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**JUNE 2014**

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**ON THE COVER**

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### *Seeking the Greater Good*

BY PAUL DE BARROS

For Brian Blade, widely acknowledged as one of the top drummers in jazz, "fellowship" isn't just a word. It's a creed.

Drummer Brian Blade (center) with his bandmates in The Fellowship Band, from left: Jon Cowherd, Myron Walden, Melvin Butler and Chris Thomas



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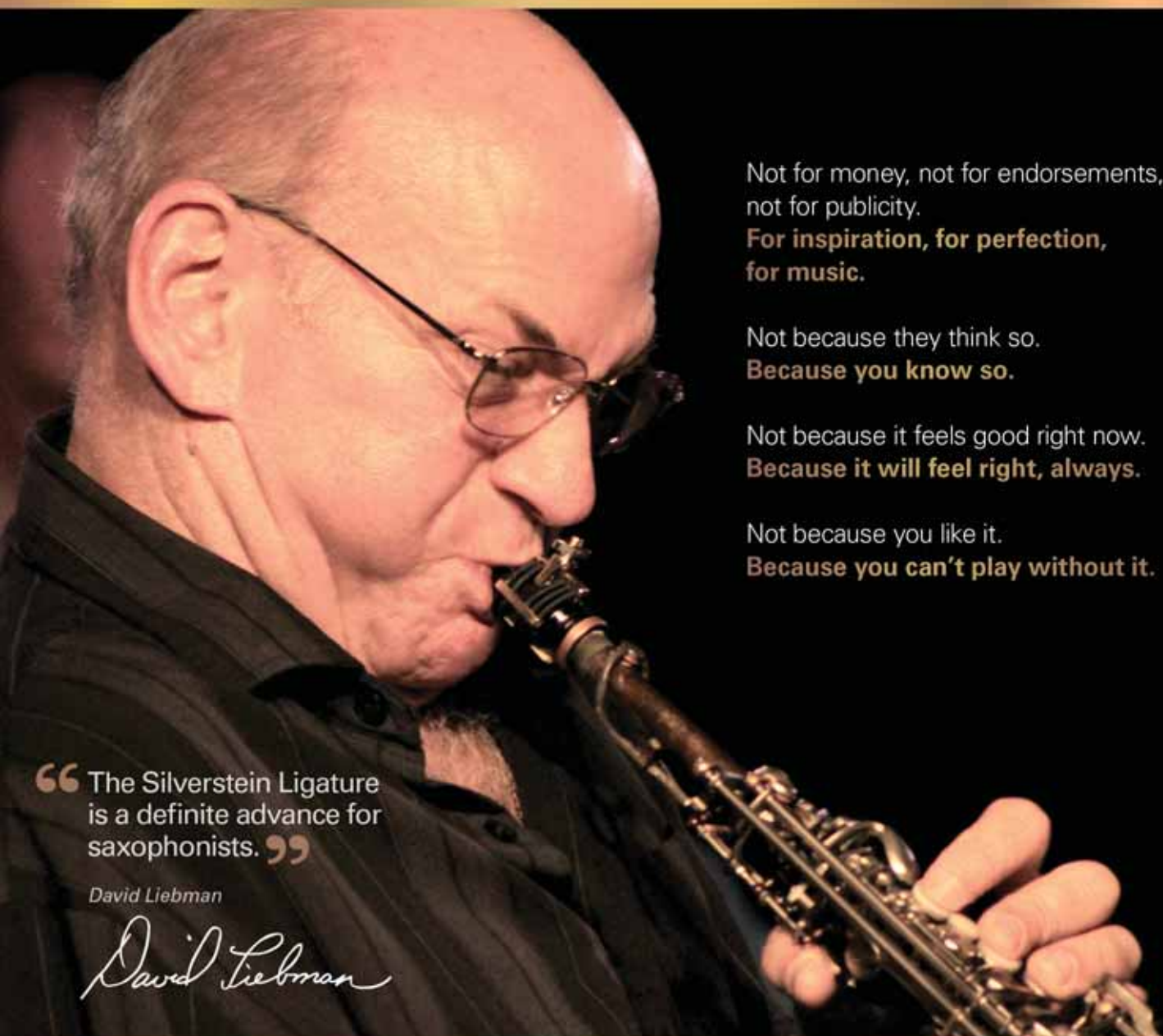
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# Visual Inspiration

**ARTISTS ARE SENSITIVE.** Oftentimes, they are people who are particularly sensitive to surrounding visual stimuli. Just as music inspires visual artists to create, it's equally true that visual art inspires musicians.

In our interview with Rufus Reid (starting on page 34), the bassist-composer-bandleader reflects on the inspiration behind his latest album, a suite for large ensemble titled *Quiet Pride: The Elizabeth Catlett Project* (Motéma). While writing this extraordinary suite, he drew inspiration from the sculptures of artist Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012), whom he befriended late in her life.

Whenever I listen to *Quiet Pride*, I like to add another dimension to the experience by simultaneously studying photos of Catlett's work. The CD booklet for the album includes photos of Catlett's sculptures, accompanied by Reid's comments on compositions that were informed by specific sculptures.

For example, his suite includes a movement titled *Singing Head*, and in his liner notes essay, he comments on Catlett's sculpture of the same name: "This sculpture portrays the original musical instrument, the voice. Here, the a cappella voice sings the theme directly into the interior of the piano, resonating its strings. The harmonic movement challenges the improvising soloist to create additional melodies, finally returning to its simpler harmony." On the album, the gifted vocalist Charenee Wade helps bring Reid's vision to life in compelling fashion.

Reid is hardly alone in his quest to use visual art as what I like to call "nutrients" for making music. In our interview, he nods to a project that paved the way for him: saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom's 2003 album *Chasing Paint*, influenced by the paintings of Jackson Pollock.

Trombonist Michael Dessen (the subject of a *Players* profile on page 20) has written an album titled *Resonating Abstractions* (Clean Feed) that was inspired by the work of seven contemporary abstract painters: Beatriz Milhazes, Allison Miller, Tomoroy Dodge, Jonathan Lasker, Mammie Holst, Julie Mehretu and Odili Donald Odita. Elsewhere in this issue, our interview with Erik Friedlander (page 18) includes a fascinating discussion of the cellist's new album, *Nighthawks* (Skipstone), which was informed by the work of painter Edward Hopper, who is best known for his 1942 painting *Nighthawks*.

These connections help us to understand the ways in which art forms are constantly "speaking" to one another, as dancers are influenced by filmmakers, poets are influenced by photographers, and architects are inspired by chefs (and vice versa). It's always enlightening to hear musicians talk about the music that they grew up with, but what's really intriguing is to learn about the various works of art that have shaped them as adults.

Whether musicians spend their spare time visiting art galleries or reading poetry, the ultimate goal, of course, is to get inspired to make transcendent original art. And great art should be tended to with tremendous care—as well as legal protection. On page 84, former *DownBeat* editor Jason Koransky offers a Pro Session essay titled "Let's Get Along: How an Operating Agreement Can Reduce Band Conflicts and Resolve Legal Issues." It's a must-read for any aspiring musician who is considering a professional career in the music business. If you are on the verge of starting a band or self-releasing your debut, please read this essay. It could prevent you from making some very costly mistakes. And no one wants to be hampered with legal disputes that stand in the way of making transcendent original art.



*Singing Head* (1980, Black Marble, 16 x 9.5 x 14.25 inches). © Catlett Mora Family Trust / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

PHOTO: MANU SASOONIAN, COURTESY OF THE JUNE REED GALLERY, NY

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## Chords & Discords >

### Lloyd Hails Heath

The Jimmy Heath cover story in your May issue was very touching and triggered a flood of memories. When I arrived in Philadelphia with Chico Hamilton's band in 1961 or '62, Jimmy Heath came to get me at our hotel and drove me around Philadelphia in his Triumph. He offered great camaraderie by taking me to his mother's home, and it was such an inspiration to have one of the masters look me up.

As a young person growing up I had played some of his compositions, including "C.T.A." It is important to know your history, and he had grown up with Trane and Benny Golson. When I moved to New York City, he gave me an Otto Link mouthpiece along with great encouragement—always the teacher and scholar with wisdom and a great sense of

humor. (The whole Heath family is outrageous, and they're funny storytellers.) He is a treasure to the planet and has an encyclopedic knowledge of what went on.

I'm a junior elder now, and I cherish the memories and interaction I had with my elders. Long live the ever-youthful Jimmy Heath, and God bless his contribution to our indigenous art form. He is a great soul.

CHARLES LLOYD  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.



### Memorable Curriculum

In your May cover story, it was wonderful to read about Jimmy Heath, as well as my favorite place of higher learning: Queens College. I had the great pleasure of meeting Mr. Heath there in 1975. I had the distinct honor of studying with Frank Foster, but I need to make mention of the person who originated the Jazz Studies program there: Steve Elmer. Steve, a fine pianist, is an active musician on the New York City scene. My long association with Steve, starting with many courses, has provided me with so much that I have loved about the music.

MARSHALL ZUCKER  
MZXKLO@AOL.COM

### Denver Dazzles

Geoffrey Himes' article about Capri Records in the May issue shined some well-deserved light on the jazz scene in Denver. I grew up in Kansas City and lived in Chicago and Seattle for several years, and I assumed, following my move to Colorado, that my days of enjoying live jazz close to home were over. Happily, that was not the case. Not only can Denver claim such luminaries as Dianne Reeves, Bill Frisell and Ron Miles, but the Denver/Boulder area has a wealth of local jazz improvisers and composers, and one of the country's finest jazz clubs, DazzleJazz. As a longtime semi-pro jazz drummer, I even had the privilege of backing Spike Robinson in a concert performance in

my little town in Southern Colorado. Jazz in Colorado? You bet.

DAVID ZEHRING  
RDZEHRING@YAHOO.COM

### Tapas vs. Cardenas

Anthony Dean-Harris' 3-star review of guitarist Steve Cardenas' *Melody In A Dream* in your May issue was way off base. The concept, musicianship and sound of this record are nothing short of beautiful and sublime. Is it a 5-star record? No, but it certainly is far from "forgettable," as Dean-Harris asserts. He briefly mentions Cardenas playing with Paul Motian, but if he had actually heard any of the many recordings Cardenas is on of Motian's, then he would've known that this album was not a departure, or a "back-to-basics" nod to "Grant Green and Wes Montgomery." Anyone could hear that this album isn't coming from that direction in the least. Dean-Harris' comparison of this album to a "Tuesday night session at a tapas bar" is just snide and insulting. One doesn't hear music like this at a tapas bar in NYC, but you do at the Village Vanguard.

I'm fully aware that there always will be differences of opinion where artistic endeavors are concerned. But this review was just too far off. This record deserves more than to be dismissed and brushed off. Too bad one of your veteran reviewers couldn't have gotten this one.

TIM WALLINGFORD  
QUEENS, N.Y.

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**BRIAN BLADE  
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Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band returns to Blue Note for a deeply expressive album co-produced by Blade and Jon Cowherd and recorded in Blade's hometown of Shreveport, Louisiana.



**JOSÉ  
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While You Were Sleeping is the follow-up to José James' widely acclaimed R&B and jazz-steeped No Beginning No End. The album signals a new creative direction for the versatile singer-songwriter and was produced by José and Brian Bender.



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**Inside**

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# Omnivore Unearths New Pastorius Tracks

**A NEW JACO PASTORIUS ALBUM IS SHINING A LIGHT ON THE LOS** Angeles-based label Omnivore Recordings. Founded in 2010 by industry veterans Cheryl Pawelski, Dutch Cramblitt, Greg Allen and Brad Rosenberger, the label has spearheaded reissue and archival releases from a range of artists, including Art Pepper, Hank Williams and Big Star.

Omnivore released Pastorius' *Modern American Music ... Period! The Criteria Sessions* as a special limited-edition vinyl LP for Record Store Day on April 19. (A CD version is also available.) Recorded in March 1974 during after-hours sessions at Criteria Studios in Miami, many of the songs would go on to appear in different versions on the bassist's eponymous debut solo album on Epic in 1976.

Metallica bassist Robert Trujillo wrote an introduction for the liner notes and is co-producing an upcoming documentary film about Pastorius (1951–'87) titled *Jaco*. Last summer, Trujillo met with Pawelski and the late bassist's son Johnny to discuss releasing the Criteria demos. (Pastorius' brother Gregory still had the original acetate from the sessions.)

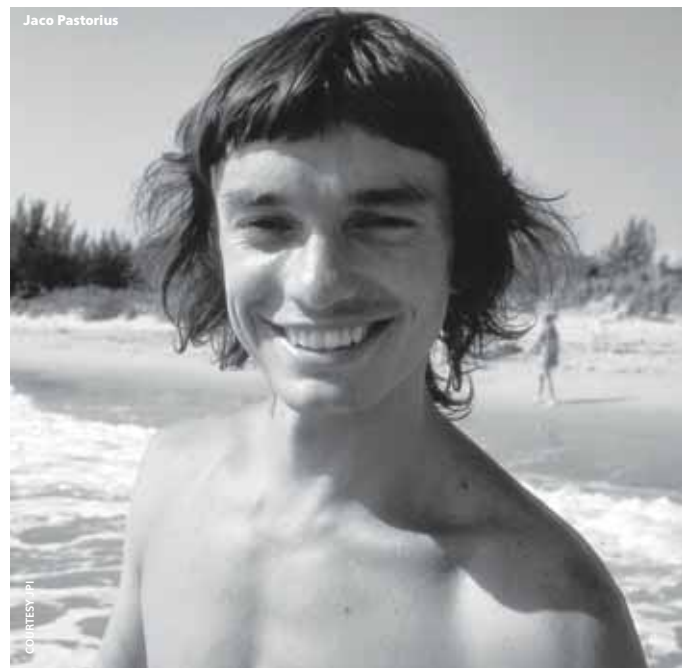
The six songs from the acetate are reproduced on the new LP. Side one includes the previously unreleased tracks "Balloon Song" and "Pans #1" as well as "Havona/Continuum," two songs Pastorius combined at the sessions. ("Havona" would later appear on Weather Report's 1977 album, *Heavy Weather*, while a version of "Continuum" appeared on Pastorius' Epic LP.)

Trujillo says there's something special about these early jam sessions, which featured drummer Bobby Economou, pianist-keyboardist Alex Darqui, steel drummers Othello Molineaux and Cederick Lucious and percussionist Don Alias.

"I feel there's a powerful, edgy component to the performances," Trujillo says. "Punk is the attitude from these young cats, and that's what takes us on their journey at Criteria Studios. Because they actually did sneak into the studio in the middle of the night to record. It is a reckless spirit Jaco is delivering with engineer-producer Alex Sadkin on that evening. And that's what's exciting to me. But Jaco's timing doesn't stray in his performance—it's right on course, he's locked in, like a marksman."

Pastorius had been playing with groups like the South Florida-based r&b outfit Wayne Cochran & the C.C. Riders, but had also been working on his own compositions and jamming with Darqui, a neighbor in his Hollywood, Fla., apartment complex.

Pastorius' daughter, Mary, who was 3 at the time, says she has fond mem-



ories of the time period: "These demos are a soundtrack of my early childhood—of South Florida in the '70s—and evoke a flood of memories: beaches and parks, softball and Frisbee, poolside hotel and motel gigs, mangoes and piña colodas. A time when my whole family was still whole, and my dad was home every day. Honestly, it was idyllic."

Pastorius was 22 when the sessions were recorded. "[He] never had a [music] lesson," Mary continues. "Already had a wife and two kids. We were all living in one room—an apartment above the Laundromat. And in this environment he's creating a never-before-heard sound—he is literally changing music."

Among the other songs featured on the release are "Kuru," a second version of "Continuum," "Opus Pocus" and the previously unreleased track "Time Lapse." The CD version of the Criteria demos also includes Pastorius' solo version of Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee" (which opened the original Epic LP) and alternate versions of "Balloon Song" and "Time Lapse." Pastorius' solo Fender Rhodes version of "Forgotten Love" closes the disc.

Michael Kurtz, director of Record Store Day, says that director Stephen Kijak's *Jaco* documentary is in the works for a fall release, along with a soundtrack to the film. Kurtz contributed to the documentary by donating his 1978 footage of Pastorius and Weather Report performing in Charlotte, N.C., which he shot as a teenage fan.

—Davis Inman

## Riffs >

Fred Ho



**In Memory:** Baritone saxophonist, composer, writer and activist Fred Ho passed away on April 12 in his Brooklyn, N.Y., home. The cause was complications from colorectal cancer. He was 56. Ho had been diagnosed with the disease in 2006. His battle against cancer is central to the documentary *Fred Ho's Last Year* by filmmaker Steven De Castro. Ho, who made more than 15 albums as a leader, wrote several operas, music-theater productions, multimedia performance works, scores, oratorios and a martial arts ballet. Recent recordings include the soundtracks to his theatrical productions *The Sweet Science Suite* and *Deadly She-Wolf Assassin At Armageddon!* Ho was the founder of the Afro Asian Music Ensemble, Monkey Orchestra, the Green Monster Big Band and the Eco-Music Big Band.

**More info:** [discoverfredho.org](http://discoverfredho.org)

**Guggenheim Honorees:** Saxophonist Steve Coleman, flutist Jamie Baum and guitarist Elliott Sharp are among the recipients of the 2014 fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

**More info:** [gf.org/fellows](http://gf.org/fellows)

**Two Midwest Fests:** The lineup for this year's Detroit Jazz Festival (Aug. 29–Sept. 1) includes artist-in-residence Joshua Redman, Stanley Clarke, Pharoah Sanders, Nicholas Payton, Ron Carter and Ramsey Lewis. Performers at this year's Chicago Jazz Festival (Aug. 28–31) include Terence Blanchard, Rufus Reid, Gary Burton, Dave Holland's Prism, Cécile McLorin Salvant and the Sun Ra Arkestra. **More info:** [detroitjazzfest.com](http://detroitjazzfest.com); [chicagojazzfestival.us](http://chicagojazzfestival.us)

**Farewell:** Photographer, writer and musician Duncan Schiedt died on March 12 in Pittsboro, Ind. He was 92. During the 1950s, Schiedt documented guitarist Wes Montgomery and other jazz musicians. Indiana University Press compiled decades of his photography in *Jazz in Black & White*. His book *The Jazz State of Indiana* delved into the history of Indiana jazz, and Schiedt collaborated with Ed Kirkeby and Sinclair Traill on *Ain't Misbehavin'*, a biography of pianist Fats Waller.

**More info:** [in.gov/library/5296.htm](http://in.gov/library/5296.htm)

## Caught >



Tom Rainey (left) and Ingrid Laubrock onstage in New York City on March 24

# Improvising Duos Pay Homage to Coltrane's *Interstellar Space*

**JOHN COLTRANE'S SONIC SEEKING** in the months prior to his death in 1967 continues to inspire musicians today. On March 24 in New York City, the Evolving Music series (presented by Arts for Art) hosted "An Evening in Interstellar Space: Remembering Coltrane," a concert featuring three jazz duos that aim to keep the questing flame alive.

The program served as a 40th-anniversary nod to *Interstellar Space*, Coltrane's landmark duo album with drummer Rasheed Ali. They recorded the music on Feb. 22, 1967, but the LP wasn't released until 1974.

The duos paying kindred-spirit homage to Coltrane were tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis and drummer Haim Peskoff; cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum and drummer Tomas Fujiwara; and tenor saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and drummer Tom Rainey. They each played nearly hourlong sets in the Kabayitos Theater of the labyrinthine Clemente Soto Vélaz Cultural & Educational Center on Manhattan's Lower East Side. At only 640 square feet and about 50 steeply raked seats, the space has an atmosphere as intimate as it is gritty.

Although *Interstellar Space* is not as widely celebrated as Coltrane's earlier releases, the LP would become one of the most influential of the saxophone icon's late works, especially on subsequent generations of avant-minded jazz artists. It is ritualistic music, far from nightclub fare, with Coltrane shaking bells to start most of the pieces. The album represents melody and rhythm unfettered from harmony, a lyricism of fire and freedom—exploratory yet primal.

The 30-year-old Lewis—whose *Divine Travels*, a trio date with two veterans of the New York scene, bassist William Parker and drummer Gerald Cleaver, was released in February by Okeh/Sony—has a classic, richly lyrical sound on tenor. The saxophonist sang and riffed with his horn, as Peskoff echoed rhythmically and added skittering atmospherics.

Lewis was raised in the church, so it's natural for him to tap into the spiritualism that was part of Coltrane's '60s milieu. This came through when he capped the set with his "Wading Child In The Motherless Water," which draws from the spirituals "Wade In The Water" and "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child." Although it felt as if Lewis should've pushed the music harder and longer, the blue-hued melody retained an almost shamanistic power to move.

Bynum and Fujiwara have known each other since they were teenagers in Boston, working in multiple groups together over the last 20 years—including a duo that has produced three albums: 2007's *True Events* (482 Music), 2010's *Stepwise* (Not Two) and the self-released *Through Foundation*, a limited-edition vinyl LP that was sold for the first time at the show.

Bynum is a venturesome performer and affable stage presence. Before starting, he noted trumpeter Don Cherry and drummer Ed Blackwell's 1969 album *Mu* as a precedent for a trumpet-drums duo. As Fujiwara resonated with brushes, Bynum began with incantatory long tones, a soft hat draped over the bell of his horn as a semi-mute. The cornetist moved into an extended, speaking-in-tongues array of murmuring, burbling and vocalizing on open horn, with a plunger mute and then an octagonal wooden mute. Toward the set's end, Fujiwara played a long, rolling solo; it would be tempting to describe the sound as primal, if not for all the beautiful jazz technique that went into it.

The husband-and-wife pairing of Laubrock and Rainey concluded the night with a set that also served to mark the release of their first duo album, *And Other Desert Towns* (Relative Pitch), as well as to cap the saxophonist's monthlong residency at Clemente Soto Vélaz. Laubrock is a dauntless player—unafraid of paint-stripping skronk, for better or worse—and a sharp conceptualist. The veteran Rainey again proved that he is one of the world's master drummers in this idiom.

Touchingly, the couple beamed at each other as one dramatic duo composition came to life after the other. With loose-limbed virtuosity, Rainey drew music from all parts of his kit—rubbing the drumheads, rustling his sticks and mallets together, even drawing tones from the drum stool; meanwhile, Laubrock summoned an almost theatrical sound, crying, sighing and moaning through her instrument.

The aspect of ritual was evoked: Laubrock, with a sink-stopper in the bell of her horn, whistled through her tenor as if it were a griot's quietly keening flute, with Rainey's bass-drum bombs like the punctuations of a rite. The two conjured a whole aural world with their set, an ideal tribute to *Interstellar Space*.

Arts for Art is the organization behind New York's annual Vision Festival, which will be held June 11–15.

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## Glenn Miller Archive Acquires Tommy Dorsey Collection

THE GLENN MILLER ARCHIVE (GMA) of the American Music Research Center in Boulder, Colo., has announced the donation of the Walter C. Scott Collection, a library of recordings and documentation centering on the bandleader and trombonist Tommy Dorsey (1905–'56).

Among the other artists whose work is preserved at the GMA are clarinetists Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, pianist Count Basie and vocalist Perry Como.

Scott (1933–2012), a native of Raleigh, N.C., was an audio engineer and lifelong Dorsey enthusiast and collector. He worked to restore and preserve Dorsey's recordings and radio broadcasts. The new collection includes important recordings, photographs and documents.

"The Walter C. Scott Collection and others broaden and enrich the scope of the GMA beyond our esteemed alumnus Glenn Miller and are of instrumental importance to our mission to preserve, enhance and share the American music art forms of swing and big band," Curator Alan Cass wrote in an email. "Both Dorsey and Miller were major contributors to one of the most historically

important eras in American music history—an era that gave us the zoot suit and jitterbug while also providing the soundtrack that underscored the tumult and convulsion of World War II and the rhythm and refrain that moved our 'Greatest Generation.' For the GMA and American Music Research Center, it doesn't get any better than that!"

DB

Tommy Dorsey



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

## Graves, McPhee Find 'Loose Booty'

Drummer Milford Graves (left) and tenor saxophonist Joe McPhee performed at the Art Institute of Chicago on March 13 as part of the show "Loose Booty," an interdisciplinary bill featuring film, text and live music. (Photo: Jordan Fuller/Art Institute of Chicago)





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## Friedlander's Eerie Atmospherics

As a longstanding member of numerous John Zorn ensembles, as well as a participant in several Zorn recordings, cellist Erik Friedlander was a stalwart presence at the worldwide “Zorn @ 60” retrospective marathons that took place over the past year to celebrate the composer’s 60th birthday. Whether they happened 7,500 miles away in Australia’s Adelaide Festival Theatre or just a few miles from his home in midtown Manhattan, Friedlander was on hand with his trusty cello.

As a sideman and as a leader, Friedlander has continually pushed the parameters of what the cello can do. His discography includes the daring solo project *Block Ice & Propane*, a tribute to bassist and cellist Oscar Pettiford called *Broken Arm Trio* and 2013’s meditative and cathartic *Claws & Wings* (in memory of Friedlander’s late wife, choreographer-writer Lynn Shapiro, who lost her battle with breast cancer in 2011). His new album, *Nighthawks* (Skipstone), features the same band that appeared on 2011’s *Bonebridge*: guitarist Doug Wamble, upright bassist Trevor Dunn and drummer Michael Sarin.

“I was a cello player who had been classically trained, and I wasn’t playing music that I was listening to,” Friedlander said, reflecting on the early part of his career. “I was 19 or 20 years old, studying the Dvorak Cello Concerto and listening to Carlos Santana, Jimi Hendrix or the Edgar Winter Band in my free time. I needed to close the gap. And that’s why when I discovered the kind of

Downtown scene that was going on here in New York it was so revelatory for me. It was like, ‘Yeah, I can do this! I can make string music that’s modern—that has all these influences I enjoy. And it’s OK to play music and express yourself.’ That was a big eye-opening experience for me.”

DownBeat caught up with the globe-trotting cellist in New York, right after he had concluded a 28-hour flight from Australia.

**Your latest album, *Nighthawks*, has an evocative heartland vibe that carries through on pieces like “Nostalgia Blindside,” “One Red Candle” and the title track. Where does that vibe come from?**

When I was a kid, my father would pack us into the back of a pickup truck, and we had a camper, and we would go driving cross-country every summer for about two-and-a-half months. I didn’t spend a summer at home until I was 17. Most of the years up until then were spent driving cross-country, going out West, going to national parks. So I think this album was part of recognizing my own history.

**Other tunes like “Poolhall Payback” and “26 Gasoline Stations” have a Southern rock kind of feel, particularly with the bluesy slide guitar work of Doug Wamble.**

I loved Southern rock as a kid—the Allman

Brothers, the Outlaws, the Charlie Daniels Band, Johnny Winter. I had a thing for that. When I was contemplating putting together a new band, I wanted something that had that chemistry on the front line that I remembered from those bands—and I thought of slide guitar. It just made a whole lot of sense, given where I was coming from and what I wanted to do for this project.

It’s cool the way slide guitar works with the cello. They have this strange kind of chemistry, even though they’re strange bedfellows. But there’s something about it that works. A lot of it has to do with the players, but I think there’s something inherent in the sound as well. Sometimes when you’re putting together a group, if you can just get the right instruments working in the first place, then you’re nine-tenths of the way there. That’s certainly the way it felt when I was writing the music for this album.

**The album title refers to Edward Hopper’s famous 1942 painting, the one that portrays people sitting in a downtown diner late at night. It’s eerie yet beautiful.**

Hopper is amazing. There’s this loneliness to all of his paintings. And tunes like “Nostalgia Blindside” and “One Red Candle” capture some of that feeling. It’s not gloomy, but it has that atmosphere where I think of Hopper.

I also think of that experience we had in Lower Manhattan when we had the blackout here



from Hurricane Sandy. We were without power for five days. Everything was blacked out—no traffic lights, no subways, no power anywhere. And then if you were lucky enough to find a cab and go above 41st Street, all of a sudden you got the lights, the people, subways, everything. Like a tale of two cities.

**Was this music written during that blackout?**

Well, a lot of the dark stuff... "Nighthawks," "One Red Candle." Some of the music had been written already but that's when I started putting together the feeling for the record: the titles of the tracks and the sequence and just the kind of concept of what I was actually saying with this record. I was definitely going for that quality you described in talking about Hopper's painting—that kind of atmosphere of eeriness, a little unsettling but somehow beautiful, too.

**You do a lot of great pizzicato work throughout the new album. That is something that you really focused on heavily on your solo album, *Block Ice & Propane*, which was like your pizz manifesto.**

Well, in the beginning, I thought of it as something that was just a variation every once in a while. But now I think of it as an alternate main voice for the cello. With *Block Ice & Propane*, it was something that I went after specifically, where I just started trying to bring that out more. Because I played guitar for about five years before I picked up the cello, I tried to bring some of those guitar techniques to the cello when I was starting to develop the music that became *Block Ice & Propane*. So that was kind of a turning point. But one of the eye-opening experiences I had with that was playing with Myra Melford in her group The Same River Twice, where I was kind of the main bass function and played pizzicato all night with Mike Sarin on the drums. That was the beginning of understanding that there was a possibility that this could be something great.

**Along the way, during your development on the instrument, did you check out other cellists who were doing adventurous things?**

Yeah, absolutely. Hank Roberts was a big influence. That band Miniature he had with Tim Berne and Joey Baron was a group I listened to a lot. And Abdul Wadud with his soulful Stax kind of abstract, bluesy improv feel he had with Julius Hemphill. Both those guys had incredible pizz kind of approaches. Hank's songwriting was also really inspirational to me.

**Let's talk about *Claws & Wings*, which must have been a very personal, very profound experience for you.**

After my wife died, I had been kind of dormant for seven, eight months. Part of it was I injured my hand. I fell off a bike and tore a ligament in my thumb, so I had to have surgery and

was out of commission for six months. So it was definitely a reflective period. But I would say that my whole experience of doing that record was very positive because it represented a return to playing music again. And I knew that in that moment I had to write from where I was. I needed to deal with what I was dealing with, and that was the death of my wife.

So I started to write. I called [percussionist] Ikue [Mori] and [pianist] Sylvie [Courvoisier] to see if they were free, and planned a date in August, about four to five weeks ahead of where I was. I just knew that I had to have a record by that point. And so it was a very engaging experience because it was processing into music the feelings I was having, which is kind of abstract. But it allowed me to

get fired up about something again.

We recorded in two days. It was the right thing to do, and I'm really happy with how it came out. I didn't want it to be morose, but it's thoughtful. It has a feeling of a good funeral service where you celebrate the life of somebody. And that's kind of what I did: I celebrated Lynn's life as well as dealing with my and my daughter's grief.

**Compared to that very cathartic project, the Bonebridge band sounds buoyant and upbeat.**

Well, it's a fun band, a good touring band. But it has its dark edges, too. —Bill Milkowski

## Players >

# MICHAEL DESSEN

## *Interactive Systems*



BILL DOUTHART

In an era where technology erases old truths about our world at a blistering pace, Michael Dessen is a musician for this moment. Follow his work, and you might see him play a show with musicians on another continent. Listen to his latest album, *Resonating Abstractions*, and you'll hear his trombone control otherworldly sounds with the aid of a specially programmed computer.

"[The computer] isn't about allowing me to play more notes—it's a way to add more colors to what I'm doing," Dessen said from his office at the University of California's Irvine campus. "There's a kind of gradient, spectral quality to the trombone as an instrument, and it lends itself to this sort of exploration because of the way it works. The computer opens up possibilities in timbre that I wouldn't have otherwise."

The title *Resonating Abstractions* nods to the fact that the album's seven tracks were partially inspired by the visual art of seven contemporary abstract painters.

The album features bassist Christopher Tordini and drummer Dan Weiss, whom Dessen enjoys working with not only for their virtuosity, but also for their sense of sound. "They can handle complex structures, but they also improvise tim-

brally and sonically," he explained. "With recordings, it's not just about the chords and rhythm and melody; it's about the sound, too, and they can take it in a lot of different directions, whether I'm using the computer or not. What distinguishes this band is a combination of very open forms of improvisation with highly composed written materials—it's hard to tell when we're improvising and when we're not—and we combine that with technology in real time."

