goodwin has objectified those measurements in terms of virtuosity, something manifest in virtually every chart the band plays. No band has a monopoly on these qualities. But the Big Phat Band has made energy, discipline and volume its calling card in ways few others have, a strategy that has made it an attraction among hip younger audiences. However, it would be nice to hear the unit relax a little and get in touch with the softer nuances of swing that beat beneath the funky ostinatos and virtuosity.

—John McDonough

Act Your Age: Hit The Ground Running; Watermelon Man; September; Yesterdays; Señor Mouse; Punta Del Soul; Act Your Age; Chance Encounters; Backrow Politics; East Coast Envy; El Macho Muchacho; Gumbo Street; Floating Home. (74:07)

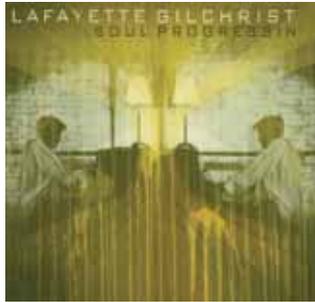
» Ordering info: immergent.com

Lafayette Gilchrist

Soul Progressin'

HYENA 9371

★★★★



Baltimore pianist Lafayette Gilchrist is best known as a member of the David Murray Quartet, but with each of his own records he's been turning heads with a personal sound. He made *Soul Progressin'* with his octet the New Volcanoes, an instinctual, tight-knit combo that can't be randomly assembled from a pool of session cats. Gilchrist's tunes collide all kinds of styles, and at first blush the record seems like a new iteration of the M-Base sound pioneered two decades ago, with go-go rhythms instead of hip-hop. Drummer Nathan Reynolds and electric bassist Anthony Jenkins have taut funk in their blood, and their muscular, frenetic grooves provide the dominant armature for the pianist's sometimes knotty, sometimes plaintive tunes. Gilchrist's sanguine melodies, vulnerable and gospelized, distinguish the music from M-Base's cool austerity.

The pianist's solos emerge from the din in the most naturalistic manner, as thoughtful elaborations of the written material. If there's a problem with the record, it's the unrelenting density of the arrangements, which makes "Uncrowned," an introspective solo piano remembrance of Andrew Hill—an influence on Gilchrist—that more potent. —Peter Margasak

Soul Progressin': *Soul Progressin'*; *Between Us*; *Come Get Some*; *Uncrowned*; *Those Frowning Clowns*; *Detective's Tip*; *Many Exits No Doors*. (57:45)

Personnel: Lafayette Gilchrist, piano; John Dierker, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Gregory Thompkins, tenor saxophone; Gabriel Ware, alto saxophone; Mike Cerri, Freddy Dunn, trumpet; Anthony Jenkins, bass; Nathan Reynolds, drums.

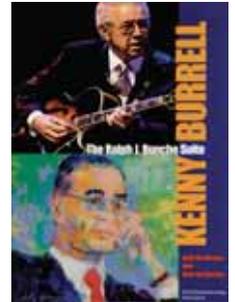
» Ordering info: hyenarecords.com

Kenny Burrell

The Ralph J. Bunche Suite

UCLA ETHNOMUSICOLOGY PRODUCTIONS

★★½



When Kenny Burrell turns his hand to a long-form piece, we expect programmatic variety and sweep. This suite, dedicated to the Solomonian diplomat Dr. Ralph Bunche, though timely, is often frustrating. Filmed in concert with a student orchestra from Burrell's UCLA jazz program, it's augmented by big leaguers like trumpeter Bobby Rodriguez and bassist Roberto Miranda.

Languid tempos throw a blanket of torpor over much of the suite. A plodding passage in the first movement casts a pall that is lifted by the pungent blues soprano sax of Charles Owens. It's not the only point where the blues elevate the proceedings. Burrell plays beautifully throughout, never wasting a note. The writing, though, suffers from a lack of melodic content. Voicings can be rich and full, but they seldom move in interesting contours. The work is also subverted by the production. Rehearsal footage disconcertingly cuts into the concert film. A sequence that features Chester Whitmore—one of L.A.'s best tap dancers—as Bunche, falls flat because his taps are inaudible. —Kirk Silsbee

The Ralph J. Bunche Suite: *Arrival—Birth Into Life's Journey*; *The Peacemaker*; *With Trust In His Soul*; *Man With A Mission*; *Thank You, Dr. Bunche*; *The Struggle For Peace, Justice And Freedom*; *Soulful Connections*; *A Man Of Peace And Love*; *Home*; *The U.N. Blues*; *Journey's End*. (58:39)

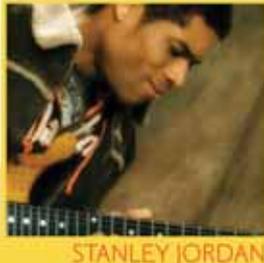
Personnel: Kenny Burrell, guitar; Bobby Rodriguez, trumpet; Hubert Laws, flute, piccolo; Charles Owens, saxophones; Llew Mathews, piano; Roberto Miranda, bass, congas; Wayne Peet, marimba; Charley Harrison, conductor; Tommy Hawkins, narrator; Chester Whitmore and the Central Avenue Dancers; UCLA student ensemble.

» Ordering info: ethnomusic.ucla.edu

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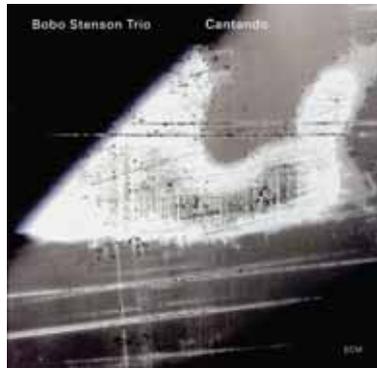
Bobo Stenson Trio

Cantando

ECM 2023

★★★★

Dreamy and eloquent, yet varied, *Cantando* is trio music like you've never heard. Then again, pianist Bobo Stenson's group recalls Peter Erskine's trio music he recorded



back in the 1990s, Keith Jarrett's Standards Trio and Tomasz Stanko's quartet (all for ECM).

In the end, though, Stenson recalls Stenson—this is adventurous music, with unexpected juxtapositions that give off a veneer of quietude and repose even as it burbles under the surface of those lush chords, percussive caresses and full-bodied bass tones. This emerges with the lovely, stately waltz “M”; however, this comes just following some prickly piano musings, pluckish bass notes and dry, piercing drumming on “Wooden Church.”

Stenson, bassist Anders Jormin and drummer Jon Fält weave in and out of 11 songs. Jormin has been with Stenson since the mid-'80s, while Fält, who follows in a style reminiscent of former Stenson mate Jon Christensen, hooked up with the trio in 2004. While Jormin may be a kind of alter ego to Stenson (his timing is impec-

cable as he works the angles of silence with the pianist here and there), all three seem like one organism on the 14-minute spontaneous composition “Pages.” Placed in the middle of *Cantando*, it serves as its heart, full of blended colors, moods and an evenness spread across all three instrumental expressions. This is a co-

authored event in the fullest sense of the term.

Don Cherry's “Don's Kora Song,” the album's most formal piece, is sandwiched by the looseness of “Pages” and Ornette Coleman's rare “A Fixed Goal.” Oddly enough, “Kora” is less substantial, with less personality—the album's weakest point. Perhaps the best example of this trio's knack for having its cake and eating it, too, takes place when they transform the tango of Astor Piazzolla's “Chiquilín De Bachín” into a lively, jazzy waltz while maintaining the character of the original form.

—John Ephland

Cantando: Olivia; Song Of Ruth; Wooden Church; M; Chiquilín De Bachín; Pages; Don's Kora Song; A Fixed Goal; Love, I've Found You; Liebesode; Song Of Ruth, Var. (78:06)

Personnel: Bobo Stenson, piano; Anders Jormin, bass; Jon Fält, drums.

» Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

The New Jazz Composers Octet

The Turning Gate

MOTÉMA 00019

★★★★½

Jazz octets require charts that infer a larger ensemble—and not just through musicians playing two or more horns, but in their sweep as well—and soloists who have a complementary and easily combustible chemistry. Led by David Weiss, the New Jazz Composers Octet has both. Yet, *The Turning Gate* is only sporadically compelling, attributable to the well-crafted but often prosaic charts. The type of exhilarating curve ball that Xavier Davis throws in the middle of “David And Goliath” are too few and far between; after launching a heated Jimmy Greene tenor solo with a modestly detailed minor blues variant, the sudden drop of pungent horn counterpoint knocks the piece into a new direction, and an equally inspired statement by drummer Nasheet Waits.

While most of the charts are deliberate, they are nevertheless studded with bright, clean-edged gambits. Davis uses a skittering descending line to trigger a thundering motive and a blistering Norbert Stachel solo in “The Faith Suite.” Weiss's title piece layers tricky lines, brimming with offsetting accents and rests to create a simmering groove for Greene's sopra-



no. “Onward,” Myron Walden's closer, uses dynamics and a mix of meaty phrases and a rhythmic feel in a manner that recalls Woody Shaw's Columbia-era charts. Except for Weiss's quirky, odd-man-out arrangement of a Henry Cow chestnut, the program is an interesting brief on how the sensibilities of Hancock, Shorter and other leading lights of the '60s and '70s still exert an enormous influence on jazz composers and soloists.

—Bill Shoemaker

The Turning Gate: The Turning Gate; New; David And Goliath; Once; Bad Alchemy (The Faith Suite)—In The Beginning, Twilight, The Doubtful, Panic; Onward Intro; Onward. (65:10)

Personnel: David Weiss, trumpet; Myron Walden, Jimmy Greene, Norbert Stachel, saxophones; Steve Davis, trombone; Nasheet Waits, drums; Xavier Davis, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass.

» Ordering info: motema.com



Carla Bley and Her Remarkable Big Band

Appearing Nightly

WATT 33

★★★★

I've repeatedly seen the word “retro” mentioned in connection with the latest from composer and pianist Carla Bley, but if there's anyone in jazz who eschews knee-jerk nostalgia, it's her. *Appearing Nightly*, recorded live at New Morning in Paris during the summer of 2006, is comprised of two separate commissions, and while Bley certainly looked back to her youth for inspiration—the extended suite “Appearing Nightly At The Black Orchid” reflects on her experience working at a piano bar after finishing high school and moving to New York—the results are thoroughly contemporary. Even when drawing upon the powerhouse sound of Count Basie, her arrangements refract that era through a prism that's all her own.

Flanked by a reliable stable of players that meticulously balance their individuality with ensemble ideals (including Lew Soloff, Andy Sheppard and Gary Valente), Bley's charts are detail-packed but unfussy, consistently pushing the music forward while maintaining a delightful airiness. As usual, her puckish humor is in evidence. A few of the pieces were written for a jazz festival with a “Dinner Music” theme, and on “Awful Coffee,” which opens with an exhilarating, free-ranging baritone sax statement by Julian Argüelles, we soon come upon a quick-blink section of a chorus where the band quotes six tunes with food references—including “Salt Peanuts,” “Watermelon Man” and “Hey Pete, Let's Eat More Meat.” But the greatest pleasure here is reveling in Bley's skill at reinvention, where she routinely takes familiar melodies and harmonies and turns them upside down, all the while maintaining a steady sense of decorum.

—Peter Margasak

Appearing Nightly: Greasy Gravy; Awful Coffee; Appearing Nightly At The Black Orchid; Someone To Watch; I Hadn't Anyone Till You. (54:00)

Personnel: Carla Bley, piano, conductor; Earl Gardner, Lew Soloff, Giampaolo Casati, Florian Esch, trumpet; Beppe Calamosca, Gary Valente, Gigi Grata, Richard Henry, trombone; Roger Jannotta, Wolfgang Puschnig, Andy Sheppard, Christophe Panzani, Julian Argüelles, reeds; Karen Mantler, organ; Steve Swallow, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.

» Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Dominique Di Piazza Trio

Princess Sita
SUNNYSIDE 1199
★★★★



Some musicians with technique as jaw dropping and original as French bassist Dominique Di Piazza's leave you cold because they're all dexterity and no soul. Best known for his work with John McLaughlin and his trio with Biréli Lagrène and Dennis Chambers, Di Piazza balances chops and musicality as well as any bassist since Jaco Pastorius—one of his early models. His four-fingered plucking technique and use of pedal steel picks give his playing a well-articulated, rippling sound, and his inclusion of a high-C string on his five-string instrument allows him to get a distinctive ringing tone.

Brazilian guitarist Nelson Veras and drummer Manhu Roche are an ideal match for Di Piazza, providing light, dance-like accompaniment that moves with the same urgency that the bassist brings to many of his compositions. "Wake Up" has a fluid melody reminiscent of some of Pat Metheny's writing, and on "Dinello," Di Piazza holds himself in reserve, sprinting alongside Veras' lead before breaking out into a bass solo that is detailed and fast. Wisely, Di Piazza follows that with two restrained ballads, including a rich version of Joe Henderson's "Recordame," because at times his rococo fingerwork can seem like so much extra icing on a cake. "St. John" and "Après La Pluie" come closest to becoming mere confectations, their surfaces smooth enough to blunt the beauty of the playing.

—James Hale

Princess Sita: Nuages; Nemo; St. John; Wake Up; Princess Sita; Little Rose; Après La Pluie; Desillusion; Dinello; Mister PM; Recordame; Torrents D'Amour. (50:17)

Personnel: Dominique Di Piazza, bass; Nelson Veras, guitar; Manhu Roche, drums.

» Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Richard Bona

Bona Makes You Sweat
DECCA B0011530

★★★★



Richard Bona brings the folk music of his native Cameroon to bear in his storytelling-infused, electric bass-flying global pop. On the live *Bona Makes You Sweat* (recorded at Budapest's A38 club in 2001), Bona croons intimately while his skintight quintet rages around him. Bona and his band know two speeds: full-on improvisational jam-band grooving, and more ethereal and delicate balladic treatments. Bona works his bass brilliantly in either scenario. He is a magical genie of global pop proportions, gliding between styles with ease.

Makes You Sweat captures, practically note for note, the songs of such past Bona albums as *Tiki* and *Munia: The Tale*. The music pops, the rhythms sparkling and sizzling, with nary a note given up to the concert experience. Keyboardist Etienne Stadwijk creates an awesome palette of textures, drummer Ernesto Simpson locks step with Bona's bass while scorching virtually every rhythm and percussionist Samuel Torres drapes it with magic dust. But at times the music is so slick and immaculately performed that it lacks a grit that seems essential to the folk music Bona so heavily references.

—Ken Micallef

Bona Makes You Sweat: Enginglaye & Ekwa Mwato; Kivu & Suninga; Kalabancoro; Samaouma; O Sen Sen Sen; Indiscretions & Please Don't Stop; Djombwe & I Wish & Trains; Te Dikalo. (64:09)

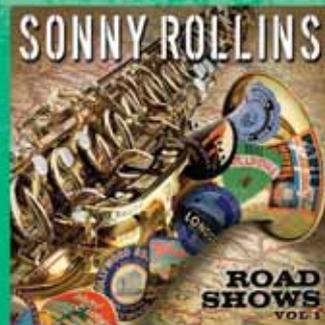
Personnel: Richard Bona, bass, vocals; Etienne Stadwijk, keyboards; Ernesto Simpson, drums; Samuel Torres, percussion; Taylor Haskins, trumpet; John Caban, guitar.

» Ordering info: deccarecords-us.com

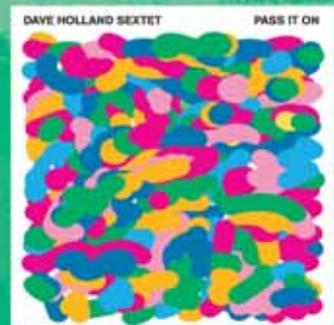


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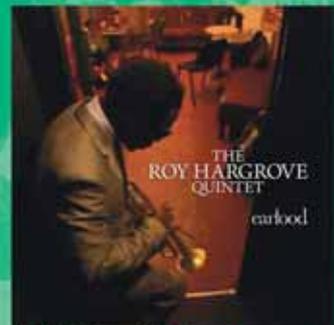
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BORDERS.