Rather than produce simple effects in the manner of an octave pedal, for instance, Dessen programs entire systems that give him a wide range of options. "The first thing I do with the computer in this band is process the sound I'm playing," he said. "I use a modified mute to send the sound to the computer, and it comes out sounding like a flock of geese. I'm using the trombone to control these strange sounds. The other thing I do with the computer is create sound worlds that do unexpected things. I might record a hundred little half-second gestures on the trombone, then write a program that will improvise with them."

Dessen sees technology as a partner to creativity, with the desire for more capabilities pushing new technology, and that technology in turn

changing the way people think about what's possible. His telematics concerts—featuring musicians in multiple locations playing in real time via online video feed—push him to adapt the way he composes. The effect can be strikingly immediate.

"When you get more than a couple hundred miles away, you start to notice a delay. You can't quite groove together in the same way," Dessen said. "I've done pieces where we had a band in California creating a groove as a unit, with the band in New York playing something that relates to that but has its own internal time structure. You can create some really interesting effects. It's about making music that fits the new medium rather than just replicating what we'd be doing otherwise. I think telepresence technology will change the way we understand music."

For his next project, Dessen is trying to integrate the computer further into the band. "The computer is drawing on a database of scores I composed, and it's listening to us," he said. "If we get really loud, it might go to this section. I'm trying to create interactive systems where there's a lot of flow among different agents, the people, the score, the computer. It's a big space where we can all improvise together." —Joe Tangari





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Players >

**ARK OVRUTSKI**  
*Creative Season*

**B**assist Ark Ovrutski now lives in the Westchester suburbs of New York City, but he grew up in Kiev, the capital city of Ukraine, in one of the oldest downtown neighborhoods. His mother still resides there, close to where anti-government protests and violent street clashes have taken place over the last several months. Other than phoning his mother daily to see how she is doing, Ovrutski explained that the ongoing turmoil in Ukraine is not a major concern for him. "I focus most of my thinking on music," he said, "and stay apart from politics."

That abiding dedication certainly has paid off, as evidenced by his third album as a leader, *44:33* (Zoho). For the recording sessions, Ovrutski brought together trombonist Michael Dease, saxophonist Michael Thomas and the muscular rhythm section of pianist David Berkman and drummer Ulysses Owens Jr. Matching the brio and inventiveness of modern jazz with strong melodies and brilliant ensemble interplay, Ovrutski creates a major "time to take notice" statement on *44:33*.

"I feel like I'm in the middle of a creative season," said the 50-year-old Ovrutski. "Finally, I'm at a point where I can accomplish the things I've wanted to do for a long time." He recently finished his doctoral degree at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he studied with Chicago-based double bassist Larry Gray and spent time analyzing Bach's contrapuntal writing.

"For this recording, I wanted every line to be different, independent and singable, starting with the melodies," Ovrutski said. "The process brought me back to the basics."

Named for its playing time, *44:33* extends multiple surprises on its seven tracks. Thomas shines especially on the bubbling "Waltz" and the album's lone cover, John Lewis' "Milestones."

The veteran Berkman conjures Bud Powell on the boppish "Up" and guides the transitions between melodic enunciations and solos to the point where they are seamless. Ovrutski's solos are a feast of chewy low notes, and his creativity and quickness are astounding. His presence gives credence to the idea that band cohesion and performance start and end with the leader's tangible gifts.

"Ark has been a revelation to me," said Dease, who was asked by Ovrutski to help choose the musicians for *44:33* and co-produce the recording.

"Hooking Ark up with Ulysses Owens was key—if those two aren't simpatico, then you have a long recording job ahead of you," Dease explained. "Everything clicked, and Ark ended up with a very cool record. A lot of that is Ark's writing and bass playing. He understands the function and role of his instrument, and he has a lot of chops. It's a sign of maturity when you don't let your ability overshadow the needs of the music."

Ovrutski started on violin in grade school, then turned to electric bass guitar and was working in local jazz and circus bands during his teens. Following music conservatory studies in Kiev and Moscow, Ovrutski spent three years in Krakow, Poland, and another year in Rome, knowing he would eventually end up in the United States.

Ovrutski has worked hard to stand out in New York. Upon his arrival nine years ago, playing a borrowed bass, Ovrutski made a beeline to Harlem and became a fixture in the local jazz clubs, where saxophonist Patience Higgins and vocalist Gregory Porter became early allies. "From the beginning, I knew that playing the bass was all about getting a certain sound and feeling the rhythm," Ovrutski said. "Knowing how to solo is OK, but it's really optional. In jazz, you have to be ready on bass to create a groove to help carry the music."  
—Thomas Staudter





Players >

## JAREKUS SINGLETON

*In His Own Lane*

MARILYN STRINGER

Jarekus Singleton is one of the most exciting blues guitarists to come along in years. He's performing at clubs and festivals around the country in support of his first high-profile album, *Refuse To Lose* (Alligator), and Europe beckons. The 29-year-old Mississippian, during an interview infused with the boundless enthusiasm that characterizes his personality, was quick to quantify his special type of modern blues. "It's just Jarekus," he said. "I call it Rek-Dawg music, man. How the music comes to me, I'm not afraid to be myself and embrace who I am."

Singleton shoots super-heated notes through the chords with an emotional directness—and a musical spirit that's all his own. "I like to think I have my own sound," he says. "I do feel like I'm in my own lane. But without the Muddys, the B.B. Kings, without Hound Dog Taylor and T-Bone Walker, I wouldn't have this lane of honest music where I can be myself and tell my story."

Raised in a family of talented singers who attended his preacher-grandfather's gospel church five days a week, Singleton is just now resolving self-doubts about making his mark as a vocalist. "On my first album, I didn't feel like I sang well at all," he admitted, referring to his 2011 self-release *Heartfelt*. "But from that album to this new album, I've had a lot of vocal growth. When I recorded the new album, I sent some MP3s to my mom and my brother, and they thought it was *someone else* who was singing."

Sports almost robbed the blues of Singleton's sparkling presence. "I played basketball professionally before I did music," he explained. "I had a bad injury, had to have my cartilage taken out of my ankle, in 2009." With his days on the hardwood court over, he acted on something extraordinary he had felt several years earlier. "When I was about 16, my uncle took me to a club," he

recalled, passion gradually mounting in his voice. "I heard some blues artists playing some Albert King, and, man, it was so funky. The groove was so right. Growing up in Mississippi, there was always blues all over town, guys doing the back-porch thing, but I thought King's music was more versatile, had more variety. It was honest. From that point on I was sold on the blues."

Recording for Bruce Iglauer's record label is the real deal. Hundreds of solo performers and bands aspire to be on the Alligator roster, yet scant few are extended invitations. "I started sending Bruce demos back when I first got started, before *Heartfelt* came out, and some of the music he didn't agree with," Singleton said. "Bruce is a very hard critic. But he always wrote back saying he was looking forward to my musical growth. The way I got over the hump is that I went to the IBC [International Blues Competition], and he saw me in the semifinals at B.B. King's club in Memphis. When I got off stage, Bruce approached me and said, 'I've been talking to your manager, and I'll be in touch.' That was February 2013. I kept working on my vocal skills and songwriting, and here we are now."

Supported by a band consisting of his two cousins on bass and keyboards and a long-time friend on drums—all raised in the Baptist church—Singleton maintains a keen sense of purpose. "I thank God for who I am and what I've become," he said. "I'm glad to be *present*. I just love to get my music out, and I just want to keep helping people. When somebody calls me and says, 'Jarekus, dude, I was struggling, but when I heard your song, it put me at ease because somebody else was going through the same thing I went through'—that's what motivates me as an artist."

—Frank-John Hadley



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Players ›

## ANTHONY MOLINARO

### *New Ostinatos*



Anthony Molinaro takes an unadorned, minimalist approach to The Beatles' songbook on his solo album *Here, There And Everywhere* (19/8). But there's nothing simple about how his impressions of these songs become vehicles for an individualistic blend of classical techniques with jazz improvisation.

"Part of the difficulty of a project like this is saying something meaningful," said the Chicago-based pianist. "A re-imagining of the original tune is a combination of what I present and one's own experience. People have had powerful reactions to 'The Long And Winding Road,' but it has to do with their relationship to that song. Everybody has a story for their favorite song, and when you're talking about The Beatles, most people have a story about every song."

Molinaro avoids the easy route in interpreting these songs. He uses the John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison melodies as templates for new ostinatos rather than just playing the familiar tunes and then turning them into vehicles for solos. He also composed a short fugue based on "In My Life" as a tribute to Beatles producer George Martin. But the cores of the original compositions worked for Molinaro in ways that American standards could not.

"It's almost going to cease to be an ostinato if you're jumping around and playing the same kind of line, but a different chord in every bar," Molinaro explained. "You can look at a jazz standard tune with changes in harmony every bar, every other beat. Looking at a rock tune is more about three or four chords, or a continued progression. The beginning of 'Dear Prudence' wouldn't make as much sense if there were harmonies moving all over the place because it would interrupt what's happening."

Molinaro's version of "Dear Prudence" fea-

tures not just intriguing melodic counterpoint, but also two different meters played simultaneously. On other pieces, he uses his thumb to catch the basic melody while trying to incorporate more lines with his fingers. According to Molinaro, "Blackbird" may have been the most challenging.

"Blackbird" becomes more difficult to play an ostinato pattern where there are rests involved in odd groupings," he said. "In 'Blackbird,' there's a grouping of five, and that becomes very tricky to know where you're at and not screw it up. I was also working at adding a descending line that comes in there. They became little etudes on their own."

Most of the songs on *Here, There And Everywhere* are from the late '60s—a few years after the screams of Beatlemania had erupted. Not coincidentally, Molinaro connects to the period when the band spent more time working out their concepts away from concert stages.

"I generally think [those songs] grew out of a jam, or something very natural," he said. "In my own compositions, people would ask, 'Where does this come from?' And it doesn't come from me sitting down and making this effort. I wrote a composition called '19/8' where the meter goes into 19, and it basically came out of a jam, trial and error, playing this pattern."

Molinaro would like to publish his scores and possibly record a live DVD of his performance of this disc. An assistant professor of music at Loyola University Chicago, he says these different media will enhance the educational impulse that is central to everything he does.

"If I work out some complicated rhythm thing on *Here, There And Everywhere*, I'm interested in mapping that out so I can explain that to my students," he said. "Whatever I'm telling them is exactly what I'm doing on a daily basis." —Aaron Cohen





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BRIAN BLADE & THE FELLOWSHIP BAND

# SEEKING THE GREATER GOOD

BY PAUL DE BARROS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL SHEEHAN



**T**he music curls up from the quintet like strands of smoke. It's a processional andante, in 3/4 time. The pianist pronounces a folkish melody with dignified simplicity, the notes climbing, then falling like a sigh. Behind the horns, arms hovering over the kit like a cat ready to pounce, is a wiry man who once contemplated a career in tennis. He whaps the drums with his brushes, on the one.

The drummer in question is Brian Blade and his group is The Fellowship Band, giving a master class in Seattle earlier this year. The Northwest visit occurred several weeks prior to the release of the group's fourth album, *Landmarks* (Blue Note), a lushly atmospheric set that braids haunting Americana moods with group improv, in which solos rise and fall from an ever-shifting cloud.

Founded 27 years ago, The Fellowship Band has not been prolific, but it's a profoundly important band, and Blade is widely acknowledged as one of the top drummers in jazz.

Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, from left: Jon Cowherd, Myron Walden, Brian Blade, Melvin Butler and Chris Thomas.





Blade is revered as a leader and as a collaborator.



“We’re not headliners,” Blade admits during an interview at his hotel, the day before the show. “But I’ve been so thankful that we’re able to come back together after months off.”

One of the reasons The Fellowship Band doesn’t tour as often as fans or its members might like is that Blade has other significant obligations. For 13 years, he’s held down the drum chair in the Wayne Shorter Quartet, whose *Without A Net* (Blue Note) won a Grammy this year for Best Improvised Jazz Solo (on the track “Orbits”) and was voted Jazz Album of the Year in DownBeat’s 2013 Critics and Readers Polls. But you also might find Blade playing or recording with Bob Dylan (with whom he shares a Grammy award for *Time Out Of Mind*), Joni Mitchell, Bill Frisell, Emmylou Harris, Charlie Haden ... it’s a long list. And there’s a reason why: He’s a great listener.

“He’s like a tailor,” says Shorter of Blade. “He makes the clothes fit the person he’s playing and interacting with.”

Blade’s humble sense of “service” to the group he’s working with stems from his background as the son of a Baptist minister. For Blade, “fellowship” isn’t just a word. It’s a creed. Inspired to compose by Loyola University New Orleans schoolmate Jon Cowherd, who plays piano in the group, Blade is also a sometime singer-songwriter, having been steered toward guitar by Dylan producer Daniel Lanois.

As a drummer, Blade comes out of Elvin Jones, but with a surprising twist. As a composer, he insists that music is “not just notes,” but carries important, even urgent, messages. As a person, he prompts unconditional praise. Recently, in a fairy-tale love story, Blade came full circle, moving back to his hometown of Shreveport, La., with his high school sweetheart after having bounced around New Orleans, New York City, Woodstock, N.Y., and Portland, Ore.

Blade was born in 1970 in Shreveport, 325 miles northwest of New Orleans. The city is a nexus of blues, folk, country, funk and jazz. The song “Ark.La.Tex.” on the new album honors that convergence. Blade started on violin when he was 9, but was drafted into the drum chair at church when his older brother, Brady, left for college.

Church music was a huge part of his early life. His father, an imposing man with a stentorian voice, preached at Zion Baptist Church and had a radio ministry. Saturday tapings of the show were a regular feature of Blade’s childhood.

“I’m sure the first voice I heard in the womb was my father’s,” says Blade, whose mother was a kindergarten teacher.

He and his brother had a nurturing childhood. “They encouraged us,” says Blade. “They wanted us to go after what we were interested in: Drums? Tennis? ‘Get him a teacher.’ So if Brady was having rehearsals with his band in the garage, or if I was practicing in the back room ... there was never a cutoff time. Just try to do it.”

In high school, Blade played in stage band and did gigs with his teacher Dorsey Summerfield Jr.’s quartet The Palisonics. Working in a record store, he was exposed to a wide range of music, from Kiss to Michael Jackson, but when a friend turned him on to John Coltrane’s *Giant Steps* and *A Love Supreme*, he was hooked.

At Shreveport’s annual Red River Revel festival, Blade heard bands like Asleep at the Wheel and the Neville Brothers, which may account in part for his eclecticism, which takes in Americana, jazz and the rhythms of the Crescent City.

The Nevilles’ New Orleans beat was seductive. After high school, Blade made a beeline for the Crescent City, with eyes to study with guru Johnny Vidacovich, which he did. Getting thrown into a house rhythm section for Loyola big band auditions with Cowherd was a game changer.

“At the first break,” Cowherd recalls, “Brian came right up to me and said, ‘Hi, my name’s Brian Blade. I feel like we hear music the same way.’ We clicked immediately.”

Blade and Cowherd were soon playing around New Orleans, as the young drummer soaked up sounds from Vidacovich, reed man Victor Goines, Loyola director John Mahoney, saxophonist-educator-producer Harold Battiste and the singing bass player George French.

Ironically, while Blade was ranging all over the musical map, Cowherd, who had come up in Kentucky playing classical music on French horn and wanted to “catch up” on jazz, fell in with the so-called “Young Lions” of the 1980s.

“All of our contemporaries were trying to emulate whoever was in Wynton’s band,” Cowherd remembers. “I was trying to play like Kenny Kirkland and Marcus Roberts.”

While it’s easy to conclude that the mix of Americana and jazz in The Fellowship Band arose from the collaboration of a white country boy with a black preacher’s son, the reality is much more complicated. One of Blade’s favorite albums as a teenager was Joni Mitchell’s *Hejira*; the iconoclastic vocalist and guitarist continues to be an influence. Cowherd, who now tours with Rosanne Cash, didn’t even like country music growing up; in New York, he took inspiration from playing in a black church.

In 1989, bassist Chris Thomas came to New Orleans to study at University of New Orleans, and the following year, Blade transferred there to study with Ellis Marsalis. (Cowherd moved on to New York.) Ellis took Blade to England for a tour with saxophonist Courtney Pine.

According to Blade, the elder Marsalis counseled, “You can always come back to school.”

That wasn’t going to be necessary. By 1992, Blade had been singled out by the New Orleans





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Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band in Seattle on Feb. 18.



Times-Picayune as “One of Tomorrow’s Stars.” A year later, he was discovered by Lanois.

“I had a recording studio in the French Quarter,” recalls the producer, “and Iggy Pop was making a record. I went for a walk with Iggy to get some air. We walked past this place called Café Brasil and heard this most amazing thunder. There was this kid with a shaved head and wire-rim glasses, probably sitting too high on the stool and just ripping me up. Iggy said, ‘We gotta work with this kid!’”

Lanois invited Blade to jam in a little theater he had rented across the Mississippi River, in Algiers, and a month later, they went on the road with a trio.

Lanois, like Cowherd, inspired Blade to write, but also to take up guitar, and hired him to play on albums he produced for Dylan, Mitchell and Harris.

“He believed in me and brought me into the world he was working in,” says Blade. “I’m so thankful for that trust and friendship.”

Meanwhile, back at the jazz ranch, Blade met Kenny Garrett while working at the Village Vanguard with Harry Connick Jr., which led to multiple albums with the ferocious saxophonist, including 1996’s *Pursuance: The Music Of John Coltrane* (recorded with Pat Metheny and Rodney Whitaker). Around the same time, through Delfeayo Marsalis, Blade met saxophonist Joshua Redman, who drafted him for the albums *MoodSwing* and *Spirit Of The Moment*. Blade, Redman and Christian McBride put together The Trio, touring cross country, including a week with McCoy Tyner at Yoshi’s in Oakland.

But Blade still didn’t have a group of his own.

When Blue Note approached him in 1997 with the idea of forming an all-star band, he told the label he preferred to choose his own sidemen. Blue Note agreed and The Fellowship Band was born: Cowherd (piano), Thomas (bass), Myron Walden and Melvin Butler (reeds), Kurt Rosenwinkel and Jeff Parker (guitar), and pedal steel man Dave Easley. (Though the recent Fellowship Band tour did not include a guitarist, Parker and Marvin Sewell play on *Landmarks*.)

The Fellowship Band’s first, eponymous album, released in 1998, was well-received.

With its undertow of implied time, gauzy sonic landscapes, hypnotic vamps and curling, reverb-laden guitars, that first album set the Fellowship tone.

Also present was one of band’s most salient characteristics—its diffuse pulse. On that beautiful waltz they played in Seattle, for example (it’s called “Stoner Hill,” after the Shreveport neighborhood where Brian grew up), Blade plays on the “one,” not the usual two or three that drummers accent on a waltz to give it that lift. And yet the lift is there. Where does it come from?

“It’s coming from everybody,” answered Thomas, in a band interview after the master class.

“The first time I met Brian,” adds saxophonist Butler, “I was playing with Betty Carter and she said, ‘Time is felt, not heard.’ That’s the way it is in this band.”

The group embodies a sense of cooperation on the bandstand. “Everyone is so giving and everyone’s so caring to everyone’s need, their expression,” says Thomas. “It relies on interaction with somebody, call-and-response. It really demands that. It’s a conversation.”

Blade’s spiritual background clearly underlies this sense of communion.

“I think it is not a coincidence that Brian played the drums in his dad’s church,” says Portland pianist and longtime friend Darrell Grant, who has hired Blade for all his albums. “Because music was spirit. That was its function. If you come at music that way, how can you not make it spiritual?”

Blade’s beliefs also drive his urge to make a difference. He holds high ideals for what music can do, calling it “a cosmic, healing chemical” that can “fortify our lives.”

Many of The Fellowship Band’s songs deal with social issues. “Steadfast”—a track on 2000’s *Perceptual* that features Mitchell’s vocals—was inspired by the tragic school shootings that have become almost epidemic. “He Died Fighting,” on the new album, was inspired by heroes who made sacrifices, including Nelson Mandela and Blade’s maternal grandfather, Levi Gardner, a World War II veteran.

“Is there another who might make that sacrifice?” Blade wonders. “I look in the mirror, and I don’t know. What am I willing to die for? What can I give up? In a way, it’s the simplest song on the album. I’m not varying what I’m doing very much, as the drummer. I’m sticking to my story. I feel like that’s what great people like Martin Luther King or Levi Gardner or Nelson Mandela did. They stuck to their story—no matter what.”

But The Fellowship Band isn’t preachy. Sometimes it’s just painting a beautiful picture, as with “Embers,” a tune Blade wrote while living briefly in Portland, Ore., around 2008.

One of Blade’s early musical inspirations was



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Elvin Jones, but Shorter points out that Blade is very much his own man. "Tony [Williams] and Elvin, he's kind of celebrating that," says Shorter. "But I hear mostly him. His identity is continuously emerging."

Indeed, the Jones connection can be misleading, because that name conjures the driving, poly-metric force behind Coltrane. But Blade's route through Jones was the delicate drum solo opening to "All Or Nothing At All" on Coltrane's *Ballads*.

"I listen to Elvin play that, and I think, 'God, it sounds like a tribe of people and he's just playing two drums!' It's not a matter of what you have; it's a matter of what you do with what you have."

Blade uses just four drums (a snare, mounted

tom, floor tom and bass drum), three ride cymbals that double as crashes, and a hi-hat. But with that sparse set, he, too, sounds like a tribe, though one that moves stealthily from quiet passages to sudden storms. Unlike Jones' hurricane, it's like a little story, with lots of space between chapters.

Part of that can be attributed to Vidacovich's influence. "He really came at me with the philosophical idea of time as a ball, this round, moving flow," says Blade.

If this sounds a little elusive, it's in keeping with Blade, whom Shorter calls "the man who walks through walls."

Such praise could go to one's head. But Blade would be the first one to tell you he's made a few

mistakes in his life, including walking away from his high school sweetheart. And therein lies a tale.

Insiders knew that's who he was talking about on "If You See Lurah," on the first Fellowship Band album. Blade dropped the song "Mercy Angel" on his 2009 singer-songwriter album, *Mama Rosa* (Verve), with the moving, plainspoken lyric, "I remember meeting you in the band room after school/ On our first date, we stayed out late/ And you kissed me." After the album was released, something amazing happened. He and Lurah wound up getting back together.

They were married three years ago. Blade is now the proud stepfather of three children, ages 22, 20 and 19. He and the family recently moved back to Shreveport.

Blade has deep ties in the city thanks to his brother, Brady, who served as executive producer of *Landmarks* and whose Blade Studios, in Shreveport, was where seven of album's tracks were recorded. Brady has a dynamic career of his own as a drummer, having recorded, like Brian, with Emmylou Harris, as well as Dave Matthews and Solomon Burke. Brian and Brady also work with their father (and Lanois) in a religious family project called The Hallelujah Train.

Unsurprisingly for a guy raised by a teacher and a minister, Blade is a superb tutor. At Seattle's Cornish College of the Arts, when someone asked how he developed his "unique sound," Blade tipped his hat equally to Stravinsky and Coltrane.

"Even in silence," he told them, "find the serenity. Then a sudden rainstorm."

Later, at his hotel, Blade elaborated on his advice for young musicians.

"Know your weaknesses, the time you spend closing the gap between your head and your hands. Be listening, and aware, all the time. Play as much as possible, any gig, because it will be something you have not experienced. Even if it turns out to be bad, it will be for the greater good."

During a recent concert at the Seattle Art Museum, The Fellowship Band started with "Stoner Hill" and worked through tunes from the new album. "Ballad Of The Prodigal Son" showcased Walden's golden-toned alto sax and Butler's dancing tenor, while Blade built press rolls and punished a floppy, half-open hi-hat. Walden broke out his bass clarinet on "Alpha And Omega," kissing the ends of his phrases with wide vibrato and digging into multiphonics, and Cowherd took a trip on a wood-framed pump organ. Blade rang tiny bells before the song melted into silence.

It's on "Farewell Bluebird," Blade's song for a favorite New Orleans café, that the drummer's genius shone through most clearly, as he demonstrated his uncanny ability to make explicit what the other players merely imply. During a Cowherd solo, Blade answered back with phrases that seemed to say, "This is what you were thinking, right?"

Now that's really listening. The crowd leaps to its feet to offer a standing ovation in response to that sense of transformation. And, like Thomas says about the life on "Stoner Hill," it's coming from everybody. It's a fellowship, indeed. **DB**

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Rufus Reid

# Still EVOLVING

It was a singular event, even for New York City: 20 of the country's finest jazz musicians trying to squeeze onto the stage of The Jazz Standard, an area about the size of a Manhattan apartment's galley kitchen. A packed house had turned out on a stormy Wednesday night to hear this big band, enhanced with two French horns and a vocalist, perform an ambitious five-movement jazz suite entitled *Quiet Pride: The Elizabeth Catlett Project*, inspired by the work of the celebrated African-American sculptor.

The musicians filed in, spilling off the stage, their front row taking up some of the club's precious floor space. Veterans like Steve Allee, Vic Juris, Tim Hagans, Steve Wilson and Scott Robinson shared the stage with rising stars like Freddie Hendrix, Michael Dease and Erica von Kleist. Rufus Reid,

the suite's composer, took his place in the back row on upright bass, a benevolent *éminence grise* watching over the ensemble he had handpicked to perform this demanding work.

Drummer and composer Dennis Mackrel (Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Count Basie Orchestra) conducted from the edge of the crowd. Mackrel may have been steering the ship, but "Rufus was like the ship's captain that night," said Jana Herzen, president of Motéma Music, who was watching from a central table.

Speaking by phone a few days later, Herzen said that the main reason she signed Reid in 2007 was for his composing. "I was blown away by his large ensemble work. He is so in love with composing—he's like a kid in a candy store." *Quiet Pride* is his fourth album for the label.





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BY ALLEN MORRISON | PHOTO BY JIMMY KATZ

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One of the most prolific jazz bassists of the last 50 years, Reid has toured and recorded with a long list of heavy hitters, including Eddie Harris, Nancy Wilson, Dexter Gordon, J.J. Johnson, Freddie Hubbard, Jack DeJohnette, Art Farmer, Stan Getz, Kenny Burrell, Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, Kenny Barron, Benny Golson, Frank Wess—the list goes on. He is also an influential jazz educator. In 1974 he wrote a best-selling bass book (and instructional video), *The Evolving Bassist*, that is still in wide use. Reid served as co-creator and director of the Jazz Studies & Performance Program at William Paterson University for 20 years. He organized his current Out Front Trio with pianist Allee and drummer Duduka Da Fonseca in 2008, releasing albums in 2010 and 2011.

Although he has issued more than a dozen recordings over the years as a leader or co-leader, including several in the duo Tana-Reid with drummer Akira Tana, Reid's emergence as a big band composer is a relatively recent development. After his retirement from WPU in 1999, Reid joined the BMI Jazz Composer's Workshop in New York and began winning prizes and grants, including the first Charlie Parker Jazz Composition Prize in 2000 for his piece *Skies Over Emilia*, a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Mellon Jazz Living Legacy Award.

His works for large ensembles have been praised by everyone from critic Dan Morgenstern to such jazz masters as Golson, Jimmy Heath and Slide Hampton. "Hampton was one of the judges for the Charlie Parker Prize," Reid recalls. "After listening to my work, he said, 'You're serious, aren't you?' That meant a lot to me."

Allee first saw Reid accompany saxophonist Dexter Gordon (with pianist George Cables and drummer Eddie Gladden) in the late '70s when they were passing through Indianapolis. Allee said, "Rufus has accompanied all the greats. He always makes other artists' boats float higher. Playing with Rufus is like having a red carpet unfurled at your feet: [His sound] is rich, buoyant and, above all, elegant. His harmonic knowledge is so advanced that he can get *inside* the chords that I'm playing, and every note he plays has a musical relevance that supports what I'm playing."

*Quiet Pride* has echoes of 20th century influences as diverse as Duke Ellington, Thad Jones, Leonard Bernstein and the big band compositions of Kenny Wheeler. As twisty as its melodies and challenging as its postbop harmonies may get, it is founded in a series of steady, swinging grooves that provide a superior platform for boundary-pushing solos by the ensemble, which, in addition to the aforementioned artists, includes Herlin Riley on drums; trumpeters Ingrid Jensen and Tanya Darby; reed players Tom Christensen and Carl Maraghi; trombonists Dave Taylor, Ryan Keberle and Jason Jackson; French horn players John Clark and Vincent Chancey; and singer Charenee Wade, who provides wordless vocals.

The enhanced CD of *Quiet Pride* includes a "making of" video as well as photos of the sculptures by Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012) that inspired the nearly hourlong suite. Catlett's sculptures of the human form in clay, wood and stone illuminated the lives of African-Americans and

the civil rights struggle that defined her time.

The works that inspired Reid's suite are titled *Recognition*, *Mother and Child*, *Singing Head*, *Stargazer* and *Glory*. Introducing the *Glory* section at The Jazz Standard, Reid said he had admired this sculpture of a woman's head, that it looked noble and proud. "But I wondered, why was it called *Glory*? Well, when I eventually met Elizabeth I asked her. She said, 'It's not a *what*—it's a *who*.'" *Glory* was the name of a woman Catlett had met at a gallery exhibition; the artist admired her beauty so much that she asked her to pose for a bust of her head. "And, ladies and gentlemen," Reid said, "Glory is here tonight."

Glory Van Scott—a former principal dancer with Agnes de Mille and the American Ballet Theatre—acknowledged the applause from a table where she sat with her companion, 88-year-old impresario and NEA Jazz Master George Wein. "It's such a wonderful feeling to be honored in this way—twice," she told DownBeat after the performance. "Elizabeth was capturing the inside of me. I felt the same way when I heard Rufus' music; I felt spiritually renewed."

Wein shares her enthusiasm. "I had the privilege of working with Rufus in the Newport All-Stars in 2006," he said. "He's one of the greatest bass players I ever heard, but I didn't know he could write music like that!"

A couple of days after the show, over a leisurely lunch in Greenwich Village, Reid said, "The live show was a reaffirmation that the piece works."

**How did Elizabeth Catlett's work become a springboard for you to compose?**

In 2006, I got an email from the University of Connecticut about the Sackler Composition Prize [The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Prize in Composition]. It was the first time they had included jazz compositions, and it paid \$20,000. I said, "What the hell, I have nothing to lose." But you had to propose something. My friend Jane Ira Bloom had recorded an album with songs inspired by Jackson Pollack or Miró, and it was great. And then Jim McNeely [director of the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop] got an opportunity to write something for the Paul Klee Center in Bern, Switzerland. He wrote 10 pieces. I saw some of these paintings and heard the music, and I said, "Whoa!"

**And that's what made you choose visual art as your inspiration?**

Well, Jim and Jane were role models—they did it and were successful. And I thought, "Damn, I have this book [of Catlett's art] in my house—let me look at it." When I did, some of those images jumped out at me, and I said, "That's it!" I proposed a suite that would be an hour's worth of music. I had to fill out an application and get letters of reference. I didn't really think I was going to get it. A couple of months later I got a phone call—"You've been chosen"—and I almost dropped the phone. Then the guy says, "You know, it's very interesting. Mr. Sackler loves art, but he wasn't aware of Elizabeth Catlett." It intrigued them that they didn't know about her. [Later on I realized]

he's got a wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I hadn't made the connection. My wife and I had been there many times. Then one time we walked under the [Sackler Wing] sign, and all of a sudden, she says, "Oh, my God." This was after I had applied for [the prize].

*[Reid composed Quiet Pride in 2006; it debuted at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, with the university's jazz ensemble, in 2007. He later met Elizabeth Catlett through her son, percussionist-composer Francisco Mora Catlett.]*

**How did you become friends with Ms. Catlett?**

Elizabeth lived in Mexico, but visited New York. Some time after the premiere, she and Francisco came to hear me play at Sweet Rhythm with Kenny Barron and Victor Lewis. She was elderly and using a walker, but they came to the late show. A few days later, I called her and said, "I'd like to invite you to the house, and I'll cook for you." And her response was, "Can you cook?" I said, "Yes!"

So she came. It was thrilling to have her there, and she signed my book. She liked us, so she said, "I want you guys to come to my home in Cuernavaca." We said we'd love to—but we didn't really think she meant it. We didn't respond for a couple of weeks. Then she called us and said, "Well, are you coming or not?" She invited us for Thanksgiving. She was maybe 92 at that time, so it was not a time to dally. So we spent a week with her, and it was unbelievable.

**You've played in small groups and big bands. As a composer, what made you want to write for such a large ensemble?**

I had been writing for big bands with the BMI Jazz Composers' Workshop. And I'd been listening for years to [trumpeter] Kenny Wheeler's big band composing. The first time I heard him live with a big band at Birdland in New York, Luciana Souza sang wordless vocals with him. When I saw that, I said, "Wow, what an incredible sound." It was always in my head—I liked the sonorities of it. To use the voice is one thing, but to be able to put the voice together with bass clarinet, tenor, guitar or piano, then it becomes like a third instrument. I loved Charenee Wade's performance [on *Quiet Pride*]. This is a skill that not too many singers have.

This is the first commercial recording of my big band stuff. That's why I'm thrilled about the recording. A lot of people know me as a bass player, but they don't know that I'm writing this.

**Early in your musical life, you were a trumpeter in the Air Force Band but taught yourself bass in your spare time. What made you want to switch to bass?**

The bass offered a unique combination of things—I had to carry the rhythm, and then I had to deal with the harmony at the same time. If you slip in one, it affects the other. And I liked the way



it felt. I liked playing a note and feeling the resonance against my body when I held it. The trumpet was cold and hard.

I went to Japan in 1964 with the Air Force for two years. That's when I began to really dig deep with the bass. I was still playing trumpet in the Air Force Band, but the band wasn't playing that much. I had a car and drove into Tokyo almost every night, either hearing jazz or playing it—playing bass; I never played jazz on trumpet. Tokyo was full of jazz. I saw the Modern Jazz Quartet and Horace Parlan. I saw Duke Ellington's band live and even got to hang out a bit with Cootie Williams and Cat Anderson. I saw Oscar Peterson's trio with Ray Brown. When I saw Ray play, well, that was it. I knew what I wanted to do—end of discussion.

### **You have been a mentor to a lot of players. Who were your mentors?**

When I got out of the service and moved back to [my hometown of] Sacramento, in the summer of '67, I got a chance to play with Buddy Montgomery for two weeks. I sold my trumpet and bought a bass. He was very supportive. He said, "Keep it up, you got something, man."

*[After two years in Seattle, during which he studied with the principal bass of the Seattle Symphony and went to jam sessions, Reid applied to Northwestern University in the Chicago suburb of Evanston, Ill., where he would ultimately graduate with a degree in music performance.]*

The bass was in my hand at least 17 hours a day—whether I was in school, playing in the Civic Orchestra, playing in clubs until 2 a.m., then back in class. Chicago was vibrant. I became the house bass player at Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase. That's where I met Kenny Burrell, played with Kenny Dorham, James Moody, Bobby Hutcherson.

And of course, that's when I first met and played with Eddie Harris. Eddie was my mentor, probably more so than any one person. When we traveled, he said, "You know, we're a family now, we're away from home, so we have to look out for each other. Memorize everybody's suitcases, so nobody steals them."

This was about 1972. He was about 15 years older than me, but he was like a father figure. He used to say, "All I need you to do is two things: be on time and be able to play." Eddie would pay me every Friday like clockwork. He was a great businessman; he had one company for his performing and another for his publishing. We'd make up songs on the road, then record them. And he'd put all our names on the copyright, and to this day I get a little check, 40 years later. He taught me how to handle business and how to be a bandleader.

### **Your current Out Front Trio with Steve Allee and Duduka Da Fonseca has great chemistry.**

Yeah, both those guys are amazing. We do have chemistry. Steve Allee is so underrated; he's not as well known as he should be. We've become close and dear friends. He's a really good composer, too. We show each other our scores, and

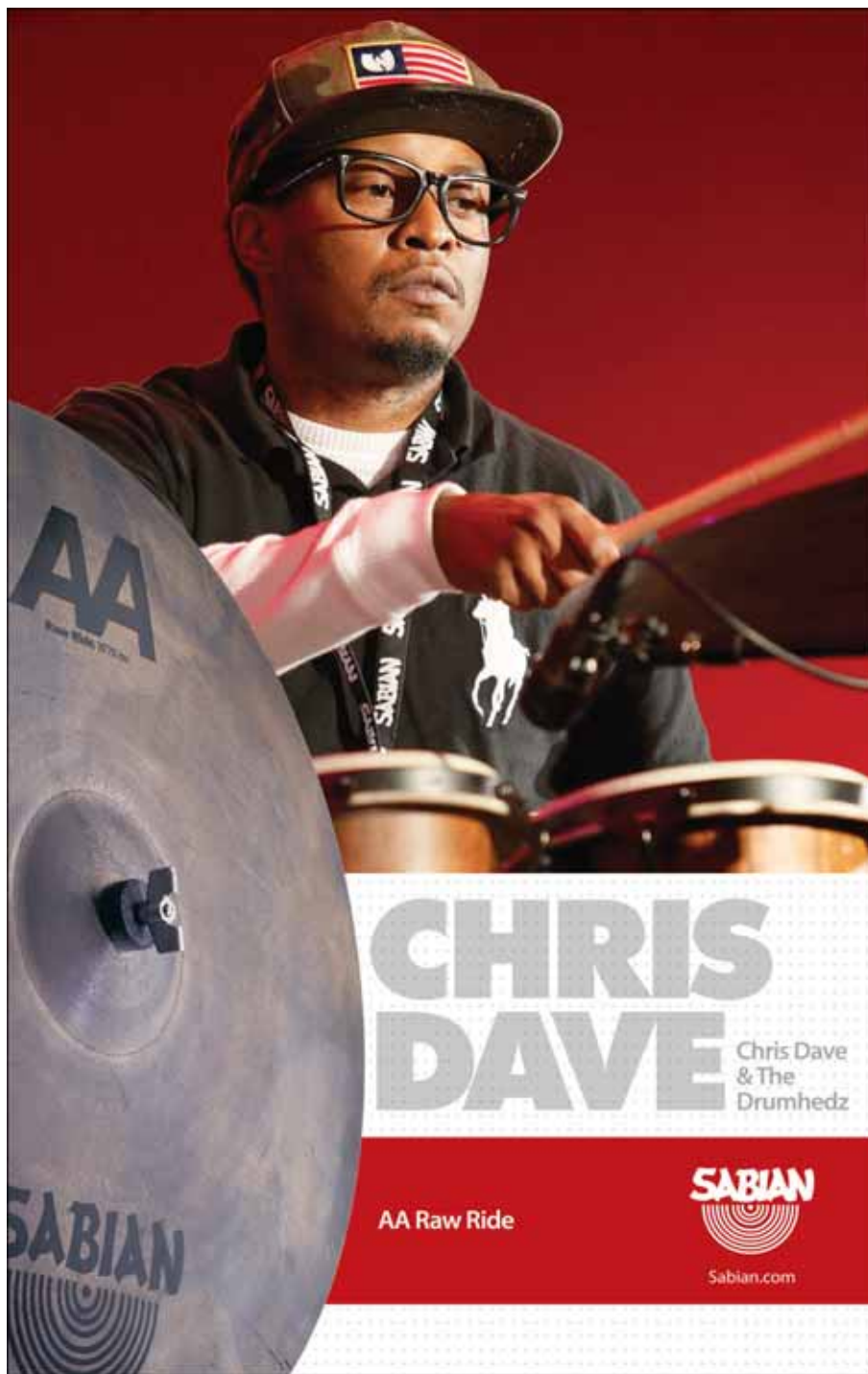
I've learned a great deal from him. But to play with him—he seems to caress everything I play. And he's always consistent. But we literally have a thing together. It's special for me. I had that kind of chemistry with George Cables, too, when we played with Dexter Gordon; and with Akira Tana, and with Kenny Barron and Victor Lewis. But of all the great piano players I've played with over the years, there have only been a few like Steve, where we got to the point where we didn't have to think—it's just natural.

### **Are you surprised to be still growing as a musician after such a long career?**

Composing has taken me to a whole other place. It's changed my bass playing, too. I don't think so much about what notes I'm going to play. I'm thinking more about "shapes" than data.

You have to think about shapes and transitions to be a good composer. The scenery changes, and you didn't even know it until it happened. Someone like Bartók, or Stravinsky or Ravel—it's done so slick, and suddenly you're in another room; you were transported somewhere else. What an incredible gift. To make you forget that you're listening; to take you away from your regular daily stuff and get you out of your head. That's what profound musicians do.

DB







# Eric Alexander

By Phillip Lutz  
Photography by Steven Sussman

# CHICAGO SOUND

For two decades, Eric Alexander has lived with a myth not of his making: that he is from Chicago. Although the tenor man was neither born nor raised in the Windy City, he cut his musical teeth there during the early 1990s—a relative novice going toe to toe with the reigning demons of the South Side clubs. That helped give rise to the myth, which has outlasted many of the clubs.

Alexander has moved on, having long ago moved to New York. But he has hardly gone out of his way to gainsay the myth. He has instead helped keep it alive with a style that draws heavily on the breathy, big-toned, blues-and-bop-inflected aesthetic honed by the great Chicago tenor players. And he is feeding the flame with the release of a new album, *Chicago Fire* (HighNote), which celebrates that tradition.

“The myth, or the falsehood, spread,” he said. “The truth is, I’m happy with it.”

“I was always very interested, if not obsessed at certain times, with the Chicago tenor tradition,” he added. “While I was living there, I really dug into it. The years that I spent in Chicago were some of the last years that a certain type of scene existed. It wasn’t flourishing, but it was still there and a viable situation.”

Kicking back in the Bronx apartment he shares with his wife and kids, Alexander recalled a time when, just out of college and daunted by the prospect of diving directly into the New York maelstrom, he took a detour to Chicago, where he soon found himself playing five nights a week at the East 75th Street club The Other Place. The pay wasn’t great but it was steady and it kept him afloat financially.

Staying afloat musically was, at first, another matter. While he had been a singular sensation in college, the real world had him elbowing his way onto bandstands crowded with the best of the Midwest. But he was smart enough to keep his ears open and his mouth shut. Picking out standards and biding his time behind veterans like singer Lenny Lynn, he purposefully established his bona fides.

“The whole vibe,” he recalled, “was of a club where people would put on nice clothes and come and hang out, listen to soulful music. They were familiar with what the real stuff was, and they didn’t want to hear any bull. You had to dig in and be authentic.”

Authenticity, if he needed a model, was just down the block in the person of tenor man Von Freeman. On Tuesday nights, Alexander said, he would slip out between sets to catch Freeman, who was holding court at The New Apartment Lounge. By that time, Freeman, who was born and raised in Chicago—and died there in 2012—had long been a locally revered player. (He got his due nationally when he was named an NEA Jazz Master in 2011.)

But 20 years earlier, Alexander was well aware that he had to mix it up with elder statesmen like Freeman, and did so by taking advantage of staggered set times and after-hours jams. While the learning curve was steep—“I was just surviving with those guys,” he said—he ultimately thrived.

All of which has provided kindling for *Chicago Fire*. Case in point: “Blueski For Vonski.” The piece, whose title plays off Freeman’s nickname, is credited to Alexander. But, he said, much of the track owes to the efforts of pianist Harold Mabern, who went beyond comping to engage in some spoken-word interplay with bass-

ist John Webber. In a bit of overdubbing that will no doubt be of interest to future musicologists, Mabern (who himself migrated to Chicago, from Memphis, in the mid-’50s, before moving on to New York) and Webber (a Second City native) talk about their experiences in club life.

The duologue segues to a deep musical groove involving all the band members—trumpeter Jeremy Pelt and drummer Joe Farnsworth round out the lineup—with Alexander filtering Freeman through his own sensibility. The heart, soul and a bit of Freeman’s signature sound and fury are there, tempered by the clarity, control and sense of symmetry Alexander brings to even his most outrageous excursions.

Similarly, Alexander applies that filter to “The Bee Hive,” a bracing Mabern original that takes its title, tone and tempo from the high-energy Hyde Park lounge where bebop and Chicago blues mingled back in the day. Alexander offers a brisk account, paraphrasing but never plagiarizing the 1970 version by trumpeter Lee Morgan featuring saxophonist Benny Maupin on *Live At The Lighthouse* (Blue Note). Incorporating just a few sly melodic references to that disc, Mabern said, “It’s pure Eric.”

From the get-go, these tunes—and, for that matter, any of the half-dozen others that populate *Chicago Fire*—reveal Mabern to be a fine foil for Alexander, complementing but rarely competing with the horn player’s statements. That kind of simpatico, Mabern said, made for a one-take affair at Rudy Van Gelder’s studio in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., in November of last year. It reflects a relationship that dates to the fall of 1987, when Alexander found himself in a small-ensemble class Mabern was teaching at William Paterson College (now University) in Wayne, N.J.

Alexander had transferred from Indiana University, where he enrolled after attending public schools in his hometown of Olympia, Wash. Though he had played some big-band charts in high school, he entered Indiana with little real jazz literacy. And though Indiana offered freshmen an array of theory, performance and history courses—including David Baker's lectures—he had yet to assimilate the material, he said, by the end of the year. Still, he was undeterred from pursuing his career goals.

"I was convinced I wanted to be a jazz musician, which was probably a pretty bad idea," he said. "How could a kid without any real experience think he was going to drop out of a decent university and disappear to the East Coast? I didn't want to go to school—I just wanted to go to New York. How stupid could I be?"

Not that stupid, as it turned out. While he knew little about the professional players the city was funneling to nearby schools in need of faculty, like William Paterson, he did stumble on Mabern—a stroke of "pure luck," he said, that would alter the trajectory of his musical life. The pianist, blown away by Alexander's raw ability, took an interest in the aspiring horn player.

"He was the best student I had in 33 years," Mabern said, factoring in the time he had taught before he joined the William Paterson faculty.

Alexander recalled being thrown for a loop from the opening moment in class, when Mabern pulled out "Embraceable You." The Gershwin tune was well-worn but unknown to Alexander, who had to learn it by ear, writing down the changes as he figured them out. "It would be hard to imagine that I could have played anything good on what I knew at the time," he said.

But Mabern begged to differ. In a separate interview, he explained, "What he played was like Dexter Gordon. I said, 'Wow, who's this young kid? He's a straight-A student, a diamond in the rough.' From that moment on I was impressed with everything he did."

Studying with Mabern and sax-playing colleagues like Joe Lovano, Ralph Lalama and Gary Smulyan opened a new world of possibilities for Alexander at a time when he was starting to absorb the theory Baker had imparted in Indiana. "Now I was around these guys who were playing in New York. Basically they said, 'Throw away your sheet music, you've got to get everything up here,'" he said, pointing to his head. "I was like a life raft adrift in the Indian Ocean because I just couldn't do it for the first four months. Then it started to kick in."

Improving rapidly, he graduated from college in 1990. But he was hesitant to take the next step and put himself out there. According to Farnsworth, Alexander used to drive the two of them to jams at trumpeter Bill Hardman's Brooklyn home, where he would wait in the car while the drummer was inside playing. Alexander recalled his frame of mind.

"I was scared," he said. "I was practicing all the time but didn't feel that I was ready. I was in awe of the musicians."

So he headed to Chicago, a vibrant market that could function as a testing ground. Drawn to the Hammond B-3 milieu, he immediately sought



out organist Charles Earland, who, looking for a tenor player after coming back from illness, hired Alexander after hearing him run through Carlos Santana's anthem "Europa." Soon they were recording and touring in a van through Rust Belt towns like Youngstown, Ohio, Gary, Ind., and Harrisburg, Pa.

"It was cooking," Alexander said. He worked with Earland until the organist died in 1999.

Meanwhile, even as Alexander's profile was rising in Chicago, Martin Krivin, the founder of William Paterson's jazz program, contacted him and suggested he enter the 1991 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition in Washington, D.C. He did, making it to the finals, where, decked out in a double-breasted Italian suit, he played "Dedicated To You" for a ballad, "The End Of A Love Affair" for an uptempo tune and "Bigfoot" for a blues. He finished second to Joshua Redman—an experience that, coupled with his success in Chicago clubs, boosted his confidence and helped him overcome a lingering fear that he would be rejected back east.

"I sort of realized I could actually come back to New York," he said. The next year he did.

Ensnconed in a flat on Second Avenue in the East Village, he quickly became a fixture in Upper West Side and Morningside Heights nightspots. Notable among them was Augie's, where he fell

in with a group of like-minded players. The music was good; the money, not so much. Many nights, Farnsworth said, the haunt operated on a pass-the-hat basis, save for venerated names like baritone player Cecil Payne, who was paid off the top.

"We'd come out of there literally with change, quarters and dimes," Farnsworth said.

But Augie's ran its course and, after it closed, the situation took a turn for the more remunerative when the space, at 106th Street and Broadway, reopened as the reconfigured and upgraded club Smoke. Mabern and Alexander connected, with the latter now the sometime employer. Mabern's former student was quickly becoming his peer.

Having worked with George Coleman, Benny Golson and, from the Chicago school, Johnny Griffin and Gene Ammons, Mabern, 78, spoke with authority when he called Alexander, 45, "the best sax player to come along in his age bracket, or any age bracket, in the last 20 or 25 years."

"Other tenor players of his generation don't have that sound," he said. "I hear two notes and I know it's him. They can't play ii-V-I the way he does, either, because he came up through the old school. And he can play the blues."

A fan as well as a colleague, Mabern was watching from the bar at Smoke on a Friday night in March when Alexander put those qualities on full display. The occasion was an early set in which



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pianist David Hazeltine led a quartet that included bassist Nat Reeves and Farnsworth, charter members of the Augie's-Smoke coterie.

Alexander, who earlier that day said that he probably would hit the bandstand that night cold, warmed to the moment immediately. Blowing through the standard "Sweet And Lovely," Buddy Montgomery's "Blues For David" and Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Triste," he made his points with subtlety and speed to spare. His timing was impeccable; his respect for the changes—inside and out—complete.

But it may have been his "For All We Know"

that most defined his voice that night. His restrained interpretation of the 1934 ballad called to mind his disquisition a few hours earlier about how Griffin—the Chicago player with whom Alexander's ability to handle breakneck tempos is often likened—had, ironically enough, once offered him some salient advice on the art of slow playing. The advice, Alexander said, boiled down to a mantra: "subtone, subtone, subtone."

Like Griffin before him, Alexander has developed an ability to cast a breathy spell in any register, displaying uncanny tone control with his early '60s Selmer Mark VI. The technical details are dif-

ficult to articulate, he said. But cast a spell he did, offering intensely modulated performances both on the stand at Smoke and on his all-ballad album, 2012's *Touching* (HighNote).

That album, which Alexander called "the best record for my playing," is a mix of popular tunes associated with singers like Frank Sinatra ("September Of My Years"), Barbra Streisand ("The Way She Makes Me Feel") and Michael Jackson ("Gone Too Soon"). Alexander said that before he took on the tunes, he absorbed the lyrics, in the mold of one of the great tenor balladeers, Ben Webster, a Kansas City native who spent time in Chicago in the 1940s.

"They said he stopped playing a ballad one time," Alexander said, his voice growing soft. "Tears were rolling down his cheek. They said, 'What's wrong, Ben?' He said, 'I forgot the words.'"

With Webster and Griffin as context, Alexander said he knew he was setting himself up for a challenge in making an all-ballad recording. "I just had to find the best part of me to get through these tunes," he said. On that level, *Touching* contrasts with *Chicago Fire*, which trades the tension attendant to ballad-playing for the release of medium-tempo and uptempo material that allows the player to unwind.

But whatever the contrasts, the CDs are of a piece, both embodying values that Alexander and his colleagues in the Smoke circle are intent on preserving. Prime among them, he said, was the imperative to respect the composer by playing the song so that it is clear you've learned it as written before improvising on it—and improvising on it without the pretense of irony.

He said, "If you're a real straightahead jazz musician—I don't consider that a bad word—you pride yourself on really knowing what the melody is."

Alexander's ethos extends to respecting the audience, reflecting the populism practiced by the players of the postwar Chicago school. "They're beboppers," he said, "but they're not stone-cold beboppers. You'd go into a club, it's toe-tapping music. Even the guys who liked to play fast, like Johnny Griffin, played for the people."

That element has been evolving as the common "language of jazz" disappears, Farnsworth said. "People want to hear something in 7/8. They want to hear one guy squeaking a note over here, one guy playing a chime over there, people playing six different tunes at one time. I don't understand it, but that's considered hip. The hardest thing is to be able to swing."

Implicit in these critiques is skepticism about the impact of commerce on art. "Change is good," Alexander said. "But one of the byproducts of that is that musicians, in trying to impress people, are always looking for some little gimmick that's going to sell records or get them tour support or get them an agent. It's really disingenuous most of the time."

"I know I'm not inventing a new style," he added. "I'm not changing the course of jazz history. I'm sure it would be great if I could, but that's not what motivates me. I just want to have a voice—and I'm getting closer and closer to that all the time."

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Dave Stryker

# RETRO VIBE

By Ken Micallef | Photo by Mark Sheldon

Performing for a late-night audience at New York City's Birdland, Dave Stryker practically recited the history of jazz guitar in such songs as Anthony Newley's "Pure Imagination," Leiber & Stoller's "Kansas City" and Jule Styne's "Make Someone Happy." Backing mighty vocalist Kevin Mahogany this windy March evening, and accompanied by organist Pat Bianchi and drummer McClellent Hunter, all eyes and ears returned to Stryker the instant he comped Wes Montgomery-like chordal waves or grooved George Benson-worthy single-note solos. But along with his dense chordal workouts and serpentine solos, Stryker's tone was supremely satisfying: a fat, rich, round sound that makes listeners feel good.

"My sound is related to my time feel," Stryker said a few nights later at his home in South Orange, N. J. "People feel your time feel before they hear anything else; that's what hits people in their hearts. It's the feel of your sound, your time feel, and then your notes. It's hard to teach that. Listen to Grant Green: He's not playing a million notes, but he sure makes you feel good. [Jack] McDuff used to tell me, 'Look at the audience. If they aren't moving their heads, then you're doing something wrong.'"

After his apprenticeship years—1984–'86 with organist Jack McDuff; and '86–'96 and then '99–2000 with Stanley Turrentine (including the tenor saxophonist's final gig at the Blue Note in New York)—Stryker went solo and has since recorded more than 25 albums. Wide ranging and soul-drenched, Stryker's catalog runs the gamut of jazz line-ups: trio recordings with Bill Stewart and Scott Colley, Victor Lewis and Ed Howard; his brass-blowing Blue to the Bone projects with Gary Smulyan, Conrad Herwig, Brian Lynch and Billy Hart; the long-running Stryker/Slagle band showcasing his and tenor player Steve Slagle's original material; and organ-gui-

tar groups with Jared Gold, Joey DeFrancesco and Larry Goldings.

Though Stryker is a jazz-blues guitarist par excellence, expressing all the advanced harmonic logic of classic jazz guitar, fortified by the three Kings—B.B., Albert and Freddie—he's equally comfortable and eloquent covering stark, beautiful melodies. His version of "Pure Imagination" at Birdland was a clue.

His discography also includes his interpretations of Johnny Mandel's "A Time For Love" (from *Guitar On Top*, 1991), the bitter-sweet "A Lazy Afternoon" (*All The Way*, 1998) and Jimmy Van Heusen's "Nancy With The Laughing Face" (*Stardust*, 1994). Though not as familiar to the practicing jazz musician as *Real Book* tunes, and not exactly standards, these songs demand all of a guitarist's gifts for harmonic, rhythmic and melodic choices, and in constructing a convincing solo. Stryker's ability to work beyond the box of jazz constraints is yet another ingredient in this late bloomer's endless slow burn.

Stryker's love of old-school melodies can also be heard on his latest album, which is also his most unusual to date. *Eight Track* (Strikezone Records) features Gold on organ, Hunter on drums and Stefon Harris on vibraphone. It's the perfect retro program in an era where so much attention is paid to pop culture's past, from the resurgence of the vinyl LP format to the hit cable TV series *Mad Men* to the worship of Blue Note's vintage album covers.

Focusing on the songs of his youth, the 56-year-old Stryker revisits The Spinners' "I'll Be Around," Bread's chart-topper "Make It With You," Curtis Mayfield's "Pusherman/Superfly," Pink Floyd's "Money" and the slow-dance anthem to every '70s high school prom: The Association's "Never My Love." A glance at that list might suggest an exercise in irony, but Stryker and Co. take this repertoire very seriously.

"I wanted it to be a burning record with those '60s and '70s tunes," Stryker explained. "We're still playing with swing and integrity."

*Eight Track* also includes the quartet's versions of Jimmy Webb's "Wichita Lineman," the Jackson 5 hit "Never Can Say Goodbye" and "Aquarius" (from the musical *Hair* and popularized by the 5th Dimension). The album begins with the steaming shuffle arrangement of "I'll Be Around," Stryker and Harris trading eights after the song's swung melody. It closes with a version of the Earth, Wind & Fire tune "That's The Way Of The World."

"When you're programming a record, you want it to be a journey," Stryker explained. "'I'll Be Around' made for a killer shuffle. 'Wichita Lineman' worked well in that 6/8 vibe. I needed something burning. How do I find a '70s pop tune that can do that? We did 'Aquarius' à la Coltrane. This idea is nothing new; Coltrane did it back in the '60s with 'Chim Chim Cher-ee' [from the film *Mary Poppins*]. Lots of guys have done it."

Stryker's former employers McDuff and Turrentine—as well as many of the great jazz artists of the '40s, '50s and '60s—modernized and often reharmonized pop and Broadway standards. But many of today's jazz artists eschew popular music as source material (unless it's Radiohead or hip-hop).

"Every time we do a gig I'll throw in one of those tunes, like something from the Carpenters," he recalls. "I'll joke to the crowd, 'Here's something from my next record, *Dave Stryker Plays The Hits Of The Eight Track*.' And everyone will laugh because they remember the eight-track cassettes we'd play in our cars. People come up after a gig and say, 'I'd buy that record. Why don't you do that?' They dug those tunes. There's a lot of good music from back then."

*Eight Track* succeeds on a number of levels, and it holds up during repeated spins. You know an album is a keeper when the final track ends and you think, "It's over already?"



Dave Stryker at the 2012 Litchfield Jazz Festival

STEVEN SUSSMAN

“Dave has hit the mark on this project,” Harris said, noting that it’s the first release in Stryker’s discography to include vibraphone. “This album is a direct reflection of Dave’s life experience. It’s important that an artist chooses a book of music that is authentic to their cultural experience. This is one of the only ways that an artist can truly make authentic music which is culturally relevant on a larger scale. Dave and everyone in the ensemble demonstrated a very strong connection to both the music and to one another.

“The sonic palette of guitar, organ, vibraphone and drums is a classic palette from the pantheon of jazz, and for good reason,” he continued. “The blend between the instruments creates a unique sound all of its own, full of soul and subtlety. Even a palette as classic and beautiful as this would not work without the rhythmic foundation established by McClenty Hunter. He really makes the music dance. And Jared Gold’s organ reminds me of the black church and the cultural origins of the art form.”

The cover art for *Eight Track* depicts a plastic Ampex eight-track tape box with a sticker on it that features Stryker, wearing a sport coat and holding his guitar in his unique 90-degree-angle position. In theory, recording jazz-funk versions of “Never My Love” and “Aquarius” might seem like a bad idea. But like the rest of *Eight Track*, these interpretations are surprisingly effective. Like Benson’s “Here Comes The Sun” or Pat Martino’s “Days Of Wine And Roses” or countless covers by Grant Green, Dave Stryker’s pop bonanza is, in ’70s vernacular, “a stone groove.”

Stryker’s quartet plays “Pusherman/Superfly” straight, Harris providing the whole-note chords as Stryker intonates the familiar melody, the entire group swinging the refrain. His version of “Wichita Lineman” recalls Pat Metheny. Stryker’s performance here is sublime, a simple recitation of the melody followed by Gold’s flowing B-3 interpretation. A surging straight-ahead vibe infuses “Aquarius,” Stryker employing dramatic three-over-two accents, then high-flying solos all around.

Gold introduces “Never My Love” with lush pads and a gently enumerated, gospel-touched melody. Playing it lightly, Stryker’s handling of the melody, subtly assisted by Harris, is as pillow-soft as air. A series of descending chords introduces

“Never Can Say Goodbye,” another example of swinging what was originally an eighth-note melody. Atop the breezy arrangement, Harris and Stryker perform beautiful solos.

“Those are almost the same changes as ‘On Green Dolphin Street,’” Stryker explained. “The intro is a major seventh, then it moves up a minor third and goes down chromatically. You could sing the melody of ‘On Green Dolphin Street’ over it. That’s one of the reasons other musicians have covered the song.

“I wanted different feels throughout the record. I didn’t want to copy Coltrane or Grant Green, but I thought these feels with the vibraphone would take the listener on a journey. I had to take liberties with the harmonies, but I kept the melodies the same. I put hipper chords in certain places on some songs. Like on ‘Aquarius,’ once we get to the solo section, I came up with a set of blowing changes that worked. I went with my own changes, but it’s still related to the harmony of each song. A lot of these tunes have pretty hip changes, like ‘Never Can Say Goodbye.’ Those are decent changes to play.”

Following Bread’s puppy-sweet “Make It With You,” Pink Floyd’s “Money” swings in 7/4 like a dangerous python on the prowl.

“‘Make It With You’ is a great melody,” Stryker asserted. “I was wondering if the jazz police were going to come for me for doing that, but at a certain point you have to commit to an idea and just go with it. I believe a good song is a good song, and these tunes have good melodies.”

The Stryker-Harris alliance, coupled with the billowing/bellowing Gold-McClenty rhythm section, makes the kind of contagious music that once filled blues bars and organ trio rooms to SRO capacity. The old jazz and blues bars are largely gone, though Stryker did record his 2007 DVD, *Dave Stryker Organ Trio Live* (with drummer Jonathan Higgins and organist Bobby Floyd), at The Jazz Factory in Louisville, Ky.

Gritty organ-inspired jazz in the ’60s was about bringing it to the people, middle-class workers who enjoyed a little r&b with their jazz and who needed to blow off steam after a week on the line. Stryker agrees that jazz needs more old-school grits and gravy, and perhaps less intellectual navel-gazing.

“If we are playing jazz, we have to bring people in, and this is one way to do it,” Stryker said. “Stefon and I are both about communication, so he was totally on board. I like to play as ‘out’ as the next guy, but you have to give the people melody and groove, things that they can latch on to, and then they will go on the journey with you. Those are the lessons I learned from all the older guys I was lucky enough to play with—when there was still an apprenticeship system in jazz.”

Using a fairly simple setup and playing a Gibson ES 347 semi-hollowbody guitar with a

medium-heavy teardrop pick, Stryker believes in the basics.

“There’s something pure about the guitar sound without effects that has staying power,” he said. “That sound will always be classic. Whereas if you’re using a lot of effects, in 10 years you may sound dated. I use reverb and wah-wah, but I like a clean sound.

“I use a combination of fingers and picking and thumb,” Stryker explained, regarding his technique. “I switch between pick and thumb and hide the pick in my two middle fingers. I’ve listened to a lot of piano players like Herbie and McCoy, and I like their style of comping. When I was younger I started listening to horn players more, Miles, Trane, Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson. If you play those ideas on guitar it will automatically take you out of playing guitar-istically.”

Working with many great organists like McDuff, Jimmy Smith and Dr. Lonnie Smith, as well as his stint with Turrentine, had a huge impact on Stryker’s views beyond the guitar.

“Guys like that weren’t afraid to say stuff about your playing,” Stryker recalled. “The first gig I did with Jack McDuff was at Marla’s Memory Lane in L.A. Jack wanted my amp on his Leslie right next to his ear. The next day he says, ‘Stryker, what kind of sound is that you’re getting on the guitar?’ In other words, my sound needed some work. You couldn’t hang with either Jack or Stanley if you weren’t swinging. You’d have to play with some fire, some soul, and good rhythm. Otherwise, you wouldn’t last two weeks. It was the same with Stanley: Once you got the gig, it was up to you to be musical and make the right choices.”

“Jack McDuff has turned out some legendary guitar players,” drummer Billy Hart said. “For what he does, Stryker is a great, great composer. It may sound like he is simply a great arranger, but he is a great composer, too. He’s a really moving guitar player. He can really play the blues, and with a harmonic spin on it.”