Key Foundations

The spell cast by Adrián laies and his group on *Vals De La 81st & Columbus* (Sunnyside 1192; 65:40) ★★★ brings out exotic qualities sometimes overlooked on this side of town. His writing, like his performance, is thoughtful, wistful, understated and not too adventurous. But by simply adding bandoneón virtuoso Michael Zisman to the lineup alongside bassist Pablo Aslan and drummer Pepi Taveira, he adds an evocative tonal dimension as well as a soloist whose aggression and emotion balance the qualities that laies offers. Trumpeter Juan Cruz de Urquiza guests on two tracks, but Zisman's more vital energy makes all the difference.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Rob Schneiderman steers a straight-ahead course throughout *Glass Enclosure* (Reservoir 193; 61:54) ★★★. Right off the bat, on "Reunion," alto saxophonist Charles McPherson, bassist Todd Coolman and drummer Leroy Williams are in sync and swinging hard. While everyone plays with a pleasing and relaxed authority, Schneiderman pushes a little further; his easygoing solo on "Ready Or Not" spins long melodic ideas far past the changes, returns to touch down on the tonic every now and then, and, as if refueled, takes off on another exploration. Playing within clear boundaries, quoting themes from other tunes in his solos, Schneiderman finds plenty of scenery to savor from the middle of the road.

Ordering info: reservoirmusic.com

On *FiveLive* (Savant 2091; 63:35) ★★★, recorded at Smoke in New York, Mike LeDonne delivers a bristling, restless performance, not just on the lickety split opening track "Encounter," but also on the Stevie Wonder ballad "You And I," scattering so many notes into his first few choruses that there's no choice but to kick it into double-time. It's not just flash, though, as LeDonne ignites tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt with the substance as well as the sizzle of his solos, and a repeated figure in the midst of his workout on "Hands" elicits some deft ride-cymbal response from drummer Joe Farnsworth. The most jaw-dropping moments, though, come on "Manteca," courtesy of bassist John Webber, who never loses steam or runs out of ideas.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

On *Songs For A New Century* (Origin



Adrián laies:
tonal dimension

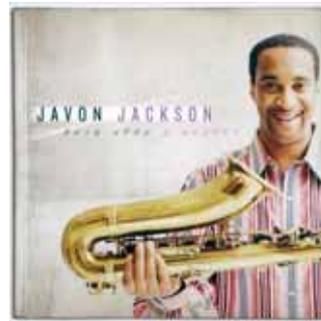
82507; 60:21) ★★★★★, Jessica Williams proves that she excels in the solo format. These pieces may owe something to her decision to remove the music stand and fall-board, unfold the front part of the lid and lower the level of her seat. What matters more is the results of this tinkering, and while outside effects do crop up, such as the sparking string plucks on "Toshiko," the effect is one of consonance and elegance, more compositional than improvisational, haunted as much by Beethoven ("Fantasia") as by blues ("Dear Oscar").

Ordering info: origin-records.com

Phil Markowitz also brings a game plan to his latest album. With bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Adam Nussbaum, he strives on *Catalysis* (Sunnyside 1194; 55:27) ★★★ to explore multiple dynamics of trio performance, from unison thematic articulation on "M.D.A." to the development of fragmentary motifs on "Breach" to linear, non-harmonic structure ("Whys And Wherefores") to building on a restless, five-note riff ("Undercurrent") and more. The thought behind it is impressive, and the group's ability to anchor it to a low-key but swinging foundation brings it home.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

That brings us home to Junior Mance, the senior statesman of this gathering. There's nothing academic or experimental about *Groovin' With Junior* (Sackville 3070; 64:16) ★★. Rather, this live set is an old-school celebration hosted by Mance, bassist Don Thompson and drummer Archie Alleyne, who give these songs the love they deserve. But we've been to this party countless times, and when Mance's uptempo stuff doesn't fall quite into the pocket, or when he hits those long tremolos that Gene Harris or Jaki Byard wore out a long time back, we're reminded that going back to the well doesn't always give us much to sink our teeth into. **DB**



Javon Jackson

Once Upon A Melody

PALMETTO 2136

★★★★½

Channeling the history of modern jazz saxophone, Javon Jackson hits on all cylinders with *Once Upon A Melody*. Jackson often evokes the mid-'50s to the mid-'60s, a time when jazz was sorting itself out before the next revolution, featuring hard-bop, soul-bop and modal with more than a glance at America's popular songbook.

Jackson has an uncontrived and unforced sound and style. Listen to him play free as a bird on "Will You Still Be Mine." The carefree air reminds one of something Stan Getz might have done on one of his ballad albums, except that Jackson always carries a little grease with him by way of players like Sonny Stitt, John Coltrane and even Wayne Shorter. Then there's Sonny Rollins, who he visits with "Paradox," again as an easygoing swinger.

Part of *Once Upon A Melody's* success can be attributed to Jackson's great rhythm section in pianist Eric Reed, Corcoran Holt on bass and drummer Billy Drummond. Jackson works well with his band, as everyone knows the leader's moves, echoing his relaxed approach to these songs. (Drummond's solo on "Paradox" is the essence of nice-'n'-easy while furthering the beat.) Shades of Trane's plaintive tone run through the modal swing waltz "Mr. Jones," which Jackson wrote seemingly with Elvin in mind. The only thing missing in the Coltrane/Johnny Hartman treatment of "My One And Only Love" is Hartman, with Jackson's authentic pose sweet and tender.

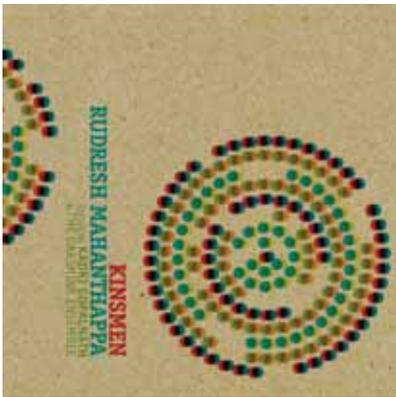
"The In Crowd" is a bit too easy, its funky backbeat a tad hokey and the melody worn. It shows how Jackson runs the risk of sounding generic with his barely-break-a-sweat blowing. However, primary influence Coltrane returns full-bore with a short trip through McCoy Tyner's uptempo swinger "Inner Glimpse," and, with the ballad "Like A Star," *Once Upon A Melody* ends strong despite the odd fadeout.

—John Ephland

Once Upon A Melody. One By One; Will You Still Be Mine; Paradox; Mr. Jones; My One And Only Love; Mr. Taylor; The In Crowd; Inner Glimpse; Like A Star. (54:36)

Personnel: Javon Jackson, tenor saxophone; Eric Reed, piano; Corcoran Holt, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.

» Ordering info: palmetto-records.com



Rudresh Mahanthappa

Kinsmen

PI 28

★★★★

Mauger

The Beautiful Enabler

CLEAN FEED 114

★★★★

Rudresh Mahanthappa has a plangent, hard-edged alto saxophone sound, one that is made more searing by the hard-hitting, knotty themes that have been his stock in trade on his own recordings and those with his most empathetic collaborator, Vijay Iyer. If there is any criticism that could be leveled at the saxophonist's recordings to date, it is their emphasis on complexity, albeit in the service of an incisive cultural critique. These two recordings flesh out crucial aspects of Mahanthappa's sensibility, leaving one with a fuller picture of a musician on the threshold of major artist status.

Mahanthappa's compositions breathe more easily than usual in the company of such stellar Indian musicians as Kadri Gopalnath and A. Kanyakumari on *Kinsmen*. "Introspection" could be a Jackie McLean or Gary Bartz head, while the ballad section of "Longing" cuts to an emotional quick without ornamentation. Additionally, the grooves are equally accessible to the idioms of both traditions. "Snake!" smartly pivots from drummer Royal Hartigan's jazz-centric pulse, which launches a stinging statement by guitarist Rez Abassi, to a Poovalur Sriji-fueled rhythm on mridangam. In addition to sensitively taking the Carnatic musicians far afield of their tradition, Mahanthappa retools the convention of alap, the improvised introduction of a raga, resulting in pungent unaccompanied interludes by Abassi, Gopalnath, Kanyakumari and bassist Carlo de Rosa.

Bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Gerry Hemingway write demanding pieces, but they also pen tunes conducive to expansive, convivial blowing like the four they include on *The Beautiful Enabler*. With more than 30 years experience playing together in a multitude of settings, they are one of the more telepathic bass-drums tandems active today. But, far from

being the odd man out, Mahanthappa plays like he spent years in the shed with them. His "I'll See You When I Get There" benefits greatly from Dresser's furious arco and Hemingway's shadowing phrases and abrupt groundswells, while the plaint of "Intone" is constantly pulled by their undercurrents. Throughout the album, Mahanthappa sounds like he has at least a decade more experience than he actually does, a great measure of the energy and mutual support created on Mauger's sterling debut.

—Bill Shoemaker

Kinsmen: Introspection; Ganesh; Rez-Alap; Longing; Snake!; Carlo-Alap; Kalyani; Kadri-Alap; Kanya-Alap; Convergence (Kinsmen). (69:17)

Personnel: Rudresh Mahanthappa, Kadri Gopalnath, alto saxophone; A. Kanyakumari, violin; Re Abassi, guitar; Poovalur Sriji, mridangam; Carlo de Rosa, bass; Royal Hartigan, drums.

» Ordering info: pirecordings.com

The Beautiful Enabler: Acuppa; Bearings; Flac; Intone; The Beautiful Enabler; I'll See You When I Get There; Meddle Music. (50:58)

Personnel: Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Mark Dresser, bass; Gerry Hemingway, drums.

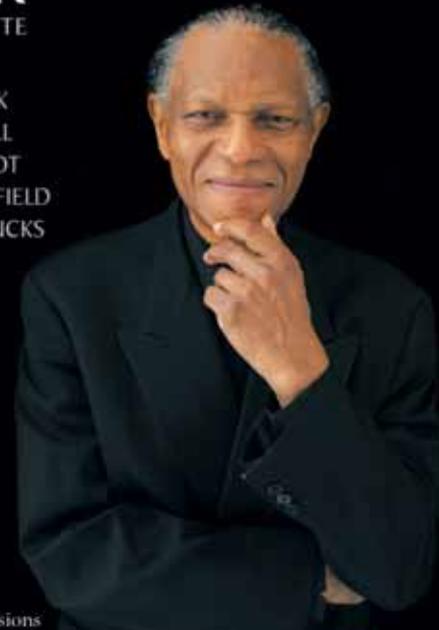
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Paul Motian Trio 2000 + Two

*Live At The Village
Vanguard Vol. II*
WINTER & WINTER 913 143

★★★½

It's Album Construction 101: Lead with a strong track. This concept is clearly adhered to on Paul Motian's latest album. "Till We Meet Again" features fine keening volleys between saxophonists Chris Potter and Greg Osby, as well as taunting interplay between the drummer, bassist Larry Grenadier and pianist Masabumi Kikuchi. And, the equally fundamental goal of ending strong is also achieved, with a short, semisweet reading of "If You Could See Me Now" and Motian's churning "Fiasco," both of which benefit from Mat Maneri's limpid viola (the former is one of his most persuasive takes on a standard to date).

What happens in between is a bit problematic. Motian writes somewhat like he drums, liberally using space and often turning phrases inside out to surprising effect. That's why Motian's trio with Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano is his most effective outlet for his compositions; generally, the more crowded the bandstand, the more likely his nuance-filled lines won't be fully exploited. That occurs here, but not lethal-



ly. How much this is the result of a mix that frequently submerges Grenadier and accounts for Kikuchi's occasionally overbearing thunder can be debated, as well as the extent to which this suppresses the lift and fluidity that usually distinguishes Motian's compositions in the four tracks that comprise the bulk of the album.

Motian successfully sidesteps the issue on "Ten" by devoting most of the performance to duets between a fuming Potter and an unobtrusive Kikuchi, followed by Osby, whose parrying with the pianist has a Braxtonian tinge. "The Divider" has a more dramatic tilt, while the solos benefit from Motian's trademark bustle, shadowed by Grenadier's scurrying lines and shifting rhythmic feels. "The Third Walk," however, only barely clears the line separating the declamatory from the leaden; coming on the heels of "Sunflower," a trio piece featuring a turgid Kikuchi, the flow of the album is almost clogged, albeit temporarily. —Bill Shoemaker

Live At The Village Vanguard Vol. II: Till We Meet Again; Sunflower; The Third Walk; Ten; The Divider; If You Could See Me Now; Fiasco. (54:26)

Personnel: Paul Motian, drums; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Larry Grenadier, bass; Greg Osby, alto saxophone; Mat Maneri, viola; Masabumi Kikuchi, piano.

» Ordering info: winterandwinter.com

Mike Clark

*Blueprints Of Jazz
Volume 1* »

TALKING HOUSE 0809-018A

★★★★½

Donald Bailey

*Blueprints Of Jazz
Volume 3*

TALKING HOUSE 0811-020A

★★★½



Mike Clark and Donald Bailey are two great drummers whose identities are seemingly stamped in time, both reversing that notion with two challenging recordings. Clark is best known as the drumming innovator behind two of Herbie Hancock and the Headhunter's most influential tracks, "Actual Proof" and "God Make Me Funky." Revealing his Oakland, Calif., roots, Clark's funk-'n'-jazz designations combined with the then-nascent fusion style to create drumming that still floors anyone within earshot. But that was then. Clark has built a serious global jazz resumé ever since, working with everyone from Woody Shaw to Donald Harrison, who guests here. *Blueprints Of Jazz Volume 1* detours briefly into funk ("Loft Funk"), but its total tone and temperament recalls jazz landmarks like *Maiden Voyage* and Joe Henderson's *Live At The Lighthouse*. Gritty ("In The House"), swing-

ing, fluid ("Clark Kent"), and intense, this is a galvanic session with a killer cast. Clark stirs up equal parts Tony Williams and Elvin Jones, his brisk cymbal work tipping madly.

Bailey earned his grooving bona fides during a nine-year stint with Jimmy Smith, so it comes as a surprise to find him stretching boundaries and scalding the senses here, accompanied by Odean Pope and Charles Tolliver. Bailey matches their melodic explorations, extracting compound textures, rhythms and colors from the drum set. Playing percussively, he often sounds like multiple drummers in this loose and rambunctious session. —Ken Micallef

Blueprints Of Jazz Volume 1: In The House; Like That; 10th Ave. 1957; Past Lives; Thanks Len; Loft Funk; Clark Kent; Conchita's Dance; Morning Became Electra; I Want To Talk About You. (73:40)

Personnel: Mike Clark, drums; Christian Scott, trumpet; Christian McBride, bass; Donald Harrison, alto saxophone; Patrice Rushen, piano; Jed Levy, tenor saxophone.

Blueprints Of Jazz Volume 3: Plant Life; Blues It; Gone Now; Variations; Fifth House; For All We Know; Family Portrait; USQ/Trilogy; Blue Gardenia. (63:13)

Personnel: Donald Bailey, drums; Odean Pope, tenor saxophone; Tyrone Brown, bass; George Burton, piano; Charles Tolliver, trumpet.