Currently an adjunct professor of jazz guitar at Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University and the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, Stryker also teaches privately and at Jamey Aebersold’s Summer Jazz Workshops, the Litchfield Jazz Camp and the Jazz House Kids Summer Jazz Workshop.

Stryker’s next album is being recorded for Posi-Tone, and he’s thinking of assembling a cast of tenor players for a Turrentine tribute. Like Mr. T, Stryker is all about soul, roots and swing. Hart put it succinctly: “Stryker really knows how to get to an audience.”

For Stryker, it all begins with the foundation. “Why did Ornette Coleman sound so good when he played those melodies and tunes of his?” Stryker asked. “Because he had that blues foundation. Why did Sonny Rollins and Trane sound so good when they played free and ‘out’? Because they had a foundation. When they played ‘out,’ it had meaning. It’s important to have roots and good time feel and a pocket. That’s what people feel. You communicate to people with your sound and they will feel your notes. It’s not something that can be taught. You can’t teach someone to have a good feel. But you can expose them to the music.”

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MARTIN WIND

# NEW POSSIBILITIES

By Ted Panken / Photo by Olff Appold

In Martin Wind's view, deciding to release *Turn Out The Stars* on his brand-new imprint, What If? Music, was a no-brainer. "When you've created something, there's an urge to document it and close the chapter," the 45-year-old bassist said.

The album captures a May 2011 concert at Teatro Rossini in Pesaro, Italy, a small coastal city in the Marche region that is the hometown of the legendary opera composer for whom the venue is named. As implied by the title, the program comprises nine pieces either composed by or associated with iconic pianist Bill Evans, or created in Evans' honor. Wind's quartet (Scott Robinson, tenor and C-melody saxophones; Bill Cunliffe, piano; Joe La Barbera, drums) performs throughout the program. Joining them on six selections—four arranged by Wind, and one apiece by Cunliffe and Robinson—is the 35-piece Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana, conducted for the occasion by jazz trombonist Massimo Morganti.

Hardcore jazz fans know Wind for generating deep grooves, informed harmonic dialogue and no-limits solos in both the ensembles he leads—such as the quartet's *Salt 'N Pepper!* (Challenge) and *Get It?* (Laika)—and in various combos with, for example, pianists Cunliffe, Bill Mays and Ted Rosenthal and drummer Matt Wilson's stylistically eclectic Arts and Crafts unit. "Martin is exceptional for his ability to adapt and be flexible to find the sound that bends to the moment," Wilson said, pinning down the ineffable qualities that Wind brings into play. "His instincts are incredible."

These qualities come through on the quartet-only numbers "Goodbye, Mr. Evans," "Days Of Wine And Roses" and "Kind Of Bill" (an Evans homage by La Barbera with an "I'll Be Seeing You" connotation), and on four selections highlighting Wind's abilities as an arranger and orchestrator. His charts capture the lyric sweep of the title track and the speculative discursiveness of "Blue In Green," both by Evans, while he addresses Don Friedman's "Memory For Scotty" and "My Foolish Heart" as frames for self-expression in both arco and pizzicato contexts. Complementing these selections are Cunliffe's atonal-to-consonant deconstruction of Evans' "Twelve Tone Tune Two" and Robinson's kaleidoscopic original "Jeremy."

The project gestated in 2009, when Wind, in Assisi with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, had lunch with producer Giancarlo Di Napoli. "He said the orchestra was interested in organizing 'crossover' concerts," Wind recalled. "I'd always had an affinity for Bill Evans, as he was so firmly rooted in Russian classical music. It took a while to raise funds for the commissions and firm up the dates, but finally Giancarlo told me to go to work."

In approaching the task, Wind—a native of Flensburg, Germany—drew on extensive training in the Euro-canon garnered during the early '90s at Cologne's Musikhochschule, where he earned a diploma as an orchestra musician. Simultaneously, he worked around Europe with various orchestras and such distinguished jazz practitioners as Bill Mays. After moving to New York in 1996 to matriculate at NYU's Steinhardt School of Music, he studied arranging with Jim McNeely, whose excellent program notes illuminate the *Turn Out The Stars* package. Additionally, McNeely recruited Wind for informal piano-bass duo marathons, and invited him to play on master class sessions with Joe Lovano, Michael Brecker, Dave Douglas and Mike Mainieri.

Initially a guitarist, Wind learned electric bass at 15 for his school band and transitioned to double bass at 17. That year, his teacher gave him *The Viking*, a 1983 duo album by bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen and guitarist Philip Catherine. "It changed my world," said Wind, who recently collaborated with Catherine on *Duo Art: New Folks* (ACT). "Niels-Henning had incredible technique, and functioned as the featured melody instrument. He raised the bar from the get-go. I'd hear other jazz bassists, but thought they didn't play in tune or sing on the instrument like Niels."

At 19, Wind joined the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Germany, which visited the Centrum jazz camp in Port Townsend, Wash., in July 1989. There, Wind met Ray Brown, John Clayton, Monty Alexander and Jeff Hamilton, who introduced him to what Wilson describes as the "I-love-the-

Martin Wind





beat-first-and-foremost club.”

“Meeting them opened a different door into grooving and swinging,” Wind said. “A few years later, [pianist] Frank Chastenier, who was in that orchestra, organized a trio gig with Jeff. It was the first time I was able to play exactly the way I always wanted to. At one point, Jeff looked over and said, ‘Yeah, Ray,’ complimenting me on my feel. To me, that was a seal of approval.”

Wind considers Clayton a mentor and an “idol.” “I thought that if John could solo with the bow, so could I,” he said. “If he leads a group or writes for big band, why shouldn’t that be my goal? I played John’s charts for big band and strings with the Metropole Orchestra, and thought perhaps I could write for orchestra one day. Why not?”

Such “Why not?” imperatives informed Wind’s process both in creating *Turn Out The Stars* and presenting it to the world. Confident of his ability to write for strings, Wind—an NYU faculty member since earning his master’s degree—drew on NYU’s library holdings of scores and orchestration books. He said the research allowed him “to learn how woodwind and brass sections work in a classical environment, how to write for percussion and harp, how to make it all blend.” After the orchestra gave him *gratis* rights to the Pesaro concert tape, making commercial release financially feasible, Wind decided to offer it to labels he had worked with before and others that he had ties to.

“Nobody believed in the project,” he said. “I did. I thought it was a sign to take matters into my own hands.”

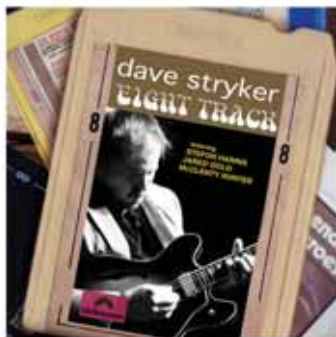
“Martin is committed; he means every note he plays,” Cunliffe said, evoking a devotion to detail that is apparent in the top-shelf production values Wind applied to the initial *Turn Out The Stars* edition of 2,000 units. Wind spent, by his estimate, \$12,000 to \$15,000 from personal savings on the project. The sound is warm and well-balanced; the CD booklet is elegantly designed, with each orchestra member named in the credits.

Because the bass section was low in the original mix, Wind post-recorded the parts for German engineer Stephan van Wylick to mix into the final cut. He mentioned that prominent Hamburg-based advertising photographer Olf Appold, who shot the front cover, is a friend, as is Glenn Dicker, the co-owner of Redeye, a successful international indie distributor that also services Dave Holland’s Dare2 label and Branford Marsalis’ Marsalis Music.

“My attitude is, it will be nice if I break even,” Wind said. He related that after a recent performance with a scaled-down ensemble, he sold 50 CDs, netting close to \$1,000. “It shows me that people react to this. If I can round up enough possibilities to present this concert live, there is a fair chance I’ll make back my money.

“I don’t have an agent or anyone who does booking for me, so I’m doing it all myself, with help from friends here and there. So many orchestras in the U.S. and abroad are looking to change their programming to attract new listeners. How many more Gershwin nights can you do? How many more cabaret singers can you invite to do a Cole Porter tribute? I certainly hope they embrace other possibilities of presentation.”

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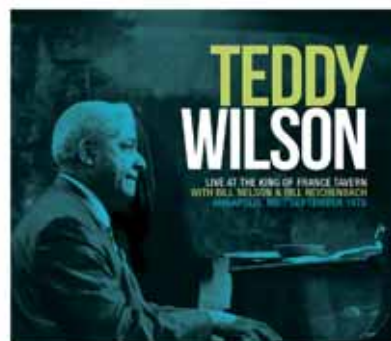
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## HOT TONE MUSIC

## COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT

By Michael Gallant

When stock markets tumble and financial crises loom, many react by hunkering down, saving nickels and avoiding risks until the smoke clears. Mimi Jones' reaction? Start a record label.

"At first, the changes in the economy didn't affect me," said the New York City bassist, referring to the blistering aftermath of the late-2000s housing crisis, as well as fallout from 2012's Hurricane Sandy. "People kept asking how I was doing and I said I was all right. But then things got slower and my gigs started to fall out." Jones saw A-list artists taking B-level opportunities, venue doors shut at a distressing rate and festival slots seemed to get harder and harder to secure.

"I kept asking myself, 'How am I going to do this?'" Jones continued. "If you weren't teaching or didn't have a real setup, it was a scary time."

Jones saw opportunity amid the chaos—inspired in no small part by impromptu mentoring sessions that she had been leading, over dinner, at the Bronx home where she lives with her husband, pianist Luis Perdomo. "Musician friends would come to New York and ask me, 'How in the world do you make it work here?'" she said. "I'd tell them to come over and talk. I don't know everything by any means, but I was always eager to share what I did know."

Fueled by the instinct to help like-minded musical spirits—and tired of waiting for record labels to decide to invest in her—Jones took matters into her own hands. She officially founded Hot Tone Music as a New York corporation in 2010. Early 2014 saw Hot Tone release its debut trio of projects: *Origins* by saxophonist and vocalist Camille Thurman, *Humility: Purity Of My Soul* by drummer Shirazette Tinnin and Jones' own leader project, *Balance*. There was a very strong collaborative spirit at work, with each of those albums featuring musical contributions from the other artists.

For Jones, the label is not just a tool for sharing her creative work, and that of fellow artists in whom she believes. Continuing the vibe of those dinnertime conversations, she has made career learning, scholarship support and artist development integral to Hot Tone's mission: "The goal is to get people on their feet, help them find ways to be creative and find ways to get things going. How do you start a buzz if you don't have any buzz already going, so people can think you have a buzz, so then you actually have a buzz? I was already doing these things for myself, and then people around me and I decided to work together to take our efforts to the next level."

Despite the economic challenges of launching



Hot Tone Music artists Camille Thurman (left), Mimi Jones and Shirazette Tinnin

a label, Jones' ample supply of gumption and charisma gave Hot Tone the jumpstart it needed. At gigs and industry events, she has made concerted efforts to connect with fans and colleagues, people who shared her goals and who wanted to help. In addition to Thurman and Tinnin, her core team at Hot Tone has grown to include four part-time employees assisting with duties such as booking and general management, while Jones herself handles artist development responsibilities. "I live a double life, half on the corporate side, half as an artist," she says, laughing.

Jones cut loose the "artistic side" for a recent gig at Ginny's Supper Club in Harlem. Backed by a five-piece band including Perdomo on piano and Thurman on sax, she traversed musical terrain from blues to funk, Ellington to D'Angelo, all with guts and assurance. Jones leads Hot Tone with a similar mentality, drawing upon multiple creative interests. "I love producing music, I love the studio—whether it's me behind the mic or someone else—and I love putting together designs for the physical album packages," she says. "It's creative, and it's a release from playing and traveling."

Jones turned to tried-and-true, indie-friendly services like Disc Makers and CD Baby to replicate and distribute the albums. Fans can also find the Hot Tone titles on the company website ([hottonemusic.com](http://hottonemusic.com)), iTunes and Amazon. Jones is working on a plan to distribute physical CDs in retail outlets in Japan. She's excited to pursue corporate sponsorships that could give Hot Tone

expanded reach and resources.

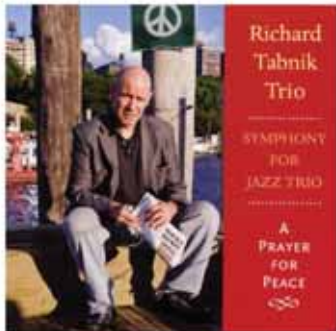
So how did Jones get the financing to start Hot Tone? She diligently stashed away money from gigs, strategically pooled resources with her label-mates and crowd-sourced thousands of dollars via Kickstarter and other direct-to-fan outreach. Bartering also played a significant role, with Jones and her colleagues trading their creative work for that of needed collaborators. As a result of the team's efforts, Hot Tone currently has positive working relationships with a growing community of external bookers, managers and beyond.

For young musicians who hope to wed music and entrepreneurship as Jones has, the artist recommends a long-view approach for every album project. "It's not just about writing your music and going into the studio," she said. "After that, what do you do with it? How do you launch it? How are you going to speak to the public so they want to learn more about you? These are important things that you have to work on well ahead of time—even if, like many musicians, you're an introvert and would rather not have to worry about things like publicity and marketing."

Jones advocates a team approach above all else. "Hot Tone is not just me," she noted. "If I could only do the music itself, that would be great, but the business parts need to happen. I need good people around me and I always seek advice. It's really a community—you can't do it yourself. You have to have a support system, and that's what Hot Tone is."

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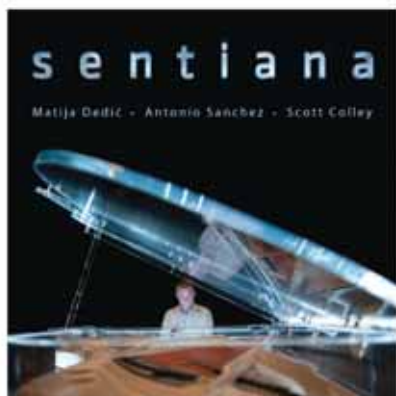
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RALEIGH DAILEY

# DIY APPROACH

By Yoshi Kato



If the website to pianist-composer Raleigh Dailey's Llama Records had an FAQ section, the first entry would surely be "What's the story behind the name?" Oddly enough, the answer is related to the Dalai Lama.

"I had a fusion group with Ross Whitaker, a guitarist here in Lexington," explained Dailey, an assistant professor of jazz studies at the University of Kentucky (UK). "He's a punster and calls me Raleigh Lama.

"So when it came time for me to name my free-improvising group, I decided to call it 'raleighllama,'" he said, by phone from his university office. "And then when it came time to name the label, I kept the 'llama' theme."

Dailey's career as a musician, educator and now an independent label chief mirrors a similar spirit of inspired interconnectivity. His pair of inaugural Llama Records releases reflect disparate aspects of his playing and composing that came about under distinctly opposite circumstances.

Twelve years in the making, *What Happened Next* was recorded in June 2012 and features nine Dailey originals with his longtime trio with double bassist Danny Cecil and drummer Paul Deatherage. "They either teach part-time or are adjuncts at UK and are first-call guys on their instruments out here," he said.

The duo disc *Measure From Zero*, in contrast, was conceived and executed in less than a day-and-a-half. In March 2013, trumpeter Peter Evans (Mostly Other People Do the Killing, Evan Parker's ElectroAcoustic Ensemble) gave a clinic at UK and performed later that night with Dailey

and fellow trumpeter Rui Li, a UK doctoral candidate and frequent Dailey collaborator.

"I talked Peter into going into the recording studio with me the next day," Dailey said. "I admire his playing so much—it's so inventive.

"We went into the studio for three or four hours, and then he flew out that night," the pianist recalled. "The only time we really talked about what we were going to play was when we just decided to record a couple of shorter tunes at the end."

Dailey offered the recording to Evans, who runs his own More is More Records label. "Peter was cool with my releasing it," he said. "He was backed up, so he said I could."

In fact, Evans actively encouraged him. And now that Dailey had a pair of sessions in the can, he could do so through his own imprint.

"Peter told me that it would be slow at first and that it would be hard work," he noted. "But he also said, 'You can control what you do when you release it on your own.' And he's a great example of that."

A native of northeastern Ohio, Dailey played a variety of instruments in high school and majored in music theory and classical piano at Kent State University. "By the time I got out of there, I'd been bitten by the jazz bug," he said. A master's degree in musicology from the University of North Texas and a Ph.D. in jazz studies at UK followed.

Soon after arriving in Lexington, he happily learned of the community's free-improv scene. "There's a guy in town, Ross Compton, who organizes these left-leaning concerts," he said.

Compton's Outside the Spotlight jazz and improvised music series began in 2002 and annually presents six to 10 concerts by the likes of drummer Tim Daisy and saxophonists Peter Brötzmann and Ken Vandermark.

"The college job affords a little stability, but it's definitely a juggling act," Dailey said. "You can really overdo it pretty easily with over-scheduling."

Both of the Llama albums were recorded in Lexington at Studio at the Courts, a converted house that boasts isolation booths and a grand piano that Dailey himself helped pick out. He was able to help fund the projects with money provided by UK's Abercrombie Endowment for Jazz Study.

"Luckily, there are some avenues at the university where I could get some help. Part of what they expect you to do is to make a recording and go out to play," he explained. "They financially support that to a certain extent. Composing, performing and getting your pieces played falls under [academic] research for us."

Once Dailey launched the label, he quickly saw that publicity was the next hurdle. "The only way anyone is going to know about this is if I tell them," he said. "With a record label, you've got an infrastructure to work with. So I get up a little early some mornings and stuff a couple of hundred envelopes."

While plans for future releases include the debut of Dailey's free-improv group, he also seeks to put out albums by other musicians, including live recordings of some of the Outside the Spotlight concerts.

DB



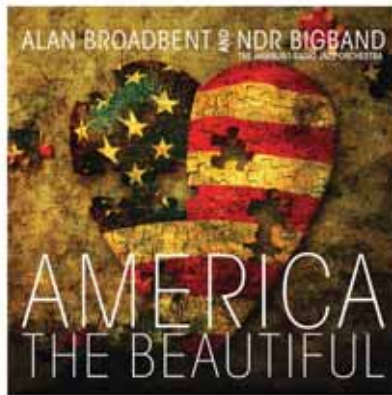


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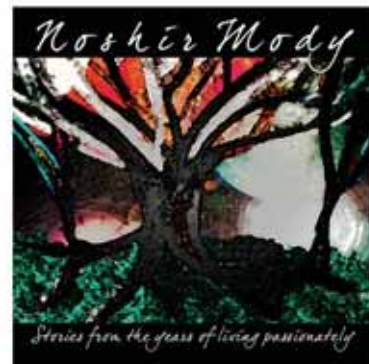


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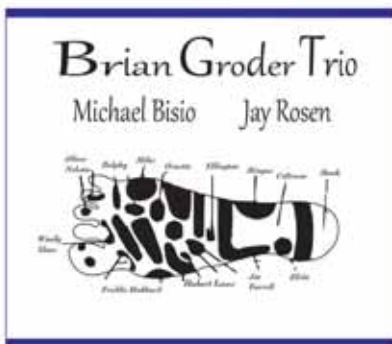


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**Shawn Maxwell's Alliance**

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Bobby Reed, DownBeat

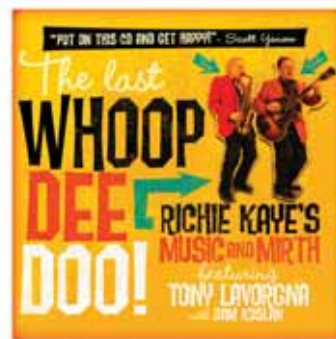
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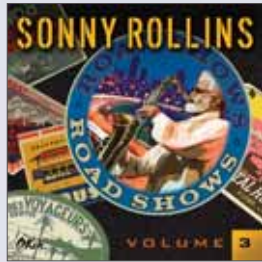


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# REVIEWS >

Sonny Rollins



## Sonny Rollins *Road Shows, Volume 3*

DOXY/OKEH 88843049982

★★★★★

We don't need to recount Sonny Rollins' aversion to the studio at this late date. He has said it countless times: His muse is mired by the recording booth. That's one reason why the *Road Shows* series was born. Newk goes to the gig, enjoys the elbow-room of a concert performance and crosses his fingers that greatness joins him onstage. On occasion, it does.

Each of the previous installments boasts stellar moments. But this third edition is the most successful presentation of Rollins' titanic skills so far. Whether he's milking a simple riff, reconfiguring a Noel Coward ballad or romping through the Caribbean, the blend of vision and spirit is astounding.

With Rollins, exuberance can be its own reward. Regardless of whether his solos hit innovative design pinnacles on any given night, the ardor of his attack is imposing. That energy marks each of *Volume 3*'s six tracks. From the jumpy clusters of "Biji" to the puckish allusions of "Solo Sonny," his instrument glows with trademark fervor. Many listeners believe the saxophonist's ever-shifting groups usually don't contain improvisers of his stature, so the maestro's bravura solos seem out of balance when compared to those of his colleagues. That's partially true here, but in general these bands (the personnel changes from track to track) feed their boss some keen kinetics. It's all the feisty leader needs to reach creative high ground.

Once there, he definitely attains those often-elusive design pinnacles. The architecture of his excursion on "Someday I'll Find You" is breathtaking. In a perpetual realignment of melody, he gracefully spends 15 minutes swooping around, shooting the blues into the sky, interrogating himself and wearing his heart on his sleeve. In music rife with metaphors, the saxophonist's well-known search for eloquence is nicely wrapped up in a piece with this title.

Inspiration is everywhere, from "Solo Sonny"'s unaccompanied glide through a barrage of melody snippets ("A-Tisket A-Tasket," "Oh! Susanna," "The Song Is You") to the rampaging exchange between drummer Steve Jordan and our hero on the 24-minute explosion of "Why Was I Born"—the definition of *tour de force*.

"Playing doesn't mean anything until you do it on a stage before an audience," Newk told *The New York Times* in 1961. It means everything on *Volume 3*. Get yourself in a big room and turn this album up loud. Genius awaits.

—Jim Macnie

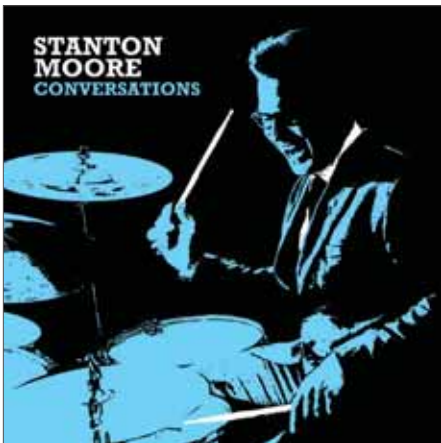
**Road Shows, Volume 3:** Biji; Someday I'll Find You; Patanjali; Solo Sonny; Why Was I Born; Don't Stop The Carnival. (72:54)

**Personnel:** Sonny Rollins, tenor saxophone; Clifton Anderson, trombone; Stephen Scott, piano (1); Bobby Broom (2, 4, 5), Peter Bernstein (3, 6), guitar; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Kobie Watkins (3, 4, 6), Perry Wilson (1), Steve Jordan (5), Victor Lewis (2), drums; Kimati Dinizulu (1, 2, 5), Sammy Figueroa (3, 4, 6), percussion.

**Ordering info:** [sonnyrollins.com](http://sonnyrollins.com)



JOHN ABBOTT



## Stanton Moore *Conversations*

ROYAL POTATO FAMILY 1406

★★★★

Stanton Moore is not the first rock drummer with a jazz alter-ego waiting to escape. Remember Charlie Watts' career detour into swing in 1987? Maybe it's the same impulse that lures rock singers into the Great American Songbook: To act like a grown-up. I don't know much about Moore's rock credentials, but as a drummer he has a swift and smart hand with a pair of brushes (on a "Cottontail"-ish "Tchefunkta") and the kind of old-fashioned spring to his rim shots and press rolls that can lift the right house into a swaying mass. Not surprisingly, the music is imprinted

with the traditions of old New Orleans as reflected through the prism of its more recent music and younger composers.

This is very much a drummer's trio, with pianist David Torkanowsky and bassist James Singleton largely following Moore's designs. There are many fine moments when this group behaves pretty much like a good, straightforward piano trio. But when Moore moves to dominate, the music becomes his showcase. While his skills cover all the bases, what emerges as his stand-out voice seems to come straight out of the second-line marching bands of New Orleans. Moore leads into "Carnival" with a parading snare beat so authentic you can practically see the street dancers twirling their umbrellas. It is distinctively conspicuous because it's heard so rarely these days in any kind of contemporary context.

When not pressing the snare, he pops off big, flavorful rim shots on "Big Greaze" and "In The Keyhole" that ring in the air like a bell; and then floats into "Paul Barbarin's Second Line" on a swell of press rolls that slosh and surge with the kind of stately obsolescence that Zutty Singleton used to strut. Moore's solos are slow, unhurried and give you time to savor their simple clarity. It's amazing how riveting such drumming can be when you haven't heard it in a while.

—John McDonough

**Conversations:** Lauren Z; Carnival; Driftin'; Magnolia Triangle; Waltz For All The Souls; Tchefunkta; The Chase; Big Greaze; In The Keyhole; Paul Barbarin's Second Line; Prayer. (63:02)

**Personnel:** David Torkanowsky, piano; James Singleton, bass; Stanton Moore, drums;

**Ordering info:** [royalpotatofamily.com](http://royalpotatofamily.com)

## The Nels Cline Singers *Macroscopic*

MACK AVENUE 1085

★★★★½

Nels Cline is one of a rare breed of guitarists who can move fluidly between jazz, improvised music and rock without it feeling contrived. His contemporary Jeff Parker manages a similar balancing act in his work with Tortoise; Cline's catalytic presence in Wilco has proved decisive for that band, adding just the right wickedness to the mix.

With his trio, The Nels Cline Singers, Cline kicks out all the jams, ranging from super-noisy electronics to Rick Nielsen-y sophisticated power chords to fragile jazz fingerwork—sometimes within the frame of a single piece. On *Macroscopic*, the group's fifth outing, stellar Bay Area drummer Scott Amendola moves deftly from the filigreed to the ferocious, and new addition Trevor Dunn covers all necessary basses.

Despite the patchwork of genres, the center holds, focused as it is around Cline's inspired playing. On "Canales' Cabeza," his solo is all strings, plectrum and insight. Elsewhere, Cline uses smoke and mirrors to good effect—check the opening moments of "Hairy Mother," a jaw-cracking hoedown with pedals and screams that leads to guitar mayhem over pounding four-on-the-floor. A more distinctly fusion-based sound, cut with a schismatic sensibility and exotic percussion, gives "Seven Zed



Heaven" its undertow.

Cline actually does sing a bit on two tracks—a nod to Baden Powell—wordlessly humming behind acoustic guitar on the title track and wailing à la Milton Nascimento during a gauzy moment on "Respira." Multidirectional harpist Zeena Parkins tangles with Cline on "Climb Down," the rhythm team doing its best African Head Charge dubplate under the severely altered stringsmiths. —John Corbett

**Macroscopic:** Companion Piece; Canales' Cabeza; Respira; Red Before Orange; The Wedding Band; Macroscopic; Climb Down; Seven Zed Heaven; Hairy Mother; Sascha's Book Of Frogs. (58:33)

**Personnel:** Nels Cline, guitar, vocals; Trevor Dunn, bass; Scott Amendola, drums; Yuka Honda, keyboard; Cyro Baptista, Josh Jones, percussion; Zeena Parkins, harp.

**Ordering info:** [mackavenue.com](http://mackavenue.com)



## Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra *The Offense of The Drum*

MOTEMA 142

★★★★

One of the great pleasures of being a New Yorker before 2011 was hearing Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra's regular gig at Birdland. O'Farrill, like his father, Chico, pushes the boundaries of a genre often consigned to the traditional label and embeds it in the realities of contemporary life.

O'Farrill throws himself a dizzying world party on this disc, exploring the links between early jazz and the Caribbean, which Jelly Roll Morton dubbed "the Spanish tinge." It's explicit in the title of "On The Corner Of Malecón And Bourbon," in which O'Farrill literally introduces, with characteristic sounds, Louis Armstrong, Hamiet Bluiett and others, invoking a popping, World Saxophone Quartet-like riff at the start. Even more fun is Big Chief Donald Harrison's stew of second-line beans and Havana rice on the Mardi Gras classic "Iko Iko."

On one of the album's best tracks, the enchanting, yearning flamenco singer Antonio Lizano—who also plays gorgeous alto sax—takes Satie's "Gnossienne 3" to Andalusia. "The Mad Hatter," with pianist Vijay Iyer kicking it in 23/8 time (9, 9 and 5?) takes a flyer into free-ish jazz, with a sax soli roiling inside percolating rhythms, chattering brass, guajeo piano—a veritable whirligig of sound.

Even when the pieces here don't completely hang together, there's always something intriguing, and there is always vigor, optimism and creativity—qualities that will keep listeners coming back to O'Farrill's band for years to come, whether they live in New York or not.

—Paul de Barros

**The Offense Of The Drum:** Cuarto De Colores; They Came; On The Corner Of Malecón And Bourbon; Mercado En Domingo; Gnossienne 3; The Mad Hatter; The Offense Of The Drum; Alma Vacía; Iko Iko. (73:23)

**Personnel:** O'Farrill, piano; David DeJesus, Bobby Porcelli, alto saxophone; Ivan Renta, Peter Brainin, Chad Lefkowitz-Brown (7), tenor saxophone; Jason Marshall, baritone saxophone; Jim Seeley, Seneca Black, John Bailey, Jonathan Powell, trumpet; Tokunori Kajiwara, Frank Cohen, trombone; Rafi Malkiel, trombone, euphonium; Earl McIntyre, bass trombone, tuba; Gregg August, bass; Vince Corico, drums; Roland, Joe Gonzalez, Pablo Bilbraut, Jonathan Gomez (3), Nestor Gomez (4), percussion; Miguel Blanco (8), Jason Linder (2), conductor; Christopher "Chilo" Cajigas, spoken word (2); Edmar Castañeda, harp (1); Ayanda Clarke, djembe (7); DJ Logic, turntables (2); Donald Harrison, vocals, alto saxophone (9); Vijay Iyer, piano (6); Hiro Kurashima, taiko drum (7); Antonio Lizano, vocals, alto saxophone (5); Pablo Mayor, conductor, maracas (4); Uri Sharlin, accordion (5); Samuel Torres, conductor, cajón (1).

**Ordering info:** [motema.com](http://motema.com)



# The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Sonny Rollins</b> <i>Road Shows, Volume 3</i>	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★
<b>Stanton Moore</b> <i>Conversations</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★
<b>The Nels Cline Singers</b> <i>Macroscope</i>	★★	★★★★½	★★★★★	★★½
<b>Arturo O'Farrill</b> <i>The Offense Of The Drum</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

## Critics' Comments

### Sonny Rollins, *Road Shows, Volume 3*

Choppy, knotty, celebratory, romantic—this live disc is a reminder of what a joy Rollins' concerts are. But while his band buoys him, it rarely serves as much more than a stage prop. Which is why the best track here is "Solo Sonny," gamboling from "In A Sentimental Mood" to "String Of Pearls," with a hundred stops in between, like a little boy whistling as he walks down the sidewalk. When the guys do chime in interactively, on "Why Was I Born," the trading fours go on far too long. —Paul de Barros

Rollins' latest basket of personally picked archival cherries is everything one could want. A recent but ripe harvest fertilized with the ecstatic cheers of adoring fans. "Biji" is a rigorously swinging opener, while "Why Was I Born" becomes a conversation with a magnificently limber Steve Jordan. "Solo Sonny" is a pop quiz of passing quotes from Rollins' bible, the Great American Songbook. —John McDonough

The master on the road in his seventies and early eighties, his playing undiminished, brilliant, at times visionary, with guitar exemplars Broom and Bernstein, some great drummers, and unnecessary but mostly unimposing percussion. Still too much Clifton Anderson, and while I dig Rollins' loyalty, it would be better to hear an upright bass here. We always wait for the unaccompanied solo; an 8-minute one from '09 doesn't disappoint. —John Corbett

### Stanton Moore, *Conversations*

Drumkit-led piano trio with heavy Nola spices, Torkanowsky evoking James Booker here and there (a good thing!). A good-time feel, lots of rolling drumwork. Sometimes goes for the kill-shot too fast rather than building gradually, but then perhaps the Crescent City begs: Why postpone? —John Corbett

Nice little effort and a fun spin, but well played ready-mades and genre exercises will never be compelling enough for a fourth or fifth go-round. It doesn't help that the music alludes to grit while showing very little. It is a plus that the trio has a terrific connection. —Jim Macnie

This trio album moves with jazz-rock muscularity and density, not surprisingly, from a drummer identified with New Orleans funk and rock. Moore lives up to the title with snappy, stroke-precise solos, and bassist Singleton's beefy plucking and yearning arco are lovely. —Paul de Barros

### The Nels Cline Singers, *Macroscope*

Cline has been inching toward this sort of eloquence for a while now, but that doesn't diminish the surprise at the way the band is able to sustain this song cycle's rich pandemonium. Like *A Saucer Full Of Secrets* or *Sketches Of Spain*, every note is crucial and part of the whole. —Jim Macnie

Seemingly inspired by *Bitches Brew*, The Mahavishnu Orchestra, prog and industrial rock, Cline digs from a seemingly bottomless bag of guitar effects, organizing them with great craft. But most of the music often feels too grand—guitar heroics from a guitarist who's a hero for other reasons. —Paul de Barros

If the '50s represented jazz's *golden* age, the '70s was strictly *tin*. And that's where most of this project reverberates—in the echo chamber of fusion, in which musicians discovered the easy virtues of the "sonic" realm and the robotic clutter that lives here in "Hairy Mother." Cline's guitar skills, though evident, seem wasted, even if they do obey his chosen intentions. —John McDonough

### Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, *The Offense Of The Drum*

Aside from an early bit of agit-prop that belongs in a program note, this outstanding crew delivers a steady storm of Latin lightning that seldom stops throbbing and pulsing. Bongos pop like firecrackers on the title track, while the writing is always audaciously inviting. —John McDonough

Nothing offensive in this inventive program that, in spite of being far-reaching, dodges the fatal bullet of pretentiousness. O'Farrill makes effective use of his diverse cast of collaborators, starting immediately with Castañeda's sparkling harp. Insanely together horns: a not-so-secret weapon. —John Corbett

The music leaps from the speakers because O'Farrill is an advocate of verve—the charts swirl and prance, and the action throttles forward. Celebrating rhythm never gets old, and this Caribbean spin, which concludes on the streets of Nola, is wondrous. —Jim Macnie

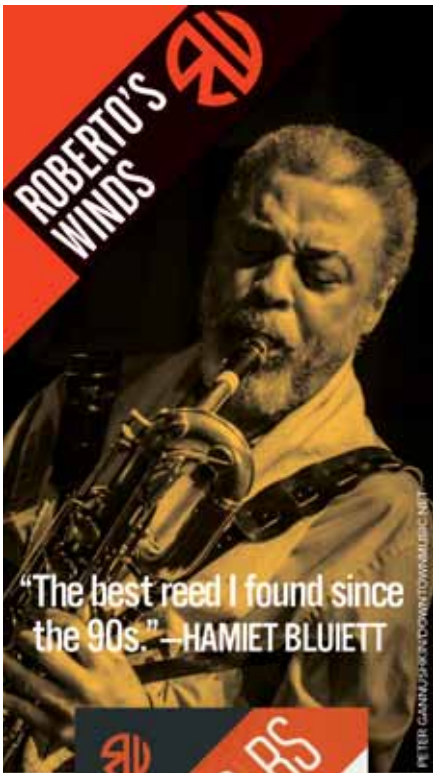
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**Bobby Avey**  
*Authority Melts From Me*

WHIRLWIND 4650  
★★★★½

New York-based pianist Bobby Avey—winner of the Thelonious Monk Competition for composition in 2011—traveled to Haiti for the inspiration behind the nearly hourlong suite documented on his third leader project. He transcribed the sounds of native drumming ensembles, attending a Vodou ceremony to experience the music in its ritualistic element. Although Avey based his composition on these spirit-raising rhythms,

there isn't the faintest hint of "voodoo" pastiche in *Authority Melts From Me*. He has created a cliché-free work of progressive jazz that's virtually cinematic in its intensity.

Avey realized the music on this disc with a quintet featuring rhythm mates from his working trio—bassist Thomson Kneeland and drummer Jordan Perlson (who excels here)—plus two terrific soloists: alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón and guitarist Ben Monder, who adds clouds of ambient tension in addition to gnarly solos with a prog-rock tone. Zenón has never been more affectingly intense on record than he is on the 17-minute centerpiece "Louvture," his solos cascading atop the roiling rhythms like men over a barricade.

As a pianist, Avey has a keen ear for the dramatic device, often using grooving repetition to build tension à la drum ritual. Yet he is a naturally rhapsodic player; in closer "Cost," he unspools black pearls of melody. His previous albums include a disc of solo piano, 2013's *Be So Long Not To Speak* (Minsi Ridge), and two featuring mentor Dave Liebman: the quartet set *A New Face* (Jay Dell) and duo release *Vienna Dialogues* (Zoho). But it's *Authority Melts From Me* that sees Avey break free as a composer of sophistication and depth. —Bradley Bamberger

**Authority Melts From Me:** Kalfou; Piano Interlude; Louvture; Drum Interlude; Cost. (53:38)

**Personnel:** Bobby Avey, piano; Miguel Zenón, alto saxophone; Ben Monder, guitar; Thomson Kneeland, double-bass; Jordan Perlson, drums.

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**Eric Revis Quartet**  
*In Memory Of Things Yet Seen*

CLEAN FEED 294  
★★★★

Bassist Eric Revis has long established himself as bulwark of any group he works in, laying down thick, muscular propulsion and harmonic sinew, but in recent years his skills as a trusting bandleader have also emerged. This new outing further establishes his versatility and malleable artistic conception, a brisk piano-less quartet session that masterfully balances composition and improvisation, free-jazz tradition and contemporary notions. The album title itself is something of a nod to the prophetic titles used by Ornette Coleman and Sun Ra back in the '50s, and while his excellent band tackles com-

positions by Ra ("The Shadow World") and Sunny Murray ("Something's Cookin'") and draws inspiration from the heyday of the New Thing, there's nothing nostalgic about the execution.

The album opens with the first part of the bassist's "The Tulpa Chronicles" suite. Each composition showcases different sections of the group, including the taut interplay of alto saxophonist Darius Jones and tenor saxophonist Bill McHenry. The band first blows the lid off things with "Hits," one of a pair of bruising group improvisations where the lines intersect and buffet with ceaseless vitality and impressive clarity. "Son Seals" is a wonderfully funky vehicle, where the yin-yang tones of the reedists engage in a compelling, interactive dance over the dazzling cymbal work of drummer Chad Taylor.

On the hurtling free-bop of "Unknown"—which opens with a charged contrapuntal theme—the group is joined by the bassist's primary employer, Branford Marsalis, an addition that pushes into blowing session terrain without surrendering the presiding concision Revis brings as a leader. On "A Lesson Earned" Revis sculpts a fat, mesmerizing line over which the horns braid a ruminative, graceful melody. There are no solos, but you can't miss the rapport the players have with one another. —Peter Margasak

**In Memory Of Things Yet Seen:** The Tulpa Chronicles (Pt. I ... Proem); Hits; Son Seals; Something's Cookin'; Unknown; The Tulpa Chronicles (Pt. II ... Ephemeral Canvas); 3 Voices; A Lesson Earned; The Shadow World; Hold My Snow Cone; FreeB; The Tulpa Chronicles (Pt. III ... For Cordel "Boogie Mossori"); If You're Lonesome, Then You're Not Alone. (57:16)

**Personnel:** Eric Revis, bass; Chad Taylor, drums, vibraphone; Bill McHenry, tenor saxophone; Darius Jones, alto saxophone; Branford Marsalis, tenor saxophone (5, 11).

**Ordering info:** [cleanfeed-records.com](http://cleanfeed-records.com)





**Riverside (Dave Douglas/  
Chet Doxas/Steve  
Swallow/Jim Doxas)**

*Riverside*

GREENLEAF 1036

★★★★

The concept of a Jimmy Giuffre tribute album automatically raises a question of focus: Which aspects of the late clarinetist, saxophonist and composer's diverse musical output should take center stage? "Thrush," the opening track on Dave Douglas and Chet Doxas' excellent and welcome new homage to Giuffre, answers that query from the outset. The convivial swing of the tune's intro speaks to Giuffre's arrangements for Woody Herman's big band; the surprising spatial breaks in the music imply a nod to Giuffre's work with Jim Hall; and the woozy, tilt-a-whirl horn section that pushes the melody to spin like a top before reconstructing its breezy rhythm recalls Giuffre's pioneering work in free-jazz. That's a lot of ground for one song to cover, but like the rest of the disc, it's executed organically, giving Giuffre's style new life in more than capable hands.

Much of the album—which features Jimmy Giuffre 3 bassist Steve Swallow and Doxas' brother, Jim, on drums—is inspired by Giuffre's pastoral forays into Americana. The compositions by Doxas in particular reflect that aesthetic. A languid and bluesy bass solo opens "Old Church, New Paint" before soft brush strokes welcome the trumpet and clarinet, both of which lean on expressive, warm phrasing, hinting at the vulnerability of Giuffre's playing.

The Riverside group isn't afraid to take some liberties with one of Giuffre's best-known songs. "The Train And The River"—a theme that Giuffre and Hall approached with a soft, rounded feel—has a celebratory, almost Klezmer vibe, courtesy of Douglas' crystalline tone. Album closer "Sing On The Mountain High/Northern Miner" invokes nature and our place within it, with a foreboding bass drum pattern that evokes rain in the woods. After establishing a somber, unison motif with Douglas, Doxas lets the human sound of his fingers on his instrument bolster his breath. —Jennifer Odell

**Riverside:** Thrush; The Train And The River; Old Church New Paint (Intro); Old Church, New Paint; Handwritten Letter; Big Shorty; Front Yard; Backyard; No Good Without You; Travellin' Light; Sing On The Mountain High/Northern Miner. (62:30)

**Personnel:** Dave Douglas, trumpet; Chet Doxas, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Jim Doxas, drums.

**Ordering info:** [greenleafmusic.com](http://greenleafmusic.com)

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## Michael Wollny Trio *Weltentraum*

ACT 9563

★★★★★

Innovative, widely versed and also obliquely romantic, German pianist Michael Wollny is making some impressive and artful noise in the realm of the new piano trio tradition, especially in the post-Bad Plus era. He steps upward and outward on his ambitious and delightful new trio album, *Weltentraum*. With his allies, bassist Tim Lefebvre and longtime drummer Eric Schaefer, Wollny makes a taut ensemble pact over unexpected terrain.

On this intriguing 14-track set, Wollny focuses on the thematic and picturesque rather than overstating his prowess as soloist. He also abides by the new piano trio aesthetic of finding worthy material from whatever surprising cultural corner he finds suitable for reframing. Thus, we get material by indie rock heroes The Flaming Lips (“Be Free, A Way”), famed contemporary German classical composer Wolfgang Rihm (“Hochrot,” played with a Brad Mehldau-ish minimalist tremolo effect) and 20th-century icon Edgard Varèse (“Un Grand Sommeil Noir”). Even music composed by Friedrich Nietzsche (yes, that Nietzsche) works into the album’s high-low cultural mosaic, with two variations on “Fragment An Sich.”

Adventurism takes too wide of a turn on the album’s final track, the extended, 8-minute-plus version of Pink’s “God Is A DJ,” featuring vocalist Theo Bleckmann. It’s an art pop anomaly that seems ill-fitted to the otherwise instrumental expanse of the album. That disorienting step aside, *Weltentraum* succeeds in pushing the proverbial envelope and lending new insights into the shifting paradigm of what makes a jazz piano trio tick, and think.

—Josef Woodard

**Weltentraum:** Nacht; Be Free, A Way; Little Person; Lassel; Fragment An Sich I; In Heaven; Rufe In Der Horchenden Nacht; When The Sleeper Awakes; Hochrot; Mühlrad; Engel; Un Grand Sommeil Noir; Fragment An Sich II; God Is A DJ. (57:30)

**Personnel:** Michael Wollny, piano; Tim Lefebvre, bass; Eric Schaefer, drums; Theo Bleckmann, vocals, electronics (14).

**Ordering info:** [actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)



## Oran Etkin *Gathering Light*

MOTÉMA 141

★★★★½

Recording projects that attempt to create a pan-national amalgam or are self-consciously thematic are often doomed to fail. So why is clarinetist Oran Etkin’s *Gathering Light* nearly perfect? A lot of the credit goes to the tight relationship between the leader and bassist Ben Allison’s lyrical playing. Nasheet Waits’ lithe, telepathic drumming also contributes mightily. But, what really pushes the recording close to 5-star status is the seemingly effortless chemistry among the five musicians and their relationship to compositions that span several continents without making much fuss about creating

truly global music.

Etkin is a sprightly player with beautiful intonation and articulation. His tone covers a lot of territory. As an improviser, he can make traditional Israeli songs like “Der Gasn Nign” and “Shirim Ad Kan” and the Japanese lullaby “Takeda” sound like organic pieces designed to be expressed through a keening bass clarinet with a sharp edge. His compositions—most notably the trio of dance-themed songs—display an ability to balance adeptly between freedom and structure.

The range on *Gathering Light* is also notable, stretching from Etkin’s spare tribute to Louis Armstrong—his piping clarinet sailing over the barest whisper of bass and brushes—to the rich, layered “Gratitude,” which features resonant, woody textures between bookends of bass clarinet that burbles and groans like a didgeridoo.

The only misstep is Etkin’s “Scattering Light,” the composition and performance that comes closest to contemporary jazz, with Waits’ prominent broken rhythmic gestures and Lionel Loueke’s bluesy guitar solo. While it completes the global circle by centering the recording in Brooklyn, it lacks the character of what precedes and follows.

—James Hale

**Gathering Light:** Gambang Suling; Taxi Dance; Shirim Ad Kan; Gratitude; Takeda (Homesick Blues); All I Really Want To Do Is Dance!; Scattering Light; Tony’s Dance; Der Gasn Nign (Street Song); Distant Sounds Of Change; Guangzhou Taxi; When It’s Sleepy Time Down South. (55:56)

**Personnel:** Oran Etkin, clarinet, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone; Curtis Fowlkes, trombone; Lionel Loueke, guitar, vocals (4); Ben Allison, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums.

**Ordering info:** [motema.com](http://motema.com)



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**Gerry Hemingway**  
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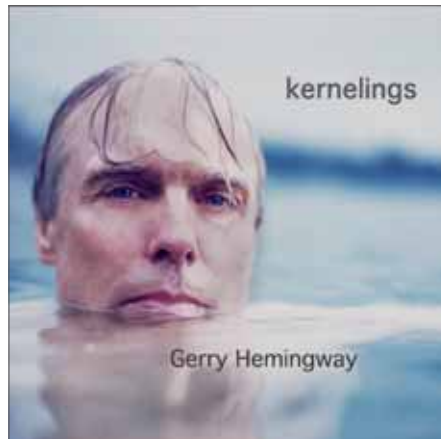
AURICLE RECORDS 12-13

★★★★

Calling Gerry Hemingway a drummer is a bit like calling Anthony Braxton a saxophonist or Miles Davis a trumpeter: The statement is accurate, but also grievously incomplete. Hemingway is, as this mostly solo audio-visual missive makes clear, an artist who deals with sound, process and ideas on a variety of levels. Currently based in Switzerland, the Connecticut-born polymath carries on a stream of solitary performance practice here that has roots in the work of former AACM members Wadada Leo Smith and Anthony Braxton in which unaccompanied playing is not merely a chance to flash your chops, but an opportunity to present information in concentrated form.

There's a lot to chew on here, and it's best taken on with patience. Whatever you do, don't skip the video, whose musical content is not duplicated on the CD. The lengthy title piece presents layered natural, processed and synthesized images and sounds that deal with human activity as a presence that persists long after the physical action stops. And yet, because he is a drummer, there are moments that could not be more physical, where he focuses on the way a hand relates to a drum skin and the air around it. For context, Hemingway has included a 30-year-old piece for electronically processed percussion and a slideshow of abstract images, an unadulterated 6-minute cymbal solo and an interview in which he explains his ideas.

The CD, subtitled *Solo Works 1995-2012*, boils things down to what Hemingway can do in real time. In his work as a bandleader, free improviser and a member of one of Braxton's most celebrated small groups, he has treated sound as something that is simultaneously in movement and constructed, and he carries that on in every percussive ges-



ture. Even a single drum strike or drag of mallet against metal yields sounds that attain sculpted, three-dimensional shape. Electronics extend the timbre and duration of these sounds, while voice and harmonica introduce genre elements. "Ohwosheshesay" crumples calypso grooves and vocalizing into a ball the way one might wad up a newspaper, and "Dust" (which appears on both the CD and the DVD) hints at the blues. And lest you forget that Hemingway has worked extensively within the confines of jazz, there's also an enthusiastically executed compendium of swing-era drum licks titled "For Chick Webb."

Because this work is so concentrated, it's not the easiest entrée into Hemingway's work. For that, check out Braxton's quartet or Hemingway's trio with Ernst Reijseger and Georg Graewe. But if you're ready for some immersive schooling, *kernelings* is Hemingway's master class. —Bill Meyer

**kernelings:** CD Solo Works 1995-2012: Ringo; Hymn Away; Dust; May Bell; B Slow; Ohwosheshesay; Bluethroat; For Whom; Steel And Bass; Calling You; B Slow Again; Up On High; Snares; For Chick Webb; Slowings. (64:22) DVD: kernelings (2013); Waterways (1984); Solo For Cymbal (2011); Interview (2013). (1:23:45)

**Personnel:** Gerry Hemingway, drum set, percussion, harmonica, voice, live electronics.

**Ordering info:** [gerryhemingway.com](http://gerryhemingway.com)

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# A Woman's Voice

**Lina Nyberg, *The Sirenaes* (Hoob 042; 40:24/29:56 ★★★★★½)** Nyberg's 16th release could double as a jazz opera. Over two CDs, the Swedish singer's quixotic force is released as she takes on "sirens" tempered by a "serenading" impulse. With more than ample help from her band—guitarist David Stackenäs, Cecilia Persson on piano, bassist Josef Kallerdahl and Peter Danemo on drums, along with the Norrbotten Big Band—Nyberg's imaginative stories create mysteries around the narrative schemes. Among the pieces here are the in-your-face rollicking swinger "The Monster Song" (both big band and quartet versions), James Shelton's textured, mysterious, elegiac "Lilac Wine," the avant-chamberesque "Who Can Measure," the intimate jazz-scat vehicle "The Skin" and a quiet, revealing version of Caetano Veloso's "London London." (Nyberg graciously tells us: "The experience is in the ears of the listener.") Nyberg's incredible command of the lyrics and music, and compelling musical vision make this ambitious storytelling project riveting.

**Ordering info:** [hoobrecords.com](http://hoobrecords.com)

**Pixel, *We Are All Small Pixels* (Cuneiform Rune 372; 46:53 ★★★★★)** Ellen Andrea Wang brings her four-year-old, Oslo-based band, Pixel, back for another round of alternately peppy, unpredictable crossover music. Trumpeter Jonas Kilmork Vemøy, reed player Harald Lassen and drummer Jon Audun Baar also add backing vocals in this mostly Wang-driven set of 11 tunes (including some instrumentals). Like 2012's *Reminder*, Wang's clarion voice is doubled with instrumental lines, the tight arrangements here offering a Latin flair ("Be Mine"), some sass with a nasty backbeat ("Dreaming"), a lullaby ("Time") and an odd time signature with dollops of sweet-and-sour singing ("Daylight").

**Ordering info:** [cuneiformrecords.com](http://cuneiformrecords.com)

**Natalie Cressman, *Turn The Sea* (Self-Release; 44:53 ★★★★★)** Cressman's second release presents yet another pop sensibility infused with jazz, this time with loads of instrumentation, all of it clearly interwoven into the singer's girl-next-door charm. The arrangements flavor everything, with subtle surprises, fresh writing and tuneful material (mostly hers). The San Francisco native's easy, listenable lyrics are the connective tissue. Cressman also plays some serious trombone, and she has an affinity for involving others in this septet of horns, guitar and acoustic and electric keys. Here and there she overdubs her voice, creating a dreamy chorus-like vibe, as on the bouncy, searching "New Moon" and delicately arranged "Checkout Time." The storyline behind Hanne Hukkelberg's lyrical, whimsical "Do Not As I Do" sets the stage for some instrumental twists and turns by flutist Steven Lugerner, but also a slightly rough-hewn electric guitar turn by Gabe Schneider. Cressman's soft, pixie-ish voice warms the radio-friendly "Winter Chill."

**Ordering info:** [nataliecressman.com](http://nataliecressman.com)



Emilia Mårtensson

JOANNA NATALIA GOURLEY

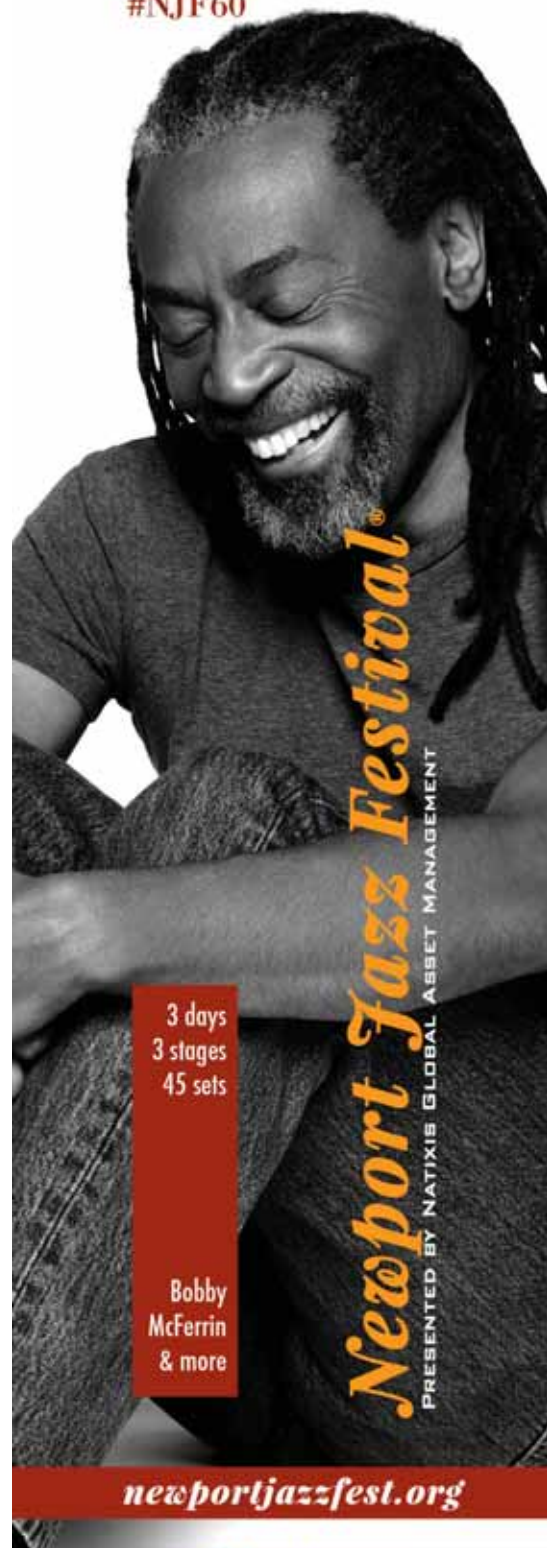
**Sara Serpa & André Matos, *Primavera* (Inner Circle Music 039; 47:04 ★★★★★)** Portuguese natives Serpa and Matos' *Primavera* is a quiet affair. Matos' acoustic guitar and occasional electric bass—along with guests spots from saxophonist Greg Osby and instrumentalists Leo Genovese and Pete Rende—enhance Serpa's floating yet earthy vocals and various keyboard touches. Her preference for the upper registers and note-for-note accompaniment is at times mesmerizing, as on Matos' dreamy "Tempo." Serpas' vocalese and casual way with rhythm are readily apparent on Matos' folksy waltz "Rios" and her gentle, unadorned "Song For A Sister." The duo, now based in New York, also highlights the poetry and music of Ran Blake and Jeanne Lee ("Vanguard") and Guillermo Klein ("Se Me Va La Voz"), adding to this simple yet nuanced collection of 14 songs.

**Ordering info:** [innercirclemusic.com](http://innercirclemusic.com)

**Emilia Mårtensson, *Ana* (Babel 14126; 40:42 ★★★★★½)** Mårtensson's second CD, named for her grandmother, is a haunting immersion into strings (via the Fable String Quartet). Covers include Joe Henderson's singer-friendly "Black Narcissus" (with Mårtensson's original lyrics) and a funky take on Paul Simon's quirky ode to chance and change, "Everything Put Together Falls Apart." The U.K.-based Swedish native's earnest, delicate singing voice (think Patricia Barber) caresses these tunes along with eight more string-laced, folk-inspired numbers that fall on your ears like a lover's kiss. The perfect blend of jazz and pop comes with the opener, the samba-flavored "Harvest Moon." There's no sentimentality on the yearning alt-pop tune "Learnt From Love," its backbeat vibe a novel touch. Smart, all-embracing, luxurious yet pointed arrangements by producer Rory Simmons feed "Moffi's Song" (a nod to her grandfather), a song both simple and straightforward, and the perfect prelude to *Ana's* closer, the lone voice of Mårtensson, overdubbed and full of girlish charm. **DB**

**Ordering info:** [babellabel.co.uk](http://babellabel.co.uk)

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# Wild Dreams, Hard Realities

**Charlie Parr, *Hollandale* (Chaperone 015; 42:08 ★★★★★½)** With 1920s country blues and Appalachian string-band music as guideposts, Charlie Parr uses his acoustic guitars in five different tunings on this freshly minted instrumental album recorded in an abandoned house. (Fellow seeker Alan Sparhawk provides almost inaudible but telling traces of electric guitar drone.) Recharging tradition through a free spirit's exploring of his own virtuosity, he journeys to places of fright and amazement during the lengthy two parts of "I Dreamed I Saw Paul Bunyan Last Night." Spontaneously referencing memories and melodies, the middle-aged Minnesotan evokes rural parts of the Upper Midwest via "Clear Lake" and "Barn Swallows At Twilight." Parr has been struck by the same lightning bolt of inspiration that lit up John Fahey and Davy Graham.

Ordering info: [chaperonerecords.com](http://chaperonerecords.com)

**Bobby Rush With *Blinddog Smokin', Decisions* (Silver Talon 393; 50:48 ★★★★★½)** It's about friendship here. For about 20 years, Bobby Rush—one-time Southern chitlin' circuit star and recent Grammy nominee—has known Carl Gustafson, leader of Southern California's blues 'n' funk band *Blinddog Smokin'*. Their first studio collaboration is entertaining, like when Rush sings of his pathological concern over a lover's girth on "Skinny Little Women" and guitarist Chalo Ortiz mimics Carlos Santana on "Stand Back." Who says Rush can't rap? Hear the genuinely funny "Dr. Rush." Of a far weightier nature is the slinky blues song "Decisions," which addresses the value of moral responsibilities in an unhinged world. Rush and Gustafson team with mutual pal Dr. John to funk up "Another Murder In New Orleans," a fundraiser for the emergency telephone system *Crimestoppers*. The accompanying DVD includes the "Another Murder" music video, interviews and photos.

Ordering info: [silvertalonrecords.com](http://silvertalonrecords.com)

**Candi Staton, *Life Happens* (Beracah 31340; 66:05 ★★★★★½)** Mavis Staples and Bettye LaVette, move over. Candi Staton is a perennially superlative singer conversant with soul, gospel and blues emotions. She rivets one's attention all through her latest album, even when she is saddled with schlocky pop songs and production. (Muscle Shoals legend Rick Hall should have known better.) Staton's piercing conflicts with unrequited love ("Never Even Had The Chance," "Where Were You When You Knew?") and a cheating partner ("Three Minutes To Relapse") are reminders that few singers today match her power to make us want to shed a tear, then jump up and shout.

Ordering info: [candi-staton.com](http://candi-staton.com)

**Rip Lee Pryor, *Nobody But Me* (Electro-Fi 3438; 43:20 ★★★★★)** A cancer survivor, Rip Lee Pryor pledges allegiance to the fixed, systematic Chicago blues tradition paved by his father, har-



monica great Snooky Pryor, and other post-World War II forebears. Still, he's better suited for back porches in the country than smoky urban clubs. It would be more interesting if this harmonica-and-guitar one-man band were performing original songs about overcoming hideous disease and an addiction to gambling rather than fossilized material like "You Gotta Move" and his own, just-OK love-gone-bad tunes.

Ordering info: [electro-fi.com](http://electro-fi.com)

**The James Bolden Blues Band, *No News 'Jus' The Blues* (Real Records 1714; 59:41 ★★)** James "Boogaloo" Bolden, who's been B.B. King's bandleader and trumpeter for 30 years, favors for his fourth feature album a hybrid of blues, jazz and funk as natty as the suit he wears fronting his eight-piece band in Houston clubs. The program starts promisingly: Bolden sings with personality, and the band shines on a fresh arrangement of "Big Boss Man" and on the slow blues "Pocket Full Of Money." But then the album slides into a long stretch of mediocrity, stricken with feckless lead vocals by three band members (only saxophonist Evelyn Rubio gets a passing grade) and so-so songs, one stained with ill-considered masochistic lyrics.