» Ordering info: threcords.com

Tried And True

Mighty Mike Schermer: *Right Hand Man, Volume 1* (Fine Dog 1037; 54:43) ★★★½ For the uninitiated, Schermer is a San Francisco Bay Area guitar-for-hire with near-Olympian talent whose stylistic compass points to the soul side of the blues. On this collection of formerly released and unreleased tracks from sessions with various sing-ers, Schermer's

playing mixes the weight of experience and the thrill of spontaneity. He and Earl Thomas rise to rapturous heights addressing the pained love of their composed-on-the-phone "One More Day." Among those showing flat-out conviction are Howard Tate, Mike Duke, Angela Strehli, Austin de Lone and guitarist Elvin Bishop with vocalist-drummer Bobby Cochran. Drama queens Maria Muldaur and Sista Monica just aren't believable.

Ordering info: mighty-mike.com

Magic Slim & The Teardrops: *Midnight Blues* (Blind Pig 5125; 47:19) ★★★½ Slim operates in the letter and spirit of Muddy Waters, what he's been doing since the 1960s in Chicago taverns. His ninth Blind Pig release, produced by torchbearer Nick Moss, comes up to expectations with his low-down voice and guitar-slinging sprucing up old treasures and tradition-minded originals. Guests James Cotton, Lonnie Brooks, Elvin Bishop and Lil' Ed all sound fully invested in what they're doing. What's this? Little Milton's "Loving You" has terrific Gene Barge-arranged horns, something new for Slim—bring on a full album!

Ordering info: blindpigrecords.com

Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials: *Full Tilt* (Alligator 4926; 59:06) ★★★½ Ed and his sturdy band of some 20 years unleash copious amounts of boogie and shuffle excitement perfect for fun barroom brawls. Ed's slide guitar tones slash at your ear like a razor, and he sings as though he'd wrestled over the meaning of every word. Slow sizzlers "Life Got In The Way" and "Dying To Live" provide the best entry points into his quirky, complicated psyche. Take the plunge.

Ordering info: allig.com

Joe Louis Walker: *Witness To The Blues* (Stony Plain 1337; 61:48) ★★ For all his



Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials: fun brawls

PAUL NATAKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

impressive command of guitar and voice, Walker disappoints with this Duke Robillard-produced, "enhanced" CD (studio/interview video). Emotion seems forced, platitudes infect lyrics and solos pad so-so tunes. Bright spots: Walker and Shemekia Copeland partnered on "Lover's Holiday" and a makeover of "Rollin' And Tumblin'."

Ordering info: stonyplainsrecords.com

The Voices Of Panola Co. Mississippi: *Como Now* (Daptone 014; 56:31) ★★★ The same sun-baked section of Mississippi visited decades ago by folklorist Alan Lomax yielded for New York music researcher Michael Reilly, in 2006, good-and-gritty gospel singing by local worshippers. Mary Moore, the Jones Sisters, Irene Stevenson, Rev. Robert Walker and others implore their Maker for guidance despite showing up to be recorded at Mt. Mariah Church on a Saturday rather than the Sabbath.

Ordering info: daptonerecords.com

Buddy Guy: *Skin Deep* (Silvertone/Zomba 88697; 58:14) ★★★½ Guy's natural ability at firing up his Stratocaster is a wonder, no matter if he's past 70, and this is his best album since 2001's *Sweet Tea*. He continues to sing in a vigorous voice of depth. As album producer, drummer and Guy's songwriting partner, Tom Hambridge plays a sizable role in the success of several numbers and in the clichéd mediocrity of some filler. Studio invitees getting the job done right include Derek Trucks, Susan Tedeschi, Eric Clapton and accordion player Nathan Williams. Alas, 12-bar music may be in for trouble if the little kid guitarist, Quinn Sullivan, heard on rah-rah blues "Who's Gonna Fill Those Shoes?" is supposed to be the answer to the question posed by the song's title. **DB**

Ordering info: buddyguy.com

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THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS



sunnysiderecords.com



The Wee Trio

Capitol Diner Vol. 1

BIONIC 002

★★★

It's hard not to think of The Bad Plus when checking out The Wee Trio. Although the primary melodic voices come from the vibraphone of James Westfall rather than a piano, from the repertoire to the ensemble-oriented sound, The Wee Trio seems to be questioning the rules of jazz orthodoxy, despite residing largely in its center. The album opens with a treatment of Nirvana's "About A Girl"—sound familiar?—with the vibist including a garish Gershwin quote that succeeds on pure cajones. The Wee Trio often veers from the expected; when tackling a standard like "There Is No Greater Love" the tempo is regularly upended with frenetic percussive bombs. The group generally eschews strings of solos in favor of a democratic exchange.

However much The Bad Plus was an inspiration for these guys, by and large their execution and skill make the comparisons unimportant. On a few pieces the group fails to transform some of the more threadbare material, such as bassist Dan Loomis' "Song For Harry Potter" or a cover of indie rocker Sufjan Stevens' "Flint (For The Unemployed And Underpaid)," where rather slim, treacly melodies aren't revamped enough to transcend their flimsiness. Yet more often than not they keep the music substantive and riddled with dynamics and direction surprises; they're also promising improvisers. Definitely a group to watch. —Peter Margasak

Capitol Diner Vol. 1: About A Girl; Phantom Prelude; The Ghost Of Potato Creek Johnny; Song For Harry Potter; Orange Finnish Tulip; There Is No Greater Love; Pisces; Satyagraha; Flint (For The Unemployed And Underpaid); Wee See. (53:15)

Personnel: James Westfall, vibes; Dan Loomis, bass; Jared Schonig, drums.

» Ordering info: theweetrio.com



Christian Howes

Heartfelt

RESONANCE 1006

★★★

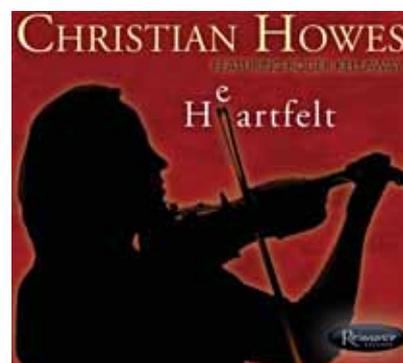
Heartfelt marks the first time that violinist Christian Howes has devoted an album to straightahead repertoire. He projects the violin as a bop vehicle, a vision that relatively few have embraced. On his uptempo readings of "Alone Together" and pianist Bill Evans' "Walkin' Up," he plays fleet, horn-like lines with little vibrato. He avoids the swing-era licks that inspire some of his peers.

These tunes qualify as exceptions on a set steeped in ballads. Howes conveys pathos while managing to swing on "Early Autumn," which boasts the album's most compelling arrangement. Howes creates a faux string section by overdubbing instruments. A chamber orchestra appears on four tracks, and the violinist plays movingly on Eliane Elias' "That's All It Was" and Jimmy Rowles' "The Peacocks." Even with a first-call rhythm section on hand, however, Howes' talents merit a more contemporary showcase. The lush scores sound out of place on a new mainstream jazz release. They frequently add more schmaltz than intensity. —Eric Fine

Heartfelt: The Wind; Cinema Paradiso; Alone Together; That's All It Was; Invasion Of The Forest; Walkin' Up; The Peacocks; Opus Half; Early Autumn; Bernie's Tune. (60:09)

Personnel: Christian Howes, violin; Roger Kellaway, piano; Andreas Öberg, guitar (10); Bob Magnusson, bass; Nathan Wood, drums.

» Ordering info: resonancerecords.org



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Mary Halvorson Trio

Dragon's Head
FIREHOUSE 12 04-01-007

★★★½



Although still in her mid-20s, Mary Halvorson has recorded prolifically as a band member, sidewoman and duo partner. *Dragon's Head* is her first record as a leader, and it's an auspicious debut. She possesses impressive technique, a broad, distinctive instrumental vocabulary and she is a canny caster of players and a strong writer.

Like her erstwhile instructor Joe Morris, Halvorson is a Jimi Hendrix devotee who wisely steers clear of openly imitating her idol's distortion-heavy style. Instead, she adapts his voluptuous bent notes and broad dynamic range to a generally clean and jazz-rooted tone, the better to perceive the group's detailed interplay; even on the stomp-box showcase "Momentary Lapse," her playing is as brisk and clear as a sunny winter day. Her jagged chords and don't-cut-yourself harmonics owe a debt to Derek Bailey, but they can flow straight into propulsive, linear finger-picked runs or delicate, chiming digressions.

Halvorson's compositions tend to be episodic and modular, changing mood and directions on a dime. "Too Many Ties," for example, starts with the guitarist embroidering elaborate figures around John Hebert's boldly stated bass melody. Their lines tangle in the ensuing improvisation, only to separate effortlessly into a succession of colorful six-string smears artfully daubed across the surface of a muscular, processional groove after drummer Ches Smith wades into the fray.

—Bill Meyer

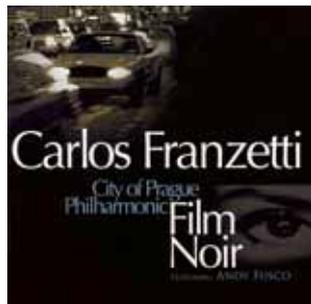
Dragon's Head. Old Nine Two Six Four Two Dies (No. 10); Momentary Lapse (No. 1); Screws Loose (No. 8); Scant Frame (No. 2); Sweeter Than You (No. 4); Sank Silver Purple White (No. 5); Too Many Ties (No. 6); Totally Opaque (No. 7); Dragon's Head (No. 9); April April May (No. 3). (55:24)
Personnel: Mary Halvorson, guitar; John Hebert, bass; Ches Smith, drums.

» Ordering info: firehouse12.com

Carlos Franzetti

Film Noir
SUNNYSIDE 1180

★★★



While Carlos Franzetti's latest recording is comprised of old movie music, it's still a bit of a stretch to title this collection *Film Noir*, as only some of the compositions evoke the crime films of Hollywood in the 1940s and '50s. That said, Franzetti has done a fine job arranging some timeless music, and has ably emphasized the melodic side of tunes like John Barry's "Body Heat" and Burt Bacharach's "Alfie."

Striving for dark, sensuous arrangements and juxtaposing Andy Fusco's searching alto saxophone against the City of Prague Philharmonic, Franzetti has created a cinematic listening experience. Interpretations of Neal Hefti's "Girl Talk," Herbie Hancock's "Still Time" and Johnny Mandel's "I Want To Live" keep the jazz quotient running high, and Lalo Schiffrin's "The Voyage Of The Damned" is steeped in a noirish ambiance. The rhythm section is solid but restrained, and Fusco's alto playing is hauntingly beautiful as he enlivens moody pieces like Bernard Herrmann's "Taxi Driver" and Franz Waxman's "A Place In The Sun" with his strong, insistent style. This is a smart, lush collection of well-chosen movie music.

—Mitch Myers

Film Noir. Body Heat; Girl Talk; Last Tango In Paris; The Voyage Of The Damned; I Want To Live; Still Time; A Place In The Sun; Taxi Driver; The Bad And The Beautiful; Tango Fatal; Alfie. (45:11)
Personnel: Carlos Franzetti; arranger, conductor, piano; Andy Fusco, alto sax; Allison Brewster Franzetti, piano; Robert Balzar, bass; Dano Soltys, drums; Prague Philharmonic, orchestra.

» Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

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 — Frank-John Hadley, *DownBeat*

"A masterpiece!" — *Jazz 'n' More*

"Exceptionally fine playing and singing. Ithamara's singing here, while leaning slightly towards the mainstream that she tackled so well on "Autumn In New York", always maintains that subtle feel for the music of South America."
 — Bruce Crowther, www.swing2bop.com



Ithamara Koorax "Brazilian Butterfly"

Produced by Arnaldo DeSouzairo / Distributed by IRMA Group

"Koorax is delightfully unpredictable in her music... Intimate dialogues with superb musicians, flashing moods and eye-blink arrangements of scintillating tunes. The energy level and timing push the max as Koorax leaps headlong into steamy, sexy and in-your-ear singing. "Brazilian Butterfly" flutters free with Koorax's embracing virtuosity and astonishing range, volcanic vocalese and feral screeches."
 — Fred Bouchard, *DownBeat*

"Koorax is a diverse, adventurous, and utterly gifted vocalist... Her confidence is legion... On "Brazilian Butterfly", Koorax has set a new bar for jazz vocalists who come after her. As she does, they will need to embody many traditions and musical histories, root them in the tradition, and be able to comfortably combine as well improvise seamlessly with and between them."
 — Thom Jurek, www.allmusic.com

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BEYOND

by Frank-John Hadley

Sing-A-Song

Richie Havens: *Nobody Left To Crown* (Verve Forecast 0011631; 54:12) ★★★½

With one of the most readily identifiable voices in folk, Havens continues to go strong decades after he was a voice of conscience for the Woodstock generation. Interpretatively, he's always shown imagination and genuine regard for a song. Back in the day, he probed the songbooks of Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and The Beatles; now, supported by slide guitarist Harry Manx and other first-call accompanists, he looks to Peter Townshend, Citizen Cope, Andy Fairweather Low (an inspired choice), and Peter, Paul & Mary. Only Jackson Browne's "Lives In The Balance" leads him into unflattering melodrama. At the peak of his songwriting prowess—six originals here—Havens casts about for light to shine on the dark human condition. Man, he still strums the guitar hard.

Ordering info: verveforecast.com

Randy Newman: *Harpes And Angels* (Nonesuch 122812; 36:52) ★★★★★

Nine years since his last studio visit, Newman delivers an album on a par with his masterworks *12 Songs* and *Good Ole Boys*. He's still a cynic at heart, but his drawled singing of ironic observations about modern America is so wise and dead-on that his jaundiced world view never comes close to overwhelming a song. His piano and a sweeping 70-piece orchestra dole out carefully measured shares of filtered sunshine. No such luck on "Losing You," a knife wound to the heart.

Ordering info: nonesuch.com

Johnny Flynn: *A Larum* (Lost Highway 11433; 53:45) ★★★

Part of the latest wave of young British folk-rockers, Flynn attains a fairly high level of achievement on his debut. He sings in an agreeable if unripe voice, suggestive of young Ray Davies, and his well-played guitar and other instruments go well with a rhythm section, cello (its dissonance out of John Cale-era Velvet Underground) and English dance hall horns. Flynn's songs, several about the down-and-out in society, sustain interest with strong melodies and thoughtful wordplay.

Ordering info: losthighwayrecords.com

Ani DiFranco: *Red Letter Year* (Righteous Babe 020631; 47:04) ★★★

Mother-



Ani DiFranco: motherhood moments

hood has brought DiFranco an appreciation for life's joys and for the emotional benefits of taking things at a slower pace. Not to say she's gone soft, complacent or lost the fire and impudence of her renegade past. Co-producer and partner Mike Napolitano and string arranger Todd Sickafoose deserve kudos for shaping the alluring streams of music that carry her melodies. Louisiana musicians upping the pleasure quotient include the Rebirth Brass Band.

Ordering info: righteousbabe.com

Inara George With Van Dyke Parks: *An Invitation* (EverLoving 024; 38:46) ★★

This pretty, slight orchestral album is a collaboration between vocalist George of the The Bird and the Bee pop duo and arranger/conductor Parks, whose numerous credits date back to Warner Bros. in the 1960s. George's elfin voice lovingly treats her dreamy lyrics as the 29-piece orchestra simulates carousel rides that occasionally offer the suspense of a mild roller-coaster ride.

Ordering info: everloving.com

Sonya Kitchell: *This Storm* (Decca 0011456; 46:04) ★★½

Eighteen-year-old singer Kitchell proves her well-received *Words Came Back To Me* album from 2006 was no fluke with this modestly likeable follow-up. She draws listeners into her original pop-folk tunes with lovely though breathy vocals, attractive melodies and usually reflective lyrics on lonely love, friendship and mustering inner strength. Kitchell's resolute performances, however, are at odds with a dispassionate band and clinical production. Anyone hoping for a jazz direction here because of her endorsement by Herbie Hancock will be disappointed.

Ordering info: deccarecords-us.com

DB

Susan Tedeschi

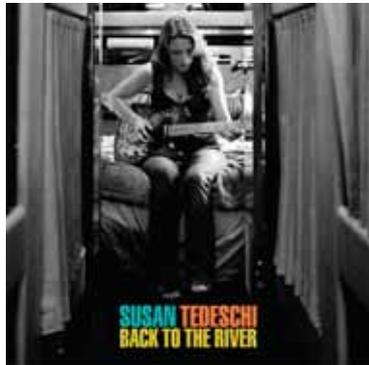
Back To The River

VERVE FORECAST B0011513

★★★★

On her first release since 2005, Susan Tedeschi stands tall with superior material that evidences her honest, accessible merger of blues, soul, rock, funk and gospel. What distinguishes her reading of a song from that of the general lot of popular artists is her emotional investment in words and melody.

Tedeschi's high voice pushes hard in a Janis Joplin-esque way, conveying hard-earned stability on "Talking About," a breakneck rock number written with guitarist Doyle Bramhall II. But she's even more effective operating at a moderate and measured pace. The Tedeschi-Sonya Kitchell song "People" succeeds as her stirring call for the triumph of reason in a corrupt world—husband Derek Trucks' slide guitar mesmerizes for its vox-humana qualities. On "Learning The Hard Way," she's a strong, independent woman showing some deadbeat the door—the Latinized rock music flows beautifully on this original penned with guitarist



Gary Louris. Amid the delectable funk of Mr. and Mrs. Trucks' "Butterfly," Tedeschi offers an iron-clad testimonial to the power of love.

No slouch, Tedeschi manages to inform everything she sings with real soulfulness. She legitimizes herself as heir to Etta James handling "Revolutionize Your Soul," an exemplary

modern soul song written with John Leventhal (Rosanna Cash, Shawn Colvin). The soul-blues mom trolls for and locates the emotion of someone coping with a natural disaster on "700 Houses," from the same songwriting partnership. Typically, Trucks adds a world of conviction in his solo. Tedeschi captures the pain and exhilaration of the blues singing and playing electric guitar on "Can't Sleep At Night," emotional connection made with her mentor many years ago back home in Boston, Ronnie Earl.

—Frank-John Hadley

Back To The River. Talking About; 700 Houses; Back To The River; Love Will; Butterfly; People; Learning The Hard Way; Revolutionize Your Soul; True; Break In The Road; Can't Sleep At Night. (44:28)

» Ordering info: verveforecast.com

Take 6

The Standard

HEADS UP 3142

★★★★½

When it comes to smooth-sailing singing, Take 6 can't be beat. Their harmonies, sense of timing, song selections, feel and cohesiveness can make for a remarkable musical experience. It seems *The Standard* was a project waiting



to be made, with its emphasis on a mostly jazz repertoire and inspired guest spots. Their music appeals across generations. It's soulful, featuring easy-on-the-ears crooning and an upbeat attitude. Smartly, they kick the album off with only vocals, later bringing in instruments and guests. "Sweet Georgia Brown" is parlayed as if it was written for these guys—its cadence and tempo are just right for a group of six. But then they zero in on "Straighten Up And Fly Right," which they play straight with help from guitarist George Benson (who also sounds a bit like Nat Cole on lead vocals).

Perhaps the best cut on the album, and one that also feels just right as a singing-group vehicle, is Miles Davis and Victor Feldman's "Seven Steps To Heaven," inspired, in part, by a live Davis solo. Guests Jon Hendricks, Al Jarreau and flugelhornist Till Bronner help pump it up a

few more notches. The playful and soulful "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans" features Aaron Neville as a guest vocalist; hearing them all sing the praises of the city in such an easygoing manner make it seem like they were Take 7.

Some of the material can wither on the vine as the program moves

through such numbers as "Bein' Green," Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" and "Someone To Watch Over Me." These seem like perfect vehicles but lack the dynamism offered up on other tracks, making one wish they'd done a fantasia of sorts on "Seven Steps," for one. With the efforts of Take 6 lead vocalist, producer, arranger and engineer Mark Kibble, and a memorable take on Ella Fitzgerald's "A Tisket A Tasket" (including her original 1938 vocal), *The Standard* should be enjoyed by lovers of all music, not just singers.

—John Ephland

The Standard. Sweet Georgia Brown; Straighten Up And Fly Right; Seven Steps To Heaven; Windmills Of Your Mind; Someone To Watch Over Me; Grace (Pre-prise); Back To You; A Tisket A Tasket; Bein' Green; Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans; What's Going On; Shall We Gather At The River; Grace. (45:59)

» Ordering info: headsupt.com

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OBLIQ SOUND™

Pete Zimmer Quartet

Chillin' Live @ Jazz Factory

TIPPIN' 1104

★★★

Young jazz drummers have much to learn upon their arrival in New York. They find clubs in which to hone their wares. They use up their cash reserves for rent practically overnight. Most importantly, they learn that what gives all great New York drummers their edge is the city itself: the noise, dirt, heat and friction.

Wisconsin native Pete Zimmer, 29, has learned his New York lessons well, as his dry tone, meaty swing beat and subtle accents make him an old hand on *Chillin' Live @ Jazz Factory*. Recorded in Louisville, Ken., on tour in 2007, *Chillin'* showcases Zimmer's band more than Zimmer, particularly guitarist Avi Rothbard, whose quick wits, unusual harmonic shading, quintessential bop tone and smart comping practically steal the night. The repertoire is standard bop, with standards balancing Zimmer's originals, which were played by his quartet on first sight, no rehearsals allowed. That makes for a compelling opener in the Latinesque "Search," but sleepy listening on the ballad "Summer Somber." The band sticks it hard on Kenny Dorham's "Una Mas" and swings with aggressive balance on Zimmer's "Common Man." Zimmer's dry ride pulse, simple but effective rhythms and even-keeled time feel recall everyone from Kenny Washington and Joe Farnsworth to Jimmy Cobb. —Ken Micallef

Chillin' Live @ Jazz Factory: Search; Summer Somber; Doxy; Una Mas; Common Man; From This Moment On. (61:45)

Personnel: Peter Zimmer, drums; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet, flugelhorn; Avi Rothbard, guitar; David Wong, bass

» Ordering info: tippinrecords.com



Scott Hamilton & Friends

Across The Tracks

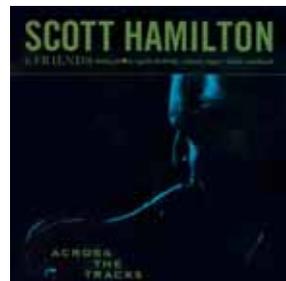
CONCORD 30388

★★½

Scott Hamilton followers will know of the tenor saxophonist's early blues and jump roots in Providence, R.I. Here, he goes all the way back to the organ format, with guitarist Duke Robillard and organist Gene Ludwig. The results are mixed.

Mellow might best describe the current state of Hamilton's tenor. Its round-edged sound can be particularly moving on a glissando. It serves him best on ballads, and there are three on this collection. Hamilton the sensualist emerges, and his ties to Ben Webster are most pronounced. But Webster had a powerful bottom to his sound. Hamilton has largely settled into middle dynamic for all of his registers. On "Memories Of You," some judiciously placed gravitas would have added dimension to the performance; Hamilton blithely wends his way through the tune. Duke Ellington's "Cop Out" finds Hamilton navigating expertly over the rhythmic contours of the tune. His command of syntax and effortless legato phrasing is enviable. It's doubtful another living saxophonist could dance through a medium rhythm treatment of "Blue Turning Grey" as gracefully as Hamilton.

Never a particularly strong writer, Hamilton's r&b tune "Something For Red" (Prycock, that is) brings out his dirtiest tone. The preponderance of riff-based blues tunes ("Something," Sonny Stitt's "Deuces Wild," Leo Parker's "Parker's Pals") wears on the ears. Another horn—perhaps a trumpet—might have stirred Hamilton. The baritone sax of Doug James comes and goes on two numbers without any discernible effect on the tenor. Likewise, Robillard's tasty plucking and Ludwig's subdued, lounge-like organ contribute to the contained quality. —Kirk Silsbee



Across The Tracks: Deuces Wild; Parker's Pals; Save Your Love For Me; Cop Out; Intermission Riff; Sweet Slumber; Something For Red; Blue Turning Grey Over You; Memories Of You. (56:51)

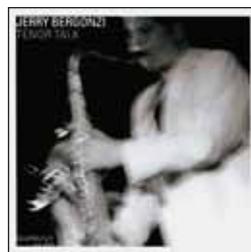
Personnel: Scott Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Doug James, baritone saxophone (2, 5); Duke Robillard, guitar; Gene Ludwig, organ; Chuck Riggs, drums.

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Jerry Bergonzi

Tenor Talk

SAVANT 2093

★★★

Boston-based Jerry Bergonzi's *Tenor Talk*, his 25th recording as a leader, is filled with top-shelf muscular tenor work that, unfortunately, after a while, becomes domineering. While the band gives the leader plenty of room, the problem is exaggerated by the recording. Bergonzi's already hard-edged horn is way out front, the piano sounds like it's in the next room and the bass and drums seem to be recorded through blankets. The result is something like sitting too close to one player in a club.

That said, Bergonzi can clearly play the hell out of the sax, and fans of heroic horn men would be well advised to check him out. The opening track, "Who Cares," is the best on the album, an infectious swinger built on a joyful melody. The rest of the album features well-crafted originals that don't have as much weight as the kick off. The album offers a whole lot of horn playing, but when you want a bit of a break—as on the ballad "Wippin' And Waulpin"—there is nothing restful about the abrasive sound of Bergonzi's horn. —David French

Tenor Talk: Who Cares?; Hank; Girl Idlig; Soul Mission; Splurge; Wippin' And Waulpin'; Left Of Memory. (52:43)

Personnel: Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone; Renato Chicco, piano; Dave Santoro, bass; Andrea Michelutti, drums.

» Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

organissimo

Groovadelphia

BIG O 2408

★★★

Hammond organ trios are prone to some unfortunate expectations about rhythmic grooves and anti-climactic jams, but organissimo is out to prove the detractors wrong. Drawing on blues, Latin jazz and even the repertoire of the drummer's father, tenor saxophonist Amo Marsh ("My Sweet Potato Pie"), the group's sophomore effort makes good on the titular promise of a groove. But that's only part of the equation.

Groovadelphia boasts a cerebral arc that moves away from the dance floor and into a series of gracefully phrased tunes, including the delicate, drumless ballad "Traces." With a strong emphasis on the different possibilities created by Latin rhythms and organist Jim Alfredson's innovative and bluesy approach to the '60s soul-jazz organ trio concept, the material is thoughtful without being too earnest; danceable, but never repetitive.

The Lansing, Mich.-based group opens with the title track's playful jam, easing its way into a carefree series of vamps that showcase the big sound a small lineup can get with a Moog, Fender and Hammond in its midst. Once the foundation's been set, "Señor Buffet" introduces the first of many Latin-based rhythmic structures, followed by a blues shuffle that extends the relaxed groove idea.

—Jennifer Odell

Groovadelphia: Groovadelphia; Señor Buffet; Third Right On The Left; Traces; Danco De Alma; If Not Now, When?; Bleecker; My Sweet Potato Pie; Rhodesia. (55:13)

Personnel: Jim Alfredson, keyboards; Joe Gloss, guitar; Randy Marsh, drums, harmonica.

» Ordering info: organissimo.org



Michael Feinstein

The Sinatra Project

CONCORD 30819

★★★½

Michael Feinstein's *The Sinatra Project* is more a project than a tribute. In addition to recording songs associated with Sinatra, Feinstein and producer/arranger Bill Elliott write arrangements in the vein of Nelson Riddle and Billy May and replicate the sonic qualities of Sinatra's early stereo recordings. The orchestra was recorded in one room with only a few mics, making the recording sound warm and deep.

Feinstein's easy cabaret tenor has a touch of vibrato and works in every backdrop Elliott gives him, from the quiet and sensitive opening of "Fools Rush In," which features tasty woodwind writing, to the relaxed Cole Porter swing workhorse "Begin The Beguine." Feinstein also provides Broadway worthy drama on "The Same Hello, The Same Goodbye" and on his duet with Pink Martini's China Forbes on "How Long Will It Last?"

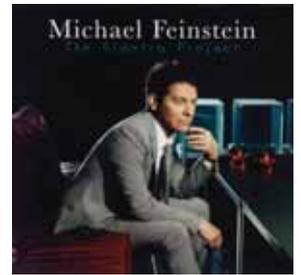
Elliott's arrangements for big band and strings are straight out of the '50s and the orchestra kills: It brings "Exactly Like You" and "The Song Is You" to a rapid boil as easy as it dials down ballads like "There's A Small Hotel" and "I've Got A Crush On You" to a slow simmer. Feinstein's delivery can be too smooth, but he has captured the charm, intimacy and scale of Sinatra's classic recordings.

—Chris Robinson

The Sinatra Project: Exactly Like You; There's A Small Hotel; Fools Rush In; The Song Is You; The Same Hello, The Same Goodbye; Begin The Beguine; I've Got A Crush On You; It's All Right With Me; You Go To My Head; How Long Will It Last; All My Tomorrows/All The Way; At Last Long Love. (46:50)

Personnel: Michael Feinstein, vocals, piano (11); Bill Elliott, arranger, conductor.

» Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com



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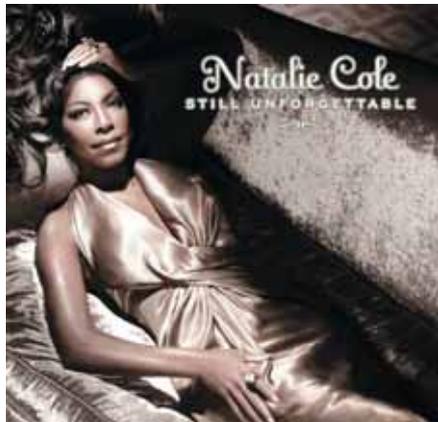
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Natalie Cole
Still Unforgettable
 DJM/RHINO 512313
 ★★☆☆



Nat Cole remains a presence in music decades after his death because the songs he sang remain a presence—enough of them, at least. A singer may live by his voice, but he endures by his taste.

Years from now, I don't know whether Natalie Cole, 58, will be listened to as Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and her dad are today. But the same principle seems to apply to this versatile and enduring performer. She came of age in the r&b/soul genre. Not wanting to trade on the family name at first, she gave her dad's songbook a second look in 1991, which suddenly made her worth a second look. *Still Unforgettable* is her encore, 17 years later.

Nat Cole pops up almost immediately in a warm and jaunty cameo on Bill Holman's chart of "Walking My Baby Back Home," presumably from the 1951 version with Billy May (and proving that that there have been no fundamental advances in record sound in at least 57 years). It's not the sentimental showstopper "Unforgettable" was, but it has its rewards. Catch the way dad handles that tricky half-step modulation to A coming out of the last bridge. The two voices make a lovely blend wherever they meet. That's their only duet.