Ordering info: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

**The Holmes Brothers, *Brotherhood* (Alligator 4957; 53:58 ★★★★★½)** Like nearly all of their previous 14 discs, the Holmes' new release consolidates the convergence of blues, funk, doowop, r&b, gospel, soul and country that has been central to their musical identity since the 1980s. The blues components—be they song structures, chords or feelings—receive more prominence than usual. Sherman's and Wendell's compositions have staying power, and so do U.K. rocker Geraint Watkins' "Soldier Of Love" (featuring Popsy Dixon's lead vocal) and blues-soul man Curtis Salgado's "Drivin' In The Drivin' Rain" (Sherman's in good voice). Produced with respect by youngbloods Glenn Patscha, Chris Bruce and Hector Castillo. **DB**

Ordering info: [alligator.com](http://alligator.com)

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## Mike DiRubbo *Threshold*

KSANTI RECORDS 002

★★★★½

It is unclear what threshold alto saxophonist Mike DiRubbo and his band are crossing over for this recording. It's a meaty, well-executed acoustic performance of driving post-bop that recalls the finest of '60s tenormen like Wayne Shorter and Hank Mobley. It is technically spot-on and grooving but it does not feel as though the titular threshold leads to the future. Instead the band embraces a high-energy, old-school aesthetic. DiRubbo has a strong, seductive tone on his alto. In lieu of the more shrill corners of the instrument, he explores its dense, romantic capabilities. He rifles off breathless lines on Charlie Parker's "Bloomdido," serving up a brisk display of saxophone chops to close the album (otherwise, the songs are all self-penned). The disc opens with DiRubbo bouncing alongside confident trumpeter Josh Evans. Drummer Rudy Royston establishes a crackling swing groove that never ebbs throughout the disc. The spacious melody of "Curvas Perigosas" begs for a drum solo and Royston delivers a wonderfully bombastic display. Brian Charette steps away from his usual post at the organ bench for piano duties and offers up an impressive display of inventiveness and technique over Royston and bassist Ugonna Okegwo's pinpoint support. "Salter Of The Earth" borrows too closely from Coltrane's "Naima," with its long-toned melody and hushed reverence, but the subdued tempo is a welcome break. All five members of the group are locked into their comfort zones here, but a few well-placed curveballs could have gone a long way. —Sean J. O'Connell

**Threshold:** Threshold; Where There's A Willis There's A Way; Sun Steps; Pace; Faith; Curvas Perigosas; 1970; Salter Of The Earth; Bloomdido. (57:35)

**Personnel:** Mike DiRubbo, alto saxophone; Josh Evans, trumpet; Brian Charette, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

**Ordering info:** [ksantirecords.com](http://ksantirecords.com)



## Christian Vuust *Urban Hymn*

AERO MUSIC 008

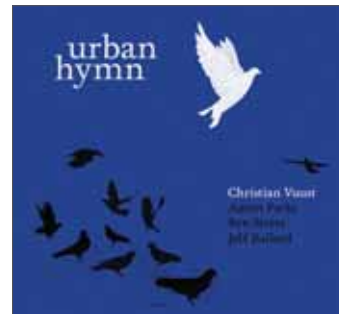
★★★★★

Danish tenor saxophonist Christian Vuust is a veteran of his nation's exceedingly rich jazz scene, which has produced such exceptional players as guitarist Jakob Bro, drummer Alex Riel and pianist Lars Jansson. Vuust has recorded nine albums, but he's participated in more than 70. Denmark's wealth of jazz talent is staggering, but unfortunately it's little appreciated in the States. Vuust's sophisticated and lush 10th album, *Urban Hymn*, is, by contrast, his tribute to New York City—really, it should be dedicated to his homeland. Though recorded in Manhattan with drummer Jeff Ballard, pianist Aaron Parks and bassist Ben Street, the music's rich tonality and sparse arrangements seem to reflect Scandinavia's sun-filled nights and eternally autumnal seasons. It's music that builds slowly, and maintains a whisper-like dynamic throughout. Vuust's music is meditative, his warm tenor recalling a wistful Michael Brecker, his composition's open palettes a perfect laboratory for the exploratory skills of his sidemen on this date. Opener "Helgenaes" features Ballard, the drummer rumbling bells, dabbling on hand drums and generally rattling rhythms with what sounds like fingers on drum skins. The title track is melancholy yet stately, Park's gentle, piano-led opening melody leading to Vuust's plaintive solo statement; the song practically pirouettes in place like a jewel. "Fjer" is as close to boisterous as *Urban Hymn* gets—a tentative shuffle that slowly fills out an eighth-note rhythm. That Vuust found New York City so inspiring is impressive; his music is even more so. —Ken Micallef

**Urban Hymn:** Helgenaes; Laerke; Urban Hymns; Rubato NYC; Fjer; Wedding Song; Biking The Big Apple; Tompkins Square Park; Summer Bygone. (50:44)

**Personnel:** Christian Vuust, tenor saxophone; Aaron Parks, piano; Ben Street, bass; Jeff Ballard, drums.

**Ordering info:** [christianvuust.com](http://christianvuust.com)



## Jozef Dumoulin *A Fender Rhodes Solo*

BEE JAZZ 065

★★★★★

Sixteen selections. One musician. One instrument. You could call Belgian keyboardist Jozef Dumoulin's *A Fender Rhodes Solo* an album of solos. Ranging in length from under a minute to more than 7 minutes, each track differs enough to make for some interesting sonic contrasts. The music swerves from pure ambience and sound effects to music approaching melody. Dumoulin gave himself four constraints: To use only one instrument, to only improvise, to isolate tracks with a regular duration, and finally, not to overdub. In his liner notes, he adds: "As for the effects, I allowed myself everything." Hmm. *A Fender Rhodes Solo* can serve as background or foreground music, for late-night or early morning listening. The sonics are mostly appealing, rarely abrasive, with no real pulse to speak of; it's single notes, blurs, the occasional chord—music gentle on the ears if generally off-kilter. The edginess is slight but ever-present. On "Amber," Dumoulin's sustained lines overlap and interweave with the occasional chord flourish or squiggly mention. The music is dreamy, otherworldly, liquid-in-resonance. There is a creepy edginess on the paradoxically titled "Warm Black," which contains jagged contours and head-ringing sustains. "The Entry Point" comes closest to a jazz aesthetic: Dumoulin's right-hand lines dart to and fro, balanced against his comping left hand. —John Ephland

**A Fender Rhodes Solo:** Amber; Dissolve; Rapid Transportation; That; Warm Black; Inner White; The Entry Point; Observing Disorder; The Red Hill Medicine; Sungloves; Honeycomb; Try Four; Safety Orange; Questioning The Hero Approach; And If, Remember; Uncountable Small Actions. (55:24)

**Personnel:** Jozef Dumoulin, Fender Rhodes.

**Ordering info:** [beejazz.com](http://beejazz.com)



## John Taylor *In Two Minds*

CAMJAZZ 7868

★★★★½

English pianist John Taylor shares with kindred-spirit trumpeter Kenny Wheeler a sublime flair for the lyrical and pastoral, but also a sense of the capricious and sly. The title of Taylor's solo release *In Two Minds* reflects the 71-year-old's ruminative/buoyant and nostalgic/ironic dualities. Moreover, it hints at the fact that the album includes Taylor playing some seamless duets with himself, entwining overdubbed lines for contrapuntal intricacy. The beautifully packaged *In Two Minds* is the third in a series of solo discs Taylor has made for the Italian CamJazz label, following *Phrases* (2009) and *Songs & Variations* (2005). The latest offering begins with the classically tinged "Ambleside Suite," a 19-minute triptych named after a Lake District town in northwest England; the outer panels are rhapsodies of counterpoint, while the middle section is a melancholy poem that Satie surely would've been glad to pen. There are shades of bittersweet beyond the suite with "Episode 3" and "Middle Age Music." The pianist shadowboxes with himself in the virtual duet "Calmo," and Taylor-times-two also covers Wheeler's "Phrase The Second" and "3/4 pm," the former a yearning song, the latter a whirling dance. Strictly solo, Taylor closes the album with a version of Duke Ellington's "Reflections In D" that flickers like a romantic evening recollected in the space between awake and asleep. —Bradley Bamberger

**In Two Minds:** Ambleside Suite; Coniston, Dry Stone, Ambleside; Phrase The Second; Episode 3; 3/4 pm; Middle Age Music; Calmo; Reflections In D. (46:46)

**Personnel:** John Taylor, piano.

**Ordering info:** [camjazz.com](http://camjazz.com)







**Stacey Kent**  
*The Changing Lights*

WARNER BROS. 541162

★★★★

What is it about Stacey Kent? What makes her such a singular, instantly recognizable singer? The voice itself is surpassingly clear, warm and calm, and, in an androgynous age, unequivocally feminine. There's also her judicious phrasing, the way she creates an intimate sense of conversation with the listener. Or maybe it's the precise articulation—not just of words and notes, but of feelings. Sometimes she may remind you of Blossom Dearie or João Gilberto, but, like those two masters, Kent is a one-off.

The analogy to Gilberto is especially relevant: *The Changing Lights* is a love letter to Brazilian music. In the liner notes, offered in both Portuguese and English, she offers “a special thanks to all the composers and lyricists, musicians and poets of Brazil who have been such an inspiration to me.” A best-selling artist in Brazil and France—she's often touted as “the American voice loved around the world”—she sings here mostly in English, with several songs in flawless Portuguese and French. (She is also fluent in Italian and German.)

Her partnership with her husband, saxophonist-arranger-composer Jim Tomlinson, is in full flower on this outing. Tomlinson, who is musically as gentle of temperament as his spouse, is a pre-bop swing player influenced by Lester Young and bossa nova-era Stan Getz. His tasteful, melodic playing always complements Kent's vocals, never competes; and his elegantly swinging arrangements form velvet-lined jewel cases for Kent and her songs.

Three of the album's six originals continue the partnership of Tomlinson and British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, who previously collaborated on striking songs for Kent such as “The Ice Hotel” and “Breakfast On The Morning Tram.” Tomlinson's discursive, inventive melodies are a good match for Ishiguro's frankly romantic, literary story-songs, such as “The Summer We Crossed Europe In The Rain” and the title tune, about long-ago lovers who meet again later in life, which is almost novelistic in scope.

As compelling and interesting as these songs are, they can't help but be eclipsed by masterpieces like “This Happy Madness,” the Jobim treat that opens the set, and Marcos Valle's “The Face

I Love,” both of which include lyrical, assured solos by Tomlinson. Legendary bossa nova singer-songwriter Roberto Menescal plays guitar on his classic “O Barquinho (The Little Boat)” and on a new Tomlinson song, “A Tarde,” with lyrics by Portuguese poet Antonio Ladeira. A first-rate rhythm section featuring pianist Graham Harvey and guitarist John Parricelli provides subtle support that rewards repeated listening.

Even if a few song choices may seem overly familiar (“One Note Samba,” “How Insensitive”), they are still spot-on renderings, arguably as good as anybody has recorded. One of the disc's two bonus tracks is “Quiet Nights”—but before you say, “Oh no, not another ‘Corcovado,’” this one offers a highly original

take on the standard, with an arrangement featuring a string quartet playing a pizzicato samba beat.

Kent and Tomlinson apparently have something very special going on. Together, they create a warm cocoon, an ideal romantic world that conveys the true spirit of Brazilian song.

—Allen Morrison

**The Changing Lights:** This Happy Madness; The Summer We Crossed Europe In The Rain; One Note Samba; Mais Uma Vez; Waiter, Oh Waiter; O Barquinho; The Changing Lights; How Insensitive; O Bêbado E A Equilibrista/Smile; Like A Lover; The Face I Love; A Tarde; Chanson Légère; Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars (Corcovado); Meditation. (65:29)

**Personnel:** Stacey Kent, vocals; Jim Tomlinson, tenor, soprano saxophones, flute; Graham Harvey, piano, Fender Rhodes; Roberto Menescal, John Parricelli, guitar; Jeremy Brown, double bass; Matt Home, drums; Joshua Morrison, drums; Raymundo Bittencourt, ganza.

**Ordering info:** [staceykent.com](http://staceykent.com)

**RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVISATIONS ON:**

Mozart, Sonata in B-Flat Major K.333

Bach, Italian Concerto BWV 971

Chopin, Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23

Shostakovich, Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87

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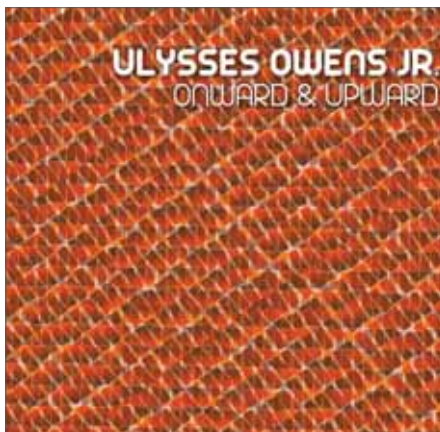
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Tues, Aug 12th, 8PM	The Shrine
Tues, Sep 16th, 8PM	Silvana
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Tues, Nov 11th, 8PM	Silvana
Tues, Dec 16th, 8PM	The Shrine

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## Ulysses Owens Jr. *Onward & Upward*

D CLEF MUSIC

★★★

For his third album as a leader, drummer Ulysses Owens Jr. (of Christian McBride's bands, among others) has chosen an attractive mix of originals and r&b-pop covers, some sleek with three-horn arrangements, others more spare and probing.

On the more pop side are the flamenco hand-claps and funk drum beats of "Onward & Upward Intro," a cover of The Stylistics' '70s hit "People Make The World Go Round" (with Charles Turner singing the anachronistic line, "Wall Street losing dough on every share/ They're blaming it on longer hair"), and instrumental arrangements of Phyllis Hyman's 1983

song "Just 25 Miles To Anywhere" and the Michael Jackson hit "Human Nature."

Even the most straightforward of these tunes hint at greater depths—note Gilad Hekselman's fresh guitar solo on "25 Miles." Hekselman is featured throughout the album, along with Anat Cohen on tenor sax and clarinet, and Owens also draws on a variety of composers and arrangers, inside and outside the band. "Exodus" (by non-band member bassist Daniel Dickinson) spirals out of its tuneful arrangement (trumpet, tenor and trombone) with Hekselman's edgy guitar, egged on by pianist (and McBride bandmate) Christian Sands, who also takes a powerful McCoy Tyner-esque solo, all speedy modal runs and pounding chords.

A more spare arrangement of Wayne Shorter's "Fee Fi Fo Fum" allows Hekselman and trumpeter Jason Palmer to stretch out with contrasting solo statements over a straight-ahead swing groove, and "Samba Jam" is sparer still, with Cohen—joined only by Owens and bassist Reuben Rogers—excelling in her one clarinet feature. Owens and trombonist Michael Dease's "For Nelson" displays a pop tunesmith's gift for melody along with a jazz musician's taste for flexible variation.

—Jon Garelick

**Onward & Upward:** Onward & Upward Intro; People Make The World Go Round; Just 25 Miles To Anywhere; Exodus; SST; Samba Jam; Fee Fi Fo Fum; The Gift Of Forgiveness; For Nelson; Human Nature; Drum Postlude. (58:21)

**Personnel:** Ulysses Owens Jr., drums, percussion, vocals; Anat Cohen, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Jason Palmer, trumpet; Michael Dease, trombone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Christian Sands, piano; Reuben Rogers, bass; Charles Turner, vocals (2); Adam Rongo, alto saxophone (9); Benny Benack, trumpet (8), vocals, percussion (1); Matthew Rybicki, bass (8, 9, 10).

**Ordering info:** [ulyssesowensjr.com](http://ulyssesowensjr.com)

## Oscar Peñas *Music Of Departures And Returns*

MUSIKOZ 001

★★★★

*Music Of Departures And Returns*, Oscar Peñas' fourth album, is true to its name. Jetting from Cuba to Catalonia, Brazil to Andalusia, the concise record functions as a diverse travelogue reflective of the Spanish guitarist's cultural influences and stylistic preferences. Its elegant tunes take you by the hand, twirl you around, bend you at the hips, and sway with insouciant purpose. Never showy or stuffy, Peñas and his cohorts treat the excursions with the charming friendliness one might chance encounter with an attractive stranger in a foreign country. Romantic undercurrents wash over each passage, none of which linger or threaten to overshadow or interrupt the lighthearted moods.

Peñas practices economical simplicity, displaying astute prowess commendable for its modesty and ease. His casual finesse produces gorgeous tonalities; his tension-free playing resounds with authoritative albeit rounded, polite signatures. Even when his fingers and strings invoke steady rain showers of notes on "Etude No. 1," the effect is soothing and welcoming. Peñas allows the acoustic-based songs to inhale and exhale with measured breaths, exposing delicate harmonics and encouraging crisp exchanges.

Standout violinist Sara Caswell mind-reads the bandleader's desires. She emerges with a distinctive voice on the heel-tapping flamenco "Paco," heading transitions and injecting gypsy spirit into a



tune made for streetlight strolls. On "The Everyday Struggle," she blends with accordionist Gil Goldstein, stamping the tango with an old-world vibe and forward-looking improvisational edge that's much like the fashionable cities in Peñas' homeland—where honored tradition and cutting-edge modernism combine for lasting art. Here, then, is a soundtrack to play in your head when dreaming about the country's late-night cafes.

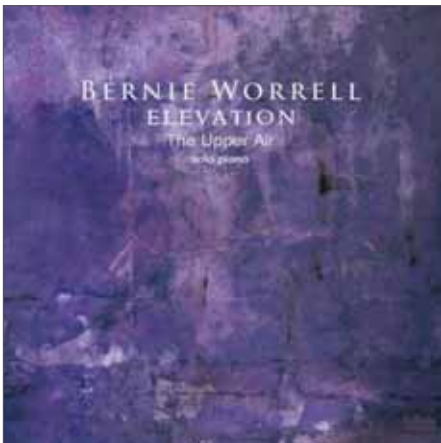
—Bob Gendron

**Music Of Departures And Returns:** Paquito's Choro; Rabo De Nube; Skylark; Paco; The Everyday Struggle; Etude No. 1; Rain; Cancó Numero 6. (37:43)

**Personnel:** Oscar Peñas, guitar; Sara Caswell, violin; Mato Fukushima, six-string electric bass; Richie Barshay, drums, cajón; Paquito D'Rivera, clarinet (1); Gil Goldstein, accordion (5, 8); Esperanza Spalding, vocals (2); Edward Perez, bass (1, 2); Rogerio Bocatto, drums, percussion (1, 2).

**Ordering info:** [oscarpenas.com](http://oscarpenas.com)





**Bernie Worrell**  
*Elevation: The Upper Air*

M.O.D. TECHNOLOGIES 0012

★★★★½

A founding member of Parliament-Funkadelic who has worked with a who's who of pop collaborators—everyone from The Rolling Stones to Buddy Guy to Sly & The Family Stone to Mos Def—Bernie Worrell is one of those musicians whose sound is iconic even if his name is less well known. On *Elevation: The Open Air*, one of the world's funkier keyboardists takes a surprisingly stark and introspective solo turn through a repertoire of jazz and pop standards that is more Manfred Eicher than George Clinton.

Produced by Bill Laswell, the album luxuriates in the resonance of the acoustic piano, frequently letting chords hang in the air until they decay, or building them into cresting, crashing waves. Unsurprisingly for an artist who's locked into grooves with some of the most influential bassists of the last half-century, Worrell has a fondness for the low end. The album's opener, "In A Silent Way," opens with a gut-churning bass tone that sounds more like an electronic drone than anything an acoustic instrument could conjure. It underlies the entire tune, adding a sense of unease to the piece's crystalline prettiness, which harkens back more to Joe Zawinul's shimmering original than to the more familiar Miles Davis version.

Worrell next borrows "I'd Rather Be With You" from one of his longtime collaborators, P-Funk bassist Bootsy Collins. The original's funk swagger gets replaced by a pensive yearning, though the pianist evokes his compatriot through the window-rattling bass rumble that he builds up. The repertoire wanders from a harrowing take on John Coltrane's "Alabama" to a late-night saloon song rendition of "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" to a wistful reimagining of the sunny pop hit "Ooh Child," before closing on an unadorned, gospel-tinged "Redemption Song." Worrell also includes a trio of originals that pare the sound back even further, with slow and ominous stabs and tense silences. —*Shaun Brady*

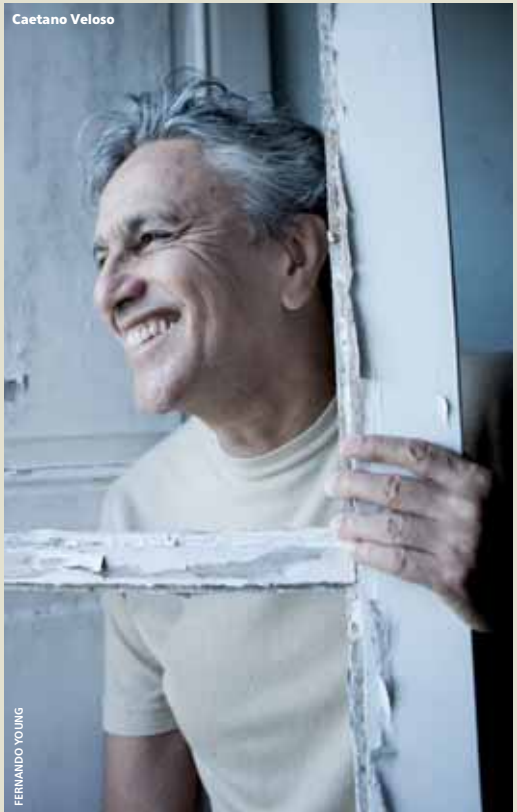
**Elevation: The Upper Air:** In A Silent Way; I'd Rather Be With You; Alabama; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Light On Water; Ooh Child; Samba Pa Ti; Realm Of Sight; I Wanna Go Outside In The Rain; Wings; Redemption Song. (53:18)

**Personnel:** Bernie Worrell, piano.

**Ordering info:** [mod-technologies.com](http://mod-technologies.com)

# The Welcome Ghost of Tropicália

Caetano Veloso



FERNANDO YOUNG

In the late '60s, Caetano Veloso and the other members of the Tropicália movement were among the first to make music that syncretized electric rock with Brazilian music. Though the movement was short-lived and small, it left a large stamp on Brazilian music, and Veloso's music has continued to shift shapes over the ensuing decades, occasionally returning to Tropicália's electric realm.

Where his Tropicália LPs borrowed elements of rock to create their unique sound, ***Abraço (Nonesuch 541364; 51:08 ★★★★★)*** seems to come from the other direction, borrowing Brazilian elements in the service of something that's more rock at its core but still retains a lot of the recombinant verve of his early music. The album features the core group of guitarist Pedro Sá, bassist-keyboardist Ricardo Dias Gomes and drummer Marcelo Callado. The music buzzes with a spirit of worlds colliding, which is remarkable considering how long these sounds have been mixing. Part of this effect is created by the very thoughtful mix, which stirs the album's various elements together in a way that suggests they're all coming from different places.

The funky opener, "A Bossa Nova É Foda," does this to the hilt; the drum kit is recorded to sound like a samba percussion section, the rhythm guitar swerves up and down in volume, and fuzz guitar flits in and out of the mix, with Veloso's high, measured tenor in the middle of it, holding things together. "Funk Melódico" illustrates this sound even more clearly with its complex rhythms that congeal from a wild flurry of raw electric guitar, odd electronic noises, and drums and bass, contrasting sharply with the song's soft, languid interlude.

Not all of the record is so challenging. "O Império Da Lei" veers closer to bossa nova; "Quando O Galo Cantou" is an airy ballad, and the title track is straightahead, low-tempo, crunching rock. It may not be as surprising as it was in 1968, but Veloso is producing impressive late work that sounds as though he's having fun and is still interested in making music that challenges his listeners and himself.

**Ordering info:** [nonesuch.com](http://nonesuch.com)

While Veloso adds to a long and already rich legacy, countryman Rodrigo Amarante is just beginning his solo career after stints in Los Hermanos, Orquestra Imperial and Little Joy. ***Cavalo (Easy Sound; 37:47 ★★★★★½)*** is an accomplished, cosmopolitan debut that shares its debt to Tropicália with influences as

wide-ranging as American indie rock, samba, British post-punk and French chanson.

Amarante sings in Portuguese, English and French, punctuating the album's uptempo eclecticism with stark, atmospheric, piano-dominated ballads that throw throbbing rock tracks such as "Hourglass" into sharp relief. The latter song wouldn't sound terribly out of place on an Arctic Monkeys album; Amarante made most of this album outside of Brazil, and his English carries as much of a London accent as a Brazilian one.

The rootlessness Amarante felt as he put together the record can be heard in the harmony of the songs. "The Ribbon" is a chilly, slow crawl that never quite resolves itself. Drummer Fabrizio Moretti (Amarante's bandmate in Little Joy, but better known as the drummer for The Strokes) provides accompaniment that's as atmospheric as Amarante's swelling, processed guitar, never quite locking into a beat.

**Ordering info:** [easysoundrecordingcompany.com](http://easysoundrecordingcompany.com)

At a glance, Veloso and Amarante could hardly seem more different: one the elder statesman assured of his place in his country's musical narrative, the other a relatively young musician who hasn't quite figured out what home is yet. Both of their albums, though, share a sense of restless creativity, even if that restlessness is derived from different directions. **DB**

## Bob Dorough *Eulalia*

MERRY LANE 0090

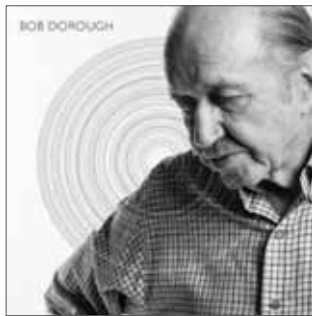
★★★★

Bob Dorough is a singular talent. There have been jazz singer-songwriters who compose and arrange instrumental music, but nobody writes his kind of quirky (and dare I say folksy) tunes. And nobody sings with his hip, Arkansas-Texas twang. This effort signifies that at 90, Dorough is still creating, and still defying expectation. It's a bit of a grab bag, but the disparate music all fits nicely under his expansive musical tent. Dorough has a capable aggregation of players, including alto saxophone patriarch Phil Woods and his daughter, Aralee Dorough, principal flutist with the Houston Symphony. The title piece is a pastoral flute feature with lovely backgrounds that move within the chords. Aralee displays a full, beautiful sound and improvises lyrically. The closing reprise bookends the album in a similarly sweet and peaceful fashion. She momentarily steals the album with her introduction on Joseph Peine's "Consummation." In between are Dorough's idiosyncratic songs. They're now the work of a man who's seen the vicissitudes of life but who still has a taste for it. "Love (Webster's Dictionary)" brings to mind Sondheim, and a musical theater thread runs throughout. Dorough's piano is spidery on "Love" and "To Be Or Not To Bop," the obligatory hip jazz tune. Dorough's craggy vocals and Woods' mellow alto are both distillations of lifetimes in the music, and you can't put a price on that. —Kirk Silsbee

**Eulalia:** Eulalia; Love (Webster's Dictionary); Whatever Happened To Love Songs; But For Now; To Be Or Not To Bop; I've Got Just About Everything; A Few Days Of Glory; Consummation; Eulalia Reprise. (45:19)

**Personnel:** Bob Dorough; piano, vocals; Dennis Dotson, trumpet; Thomas Hultén, trombone, tuba; Aralee Dorough, flute; Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Warren Sneed, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone; Gary Mitchell Jr., organ, vocals (7); Ray Wilson, guitar; Mike Mizma, vibraphone, pandeiro (2); Steve Gilmore, bass; Keith Vivens, electric bass (3, 7); Herman Matthews, drums; Tammie Bradley, vocals (7).

**Ordering info:** [bobdorough.com](http://bobdorough.com)



## Danny Fox Trio *Wide Eyed*

HOT CUP RECORDS 133

★★★★½

Where the Danny Fox Trio's debut album, *The One Constant* (Songlines), highlighted the pianist-composer's classical influences, the second emphasizes his penchant for playfulness. For starters, "Drone" is among the year's most fun single jazz tracks. Its impish, flitting piano motif rocks with the kind of energy that Ethan Iverson bore on early Bad Plus recordings. But as the composition unfolds, its uniquely thorny structure gives it an endearingly peculiar identity of its own. "Funhouse Memory" also operates in the realm of surprise, morphing directions constantly as it lopes toward a funk groove. The edgy and off-kilter "Bonkers" blends similar quantities of dark tension and humor into a densely arranged piece. But Fox and friends are equally appealing when they explore their softer side. A climactic wave of tension and release dominates "Sterling," with tumbling drums and colorful bass accents, until each member of the trio gradually falls into an odd but syncopated step. (The track's jaunty-to-serene flavor is perfectly captured by an accompanying stop-motion animation music video.) The hushed title track, meanwhile, shimmers with feeling as Fox and bassist Chris van Voorst van Beest work around each other in plaintive steps, creating such tight interplay that the notion of comping and soloing become almost irrelevant. A perfect closer, the clothes-dryer-inspired "Tumble Quiet," ultimately offers a final conclusion to the album's quirky character. —Jennifer Odell

**Wide Eyed:** Sterling; Bonkers; All Told; Drone; Wide Eyed; Confederates; Short Al In Brooklyn; Patriot Daze; Punches; Funhouse Memory; Tumble Quiet. (64:75)

**Personnel:** Danny Fox, piano; Chris van Voorst van Beest, bass; Max Goldman, drums.

**Ordering info:** [hotcuprecords.com](http://hotcuprecords.com)



## Diego Barber & Craig Taborn *Tales*

SUNNYSIDE 1346

★★★★

Distractions are everywhere today. *Tales*, the intense first album from the acoustic duo of guitarist Diego Barber and pianist Craig Taborn, feels out of step with the times. It's an album of deep concentration. The players are present and in the moment. Over four extended tracks, they're fully dedicated to the music. There's nothing casual going on here; they don't adhere to rigid roles like soloist and accompanist. *Tales* is a complex story that finds its conjurers wrapping and swirling and swinging around one another in some sort of epic guitar-and-piano dance. Clear your head—and your schedule—for this one. (The shortest track is more than 11 minutes.) "Cipres" starts with one repeating guitar chord and includes courageous piano, a rock section, simple melodies and knotty guitar riffing. "Eternal 7" begins in a free-jazz mode before descending into dramatic beauty and a catchy section. And Ricardo Gallén's "Im Park (To Diego Barber)," the only piece not written by Barber, begins in something resembling a classical mood and ends with warm solo guitar, with other conversations in between. Throughout *Tales*, it's hard to tell what's improvised and what's composed, but it doesn't matter. The album opens with "Killian's Mountains," which runs almost 30 minutes. Passing through various parts, the composition is complicated but has the energy of simpler music. —Brad Farberman

**Tales:** Killian's Mountains; Cipres; Eternal 7; Im Park (To Diego Barber). (66:05)

**Personnel:** Diego Barber, guitar; Craig Taborn, piano.

**Ordering info:** [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)



## Eddie Gomez & Carsten Dahl *Live At Montmartre*

STORYVILLE 1018450

★★★★

This album is part of a series designed to celebrate the reopening of Jazzhus Montmartre, the legendary Copenhagen club that ended a 15-year hiatus in 2010. At the suggestion of the club's music director, bass stalwart Eddie Gomez agreed to perform on Nov. 9, 2011, with Carsten Dahl, a respectable Danish pianist. With nothing left to prove and after largely paying his dues, Gomez has long been too complacent and has given the impression that he has nothing left to say. *Live At Montmartre* will change this perception. Facing a musician he does not know, Gomez is forced to be on his toes. Dahl seems to relish the opportunity to challenge him, which produces some fireworks that often sound like a cutting contest. For a first encounter, both players agreed that the most logical way to find common ground was to perform standards. The liberties both musicians take with the material testify to the degree of familiarity they share with the tunes—their interpretations can even verge on iconoclasm as Gomez delves headfirst into demented bass slapping, extracting some unusual sounds, while Dahl adds dissonance, reaching inside the piano on more than one occasion. On the other hand, this does not prevent them from treating "Body And Soul" with touching respect. This approach leads to a sizeable number of ostentatious excesses and virtuosic runs designed to please and impress the crowd, but it remains comforting to hear Gomez display a sheer joy of performing. —Alain Drouot

**Live At Montmartre:** I Hear A Rhapsody; There Is No Greater Love; Autumn Leaves; Body And Soul; How Deep Is The Ocean; All The Things You Are; First Encounter. (65:06)

**Personnel:** Eddie Gomez, bass; Carsten Dahl, piano.

**Ordering info:** [storyvillerecords.com](http://storyvillerecords.com)







**Jared Gold**  
*JG3+3*

POSI-TONE 8122

★★★★

**Jeff Hackworth**  
*Soul To Go!*

BIG BRIDGE MUSIC 1006

★★★★

For direct soul-drenched feeling and real-deal testifying at both relaxed and exhilarating tempos, an organ group is hard to beat. The instrument instantly evokes an ambiance of '60s jazz lounges when the B-3 was at its popular apex. Jimmy Smith got that ball rolling and generations of burning B-3 players have followed in his wake. Two modern-day exponents of that singular, swinging sound are organists Radam Schwartz, heard here with Jeff Hackworth's great quartet, and Jared Gold, who leads his own sextet in his seventh outing for Posi-Tone.

Gold, a chopsmeister and valued sideman in various groups around New York as well as a leader in his own right, pushes a more modernist agenda on *JG3+3* (the name referring to a core trio of himself, guitarist Dave Stryker and drummer Sylvia Cuenca augmented by three horn players) while still having one foot firmly planted in the tradition. Gold goes to church on Cannonball Adderley's gospel-tinged shuffle "Sermonette," then wails at hyper speed on a burning rendition of David Mann's enchanting 1948 standard "No Moon At All" (a showcase for Cuenca's slick brushwork). And he puts up the grease factor on Wayne Shorter's "Charcoal Blues." But it's his inventive arrangements for the three horns—altoist Patrick Cornelius, bari man Jason Marshall, trumpeter Tatum Greenblatt, all stellar soloists—that separate this outstanding release from the organ group pack. The unique horn voicings add an extra layer of hipness to the essential groove on the mellow opener "Pendulum" and their swaggering shuffle-swing take on Michael Jackson's ballad "I Just Can't Stop Loving You." Old-school feeling mixed with modern ideas and dazzling solos make this one a must for organ group connoisseurs.

Hackworth seems more committed to the old school, as he demonstrates on a classy reading of "The Feeling Of Jazz" and his quintessential soul-jazz take on "Vaya Con Dios." A seasoned tenor player from New York with a big appealing tone, he shows a soulful, relaxed approach on ballads ("Autumn Nocturne," "Little Girl Blue") and a more robust style on burners ("Blues In A

Few," "Soul To Go!"). His dramatic reading of John Coltrane's "Wise One" is a highlight here. The tenor man is accompanied by a stellar crew in consummate organ group drummer Vince Ector, veteran B-3 player Schwartz (who played with Arthur Prysock and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis) and longtime Dizzy Gillespie guitarist Ed Cherry, whose soulful, effortless swing feel while comping or soloing connects him to the rich jazz guitar-organ group lineage that begins with Wes Montgomery and includes Grant Green, Pat Martino and George Benson.