With other charts by Alan Broadbent, Nan Schwartz, Pat Williams, Jim Hughart and Hugh Wheeler, Natalie is on her own from then on in a

fine set of 14 tunes. She sounds coy, hip and gently overdubbed on "Coffee Time," singing in a demitasse of a voice that suggests Blossom Dearie. Bassist Hughart provides the stepping stones for a teasing and subtle "Why Don't You Do Right" with soft prodding from John

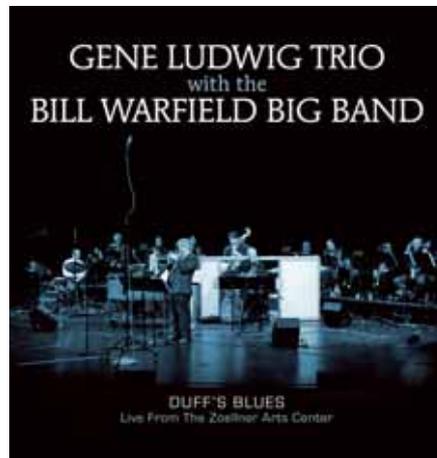
Chiodini's guitar and a fine solo by tenor great Pete Christlieb. If that's not enough, Cole scats with catty reserve against a Basie-like beat. Then there's Holman's swinging chart on "Something's Gotta Give," which Cole glides through with aplomb and another shot of Christlieb's tenor.

The ballads are, for the most part, a galaxy of smart music and lyrics, which Cole delivers with savvy polish. Although "The Best Is Yet To Come"—an OK song—has probably been done once too often by one too many aging singers as a kind of anthem of denial, Cole isn't at that stage of her career yet. Her "But Beautiful," on the other hand, is a reminder that the Bing Crosby songbook is ripe for rediscovery.

—John McDonough

Still Unforgettable: Walkin' My Baby Back Home; Come Rain Or Come Shine; Coffee Time; Somewhere Along The Way; You Go To My Head; Nice 'N' Easy; Why Don't You Do Right?; Here's That Rainy Day; But Beautiful; Lollipops And Roses; The Best Is Yet To Come; Something's Gotta Give; Until The Real Thing Comes Along; It's All Right With Me. (65:37)

» Ordering info: dmimusic.com



Gene Ludwig Trio with the Bill Warfield Big Band

Duff's Blues
 18TH & VINE 1056
 ★★☆☆

Pittsburgh organ icon Gene Ludwig positions his Hammond B-3 front and center in a big band setting on a new live recording that entertainingly evokes Jimmy Smith's work on Verve in the early '60s. More sassy swing than old-fashioned funk, Ludwig's collaboration with the Bill Warfield Big Band reaches above and beyond the organ trio format to showcase Ludwig and the B-3 in a more expansive manner.

Trumpeter Warfield, who also produced the album, supplies the bulk of the arrangements, although tenor saxophonist Glenn Cashman arranges his original "The Circuit"; they are uniformly bright and engaging. The best of the material is trumpeter-originated as well, with Lee Morgan's "Totem Pole" and Woody Shaw's "Organ Grinder" sequenced consecutively, serving as performance highlights.

Ludwig's title song opens the recording and allows him to exhibit his compositional abilities. His playing, however, isn't given the predominance in the rest of the material it deserves as a recording with his name as leader. That's a shame, because Ludwig has a distinctive and refreshing retro-swing sound that avoids the tired funk clichés of the current crop of B-3 revivalists.

Warfield and the other soloists, especially Cashman on his tune and guitarist Bob DeVos on his closing original, make effective use of their spotlight moments. So does Ludwig, but it's the quantity of his playing, not its obvious quality, that somewhat undercuts the project.

—Michael Point

Duff's Blues: Duff's Blues; Totem Pole; The Organ Grinder; The Circuit; Naked City; Dance Of The Coal Cars; Dolphin Dance; Breakin' The Ice. (71:42)

Personnel: Gene Ludwig, Hammond B-3 organ; Bob DeVos, guitar; Rudy Petshauer, drums; Bill Warfield, Danny Cahn, Jon Owens, Dave Spier, Joe Wilder, trumpet; Tim Sessions, Sam Burtis, trombone; Ben Kono, Dave Riekenburg, Glenn Cashman, Ed Xiques, saxophones.

» Ordering info: allegro-music.com

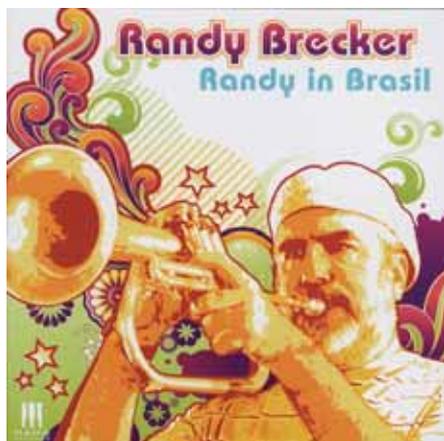
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Randy Brecker

Randy In Brasil

MAMA 1035

★★★½

Toninho Horta

To Jobim With Love

RESONANCE 2004

★★★½

Bossa nova may get dissed for an inherent prettiness unbecoming jazz heft and gravitas, but who can resist its sail-your-own changes and summer-cloud rhythms? Swift, smooth samba mixed liberally with Rio street-beat and hip electronica is the name of the game Randy Brecker plays with a who's who of Brazil's studio cats on *Randy In Brasil*.

The fun date lifts off, light and breezy, with a dozen tunes penned by pop icons, all sketched in pastel wash by film-score whiz Ruriá Duprat. Brecker gambols on his horns like a spring lamb in clover, not a care in the world, with curly wisps of cuica and timba floating by. He sounds swell on the elegant written lines doubled by flute or alto, and even better on his own canny, darting solos. Reedman Teco Cardoso grabs some nifty spots (fine tenor on "Randy's Sambop") and Duprat conjures the heady, bouncing piano of Egberto Gismonti. How refreshing.

On *To Jobim With Love*, guitarist/singer Toninho Horta masterminds a grand obeisance to the granddaddy of samba, Antonio Carlos Jobim, whose loss still resonates from Brazil throughout the world samba diaspora. It's ethereally easy listening as Horta shapes Jobim's messianic messages into a whopping studio love-in with 22 strings, nine percussion, 14 voices and a tentet. Solos might get lost in this cosmic smooch, but Horta spotlights (as did Jobim) players who can slip nervy bop into languid sambas without muting the passion.

On "From Ton To Tom" and "If Everyone," Luisa Horta sings and Dave Kikoski plays fine piano. Toninho Horta sings gently and weeps his guitar on an arms-wide "Meditation" as William Galison evokes Toots Thielemans atop the

ensemble. Horta's saucy originals ("Cristiana," "Infinite Love") also come off richly improvised. Some Jobim classics are plain pretty ("Modinha," "Sem Você"), but "No More Blues" raves up splendidly.

Led in by crying cuica and Gary Peacock's bass, pop diva Gal Costa duos warmly with Horta; then burning solos by Kikoski and Bob Mintzer incite Costa to samba-scat over grooving tenor and a five-gal flute section.

—Fred Bouchard

Randy In Brasil. Pedro Brasil; Ilê Ayê; Guarujá; Me Leve;

Malásia; Sambop; Oriente; Maçã; Olhos Puxados; Rebento; Fazenda Hora; Aialai. (56:30)

Personnel: Randy Brecker, trumpet; Teco Cardoso, saxophones, flute; Ruriá Duprat, piano, keyboards, Fender Rhodes, clavinet, voice; Paulo Calazans, piano, keyboard; André Mehmaru, Gilson Peranzetta, piano; Ricardo Silveira, guitar; Sizão Machado, Rogério, bass; Da Lua João Parahyba, percussion, timba; Robertinho Silva, Edu Ribeiro, drums.

» Ordering info: mamajazz.org

To Jobim With Love: Agua De Beber; Portrait In Black And White; If Everyone Was Like You; From Ton To Tom; Cristiana; Meditation; No More Blues; Infinite Love; Promises I Made; Modinha; The Girl From Ipanema; Sem Você; Desafinado. (58:48)

» Ordering info: resonancerecords.org

Kind Of Blue's Golden Hue

By all accounts, 1959 proved to be an alchemic year for jazz recordings, yielding a bumper crop of seminal LPs. Charles Mingus belted out *Mingus Ah Um*, John Coltrane leaped forward with *Giant Steps*, Duke Ellington played his subtone cards on the *Anatomy Of A Murder* soundtrack, the Dave Brubeck Quartet turned 4/4 swing on its head with *Time Out*, Cannonball Adderley broke new soul ground with the live *Cannonball Adderley Quintet In San Francisco* and Ornette Coleman opened ears with his prophetic *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*. Then there was Miles Davis—employing two of the above rising stars—who conjured up, with the help of Bill Evans, what became the biggest-selling jazz album of all time, *Kind Of Blue*.

According to RIAA, the album is three times platinum (representing 3 million in sales), and Nielsen SoundScan, which began tracking album sales in 1991, has calculated 2.9 million, meaning that the true sales figures could be far north of 3 million. Yet it never appeared on the Billboard 200 chart, according to Geoff Mayfield, the former director of charts/senior analyst at Billboard.

Kind Of Blue has been reissued many times. This fall, in celebration of its golden anniversary, the masterwork was delivered anew with *Kind Of Blue: 50th Anniversary Collector's Edition (Columbia/Legacy 88697 3352) ★★★★★*, which offers new bells and whistles for collectors (a 12-inch slipcase box with studio false-starts, alt takes, a live performance of "So What," a DVD documentary, a 60-page book and a blue-vinyl 12-inch LP).

Given its mammoth sales and standing as the must-buy first album for jazz neophytes, why has *Kind Of Blue* trumped all the other jazz classics in sales and endured as fresh sounding today a half century after the two-day, 10-hour first-take sessions? What is its significance in the big jazz picture? And did Davis, who scored commercial hits and misses, recognize that he had recorded a legendary album when the date wrapped?

"If Miles knew *Kind Of Blue* was going to be so big, he'd have said, 'I want two Ferraris out front right now,'" said drummer Jimmy Cobb, the only surviving member of the Davis sextet composed of Coltrane on tenor, Adderley on alto, Evans (with Wynton Kelly playing piano on one track, "Freddie Freeloader") and bassist Paul Chambers (who figuratively owns the signature bass line on "So What").



"It amazed me when I found out this album sold more than Count Basie, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington," Cobb said. "The best thing I can say is that we recorded this at a time when the music was changing, and Miles was a big part of that. Before he was playing show tunes and bebop with a lot of changes. But he broke a barrier with *Kind Of Blue*, grabbing people who listened to other kinds of music. These tunes grab you the first time, and they grab you through your entire life."

Cobb said that the album has become a cultural icon in a lot of different environments. "There's this one Clint Eastwood film where he's a secret service agent or something like that," Cobb said. "In one scene *Kind Of Blue* is playing in the background, then you see the album on a coffee table. Recently, my band was playing in Europe, and at this one jazz club, they had 'Blue In Green' playing on a loop before and after our set to set a mood there."

Inheriting the Davis bass chair from Chambers, Ron Carter, who arrived in New York in 1959, features "All Blues" in many of his sets today. "I wish I wrote it," he said.

Why does Carter think the album has been so successful? He counted down the reasons: "First, it doesn't have the fanaticism that many people associate with jazz—that screaming and falling-over-onself expression. Second, the melodies are wonderful. Third, there's that aura of Miles and later Trane's own aura. People who came late to the scene gravitated to Miles and Trane—they became important to the Jazz 101 class. Fourth, *Kind Of Blue* was so far removed

from the jazz at the time that people were immediately attuned to it as something different. That sentiment continued. Fifth, it's a good fucking record. How perfect is that?"

Drummer Roy McCurdy, who grew up in Rochester, N.Y., recalled when *Kind Of Blue* hit. "We played that record to death, and we tried to learn those tunes," he said. "Those bass lines on 'So What' and 'All Blues' were so great and the voicings, especially on 'Blue In Green,' were great. And to think that Miles didn't have much when he came into the studio. That's genius right there to pull that off. It's timeless. It's just as beautiful and fresh today as it was when we first heard it. There are only a few records like that. But the big thing was that band. It was incredible."

Orrin Keepnews agreed. "It's got a cast of characters that's hard to beat," said the producer for Riverside at the time. "And you have to remember that that band was no longer in existence when they recorded *Kind Of Blue*. It's a remarkable record that's an expression of a remarkable band. Two of the members of Miles' sextet were two of the most important artists on Riverside, so I'm going to take credit for Cannonball and Bill. So that band was as much mine as it was Miles."

Keepnews laughed, "But, of course, I'm not serious."

He first saw the sextet in 1958 when he caught a matinee at the Village Vanguard. "It was one of the most exhilarating experiences in my life," he said. As for the album, he added, "It's probably the greatest example of Miles as a hypnotist. It's part of the legacy—and legend—of Miles. That's why

by Dan Ouellette



even today people are still hypnotized by him on that album."

While *Kind Of Blue* was an immediate hit, Keepnews said that "other record companies weren't gnashing their teeth nor were they celebrating it as something wonderful for our profession. That album was part of the flow of business at a time when there were a lot of valuable products; 1959 was one of those years when people weren't saying that jazz is dying. *Kind Of Blue* is one of the top examples of how good we were."

Ashley Kahn, the writer of the book *Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece*, said that the album is "a door opener into improvisational music for anyone who has an ear. It was for me. It turned my head around. I was into rock 'n' roll and funk when I first heard it. It took me by the scruff of the neck and showed me a whole new world."

Kahn attributed the success of the album to the fact that all the musicians in the band—Davis included—were coming into their own after a decade on the scene. "They were all expressing their voices on their instruments," he said. "They were ready to conceptually move the music in a post-bop world."

Younger musicians today still go to the *Kind Of Blue* well for inspiration. Twenty-two-year-old New Orleans-born, New York-based pianist Jonathan Batiste, who leads his own band as well as works as a sideman for Abbey Lincoln and Cassandra Wilson, said, "That was a session where a whole bunch of different variables came together at the right time in the right place. The

whole modal thing Miles was doing on a technical level was all about less notes, more melody, more space."

As for why *Kind Of Blue* has sold so many copies, Batiste brought up the album's appeal to non-jazz listeners. "They don't know anything about what Miles was doing technically, but they can appreciate the music for what it is. I hear people humming 'So What' because it's such a catchy melody," he said. "Trane was going into the stratosphere with his arpeggios, Miles was cooling out and Cannonball was leveling it all with his blues sensibility."

Batiste called *Kind Of Blue* "cool and intellectual."

Saxophonist-producer Bob Belden, who has worked on most of Columbia/Legacy's Davis packages over the years, took it one step further. "It's a smooth jazz record," he said. "It's significant culturally because it's an adult jazz record. There's a lifestyle attached to it, unlike Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, which is a far more technical record because of the way he explored the absolute intervallic relationship of chords. Its influence is far more long-lasting in jazz because if you want to be a jazz saxophonist you have to study it."

While Belden champions *Kind Of Blue* as a top-tier jazz album, he questions Columbia/Legacy's decision to re-release it. "You have to ask yourself, what's improved?" he asked. "The sound? Is this new version better than the last one? Are they trying to find a new crowd of people who are just discovering it? *Kind Of Blue* again? What for? It sounds like a total exploitation of the consumer to me."

Is *Kind Of Blue* the perfect jazz record? Not necessarily, even though when it arrived in 1959, *DownBeat* crowned it with a 5-star review. Is it still alluring in its sonic coolness? Definitely. Is it a breakthrough that continues to resonate? Most assuredly.

As Gerald Early, Washington University professor and editor of the book *Miles Davis And American Culture*, wrote in the new liner notes for the *50th Anniversary Collector's Edition*, *Kind Of Blue* was "one of those records, along with Dave Brubeck's *Time Out* ... that made jazz a middlebrow music, a respectable music for middle-class, educated people who felt they had refined taste. This was enormously important to Davis both commercially and artistically for the rest of his career. As jazz ceased to be dance music, it needed middlebrow status in order to survive as art music. Davis was essential in making this transformation possible." **DB**

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com



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TK Blue

Follow The North Star

JAJA 002

★★★½

Reedman TK Blue weighs in on slavery and emancipation with this instrumental suite, featuring a capable small band. Blue's an engaging saxophonist, who's at his best spinning melodic ruminations. The early pieces, representing African life, are sunny and upbeat. Blue doesn't indulge in primal screaming or pounding. Thus, "The Capture" is a melancholy alto treatise with equally blue piano accompaniment from James Weidman; subdued yet steady mallets anchor the tune. The concluding "Township Diary" is a jubilant dance.

The modal soprano sax lopes on "Southern Rendezvous" and "Valley Of Despair" sound vaguely Arabic. The latter contains the most expressive drumming from Keith Jones. On the "Free" intro, Steve Turre lends his trombone to a spirited horn duet that touches on New Orleans parades and the happy blues. The following "Free" turns Jones loose on a full-blown second-line romp. Bassist Essiet Okun Essiet is a strong asset throughout; he provides an elastic underpinning that's broad and pungent on "North Star."

—Kirk Silsbee

Follow The North Star: Ancestral Callings; The Valley Of Paradise; The Song Of Solomon Northup (Intro); The Song Of Solomon Northup; The Capture (Intro); The Capture; Southern Rendezvous (Intro); Southern Rendezvous; Valley Of Despair; Free To Be Me (Intro); Free To Be Me; Follow The North Star; The Township Diary. (65:23)

Personnel: TK Blue, alto and soprano saxophone; Steve Turre, trombone, conch shells; James Weidman, Onaje Allan Gumbs (13), piano; Essiet Okun Essiet, bass; Willie Martinez, drums; Keith Jones, percussion.

» Ordering info: tkblue.com



Clifton Anderson

Decade

DOXY 9731

★★½

Decade is a prime example that great talent does not necessarily produce a great album. Featuring numerous musicians including Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride and Clifton Anderson's Sonny Rollins bandmate Bob Cranshaw, the album oozes with talent, but it's a fairly predictable hard-bop-by-numbers set.

The album's mix can be problematic. The bass sounds boomy and overpowering on the tracks featuring the Larry Willis/Cranshaw/Al Foster rhythm section. Several times trombonist Anderson backed off the mic into what sounded like an echo chamber, and he seemed to play from a bathroom on an uptempo 4/4 version of "I'm Old Fashioned" that sounded forced. The Stephen Scott/McBride/Steve Jordan rhythm section sounds much better.

The album shines brightly on Anderson's light and energetic calypso "Aah Soon Come." Anderson sounds more comfortable here. Somebody lit a fire under the whole band on the final track, "Stubbs," as they played with an intensity that the rest of the album lacked. Garrett shook down the album's best solo, Scott was plain nasty and McBride drove the band like he was running from the devil.

—Chris Robinson

Decade: Noble; So Wrong About You; I'm Old Fashioned; Z; I'm Glad There Is You; Déjà-Blu; If; Aah Soon Come; We'll Be Together Again; Stubbs. (65:43)

Personnel: Clifton Anderson, trombone; Kenny Garrett, alto saxophone (4, 10); Eric Wyatt, tenor saxophone (6, 8); Larry Willis, (1-3, 5, 6, 8), Stephen Scott (4, 7, 9, 10), piano; Bob Cranshaw, (1-3, 5, 6, 8), Christian McBride (4, 7, 10), bass; Al Foster (1-3, 5, 6, 8), Steve Jordan (4, 7, 10), drums; Kimati Dinizulu, percussion.

» Ordering info: emarcy.com



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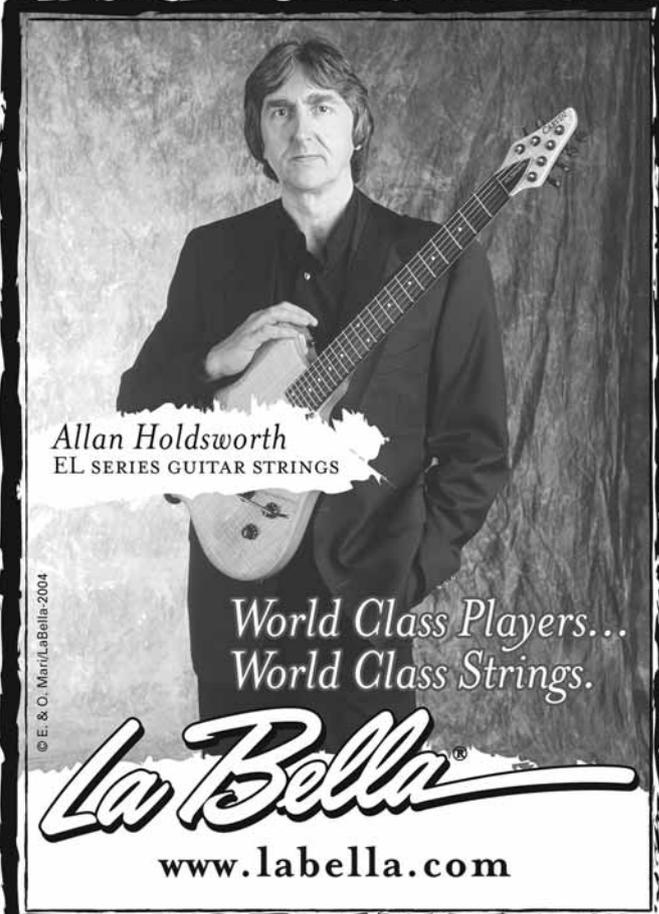
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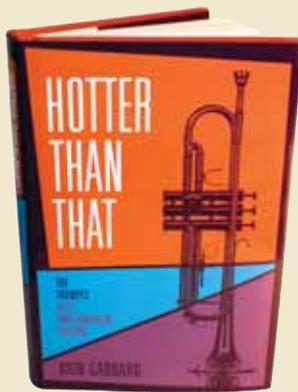
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BOOKS

by Eric Fine



Trumpet's Influence More Than Musical

The trumpet evolved over the course of centuries, and in *Hotter Than That: The Trumpet, Jazz, And American Culture* (Faber and Faber), Krin Gabbard not only examines the horn's eventful history, he discusses the instrument's significance with regard to race and gender. While critics have chroni-

cles the harmonic development of jazz from the vantage point of the saxophone, Gabbard's focus on the achievements of musicians like Buddy Bolden, Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis becomes cultural rather than musical. A professor of comparative literature and cultural studies at New York's Stony Brook University, and an amateur trumpet player, Gabbard has worked within all these realms.

Gabbard anoints the unrecorded Bolden as the creator of jazz, sometime around 1900 in New Orleans. His music became the first representation of black culture that white America validated. Bolden, he writes, "made the cornet the main attraction, loudly taking over the role of the violin and essentially ending its dominance in turn-of-the-century dance bands."

Gabbard credits Armstrong—whose song "Hotter Than That" inspired the book's title—for bringing jazz to national prominence during the 1920s in Chicago and New York, and establishing a benchmark for his instrument. Later on, Gabbard argues that Davis transformed the trumpet from an instrument marked by a high degree of machismo "with his expressions of sensitivity and vulnerability." Davis' muted tone and lean style countered the exuberant upper-register exhibitions that had defined the instrument.

Then the book turns away from merely celebrating jazz heroes. Gabbard sees the trumpet as a symbol of masculinity, sexual potency, rebellion, heroism and even equality. He touches on the trumpet's presence in everything from Greco-Roman mythology to the Bible to the films *Young Man With A Horn* and *Mo' Better Blues*; from medieval and Renaissance paintings to the piercing high notes in Bach's second "Brandenburg" concerto to novels like Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

In the chapter "From The Pyramids To New Orleans: The Trumpet Before Jazz," Gabbard chronicles early brass instruments like the natural trumpet, which gave way to the cornet and finally the present-day trumpet, originally manufactured in the 1880s at the Besson factory in Paris. Copies of this prototype appeared in the United States courtesy of C.G. Conn, which began mass-producing brass instruments in 1876 in Elkhart, Ind.

Gabbard later focuses on the design and construction of contemporary trumpets. He tours the factories of major manufacturers such as Bach, Martin and Getzen, and also boutique builder David Monette. In addition, Gabbard recalls his lifelong fascination with the trumpet, pays tribute to its fallen heroes and unsung female players, and analyzes the immense physical demands the instrument imposes. *Hotter Than That* possesses a narrative flow that distinguishes the best nonfiction from mere scholarship. The result is less a critical study than a unified collection of mostly memorable stories, interviews and anecdotes.

DB

Ordering info: fsgbooks.com

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DOWNBEAT

Studio In Your Pocket

The Incredibly Shrinking Portable Recorder

By Chris Neville

Location recording has long been a challenge for manufacturers and recordists. In the past, gear was bulky and heavy, with short battery life and limited miking options. Advances in mic and recording media have made it possible to build extremely small devices with a surprising array of professional features, which can be set up about anywhere.

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We've rounded up five popular models in this jam-packed market, which show the range of features available. The Sony PCM-D50 won the pro sound battle, but the Zoom had the best array of features. The others had varying strengths and weaknesses. One thing is clear: There's an affordable solution out there for anyone who wants to do location recording—and it probably fits in your pocket.



Edirol R-09HR

- » **Key Features:** Beautiful display—high contrast, so it's easy to see, even in the dark. This is the only unit that includes a remote control, which is a huge bonus when you've got it set in position to record and are across the room at your instrument. Nice feel—the matte finish combined with the light weight and overall form factor make this unit comfortable in your hand. Internal reverb—nice touch for the singer/songwriter.
- » **How it performed:** It did a good job of picking up acoustic instruments, but I found it a little flat with larger ensembles. It took a lot of tweaking to set the input gain set correctly so the subject did not sound too distant. Even when things were set as well as I could get them, the sound came through a little muffled. It has a strong bass response, with good stereo imaging.
- » **I wish this would have:** A built-in attachment for mounting on a tripod or mic stand. There are some accessories you can buy that add this capability, but there should be some mounting available out of the box. The included tabletop stand is only for storage, as it points the mics almost straight up.
- » **Who's this for:** The rehearsal recordist. It gives you lots of options for recording formats, so you can set it to go a long time; it has the ability to get a decent-sounding recording of a great jam.
- » **MSRP:** \$450.
- » **More info:** edirol.com



Korg MR-1

- » **Key Features:** It has 1-bit recording—an extremely high-quality recording format, and excellent for archiving as well as recording new material. It's also hard-drive based, so there's no recording media to buy. An included external mic means handling the recorder won't affect recording, and it has a rechargeable battery. The playlist feature lets you arrange recordings for playback in sequence.
- » **How it performed:** The MR-1 performed well. The recording interface was simple to understand, and the sound quality of the line-in recording I tried was excellent. The included mic was less than stellar, however, so the ambient recordings were not as good; lots of self-noise, and not accurate. I could also see how this interface that is so simple for recording purposes would become difficult to use if you needed to manage a large number of recordings.
- » **I wish this would have:** A better mic, with a longer cable. The case and buttons also need a redesign.
- » **Who's this for:** The archivist. If you want to save your audio in a pristine lossless format, dump it into the MR-1 and capture the 1-bit goodness—it'll even do your vinyl proud. It may not be ideal, though, when you go out to record live bands.
- » **MSRP:** \$899.
- » **More info:** korg.com



Sony PCM-D50

- » **Key Features:** The swivel-mounted stereo mics allow for 90-degree or 120-degree axis stereo recording. The aluminum case feels rugged and professional. It comes with 4GB internal flash memory and accepts memory sticks for additional recording time and storage. It has nice, big dials for adjusting input and output volume. Incredibly easy to use out of the box, but deep in features once you get into it.
- » **How it performed:** The PCM-D50 was the easiest to use, and also had the best results. The built-in mics are sensitive, which presented a little bit of a problem until I put on the optional windscreens, but the recordings were fantastically accurate. The big dial for adjusting the input level allowed me to be up and running in seconds on all source material, and the two mic positions gave me excellent results for single instruments and larger ensembles. It was an absolute joy to use.
- » **I wish this would have:** A larger display. The type is small, so you have to squint at it a bit to see what you're doing in a dark setting.
- » **Who's this for:** The serious professional. This one has it all, and its durability makes it a great choice for field recording. It captures music and ambient material equally well, and has a variety of accessories available to make it even more adaptable.
- » **MSRP:** \$599.
- » **More info:** pro.sony.com



Yamaha Pocktrak 2G

- » **Key Features:** It's tiny. It will fit just about anywhere. A built-in USB jack means you never have to hunt for a cable. The tiltable mic assembly allows for versatile placement, and the included long-lasting rechargeable battery recharges through the USB interface.
- » **How it performed:** Remarkably well. I underestimated this one. Its stature is misleading—the mics sound clear and are sensitive. It took a while to figure out how to navigate the menus and set the mic sensitivity, but once I did, they performed well.
- » **I wish this would have:** A better manual. The menus are not very intuitive, so there's a bit of trial-and-error figuring out some of the features. I also wish the mics had an input meter and better control of input volume, but you have to give a little slack to Yamaha for getting all of this into such a small package.
- » **Who's this for:** The stealth recordist. If you're a "found audio" person, this one's a no-brainer. You can have it with you in any situation and be ready to grab some audio in seconds—and you could do it undetected if necessary. This would also be the perfect student recorder—throw it in your backpack and never miss a lecture again.
- » **MSRP:** \$450.
- » **More info:** yamahasynth.com



Zoom H2 Handy Recorder

- » **Key Features:** Two sets of X-Y mic pairs allow for multiple polar patterns—including surround. It can be used as an audio interface to directly input the mics into a computer (great for podcasting). Includes a tuner and a metronome, and you can timestamp your audio files—great for journalists. The "auto-record" function allows for unattended capture of intermittent sounds based on levels. It comes with every accessory you'll ever need.
- » **How it performed:** Zoom has been in this market for a long time, so I expected a lot, and they did not disappoint. The surround recording (actually quad) is cool—it's a great way to get into three-dimensional audio. The mics sounded good, and the unit is compact. I like the ability to record the front and back side together. The inclusion of a mono recording mode is also appreciated.
- » **I wish this would have:** Sturdier construction. It's hard to complain about a recorder that offers this much for less than \$200, but the switches and the volume rocker felt a little flimsy. Also, a recorder with all these features must have a continuous input gain—the H2 only offers a three-position switch.
- » **Who's this for:** Just about anybody. At this price, this recorder offers so much versatility that it would be hard to pass up. It's not the top of the line, but it has no serious defects and it offers a ton of functionality.
- » **MSRP:** \$199.
- » **More info:** samsontech.com



New Jamey Aebersold Books: Tackling the Veterans

Jamey Aebersold Jazz has beefed up its jazz organ play-alongs with *Now's the Time*, featuring the Joey DeFrancesco Trio. The publisher also has added to its artist-inspired practice tools with new book/CD packages on veteran saxophonists Jimmy Heath and Phil Woods.

The DeFrancesco play-along (Vol. 123) is especially cool, as it features the organist's original trio—guitarist Paul Bollenback and drummer Byron Landham. They demonstrate how to strike a groove and keep it, providing ideal conditions for serious blowing. Titles include Wes Montgomery's "Four On Six," a contrafact on the changes to the classic "Summertime" that's replete with ii/V substitutions. "Lunch Portion," a blues shuffle with the last two bars radically altered, is an original that Aebersold wrote for the occasion. The trio even takes on the classic "Indiana," featured on other Aebersold play-alongs, at a slower-than-usual tempo and with a bossa-flavored coda.

Woods personally chose the titles for his play-along set (Vol. 121), which showcases the wide stylistic variety of his original compositions. "Samba Dubois," with its high-energy Latin dance beat, is a fine example of his evolution as a composer. Improv students will have fun navigating the progression to "Sugan," a swinger in F minor. "Lew Blew" is a burning blues in F that will challenge your fingers on the head, while "Cool Aid" provides a great minor bebop workout. "Dutch Morning," a jazz-waltz ballad, is among the most harmonically challenging pieces in this collection.