While Gold's sextet project infuses the genre with some new juice, Hackworth's quartet outing will make organ aficionados nostalgic for long-de-

funct clubs like Dude's Lounge and the Lickety Split up in Harlem or The Cadillac Lounge in Newark.  
—Bill Milkowski

**JG3+3:** Pendulum; Spirits; Sermonette; Shower The People; No Moon At All; I Just Can't Stop Loving You; Fantified; Cubano Chant; Charcoal Blues. (48:41)

**Personnel:** Jared Gold, organ; Dave Stryker, guitar; Sylvia Cuenca, drums; Patrick Cornelius, alto saxophone; Jason Marshall, baritone saxophone; Tatum Greenblatt, trumpet.

**Ordering info:** [posi-tone.com](http://posi-tone.com)

**Soul To Go!:** Soul To Go!; Autumn Nocturne; The Feeling Of Jazz; Wise One; Blues In A Few; Little Girl Blue; Live And Learn; Under A Strayhorn Sky; Vaya Con Dios. (55:37)

**Personnel:** Jeff Hackworth, tenor saxophone; Ed Cherry, guitar; Radam Schwartz, organ; Vince Ector, drums.

**Ordering info:** [jeffhackworth.com](http://jeffhackworth.com)


**Colin Vallon Trio**  
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**Glenn Kotche**  
*Adventureland*

CANTALOUE MUSIC 21098  
 ★★★½

Drummer-percussionist Glenn Kotche is best known as the tasteful longtime drummer of Wilco. Whether he's negotiating a tricky odd-meter or just laying down a spare, socked-in backbeat, Kotche puts a premium on heart, clarity and forging a compositional arc. And the same ethos carry over to his loftier solo excursions into contemporary chamber music composition and performance. On his fourth solo disc, Kotche delivers his most wide-ranging offering yet, collaborating with a variety of premier ensembles.

The centerpiece, "Anomaly," is a seven-move-

ment suite written for drum kit and strings that features the incomparable Kronos Quartet. Kotche constructed the piece with the methodical idea of assigning each of the four strings to correspond with the four independent limbs of his kit playing. Such a conceit could easily become academic but the results are an electrifying and frequently fun ride. The bond between limbs and string is especially effective in the second movement, during which the strings bob and weave in rousing triple-meter patterns locked in tightly with the kit.

With his vast array of acoustic and electric instruments—including jerry-rigged and found items—Kotche creates compelling canvases on *Adventureland*, with a knack for sonically complementing any instrument he communes with. Despite the cerebral settings of these works, the record is aglow with joy, mystery, occasional eeriness and immediacy.  
 —Jeff Potter

**Adventureland:** Anomaly Mvt. 1; The Haunted Mvt. 5—Dance; Anomaly Mvt. 2; The Traveling Turtle; The Haunted Mvt. 4—Hive; The Anomaly Mvt. 3; The Haunted Mvt. 1—Furnace; Anomaly Mvt. 4; Anomaly Mvt. 5; The Haunted Mvt. 3—Viaduct; The Haunted Mvt. 2—Treehouse; Triple Fantasy; Anomaly Mvt. 6; Anomaly Mvt. 7. (58:37)

**Personnel:** Glenn Kotche, drumkit, acoustic and electronic percussion, field recordings; David Harrington, violin, John Sherba, violin, percussion (1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12–14); Hank Dutt, viola, percussion (1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12–14); Jeffrey Ziegler, cello, percussion (1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12–14); Lisa Kaplan, piano (2, 7, 10–12); Yvonne Lam, piano (2, 7, 10, 11); Mathew Duvall, percussion (2, 5, 7, 10–12); Doug Perkins, percussion (2, 5, 7, 10, 11); Nick Photinos, cello (12); Matt Albert, violin, percussion (12); Michael Macafferri, clarinet, percussion (12); Tim Munro, flute (12); Ramon Castillo, Laurel Pardue, gangsa pemade (4); Sam Schmetterer, Christine Southworth, gangsa kantil (4); Balaji Mani, Elizabeth Johansen, reong (4); Jenn Olejarczyk, Julie Strand, jublag (4); Beth Mullins, Jacques Weissgerber, jegogan (4); Sean Mannion, kempil (4); Po-Chun Wang, gong (4); Krista Speroni, kendang (4); Mark Buckles, ceng-ceng (4); Evan Ziporyn, Sachi Sato, Katie Puckett, Kathryn French, percussion (4).

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**Harvey Mason**  
*Chameleon*

CONCORD 43113  
 ★★★

Growing up in Los Angeles in the '90s, Herbie Hancock's 1973 album *Head Hunters* was required listening. Drummer Harvey Mason provided the groundwork for many after-school jams. His simmering grooves have been mimicked but unsurpassed for more than 40 years. Here, over the course of 10 tracks, he revisits just a handful of the hundreds of seminal recordings he played on, employing a band scattered with confident young guns.

Bookending the record are a couple of Angeleno saxophonists who spent a fair amount of their high school days unlocking the secrets of Mason's backbeat. Kamasi Washington is the first up, bellowing on Grover Washington Jr.'s "Black Frost." His soulful declarations trill over Mason's swagger before giving way to strained, unhinged squalls. Keyboardist Kris Bowers pokes and prods with synthesized support. It is the peak of raw dexterity as the record is draped in a studio sheen that is occasionally blinding.

Bowers and Washington return for Patrice Rushen's "Before The Dawn," which boasts a languid sway enlivened by a Rhodes solo from Bowers that brightens the room. Tenor saxophonist Ben Wendel closes out the recording with the self-titled track. No pressure, right? He serves it respectfully, building on short phras-



es as the band rises behind him in a sea of cymbals and shakers.

The original recordings are not surpassed here. Mason's arc from funk to fusion is succinctly charted, but this album would have been more interesting and challenging if his young bandmates had brought Mason's experience to their songbook.  
 —Sean J. O'Connell

**Chameleon:** Black Frost; Montara; If I Ever Lose This Heaven; Looking Back; Before The Dawn; Hold On One Second (Studio Live); Places And Spaces; Either Way; Mase's Theme; Chameleon. (48:53)

**Personnel:** Harvey Mason, drums; Christian Scott, trumpet; Ben Williams, bass; Kris Bowers, keyboards; Matthew Stevens, guitar; Corey "CK" King, trombone, vocals; Kamasi Washington, tenor saxophone; Chris Turner, vocals; Mark de Clive-Lowe, keyboards; Jimmy Haslip, bass; Bill Summers, percussion; Paul Jackson, bass.

Ordering info: [concordmusicgroup.com](http://concordmusicgroup.com)



**Loren Stillman  
& Bad Touch  
Going Public**

FRESH SOUND RECORDS 434

★★★

Loren Stillman's Bad Touch—Nate Radley on guitar, Ted Poor on drums and Gary Versace on Hammond B-3—uses an expanded organ trio lineup to push forward a different sound from the organ trios of Jimmy Smith or Brother Jack McDuff. The band is more concerned here with composition than backbeats and burning solos. On each song there are passages of abstraction and melodies that seem to take a long time to get where they are going, but the journey and how each instrument supports the others makes for interesting listening for the most part. Poor's drum work is as much concerned with accents as it is with simple timekeeping. The organ also functions in a coloring and texture role: Versace laces "Verse" and "New Three" with psychedelic touches, and the music becomes briefly unmoored before returning to less-heady territory. Stillman switches between an airy, light attack and a cutting tone that has its antecedent in Jackie McLean. In some of the compositions, Stillman can sound like a lonely saxophone in the night, and on others, such as "Dream Therapy," he makes his alto sound like a slow martial fanfare. But his playing isn't always searching. He plays hard and spiky on "Gnu" and "Holiday Of Un-Numbered Tears." By the end of the disc, though, the wash of sound and textures have blended together, and the compositions have lost what made them distinctive in the beginning.

—David Kunian

**Going Public:** The Preachers Ophelia; Verse; New Three; P; Gnu; Dream Therapy; Holiday Of Un-Numbered Tears; Letters And Jewelry. (52:26)

**Personnel:** Loren Stillman, alto saxophone; Nate Radley, guitar, pedal steel; Gary Versace, Hammond B-3; Ted Poor, drums.

**Ordering info:** [freshsoundrecords.com](http://freshsoundrecords.com)



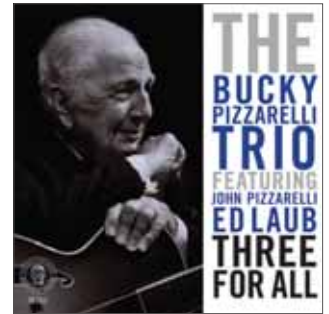
**The Bucky Pizzarelli Trio  
Three For All**

CHESKY 362

★★★

With a group like The Bucky Pizzarelli Trio, images of the 88-year-old swing guitarist joined by piano and bass—or perhaps bass and drums—come to mind. However, this trio date consists of three seven-string acoustic guitarists. Even with a few tightly arranged sections, the music here sounds as if it is an informal gathering of three old friends who got together to jam a few "good old good ones." As it turns out, that is very close to the truth. Bucky Pizzarelli is joined by his son and occasional musical partner, John Pizzarelli, and Ed Laub. Back in 1969, Laub took some lessons on the seven-string guitar from the elder Pizzarelli and they have been friends ever since. Twelve years ago, Laub gave up his longtime day job to work regularly with Pizzarelli, an association that continues up to the present time. Not surprisingly, the three musicians have little difficulty following each other's musical directions, and there are no obvious missteps; the ensemble is clean and swinging throughout. Their repertoire mostly consists of standards that the guitarists have played hundreds of times, with a few exceptions: the Dick McDonough/Carl Kress piece "Stage Fright," Claude Thornhill's "Snowfall" and Bix Beiderbecke's impressionistic "In The Dark." The guitarists take turns soloing, playing lead and accompanying each other, constantly shifting their roles. Their complementary styles don't result in many surprises, but the disc is relaxed, pleasing and fun.

—Scott Yanow



**Three For All:** All The Things You Are; Body And Soul; Avalon; Snowfall; Stompin' At The Savoy; If I Had You; Stage Fright; Medley: It's Been A Long Long Time, Don't Take Your Love From Me; Undecided; In The Dark; I'm Confessin'; Three For All; I Got Rhythm. (64:57)

**Personnel:** Bucky Pizzarelli, John Pizzarelli, Ed Laub, guitars.

**Ordering info:** [chesky.com](http://chesky.com)

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**Janice Borla Group**  
*Promises To Burn*

TALL GRASS 8281

★★★★

Janice Borla is a warm-toned, swinging jazz singer with passion in her delivery. More than most, she has the ability to make her vocals function as an instrument within the band. The downside is that she likes to scat, and she does so profusely. Borla has a pliant, medium-sized alto voice, and she uses Bill Evans' tight-cornering "Funkallero" to set the tone here. Guitarist John McLean's spare chords add to the high-wire aspect of the song, while Scott Robinson's liquid tenor ends in the altissimo register. The band takes no prisoners but also sounds like it's having fun. Borla produced the album, and her choice of material ranges from the low-sizzle bossa nova "You Don't Know What Love Is" to the ECM-like "Silver Hollow" (with an ethereal wordless vocal) to the bright and complex Tristano workout "Lennie's Pennies." Her colleagues support her, but also grant her space. Robinson's tenor can steal her luxuriousness on "Some Other Time" or run a neck-and-neck steeplechase on "Pennies." Art Davis' blues-soaked flugelhorn and John McLean's like-minded guitar perfectly illustrate the juncture between jazz and blues on "Midnight Voyage." Borla pulls off a hat trick on this disc: She's on equal footing with the instrumentalists during her musical scat exchanges, but remains the focal point with stellar performances like "You Don't Know What Love Is." Each is an impressive musical feat.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Promises To Burn:** Funkallero; Midnight Voyage; Some Other Time; Lennie's Pennies; Silver Hollow; You Don't Know What Love Is; RunFerYerLife; If You Could See Me Now. (45:33)

**Personnel:** Janice Borla, vocals; Art Davis, trumpet, flugelhorn; Scott Robinson, soprano, tenor saxophones; John McLean, guitar; Bob Bowman, bass; Jack Mouse, drums.

**Ordering info:** [janiceborla.com](http://janiceborla.com)



**Freddie Bryant**  
*Dreamscape: Solo, Duo, Trio*

GJK SOUNDS 0011

★★★★

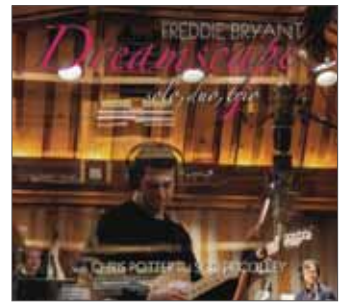
Guitarist Freddie Bryant's *Dreamscape: Solo, Duo, Trio* is a cup of tea: It's comforting, straightforward, tastes good and goes down easy. The lengthy Bryant original "Songs"—which features bassist Scott Colley and Chris Potter on bass clarinet—begins with a slow, insistent bass line and some dirty blues licks. And then, near the end, a powerful guitar-and-bass duet occurs, and Bryant lets go. For about a minute, we get dark, purposeful soloing. Another Bryant composition, "Vignette #2," falls in the same category. A somewhat disjointed piece arranged for bass and electric guitar, "Vignette #2" finds the musicians presenting something truly unified. They're focused and really working together. The album-ending traditional "I'm Going To Tell God All Of My Troubles," which does not feature Bryant, Colley or Potter, also deserves mention. Earlier in the album, the same song is done by the duo of Bryant on nylon-string guitar and Potter on bass clarinet. But the final track is a live performance from Bryant's parents, recorded at New York's Lincoln Center in 1974. Carroll Hollister's piano is sparse and soulful, and you can hear the life-and-times in Beatrice Rippy's stirring soprano. The track is close to being a tearjerker; Bryant clearly has music in his genes.

—Brad Farberman

**Dreamscape: Solo, Duo, Trio:** Dreamscape; Ask Me Now; Vignette #1; Vignette #2; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Songs; Estate; Secret Love; I'm Going To Tell God All Of My Troubles; Everyday Is The End And The Beginning Of Life Beautiful ...; Serenade; Watermelon Man; Fantasia On A Theme By Charlie Haden: For Turiya; Silence; I'm Going To Tell God All Of My Troubles. (75:00)

**Personnel:** Freddie Bryant, guitars (1-14); Chris Potter, bass clarinet (6, 9), tenor saxophone (10), soprano saxophone (1); Scott Colley, bass (1, 3, 4, 6, 10); Beatrice Rippy, soprano (15); Carroll Hollister, piano (15).

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**Chico Hamilton**  
*The Inquiring Mind*

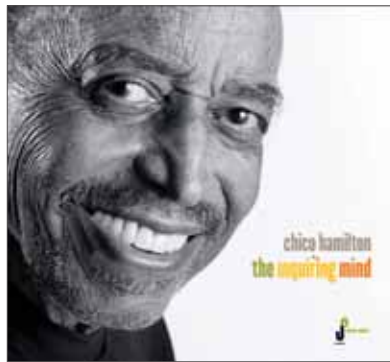
JOYOUS SHOUT! 10016

★★★

Be forewarned: Chico Hamilton does not play on this album that is being released under his name, although he's listed as producer. The great drummer and bandleader died Nov. 25, 2013, at the age of 92, just weeks after the recording and mixing of the album. The CD does feature his longtime band, Euphoria, and 12 of its 19 compositions are his. (Jeremy Carlstedt is the capable drummer.)

And it's actually a nice album. Hamilton was known for his unusual (for jazz) chamber-like instrumentation and sonorities—cello, guitar, flute. Throughout this album, flutist Mayu Saeki often takes the lead voice, with sterling guitar work from Nick Demopoulos. Also in the forefront is Paul Ramsey's electric bass, with its big, floating, Jaco-like trombone tone. Especially gratifying is the presence of former Hamilton band trombonist George Bohanon (from the early '60s edition with Gábor Szabó and Charles Lloyd), who lends gravitas to sev-

eral tracks (especially his growling mute on "Who Knows?"), and veteran trumpeter-flugelhornist Jimmy Owens, who is equally succinct and lyrical in his guest spots. The compositions and arrangements show Hamilton's typically relaxed touch and esoteric taste—interesting, hooky tunes and varied grooves. Though Hamilton doesn't play, he offers sage spoken-word observations on



Saeki, flute, alto flute, vocals; George Bohanon, trombone (6, 8, 9); Jimmy Owens, flugelhorn, trumpet (8, 9).  
Ordering info: [joyousshout.com](http://joyousshout.com)

"Gateway To The Inquiring Mind." The album ultimately leaves his legacy in good hands.  
—Jon Garelick

**The Inquiring Mind:** Joy Of Spring; Money Wish; Up To You; Perdido; Hope; Who Knows?; Nice Lick; CHO = Chico Hamilton Organization; Nate's Night; Tone Poem; 534 Play; Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind; Gateway To The Inquiring Mind; If Tomorrow Never Comes; Where Is Today; Reluctant; Albert's Tune; Nate Sure; No Wheels; Any Space In Time. (63:02)

**Personnel:** Paul Ramsey, electric bass; Evan Schwam, tenor, alto, soprano, and baritone saxes, flute, vocals; Jeremy Carlstedt, drums, percussion, vocals; Nick Demopoulos, guitar, vocals; Mayu Saeki, flute, alto flute, vocals; George Bohanon, trombone (6, 8, 9); Jimmy Owens, flugelhorn, trumpet (8, 9).

**George Mraz/David Hazeltine Trio**  
*Your Story*

CUBE METIER 21351

★★½

Bass player George Mraz and pianist David Hazeltine have developed a close relationship that is clearly palpable in their latest trio album. With the help of drummer Jason Brown, they tackle several jazz staples with an emphasis on Bill Evans—whose shadow hovers over this recording—as well as a few originals that fit right in. Mraz and Hazeltine deserve to receive the billing as co-leaders. They occupy the front line on equal footing, taking turns as the lead instrument. Their musical goal is not to break any new ground; they are content to play tasteful and timeless music while perfecting their interpretations of familiar tunes and striving to stamp them with their own sensibility. They do so with an impressive amount of finesse and nuance. The solos here are extremely melodic, and the co-leaders' intricate exchanges are powered by Brown's light yet assured drive. It would be easy to shower this album with superlatives—the trio's musicianship is unquestioned—but subtlety is not always a palliative for predictability. If the trio dazzles, it also fails to generate emotions in spite of the album's eloquent playing and warm sound.

—Alain Drouot

**Your Story:** Around The Corner; Turn Out The Stars; Barbara; For B.C.; You Must Believe In Spring; Your Story; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; Wisteria; Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye. (58:27)

**Personnel:** George Mraz, bass; David Hazeltine, piano; Jason Brown, drums.

Ordering info: [cube-metier.com](http://cube-metier.com)



**David Weiss** when words fail

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A masterful arranger and bandleader  
— Frank Alkyer, *DownBeat*


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— John Kelman, *All About Jazz*

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**Dave Chamberlain's Band Of Bones Caravan**

BB PRODUCTIONS 0002  
 ★★☆☆½

A jazz group featuring multiple trombonists is a concept whose genesis goes back to the mid-1950s with the popularity of the J.J. Johnson & Kai Winding Quintet. Later, Slide Hampton's World Of Trombones had as many as nine trombones, and there have been other occasional trombone-dominated bands during the past few decades.

While utilizing a similar concept, Dave Chamberlain's Band Of Bones stretches the genre a little. In addition to the nine trombonists (two of whom are bass trombonists) and the rhythm sec-

tion, Chamberlain doubles on flute, and Chombo Corniel's congas add a strong Latin element to half of the selections. Kat Gang also sings on three songs.

Naturally, the trombonists dominate the music with seven of the nine 'bones getting solo space. However, there is more variety to the music on *Caravan* than one might expect. The first sound is actually Chamberlain's flute on "Manteca." Nate Mayland takes one of the strongest trombone solos of the session on this tune and the blending of the flute with the trombones is quite effective. Guest Hendrik Meurkens is featured on his original "Slidin'," which has the unique front line of harmonica and bass trombone.

"Sway," a 1950s hit that has made a major comeback during the past decade, is given an inventive treatment in Chamberlain's arrangement here, which finds Kat Gang singing in Spanish. "Lament," J.J. Johnson's most famous composition, is properly if predictably somber. Harold Mabern's "Mr. Johnson" gives bassist Jerry DeVore and pianist Kenny Ascher some solo space. "V.O." features Steve Turre on conch shells and then trombone. The set concludes with a version of "Caravan" that uses unusual accents and plays a bit with time while falling securely into the area of Afro-Cuban jazz. —*Scott Yanow*

**Caravan:** Manteca; Slidin'; Sway (Quien Sera); Lament; El Grito De La Culebra; Mr. Johnson; V.O.; How Deep Is The Ocean; Caravan. (52:20)  
**Personnel:** Dave Chamberlain, trombone, flute; Charley Gordon, Sara Jacovino, Nate Mayland, Matt McDonald, Mark Patterson, Chris Rinaman, trombones; Max Seigel, Dale Turk, bass trombones; Kenny Ascher, piano; Jerry DeVore, bass; Mike Campenni, drums; Chombo Corniel, congas, percussion; Kat Gang, vocals; Hendrik Meurkens, harmonica (2); Steve Turre, trombone, conch shells (7).

Ordering info: [bandofbones.com](http://bandofbones.com)

**Paul Bley Play Blue: Oslo Concert**

ECM 2373  
 ★★☆☆

From his earliest days, Canadian pianist Paul Bley has cultivated his image as an iconoclastic yet attractive curmudgeon. His career choices have confounded expectations, as do his solo piano outings, where his non-linear approach to improvisation and ability to blur the lines between pretty melodies, ear-pleasing harmony and atonality have influenced players as diverse as Keith Jarrett and Matthew Shipp. Age—Bley is now 81—may have slowed him, but it has also brought his craggy playing into sharper relief: Witness the smears note clusters on "Flame" that suddenly, unexpectedly give way to shimmering, bell-like notes.

The Oslo audience on this 2008 concert is so rapt that it seems not to be there as Bley works his way through "Far North" and "Way Down South Suite," both of which are filled with signature techniques and constant movement. The former begins with a jittery rhythm, which smooths out as the harmony slips around. At several points, Bley seems to re-center himself before setting out in a new direction. "Way Down South Suite" offers a study in contrasts—icy, hanging notes that precede florid passages, gorgeous lines with jagged edges, and sudden blue notes or phrases.

Often, Bley can seem like a man who is lost in thought, exploring phrases and gestures as they occur to him, and turning them over like random memories. On "Longer," fragmented motifs lead in many directions, some of them blind alleys, while "Flame" blends cascades of notes, choppy passages and layered repetition into a narrative that constantly surprises. A sprightly, spare encore of Sonny Rollins' "Pent-Up House" is more scattered. —*James Hale*

**Play Blue: Oslo Concert:** Far North; Way Down South Suite; Flame; Longer; Pent-Up House. (56:30)

**Personnel:** Paul Bley, piano.

Ordering info: [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)



# The Dark Prince's Bull's-Eye

After listening to the recordings of his band's four-night stint in June 1970 at Manhattan's fabled Fillmore East concert hall, Miles Davis remarked to a music journalist that the performances were so exciting that they should be made available to the public in their entirety. Instead, Columbia Records released a double-LP later that year with the shows, which ranged in length between 46 and 57 minutes long, severely edited down to 20-minute assemblages by producer Teo Macero. Mostly gone were the long, exuberant jams between Chick Corea on electric piano and Keith Jarrett on fuzzed-out organ, as well as the surly sax solos from then 19-year-old Steve Grossman.

**Miles At The Fillmore—Miles Davis 1970: The Bootleg Series Vol. 3 (Columbia/Legacy 88765433812; 68:55/57:59/66:15/57:28 ★★★★★½)** grants the Dark Prince his wish posthumously, and his long-ago assessment strikes an uncanny bull's-eye. Though the four-CD box covers practically the same repertoire from night to night, the scorching intensity and instrumental brilliance displayed here serves notice that a reevaluation of Davis' work—and band—at this point in his career is due. These Fillmore CDs may not be the place where you start curious listeners, but they stand as artistic feats that have maintained over a good span of time a strong relevance, both aesthetically and culturally, while continuing as bona fide emblems of the eras from which they emanated. This is no small trick, especially for music still imbued with the haze from the '60s (and early years of the next decade), before the strong anti-establishment fervor and heady optimism began to fade, along with spacey, indulgent solos and uncontrolled ensemble fever dreams.

Staking his claim as jazz-fusion progenitor with the release of *Bitches Brew* in April 1970, Davis clearly embraced the "do your own thing" expressiveness and amped-up electronic experimentation that helped characterize the era. The trickster-trumpeter, always a savvy reader of the zeitgeist, was able to win over acid-rock audiences by employing a band of younger musicians with phenomenal talents, and letting them loose—under his careful guidance, of course.

These Fillmore dates find Davis at his second visit to the venue, having played there three months earlier with Corea, Dave Holland on electric bass and Jack DeJohnette (part of the core group left over from the *Bitches Brew* session), plus Grossman and Airto Moreira, playing mostly percussion but adding some flute and vocal exhortations to the mix. The big addition to the four June shows was Jarrett, who had already been working with Davis in the studio. The comfort level for all involved, judging from these recordings, is supremely high. Kept on a short leash, Grossman gives his all in 2-minute bursts, and Moreira revels in a soundscape where he's free to add



Miles Davis onstage at the Fillmore East in 1970

whatever spice he deems appropriate. But the revelations here begin with the terrific drive and lift from the rhythm section, the keyboard duels and a 44-year-old Davis' wholly inspired playing.

After the Wednesday night show, with Davis establishing a four-song set list, there are deviations. Each night Davis and crew break out of the gate with a funky take on "Directions" before DeJohnette's hi-hats signal a shift to "The Mask," then a new song from Davis, which he limns each night with perhaps his most imaginative solo of the set, his horn moving deftly from screams and lyrical flutters to wobbling phrases and scaled peals. The pace quickens with "It's About That Time," featuring a full-tilt solo from Grossman on soprano sax, and then the low and ominous pulsating electric piano announces the arrival of "Bitches Brew," the band breaking out into various motifs afterwards. Thursday's show earns a rare encore, an uptempo "Spanish Key" with Grossman suggesting Coltrane on tenor sax, and on Friday and Saturday night Davis inserts a short, balladic "I Fall In Love Too Easily" and similarly quiet "Sanctuary" before the closing "Brew." On the last night Davis keeps soloing into "Willie Nelson" after "Brew," with Corea riding a hard beat, thanks to Holland's insistent bass and DeJohnette's lockdown drumming.

The concept of the four-night Fillmore feast loses potency with the inclusion of tracks from an April 11, 1970, Fillmore West concert—"Paraphernalia," "Footprints" and "Miles Runs The Voodoo Down"—which close out two of the discs. The performances stand on-par with the June dates (even minus Jarrett), but the sound quality differs greatly; the June dates benefit from near-perfect audio production. Even so, simultaneous overplaying leads to a few mushy sections in the June shows, and Moreira seems out of place here and there. But that's where you can just shrug and blame it on the times. **DB**

Ordering info: [legacyrecordings.com](http://legacyrecordings.com)

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## JC Sanford Orchestra *Views From The Inside*

WHIRLWIND 4652

★★★★

Trombonist-composer JC Sanford obviously has a taste for eccentric sounds. As a player he's worked with the diverse and individualistic likes of Danilo Pérez, Matt Wilson and Gunther Schuller; as a conductor, he's waved the baton for idiosyncratic big bands including the John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble and the Joel Harrison 19—all while leading such off-kilter ensembles as Triocracy, which teams his trombone with a pair of saxophones, and My Band Foot Foot, which explores the canon of outsider girl group The Shaggs.

The debut CD from Sanford's own 15-piece orchestra is equally distinctive. Sanford draws on

a wealth of large-scale influences ranging from swing bands to contemporary classical music, though without creating a patchwork. Somehow his stylistic swerves flow effortlessly into one another, often melding into strange but beautiful hybrids. The ensemble not only brings strong musicianship but eclectic instrumentation, greatly expanding the leader's already imaginative palette.

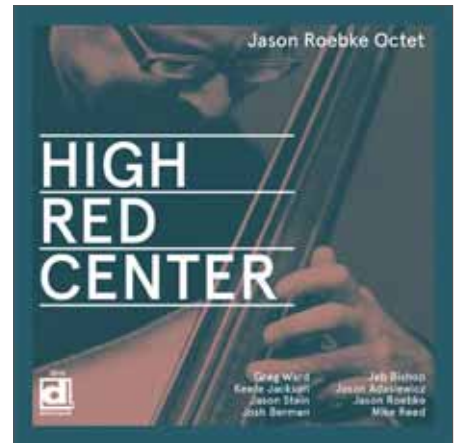
The evocative opener, "An Attempt At Serenity," begins with a chorus of Buddhist recitations on suffering, which becomes a depiction of the struggle for transcendence, pitting Kenny Berger's growling, rutting contra-alto clarinet against Matt Holman's blissful trumpet. A series of "Brooklyn Vignettes" depict the neighborhood in its swarming bustle ("Brownland") and its erratic charms ("Sunset Park, Sunset Park"). The disc culminates in the 15-minute title track, originally penned for a dance performance, which densely layers a wide swathe of emotions and colors.

—Shaun Brady

**Views From The Inside:** An Attempt At Serenity; Your Word Alone; 2nd & 7th (Brooklyn Vignette #5); Brownland (Brooklyn Vignette #1); Pre-Systems; Robins In Snow; Views From The Inside; Inter-Systems; Sunset Park, Sunset Park (Brooklyn Vignette #2); Sky, Good; Systems Two (Brooklyn Vignette #6); Verrazano Bikeride (Brooklyn Vignette #3). (68:19)

**Personnel:** JC Sanford, composer, conductor, trombone; Satoshi Takeishi, percussion; Jacob Garchik, accordion; Tom Beckham, vibraphone; Meg Okura, violin, electronics; Will Martina, cello, electronics; Aidan O'Donnell, bass; Dan Willis, oboe, piccolo, flute, soprano saxophone; Ben Kono, English horn, bass clarinet, clarinet, flute, alto saxophone; Chris Bacas, clarinet, soprano, tenor saxophones; Kenny Berger, contra-alto clarinet, bassoon, alto flute; Taylor Haskins, trumpet, flugelhorn, harmonizer; Matt Holman, trumpet, flugelhorn; Mark Patterson, tenor trombone; Jeff Nelson, tuba, bass trombone; Chris Komer, French horn; Asuka Kakitani, conductor (6, 12).

**Ordering info:** [whirlwindrecordings.com](http://whirlwindrecordings.com)



## Jason Roebke Octet *High/Red/Center*

DELMARK 5014

★★★★

Over the last decade-and-a-half, bassist Jason Roebke has been a veritable rock on the Chicago improvised music scene, contributing his strong, woody tone to a dizzying array of projects where he selflessly provides rhythmic and harmonic support. Over that time he's been judicious about his own projects, exploring specific areas of interest, from the intimacy of his chamber trio, Rapid Croche, to the multilinear electro-acoustic gambits of his group the Combination. He's been leading ever-shifting versions of his octet for several years—sometimes with as few as seven players and as many as 10. That inherent instability reveals a key ethos of the group's work, where each of the participating musicians is crucial to shaping the sound of the bassist's durable but open-ended themes.

On *High/Red/Center*, there are gorgeous harmonies all over the place—the astringent tone colors that careen through the fleet, hard-swinging "Blues," the gauzy Ellingtonian pastels of "Dirt Cheap" and the pointillistic jabbing of the title piece. There's a loose-limbed approach where players routinely drop accents or play chart fragments to cajole and prod specific soloists.

As fantastic as the arrangements are, other pieces were clearly conceived with a specific improviser in mind. On the gorgeous ballad "Ten Nights" trombonist Jeb Bishop offers an exceptionally lyric, tender statement delicately cradled by enveloping hues of brass and reeds—to say nothing of the kaleidoscopic vibes of Jason Adasiewicz—that cumulatively redirect the piece toward a new destination without the soloist's assured grip ever loosening. Roebke takes his share of solos, but his greatest accomplishment with the octet is shepherding a stunning group sound, and guiding his cohorts—drawing upon their strengths to give his writing a remarkable richness and variety.