Heath's play-along (Vol. 122) integrates different influences that contribute to his muscular yet never harsh tenor style. Well-known Heath compositions here include "Gingerbread Boy," a B-flat blues from Miles Davis' *Miles Smiles*; "C.T.A.," from a 1953 Davis session, with its descending dominant sevenths; and "A Sound For Sore Ears," which pits eight bars of static harmony against eight bars of ii/V/I descending back to the tonic. "Forever Sonny" recalls Sonny Rollins, an early Heath influence. "Without You No Me," an uptempo tune that alternates between Latin and swing, and "Basic Birks," which resembles the classic "Woody'n You," point to the direct influence of Dizzy Gillespie. —Ed Enright

- » **Ordering info:** jazzbooks.com

1» Open Range

Yamaha has released the YSS-875EXHG soprano saxophone, the company's first soprano sax made with the high-G key. The new model will offer more options to professional artists, high-end players and college students by lending the added range necessary for today's compositions. The dual necks—one straight and one curved—give the instrument a more open feel with greater resonance. MSRP: \$5,301.

More info: yamaha.com

2» Under Pressure

Prohands Music has developed two new hand exercisers for musicians. The Gripmaster and Pro challenge the strength of each individual finger to improve the speed, dexterity and overall health of a player's hand. The Gripmaster, recommended for all levels of musicians, is available in three tensions: X-Light 3-pounds, Light 5-pounds and Medium 7-pounds. The Pro, available in 5- and 7-pound tensions, features a larger profile and more resistant steel springs for more advanced players. MSRP: Gripmaster, \$13.95; Pro, \$17.95.

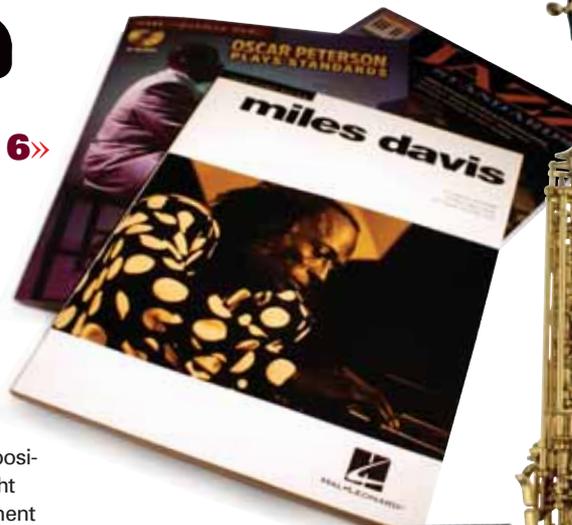
More info: prohands.net

3» Serious Chops

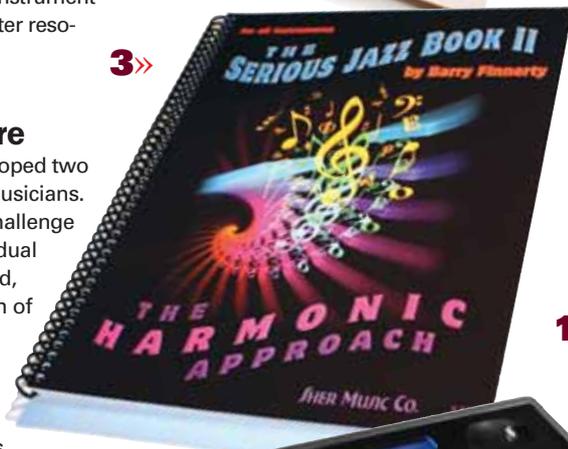
Following up on guitarist Barry Finnerty's first book, *The Serious Jazz Practice Book*, Sher Music has released a second volume in this series of woodshed classics. *The Serious Jazz Book II* offers challenging and concise exercises for jazz soloists of all instruments. Finnerty, who has recorded with Miles Davis, the Brecker Brothers and the Crusaders, explains how to become a better soloist by melodically mastering the individual chords used in jazz, teaching how they connect with each other and showing how they are used in various song forms. MSRP: \$32.

More info: shermusic.com

6»



3»



1»



4»



5»



2»



4» Cutting Edge

Alesis has introduced the SR-18, a professional drum machine with integrated FX engine, battery operation and cutting-edge percussion sounds. Alesis' SR-18 follows in the tradition of its '90s predecessor, the SR-16, with updated features like cutting-edge drum kits, electronic drums, hits and up-to-date percussion sounds for modern drummers. The SR-18's integrated effects engine includes reverb, EQ and compression for customizing sounds. MSRP: \$399.

More info: alesis.com

5» Know Your Blues

Mel Bay's latest addition to its Guitar University series, *Payin' Your Dues With The Blues*, provides developing guitarists with a comprehensive study of the blues. Through in-depth explanations of harmonic form, comping and improvisation, the book and CD explore the constructive elements that characterize the blues-based improvisations of jazz masters like Wes Montgomery, John Coltrane and Charlie Parker. MSRP: \$24.95.

More info: melbay.com

6» High Standards

Among Hal Leonard's recent releases are three new titles of jazz standards for piano and keyboard. Miles Davis is the most recent focus of its Jazz Piano Solos series. The volume includes every composition from *Kind Of Blue*, as well as songs like "Four," "Boplicity" and "The Theme." *Oscar Peterson Plays Standards* offers new transcriptions, along with theoretical explanations, of tunes like "All Of Me," "Fly Me To The Moon" and "When Lights Are Low." The 225-page *Jazz Standards*, part of Hal Leonard's Note-For-Note Keyboard series, includes transcriptions of 23 classic tunes by Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, Thelonious Monk and others for keyboardists looking to learn from the masters. MSRP: *Miles Davis*, \$14.95; *Oscar Peterson*, \$22.95; *Jazz Standards*, \$22.95.

More info: halleonard.com

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Woodshed

SOLO
by Jimi Durso

Mark Feldman's Phrygianish Violin Solo on 'Meholalot'

A fast 3/4 tune that alternates between 6/8 and 3/4, "Meholalot" from the Masada String Trio's *Issachar* (Tzadic 1998) consists of a simple progression of three chords: D, E \flat and Cm. When the notes of these chords are put in scale order, they create the scale D-E \flat -F \sharp -G-A-B \flat -C-D, a Phrygian scale with a major third—or the fifth degree of harmonic minor—which could fit over the entire song.

Violinist Mark Feldman takes a creative approach. For the beginning of his solo, he uses all of the notes except F \sharp , making his playing sound more Phrygian. The F \sharp doesn't appear until measure 21, where the sound of the scale is fully defined. He plays more sparsely in this opening section than anywhere else in his solo, playing predominantly eighth notes and leaving a few measures silent. The energy builds up at measure 26, where Feldman creates more rhythmic density, introducing triplets and playing a long string of 16th notes.

Feldman continues within the Phrygian major sound until measure 34, where an E natural is introduced. This is the ninth of the D chord, and so it doesn't sound dissonant, but it makes his playing sound a bit more chromatic and it foreshadows further chromaticism to come. The next instance occurs at bar 39, where he plays D \flat . Though this conflicts with the key, it is the seventh of the E \flat chord and makes the line sound bluesy. Then, at measure 42, he plays a wispy sounding figure that is within the key, but sequences it downward in half steps, all the way to measure 47, a sixth below where he started. This figure is also a two-beat phrase, which in 3/4 creates a polyrhythmic effect that adds further rhythmic tension.

After this extreme chromaticism, Feldman returns to the Phrygian major sound for a handful of measures. Then he plays an interesting



HYOJUVIELZ

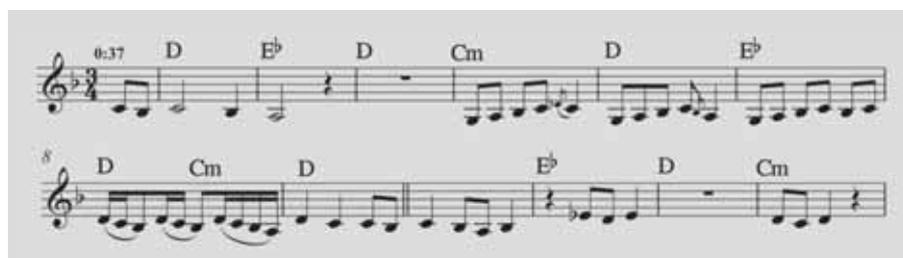
idea in bars 56 and 57, where he goes outside the changes to play a B natural against the D chord (the sixth, so not jarring), but then plays D \flat , C and B \flat , which don't seem to relate to D or Cm at all. But if you see the line as C \sharp , C and B \flat , then it's the 3rd, #9th and \flat 9th of A—the V chord in this key—and thus implies a V-I to measure 58, which is the start of the chord sequence.

Feldman tones it down a bit by bringing in the minor third in a long run of 16ths starting at measure 65. But instead of using it to create a Phrygian sound, here it's a D minor pentatonic lick. This is the most rhythmically dense section of his improvisation: seven measures of almost entirely 16th notes. There is also a polyrhythm here with the accented F and G occurring every five beats, creating a complex rhythmic effect.

To close, Feldman returns to the Phrygian major scale without any more outside pitches. He's also back to eighth and quarter notes, with the only appearance of quarter-note triplets at measure 79, to end his solo.

DB

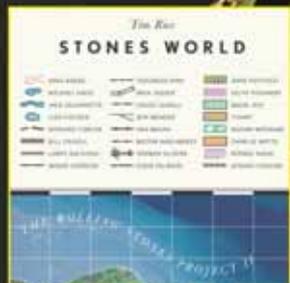
Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist in the New York area. He can be reached at jimidurso.com.



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14 D E^b D Cm D E^b

20 D Cm D E^b D Cm

25 D E^b D

29 Cm D E^b D Cm D

34 E^b D Cm D

39 E^b D Cm D E^b

44 D Cm D E^b

48 D Cm D E^b D

53 Cm D E^b D Cm D

58 E^b D Cm D E^b

64 D Cm D E^b

68 D Cm D

71 E^b D Cm D

75 E^b D Cm D

79 E^b D Cm D



sunmysiderecords.com



Blending the Clave and Cha-Cha-Chá

Combining two rhythms and making the blend appear seamless can add new textures and colors to music. My band has done this with “Don Ramon”—a tribute to Mongo Santamaria—on my latest CD, *El Mas Alla* (Kroon-A-Tune). The instrumentation consists of piano, bass, drums/percussion, vibraphone, saxophone and flute.

This piece shows how to smoothly change from a 6/8 clave rhythm pattern to a 4/4 rhythm pattern. Although differences in rhythm and clave have changed over time, concepts of song and groove remain the same. In the late 1940s and '50s, bands such as Machito and his Afro-Cuban Orchestra introduced Afro-Cuban music to the United States. Mario Bauzá, the musical director of that orchestra at that time, was a great musician and jazz lover who became friends with Dizzy Gillespie and introduced him to the great conga player Chano Pozo. This collaboration created what we know today as Latin jazz. Later on, that 6/8 Afro-Cuban rhythm turned up on Santamaria's classic “Afro Blue.”

The cha-cha-chá, created out of the older

son montuno pattern, is a 4/4 rhythm. It is less complex than a 6/8 rhythm. The beauty in mixing these two rhythms is how the combination alternates the motion between the rhythmic pattern and the melodic pattern. In the beginning of this song, the melody and bridge are played in 6/8. This makes the rhythm section seem more energetic and busy, and the melody more sparse and simplistic.

After the bridge, the transition goes into the cha-cha-chá, which creates a new canvas for the soloist. The more simple rhythm pattern allows the soloist to open up and improvise that solo on a larger scale. This contrast, when done seamlessly, elevates and projects the music into another sphere.

This example shows what I play percussively throughout the song. One cycle of 6/8 is the equivalent of two cycles of 4/4. The 6/8 pattern consists of the clave played in a 3/2 rumba pattern, while the cowbell is played in a syncopated 16th-note pattern. When playing this song, shake the shekere in an up-and-down motion with the accents on the down stroke hitting the



DAVID FRANCE

LEADER'S PART ON “DON RAMON”

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the rhythmic patterns for Clave, Cowbell, Shekere, and Congas. The Clave part is in 6/8 time, starting with a 3/2 rumba pattern. The Cowbell part is in 6/8 time, playing a syncopated 16th-note pattern. The Shekere part is in 6/8 time, playing a syncopated 16th-note pattern. The Congas part is in 6/8 time, playing a syncopated 16th-note pattern. The second system shows the hand positions and tones for the Congas, with a legend below it.

Legend:

- high drum open tone
- low drum open tone
- slap
- heel of hand (ghost note)
- fingertips (ghost note)
- right hand
- left hand

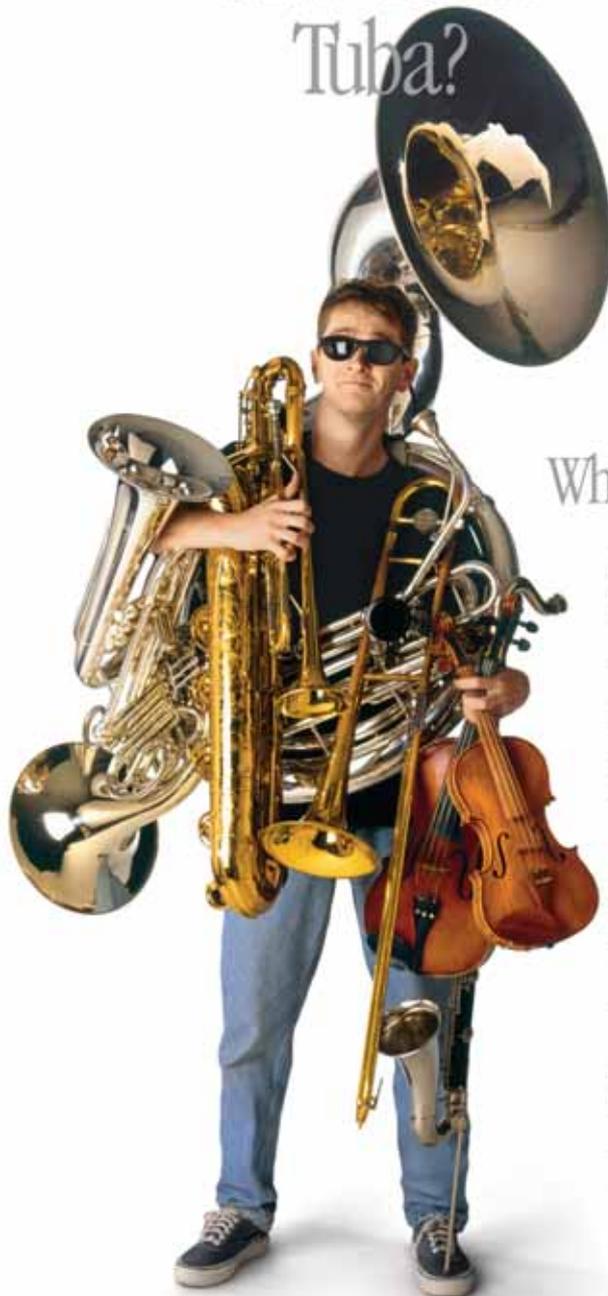
palm of your hand to create another 16th-note pattern. The conga rhythm is also a 16th-note pattern, which starts with the right hand and alternates from right to left.

The symbols on the bottom represent the position of the hand, such as the high tone, the low tone or the slap. The ghost note is like a phantom note, which feels like an unheard touch but remains important to the overall sound.

The cha-cha-chá reverses the clave to a 2/3 son clave pattern. The cowbell is played in quarter notes, with the conga pattern in a basic tumbao style. A good way of practicing this illustration is to play four cycles of 6/8 and four cycles of cha-cha-chá. Saying the clave with your mouth and playing the conga pattern on your drum is another ideal way to practice this rhythm. **DB**

Percussionist Steven Kroon can be contacted via his web site, stevekroon.com.

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Erin Davis (left), Maxine Toliver, Vince Wilburn, Sr. and Vince Wilburn, Jr.



Chicago's Sir Miles Davis Academy Opens New Building

Just before students hit the books in August, a number of Chicago educators gathered with musicians and the guardians of a jazz icon's estate to cut the ribbon on the new Sir Miles Davis Academy's building. Located in the Englewood neighborhood on the city's South Side, the sleek new classrooms and spacious confines are geared toward providing students the level of education that would meet the trumpeter's exacting standards.

"If you're going to have a Miles Davis Academy, you have to have the bar set high and the staff here is up to the challenge," said Miles Davis' son, Erin Davis, who was on hand at the ribbon cutting. "The most important thing you can use the Miles Davis name for is education. He always stressed it to me. He couldn't put up with me being uneducated or not taking my studies seriously."

About 550 students—from kindergarten through eighth grade—are enrolled in the academy, according to its principal, Maxine Toliver. She describes its program as engineering based, but with a strong musical component, which vocalist Rosa Pugh heads. The school was named after Davis in 1992 and as its previous building fell into serious disrepair during the mid-'90s, Toliver, along with parents, teachers and school board officials, sought funding for a new home. Last year, the school received a grant from the United States Department of Education's magnet school assistance program to fund the new building.

Representatives of Davis' estate have also pledged their assistance.

"Whatever they need, anything they need, I'll fly in at the drop of a hat," said Davis' nephew, Vince Wilburn, Jr. "We're talking to different musicians and maybe having musicians do workshops when they come to town."

Wilburn has volunteered his time at the previous Davis Academy building, serving as

principal for a day, and he'll continue doing so. While he conceded that students seemed particularly interested in the cars his uncle drove, Wilburn said he uses his guest lectures to turn attention toward more significant parts of his uncle's legacy.

"I talked to the kids about not worrying about the bling bling, what kind of car someone drives," Wilburn said. "Those things will come, but that's not the significance of life. Study your instrument or study to become an engineer. I hope that kids just excel. Let's get another Miles Davis."

Toliver and Pugh are forming a new choir at the school and amassing instruments. The school has a few flutes and violins, and they're working with the Davis family to obtain more, including a piano.

Bassist Darryl Jones, a Chicago native who played with Davis in the mid-'80s and now works with the Rolling Stones, was also at the ribbon cutting and pledged his support. He is talking to the companies he's endorsed to see if they can donate instruments. Jones added that the school's engineering program would have pleased his former bandleader.

"Miles was a lover of many different things—engineering, architecture or the architecture of a song," Jones said. "He always told me that one art helps another."

Part of the school's objective is to incorporate engineering into other subjects, like music and art, in a way that involves "problem-based learning with children, so sometimes they don't even know they're working with engineering," Toliver said.

"Music should be in any school, whether it's an engineering school or school of the arts," Erin Davis added. "Music stimulates your mind in different ways. You learn about yourself as you learn to play an instrument."

—Aaron Cohen

School Notes

Kris Bowers and Billie Allen-Henderson



New Juilliard Scholarship: Kris Bowers received the first Luther Henderson Scholarship from The Juilliard School from Henderson's widow, Billie Allen-Henderson, on Oct. 6. The ceremony was held at the New York school's Peter Jay Sharp Theater and the scholarship is named for the Juilliard alumnus who served as a composer and arranger with Duke Ellington and Richard Rogers. The scholarship is open to students of color who focus on such fields as composing, orchestrating and arranging.

Details: juilliard.edu

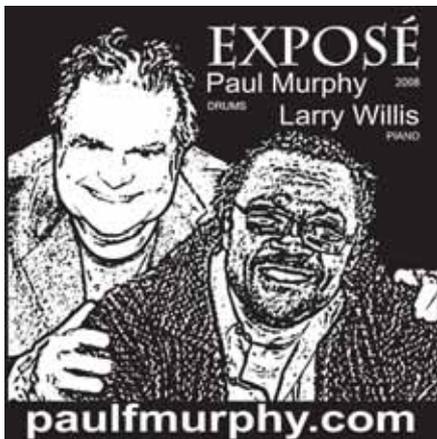
School Supplies: Jazz at Lincoln Center and Belwin Jazz have released a new educational guide, *The Jazz For Young People Curriculum*. Wynton Marsalis narrates and offers audio examples along with other interactive activities on each kit, which includes CDs and teaching guides. The series is geared toward students in the fourth through ninth grades. Details: jalc.org

Dr. Brubeck: Dave Brubeck received an honorary doctorate of fine arts from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., on Oct. 18. Details: esm.rochester.edu

Berklee Bound: Ghanaian drummer Victor Dogah is the first recipient of Berklee College of Music's full-ride four-year scholarship through its Africa Scholars Program. Twenty-five other musicians who auditioned throughout Africa will receive financial assistance toward the Boston school's tuition. Details: berklee.edu

Brown Tribute: The University of the Arts in Philadelphia hosted a symposium on Clifford Brown from Oct. 30–Nov. 1. Along with concerts and panel discussions, the event premiered faculty member Don Glanden's documentary, *Brownie Speaks*. Details: uarts.edu

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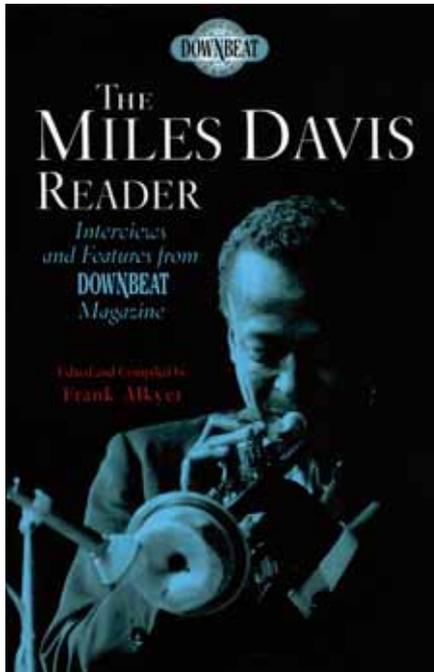
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Trumpeter Enrico Rava and pianist Stefano Bollani, musical partners since the mid-'90s, have performed together on more than a dozen albums, most recently on the duo *The Third Man* (ECM). They sat for a "Blindfold Test" at the Libreria La Feltrinelli at the 2008 Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy, on July 12.

Oscar Peterson & Dizzy Gillespie

"Caravan" (Oscar Peterson & Dizzy Gillespie, Pablo, 1975) Gillespie, trumpet; Peterson, piano.

Enrico Rava: We've got it. Dizzy Gillespie.

Stefano Bollani: And Oscar Peterson. Oscar Peterson was my favorite piano player when I started listening to jazz. I had this recording when I was 10. He was playing "My Blue Heaven." I was sure—because I couldn't read the liner notes in English—that it was two piano players playing together. When my father told me that it was just one, it wasn't Oscar and Peterson, but it was Oscar Peterson, I started studying seriously. I love all the records he did with trumpet players.

ER: Dizzy is unbelievable. He brought the trumpet ahead 20 years when he started. His technique is so extraordinary. He has little tricks with the fingering. Clifford Brown, Miles Davis, Chet Baker, I know what they are doing. If I practice 100 years, I might do the same thing. But I don't understand how Dizzy got those things.

Chet Baker & Paul Bley

"How Deep Is The Ocean" (from *Diane*, SteepleChase, 1985) Baker, trumpet; Bley, piano.

ER: I feel sure that the trumpet player is Chet Baker. It could be Paul Bley, because I know they recorded together, but I'm not sure.

SB: It's not that record with Paul Bley. I don't know this piano player. For Chet Baker, 1 million stars. But I am not in love with this piano player.

ER: Two million stars for Chet.

SB: The trumpet players, it's easier, because they have a personal sound, but the piano, they're just touching something mechanical. This is the SteepleChase record *Diane*.

ER: After Miles, Chet is the one I love more than anybody else. I am close to his way of thinking and playing melodies. The first modern jazz I heard was the Gerry Mulligan Quartet with Chet Baker, and I fell in love with Chet. I was about 18 when I bought a trumpet, and one year after that, he came to live in my hometown. I would be with Chet all day, bringing the trumpet, asking him things he couldn't answer.

Wynton Marsalis

"King Porter Stomp" (from *Standard Time Vol. 6: Mr. Jelly Lord*, Columbia, 1999) Marsalis, trumpet; Eric Lewis, piano.

ER: Very nice. Five stars.

SB: We were talking about the trumpet player, and we thought probably it's the same period of Roy Eldridge, but not before.

ER: It could be Rex Stewart. Rex Stewart was a great fan of Bix Beiderbecke, and this trumpet player did things that reminded me of Bix, but it was not at all that kind of trumpet player.

(*So you think it's an old recording?*)

ER: No. It's new. (*laughter*)

SB: I don't think the piano player is one of the greatest of jazz history, like Earl Hines or Teddy Wilson. He sounds like a modern piano player trying to pretend he's in the '30s. I guess he's American, but he's got something that is not exactly in that style. This is a precise style, so you can immediately understand if it's a pianist who was born today or is from that period. (*after*)

ER: It sounded like a guy from the late '30s.

SB: I thought the trumpet player was older, with a young piano player try-



Enrico Rava & Stefano Bollani

GIANCARLO BELFIORE

ing to play in that style. I couldn't guess who it was.

(*So Wynton did what he intended to do.*)

SB: Yeah, exactly.

ER: But he sounded so much like an old trumpet player. Anyway, 5 stars.

SB: I am not giving 5 stars, because I loved Wynton, but not the piano player so much. Three stars. Five for Wynton.

Lester Bowie

"Hello, Dolly" (from *American Gumbo*, 32 Jazz, rec. 1974/1999) Bowie, trumpet; John Hicks, piano.

ER: That's Lester Bowie.

SB: The problem with this piano player is the opposite of the other one. It sounds like he's not one of the musicians involved in the free movement, but he sounds older than Lester Bowie. Maybe he wants to sound modern.

ER: Three stars for this piece. I always loved Lester, and this one is ironic. But this was too much. He still is great, so 5 stars.

Earl Hines & Harry "Sweets" Edison

"Mean To Me" (from *Just You, Just Me*, Black and Blue, 1978) Hines, piano; Edison, trumpet.

SB: We know the period, but we're not so sure about the musicians. I would say that this piano player, maybe it's not him, but now he's sounding like Willie "The Lion" Smith.

ER: The trumpet player sounded a lot like Harry Edison.

(*It is.*)

ER: Who is the piano player?

SB: It could be Earl Hines.

(*It is.*)

ER: I love Harry Edison. This is not one of his best performances, but I don't mind.

SB: What can I say about Earl Hines? He's one of the piano players I always loved, not only for the piano playing, but because of his attitude. Often people say that I'm too entertaining. But people like Dizzy, Fats Waller, Earl Hines ...

ER: Armstrong.

SB: Armstrong. These were people who were playing great and also entertaining people.

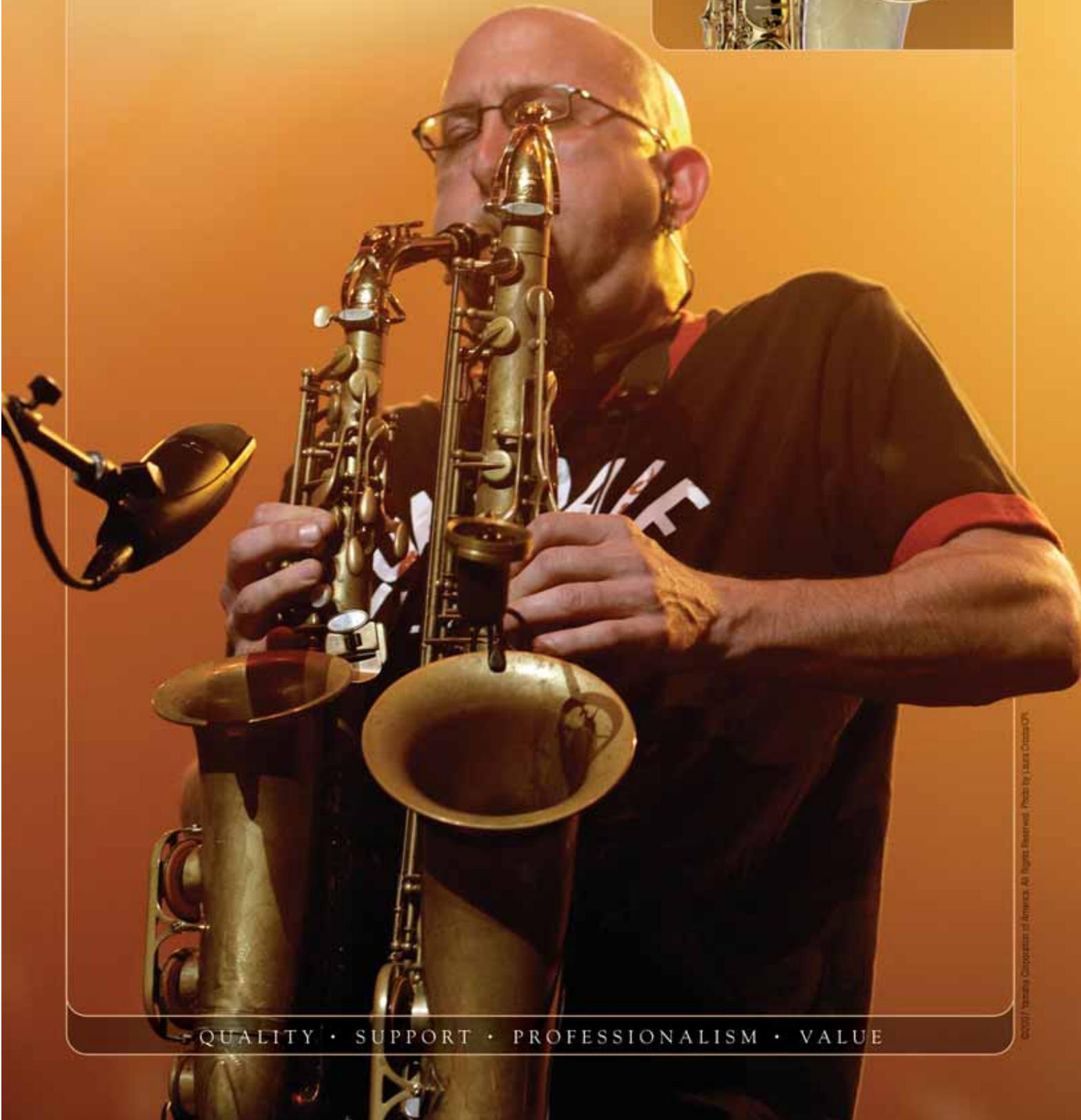
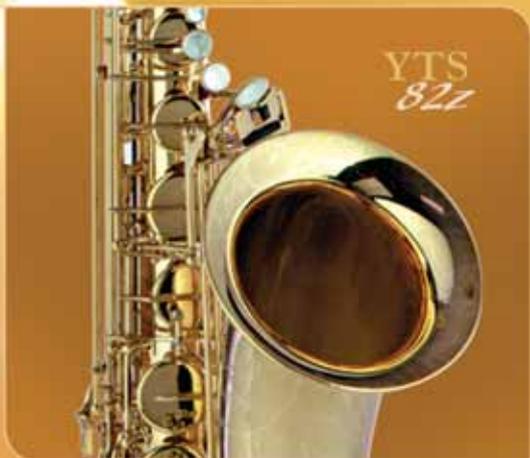
ER: I'm not particularly fond of this record, but for Harry Edison and Earl Hines, I'll give it all the stars in the universe. **DB**

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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