—Peter Margasak

**High/Red/Center:** High/Red/Center; Slow; Blues; Candy Time; Dirt Cheap; No Passengers; Double Check; Ten Nights; Ballin'; Shadow; Birthday. (60:49)

**Personnel:** Greg Ward, alto saxophone; Keefe Jackson, tenor saxophone; Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Josh Berman, cornet; Jeb Bishop, trombone; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Jason Roebke, bass; Mike Reed, drums.

**Ordering info:** [delmark.com](http://delmark.com)

## Michel Wintsch/ Christian Weber/ Christian Wolfarth *Willisau*

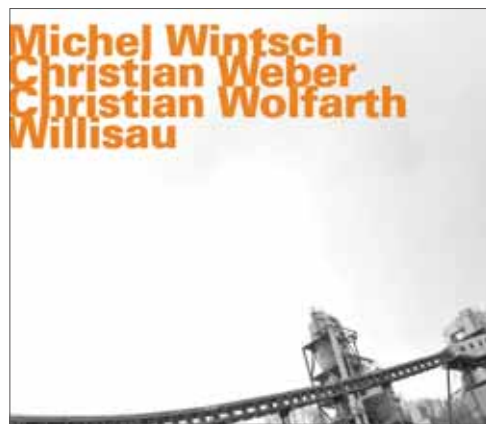
HATOLOGY 725

★★★★½

For pianist-keyboardist Michel Wintsch, bassist Christian Weber and drummer Christian Wolfarth, the journey would appear to be far more important than the destination. On their new album, *Willisau*—a crisply recorded document from a 2012 performance at the Willisau Jazz Festival—the Switzerland-based trio offers a series of group improvisations that trace a linear path from idea to idea with a momentum that is restless and often exhilarating.

The opening track—which, at 32 minutes, accounts for more than half the album—offers a compendium of the trio's individual strengths but, more importantly, showcases their advanced sense of collective invention. Weber and Wolfarth function no more as a rhythm section than Wintsch's piano acts as a melodic lead. Indeed, none of the musicians seem overly concerned with the traditional role of their respective instruments, preferring instead to investigate the sounds and textures that lie at the extremes of conventional technique.

Yet there are few moments on *Willisau* that come across as unmusical or formless; instead, the trio's improvisations lay bare the exploratory process that leads from place to place and mood to



mood. While Wintsch is able to summon abstract chromatic shapes, agitated runs and elusive fragments from the piano, he is equally willing to employ a synthesizer to generate restrained electronic flourishes. The strange sonic textures and dynamic shifts are just as likely to emerge from Weber's searching bass or Wolfarth's intricate rhythmic interventions. However, none of them are content to stay in the same place for too long: As soon as they have reached anything that looks like a destination, they have already started to pull the music in a new direction.

—Jesse Simon

**Willisau:** 2.8 Feet Below, Tiny Fellows, Distant Neighbours; Fragile Paths; North West. (47:36)

**Personnel:** Michel Wintsch, piano, synthesizers; Christian Weber, bass; Christian Wolfarth, drums.

**Ordering info:** [hathut.com](http://hathut.com)



**John Clayton with  
Gerald Clayton**  
*Parlor Series, Volume 1*

ARTISTSHARE 124

★★★★★

Bassist John Clayton has started off his new *Parlor Series* of duo albums with his son, Gerald, and will continue with duo sets featuring the late pianists Hank Jones (1918–2010) and Mulgrew Miller (1955–2013), which were recorded before they died.

The first volume tastefully combines the conventional with a spirit of exploration. John plays the elder statesman role here, representing an era where listeners knew a great walking bass line and appreciated a good version of “Alone Together” or “Yesterdays” (both featured here). Gerald, on the other hand, is a chameleon who maintains a distinct signature.

The album starts off as a pleasant, back-to-basics father-son jaunt through the classics.



But it's the display of ebullience and deconstruction on Gerald's longtime original composition “Sunny Day Go” and the spirited closer, “All The Things You Are,” that makes this album truly interesting.

“Isfahan” (from Ellington's *The Far East Suite*), Antônio Carlos

Jobim's bossa nova “Zingaro” and a cover of Billy Joel's “And So It Goes” help establish an

even-keeled mood throughout the disc. The adventure isn't in what they're playing, but in how they're playing it.

In essence, Clayton's *Parlor Series* reminds the listener how powerful the intimacy of duo sets can be: Duos bring together the minds and spirits of the performers, taking them as near or far as they want to go.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

**Parlor Series, Volume 1:** Alone Together; If I Should Lose You; Zingaro; Yesterdays; And So It Goes; Isfahan; Sunny Day Go; All The Things You Are. (60:18)

**Personnel:** John Clayton, bass; Gerald Clayton, piano.  
**Ordering info:** [artistshare.com](http://artistshare.com)

**Franklin Kiermyer**

*Further*

MOBILITY MUSIC 020131

★★★★½

Franklin Kiermyer has a thing for 1960s energy music, specifically the last few years that John Coltrane was recording. That shouldn't be news to fans



of the Canadian drummer, who now lives in Oslo by way of New York City. His band harkens back to those almost-as-heady days of the 1970s when former Coltrane bandmate McCoy Tyner played with two of Kiermyer's main men here: saxophonist Azar Lawrence and bassist Juini Booth. Pianist Benito Gonzalez even seems to have the Tyner touch. *Further* is an experiment with mixed results. The overall thrust of the album is less one of compositional style or arrangement and more one of intent. Everything but the closing cut ruminates in rubatos and skeletal motifs, with pared-down theme statements serving as effective launching pads. The solemn “Supplication” stands out as the one essentially played-through piece, side-stepping the album's typical energy for something more overtly spiritual. The medium-tempo “The Other Blues” ends everything with some bona fide swing, a serviceable contrast that showcases the band's affinities closer to home.

—John Ephland

**Further:** Between Joy And Consequence (Live); Bilad El-Sudan (Live); Astrophysical; Supplication; MafTir; Between Joy And Consequence; The Other Blues (Live). (49:20)

**Personnel:** Franklin Kiermyer, drums; Azar Lawrence, tenor, soprano saxophones; Benito Gonzalez, piano; Juini Booth, bass.

**Ordering info:** [kiermyer.com](http://kiermyer.com)

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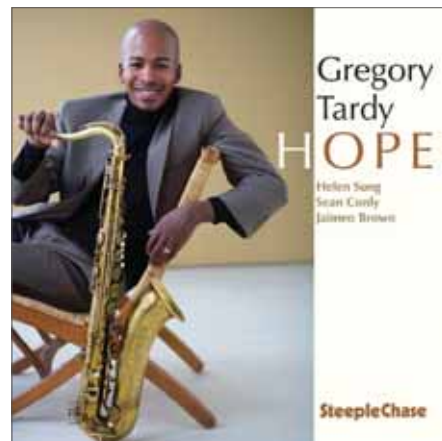
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**Gregory Tardy**  
*Hope*

STEEPLECHASE 31775

★★★★½

Tenor saxophonist Gregory Tardy has a warm tenor saxophone tone that sounds as openly embracing as his ongoing devotional themes. He has recorded a series of discs that combine his originals with classic jazz pieces and traditional Christian songs, including 2010's *Steps Of Faith* and 2013's *Standards & More* (both on SteepleChase). These discs usually feature bassist Sean Conly and drummer Jaimeo Brown, who also perform on *Hope*. But this disc stands out for the return of inventive pianist Helen Sung, who recorded with Tardy's group about nine years ago on *The Truth*.

In some ways, Tardy's disc recalls David Murray's *Spirituals* (DIW) from 1990. Both quartet recordings feature strong tenor players who combine their own works with the religious songs they've been hearing since before they even began playing music. And both give prominence to challenging pianists who become the ideal foils for the bandleader (Murray had Dave Burrell). But while Murray's broad sound took on the role of a preacher on the pulpit, Tardy's inviting approach is more about singing quietly through the hymnal.

Even though Tardy is more mellifluous, off-kilter jolts recur throughout the disc, especially during his exchanges with Sung. On his "Every Life Is Precious," the band stops around the 2-minute mark and her tense solo suddenly casts the song in a different direction. The saxophonist and pianist also stretch things out on another of his spiritually inspired originals, "The Cost Of Discipleship." She coaxes Tardy into a higher register before resolving with Brown's cymbal crashes.

While Tardy's angular attack shapes the personal protest song "Media Indoctrination," his fervor is never exclusionary. The glowing warmth he conveys on Bob Haymes' ballad standard "That's All" could turn anyone into a believer.

—Aaron Cohen

**Hope:** Jinrikisha; A Tree And Its Fruit; Every Life Is Precious; O Come, O Come Emmanuel; That's All; The Cost Of Discipleship; Be Thou My Vision; Astral; Come Thou Font Of Every Blessing; Media Indoctrination; My Jesus I Love Thee. (60:21)

**Personnel:** Gregory Tardy, tenor saxophone; Helen Sung, piano; Sean Conly, bass; Jaimeo Brown, drums.

**Ordering info:** [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)



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# The Chameleonic McLaughlin

**Bathed in Lightning: John McLaughlin, the 60s and the Emerald Beyond (Jawbone Press),** Colin Harper's exhaustive and insightful behind-the-scenes look at the ascendancy of John McLaughlin from ubiquitous London session player to underground jazz cult figure to international guitar god, leaves no stone unturned. By cobbling together relevant quotes and reviews from such respected British music publications as *Jazz Monthly*, *New Music Express*, *Melody Maker* and *The Listener*, as well as various European newspaper accounts of the time and dozens of fresh interviews with pertinent subjects, Harper very meticulously fills in the cracks for readers who were unaware of McLaughlin's output prior to his involvement with Tony Williams Lifetime and Miles Davis.

Indeed, the first 324 pages of this meaty 500-plus-page tome cover McLaughlin's career before he ever set foot on American soil. We learn of the guitarist's key engagements with Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames at The Flamingo in London (1962-'63), The Graham Bond Organisation featuring the potent rhythm tandem of bassist Jack Bruce and drummer Ginger Baker (1963), as well as important sideman gigs with Brian Auger, Duffy Power and Herbie Goins & The Night-Timers as well as rent-paying pop sessions for the likes of Tom Jones, Petula Clark and Engelbert Humperdinck.

The last 150 pages are a breakdown of McLaughlin's involvement with such landmark recordings as Tony Williams Lifetime's *Emergency* and *Turn It Over*, Miles Davis' *In A Silent Way*, *Bitches Brew*, *Jack Johnson* and *Live-Evil* as well as such pivotal albums as Miroslav Vitous' *Purple*, Wayne Shorter's *Moto Grosso Feio* and Larry Coryell's *Spaces* and his own Hendrix-inspired *Devotion* and his acoustic *My Goal's Beyond*, leading up to the formation of The Mahavishnu Orchestra and the double-barreled assault of 1971's *The Inner Mounting Flame* and 1973's *Birds Of Fire*.

Along the way, Harper investigates McLaughlin's relationships with his guru, Sri Chinmoy, and his first two wives. (In 1960, at age 18, McLaughlin married his first wife, Margaret Grey. His second marriage was to Eve Wright, who would later be given the name Mahalakshmi by Sri Chinmoy when she and McLaughlin lived in close proximity to the guru in their Jamaica, Queens, neighborhood.) Less than 100 pages are devoted to his thorough analysis of the original Mahavishnu Orchestra lineup, the second edition with violinist Jean-Luc Ponty, electric bassist Ralphe Armstrong, keyboardist Gayle Moran and drummer



John McLaughlin onstage with Ralphe Armstrong in 1974

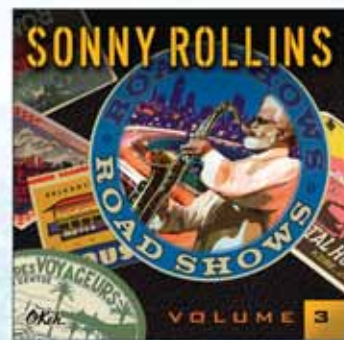
Narada Michael Walden (a fellow Sri Chinmoy disciple who gives detailed and insightful testimony throughout).

The book culminates with detailed examinations of three albums: McLaughlin's collaboration with former Beatles producer George Martin, engineer Geoff Emerick and arranger Mike Gibbs on Mahavishnu's sprawling 1974 recording with the London Symphony Orchestra, *Apocalypse*; the potent followup *Visions Of The Emerald Beyond*; and 1976's stripped-down but no less potent *Inner Worlds*, which features Armstrong, Walden and keyboardist Stu Goldberg. The author suggests, through his exhaustive research, that the ending of McLaughlin's marriage to Eve coincided with his separation from Sri Chinmoy and his exhaustion with loud music, which led to his investigation of an acoustic East-West hybrid with the group Shakti.

Of course, the chameleonic McLaughlin—who recently released a new live album, *The Boston Record* (Abstract Logix) with his dynamic 4th Dimension band—has gone through myriad musical situations since those Mahavishnu Orchestra days, including an '80s revival of the band followed by acoustic trio recordings, an orchestral project, an organ trio outing with Joey DeFrancesco and Elvin Jones, a delicate guitar quartet outing and a series of Carnatic-imbued Remember Shakti projects. But his dizzying rise to fame in those pre-Beatles days in London followed by his jump to the States (and international stardom) in 1969 and subsequent canonization as the guitar avatar of The Mahavishnu Orchestra are what Harper focuses on in this remarkably detailed account.

*Bathed in Lightning* (a phrase bestowed upon the once and future guitar hero by the astute *New Music Express* critic Charles Shaar Murray) is an absolute must-read for McLaughlin completists. **DB**

Ordering info: [jawbonepress.com](http://jawbonepress.com)



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# Strengthening Your Sound With Foundation Long Tones

I've utilized long-tone exercises for many years, and they've become a cornerstone to my practice routine. We can play a magically virtuosic solo, but if our tone is poor, no one will be drawn in. If we play a very simple passage with a beautiful sound, everyone will connect to it.

The formation of one's voice begins with the tone we produce. On woodwind instruments, the air column needs to be extremely stable to produce sounds that are homogenous through the entire range. Many times players will have strengths in their range, but at the extremes the sound becomes thin and unwieldy. This can be overcome by a series of tone exercises that make the entire range of the instrument equally stable and usable. As an improviser, you need to be able to execute all that you're hearing to properly establish your own musical personality.

A long-tone exercise that I've found to be extremely productive is one that I've assembled by combining some of the various methods taught to me. I call the exercise Foundation Long Tones. It works equally well on all woodwind instruments, but here it will be applied to flute, clarinet and saxophone.

The initial concept is to understand what the lowest note on our instrument is. This will be referred to as the "foundation." The lowest note possible on a woodwind instrument is produced when all holes are closed and we are essentially playing on a tube with no holes. This pitch is very important to the comfort of the rest of the instrument, and much attention needs to be paid to playing this note extremely well. The foundation note is low C on flute, low E on clarinet and low B-flat on saxophone (there are options with these instruments to increase the range; in this case, always use the lowest note possible on your instrument as the foundation).

While using a chromatic tuner, start playing the foundation with as beautiful and round a tone as possible. Listen for the tone to open up and feel easy. Play the pitch from pianissimo to fortissimo and back down to pianissimo with a single breath (see Example 1). You're simultaneously working on tone control, pitch and dynamics. To get this steady will take time. At first your pitch will be shaky while changing dynamics, so focus on keeping your embouchure muscles static.

Once you're comfortable on the fundamental tone, go up a half step to the next pitch. Keep your jaw and mouth in the same position as the foundation and play the notes with contrasting dynamics as you did previously with the initial foundation.

Now, play the foundation up a half step and go back down to the foundation pitch with one breath (see Example 2). This will now be repeated with expanding intervals (on flute: C-D-C,

Brian Landrus



VINCE SEGALLA

C-D#-C, C-E-C, etc.) until you reach the top of the horn (see Example 3). It's beneficial to practice both slurring between the notes and also tonguing each. I encourage everyone to work on their altissimo and start incorporating pitches beyond your comfort as soon as you begin this exercise—it will increase your range and comfort at a very fast pace. Make sure that you push your limits on volume to broaden the range of your usable dynam-

ics and to help stabilize your pitch. This exercise should be utilized at least four times a week.

The initial challenges of tone production arise because of the tendency to change our embouchure to accommodate different pitches. This is something that's intuitive to the body because initially it makes notes easier to produce, but it can result in a lack of tone quality and shakiness of pitch. The foundation-note exercise develops your



EXAMPLE 1

Musical score for Example 1, featuring three staves: Flute (F), Clarinet in Bb (Cl.), and Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.). The music is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*.

EXAMPLE 2

Musical score for Example 2, featuring three staves: Flute (Fl.), Bb Clarinet (Bb Cl.), and Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.). The music is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*.

EXAMPLE 3

Musical score for Example 3, featuring three staves: Flute (Fl.), Bb Clarinet (Bb Cl.), and Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.). The music is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*.

air column and helps you keep your throat open as you move from one note to the next. It makes you aware of how large your air column needs to be for the foundation pitch, and when you learn to keep your throat very open on the highest notes possible, the sound is wide and gorgeous, and very easy to play. I've been working with this technique for the past 10 years on all of my woodwind instruments, and it has made my tone and pitch very solid and without question.

Of the many long-tone methods commonly used by musicians, several begin at the bottom of the instrument and chromatically rise through the entirety of the range. Although this is also very beneficial, it ignores the issue that small anatomical changes have occurred in the embouchure without notice while rising in pitch. The most egregious is that of squeezing more with the jaw to produce the target pitch. This will change the tone quality from "ah" to "ee," which will make the high notes strident and unpredictable.

By always referring to the fundamental of the instrument, one is reminded of how open to keep

the throat and to keep the jaw relaxed. This will create much more uniformity of tone and pitch and at the same time let the sound resonate as fully as possible by not restricting the vibrations with one's jaw. Another difference with other methods is that the player focuses more on each individual note instead of viewing the instrument as a whole. By the time you reach the highest note, you've forgotten what the lowest note feels like.

The Foundation Long Tones exercise will increase flexibility, produce a homogenous tone and enable ease of the entire range of your instrument while also focusing on dynamics and pitch.

DB

Brian Landrus is a low woodwind specialist who lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. Landrus has been called "a baritone saxophonist of imposing authority" by the *New York Times* and "a low woodwind ace" by the *New Yorker*. He has placed in the Rising Star-Baritone Saxophone category of DownBeat's International Critics Poll for the past four years. Landrus recently released the album *Mirage* (BlueLand Records) featuring his electric quintet Kaleidoscope plus string quartet. Visit him online at [brianlandrus.com](http://brianlandrus.com).

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# Let's Get Along

## How an Operating Agreement Can Reduce Band Conflicts and Resolve Legal Issues

You have joined with some likeminded musicians and formed a band. Maybe it's a straightahead quintet, an organ trio or an innovative multi-instrumental configuration destined to break some artistic and improvisational ground. You have written some compositions, started to develop a distinctive sound and even booked a few gigs. These steps are certainly significant, and this band could be a serious endeavor to which you're prepared to commit yourself. With the group in its early stages, you and your bandmates are probably getting along as you share in the creative excitement of exploring new musical terrain.

But what happens several years later when this honeymoon ends and conflicts emerge? For example, who owns the band name, its recordings, compositions or even the gear you bought together? What can and should happen when someone wants (or is asked) to leave the group? How does the group manage itself? Should the band be set up as a general partnership or a limited liability company (LLC)? How are payments from gigs disbursed?

If you and your bandmates entered into an operating agreement when you first committed to making a go of it—when you were getting along—you could turn to this agreement and find the answers to these questions. These issues are best addressed before any such problems arise. Just as you make your music with the utmost care, attention and commitment, you should address key legal issues that your band may confront with the same attention in an operating agreement.

As the name implies, an operating agreement is a contract that sets forth the rules and obligations regarding day-to-day business of the group. An attorney can assist you in drafting one, and you and your bandmates can address these issues however you want—there is no set way to do it. Having these “rules of the road” in place can ease potential conflicts and help your band operate more efficiently. Once you draft an agreement that everyone is happy

with, you can focus on what matters most—making great music.

Three key provisions in an operating agreement addressed below are (1) who owns the band's compositions; (2) who owns the band's

number of times their compositions have been covered. The songbooks of often-covered jazz composers such as Duke Ellington or Thelonious Monk have also presumably created steady royalties.

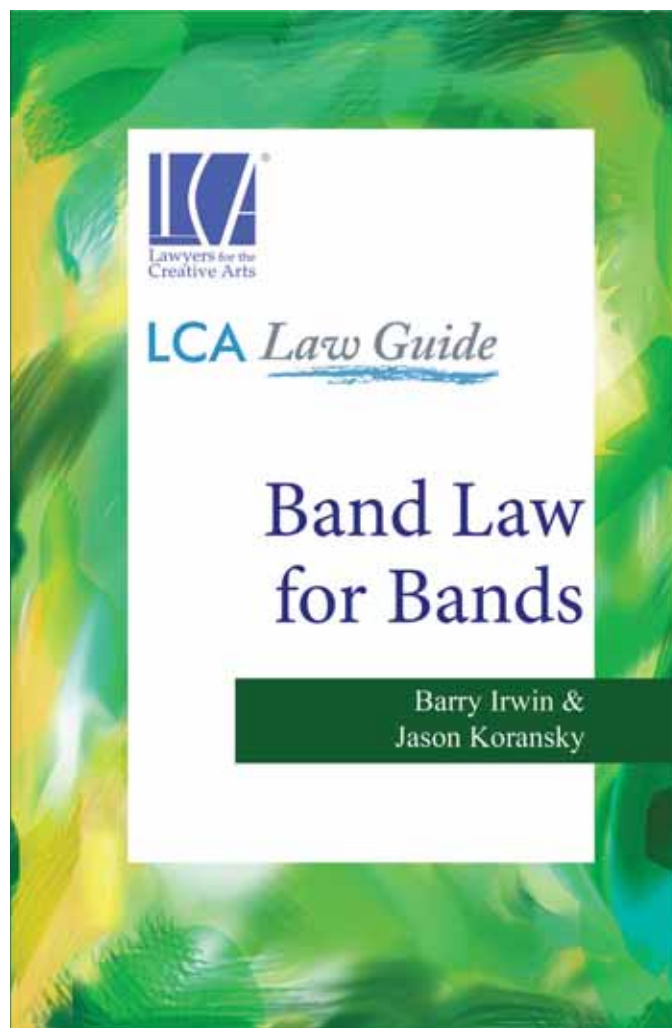
can collect mechanical royalties for your recordings (and other artists' cover versions) of the compositions. You can license the compositions for use in a commercial, television show or movie. Simply put, compositions are perhaps your band's most valuable intellectual property, and you should protect them to ensure that the rights to them are clear and secure.

The starting point in discussing ownership of your band's music is a fundamental concept in copyright law—there are two separate and distinct copyrights in a song. First, there is a copyright for the “composition.” These are the musical notes, lyrics and arrangement. Another entirely distinct copyright exists in the “sound recording.” This is the recording of a composition that is placed on an album or sold as a digital download.

How should compositions be addressed in an operating agreement? Absent an agreement that controls ownership of a band's compositions, copyright law governs the question of who owns them. But copyright law does not always lead to a simple answer.

When more than one person creates a composition, it is called a “joint work.” The Copyright Act defines a “joint work” as “a work prepared by two or more authors with the intention that their contributions be merged into inseparable or interdependent parts of a unitary whole.” Absent an agreement to the contrary, each joint author has equal ownership in the work, each has the right to individually exploit the work (such as license it) and each has a duty to account to the other owners for profits they individually obtain from exploiting the work.

Even if you intend to create joint ownership, each person has to contribute some copyrightable element to the composition. As such, absent an agreement to the contrary, only the members who actually contributed to the composition own the rights to the composition, and they own it equally. Sometimes, bands agree that the compositions will be owned by the contributing mem-



recordings; and (3) who owns the band's name and possible trademark?

### Whose compositions are these?

Jazz has been good for the estates of the composers of the Great American Songbook, as compositions from the likes of Harold Arlen and George Gershwin presumably have created significant royalty streams based simply on the num-

ber of times their compositions probably aren't setting out to write the next jazz standards. But you never know when a song may become popular. Further, beyond a song gaining popularity such that other artists decide to cover it, there are various other ways to make money from your compositions. You can collect ASCAP or BMI royalties for public performances, such as on the radio, digital streaming, or in clubs. You



bers based upon the amount contributed to the composition.

For example, perhaps the trumpeter wrote the entire composition. Ownership here is simple—the trumpeter owns it. But what if the composition emerged in a jam session? Here, there may not be a clear owner. Your band may want each contributing member to be considered an equal owner.

Such detail regarding ownership of collaboratively created compositions should be set out in the operating agreement, or the agreement can set up a system by which the band can establish ownership of its compositions, as the circumstances surrounding each could be different. For example, the operating agreement could require the band to draft a simple letter within 30 days of writing the composition—signed by all band members—in which the band assigns ownership for each composition in proportion to each band member's contribution. Or, a truly collaborative band could require all musicians to assign their compositions to the band, which gives each band member an ownership interest.

### Whose recordings are these?

In regard to sound recordings, ownership is a little more clear-cut. Unless your band's operating agreement provides otherwise, those who perform the song are joint authors of the sound recording. However, by agreement, record labels often obtain ownership of the copyright in the sound recordings by the musicians signed to the label, or they require the artists to license the sound recordings exclusively to the record label.

In the DIY jazz world, there often is not a record label, or the label is run by the band. If your band chooses to retain ownership of its sound recordings, there are at least two ways to determine ownership of them in the operating agreement. For example, you could register your band as an LLC, require each musician to assign his or her rights in the recordings to the LLC (or agree that they are works made for hire), and have the LLC own the copyrights. Alternatively, you could list each band member as an owner.

Either way, because sound recordings, just as compositions, can have long-term value—such as through sales of the music, digital streaming or licensing—ownership should be determined in the operating agreement.

### Who owns the band name?

Your band's name can distinguish you as the source of your music, and it can become quite a valuable asset. As such, an operating agreement should set forth who owns the band's name, and who can do what with the name in the event of a breakup.

If there's a clear leader of the group, it would make sense for him or her to have rights to the name. This should be set forth in the operating agreement. Further, limits or prohibitions on how a departing member can use the band's name after leaving the group should be addressed.

Along the same lines as the band's name, ownership rights in any trademarks the band has acquired should be addressed. A band's name—or even a musician's name if he or she has acquired

sufficient recognition—can be protected as a trademark. Although much less common than in the rock and pop worlds, jazz artists do own trademarks for their groups. For example, Chick Corea has three trademark registrations for "Return to Forever" and one for "RTF."

A trademark is a word, phrase, logo or other characteristic that indicates to consumers that your band is the source of particular goods (albums, T-shirts and other merchandise) or services (such as live shows). Simply put, if you are the first group to use your name, a U.S. trademark registration can establish exclusive rights to the

name. Such a mark can be valuable, and its ownership should be addressed in the operating agreement. **DB**

Former *DownBeat* editor Jason Koransky is an attorney at Norvell IP in Chicago, where his practice focuses on trademark, copyright and entertainment law. His book *Band Law for Bands*, co-written with Barry Irwin, is a legal primer addressing common legal issues musicians face. Published by Lawyers for the Creative Arts, the book is available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Koransky can be reached at [jkoransky@norvellip.com](mailto:jkoransky@norvellip.com).



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 BY JIMI DURSO

**Bobby Hutcherson's Virtuoso Vibraphone Solo on 'Later, Even'**

**AS A SIDEMAN, VIBRA-**phonist Bobby Hutcherson is just as comfortable playing avant-garde or straight-ahead jazz, as demonstrated in the vast variety of sessions he's done over the past 50 years with such diverse artists as Eric Dolphy, Jackie McLean, Dexter Gordon and McCoy Tyner, to name just a few.

Naturally, this versatility shows up in his sessions as a leader. A group of these sessions from the 1970s have been released on Mosaic as a three-disc set entitled *Mosaic Select: Bobby Hutcherson*. One track featured in this collection is the Hutcherson composition "Later, Even," on which he demonstrates his rhythmic, harmonic and technical virtuosity.

Performed as a trio with bass and drums, Hutcherson sets up a situation that gives him a lot of freedom. The drums don't state the time, which gives him rhythmic freedom, and through the entire piece the bass pedals on F, giving him a lot of harmonic freedom. Hutcherson uses this freedom to great effect. With regard to rhythm, notice how free he is with note groupings and subdivisions, especially how he uses rhythm and density to create a natural ebb and flow to this improvisation.

The first half of the solo, though it has its flashy runs, does exhibit some space. But at bar 10, Hutcherson starts on a four-measure flurry that doesn't let up until the second beat of measure 14. The unusual grouping here might be attributed to the lack of a defined rhythm in the bass and drums, but notice how the 11 groupings he plays in these measures are both consistent and accurate. This would indicate that he's really hearing this extraordinarily atypical rhythm. He gives us some more dense licks after this, but in general he's slowing the pace down and drawing his solo to a close. Also very effective is how loose Hutcherson can be with the



time, sometimes creating odd groupings of notes, and playing behind as well as ahead of the rhythm section. And yet when a line resolves to a strong beat, like the downbeat of bar 17, for example, he's right on it.

The lack of an instrument providing a defined harmony gives Hutcherson another kind of freedom, but also the responsibility to at least imply the sounds of the chords if he wants to retain the harmonic contour of the composition. Hutcherson walks this line expertly. First, he makes sure his lines help the listener hear the voice-leading with-



1:17 F7sus4 5 5 Dm/F Db/F

5 F 3 F7sus4 3 Dm/F 6 6 3

8 Db/F F 3

10 F7sus4 11

11 Dm/F 11

12 Db/F 11

13 F 11

14 F7sus4 3 2 Dm/F 3 9

16 Db/F F

in the chords. We can hear this in the beginning, where he plays F major pentatonic on the first two chords, but uses D $\flat$  major pentatonic on the D $\flat$ /F in bar 4 and F mixolydian for the F chord in the next measure. This kind of implication of the harmonies is particularly evident in the previously examined virtuosic section from bar 10 through 13. He plays repeated figures and alters them to fit the harmonies of the song—from emphasizing the F and E $\flat$  in measure 10, but with a lower voice that moves from D to C# and finally C, which sets up the D minor pentatonic lick he uses for the next measure (D, F and C). This implies the change from F7 to Dm.

In the following measure, Hutcherson goes to a C minor pentatonic lick (C, E $\flat$  and F). This is surprising since it doesn't define the D $\flat$ , but it

does create the sound of a change in harmony. At the end of this measure, he diverges into some chromaticism, which continues into the next measure. This blurs the sound of the harmonies, and Hutcherson doesn't fully bring it back until the extended F mixolydian scale he plays in the last half of bar 14. For his final three measures, he stays within the harmonies, giving us a D minor seventh arpeggio in bar 15, and a D $\flat$  major scale in bar 16, before giving us an F5 in the final bar. This stark harmonic figure sounds so much like a resting point that it helps to create a sense of finality at the end of the solo. **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at [jimidurso.com](http://jimidurso.com).

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# MakeMusic Finale 2014

## Improved Notation, Modern Architecture

With its introduction in 1988, Finale broke new ground and established itself as a leader in the rapidly expanding world of computer music notation software. Now, more than 25 years later, MakeMusic has released Finale 2014, a major overhaul of the popular package that not only adds a host of impressive features, but also contains a complete reworking of the product's underlying architecture, ensuring that Finale will continue to be a viable and productive tool for many years to come.

Early adopters of Finale are well aware that although its functionality was incredibly powerful, early versions of the software were rather difficult to use and required a steep learning curve to master. As a company, MakeMusic has always kept its ear to the ground, constantly soliciting feedback and addressing user concerns. A standard yearly update cycle provided consistent advancements to Finale in both its capabilities and interface.

With the 2014 release, the company has strayed from its annual cycle and invested two solid years in producing the latest iteration. Much of this is due to the complete rewriting of Finale's code, which has been updated from Carbon to the more modern Cocoa on Mac OSX. According to Beth Sorensen, vice president of products at



MakeMusic, "This is a real investment in the future of Finale, and the shift to modern architecture ensures the future growth of the product."

Some of the most significant changes in Finale 2014 are under the hood, and although they may not be immediately obvious to the user, they represent critical advancements. Finale now uses a completely new file format with increased stability. In addition, files can now be saved in the legacy .mus format, allowing users of previous versions to open them. This backwards compatibility is a first for Finale and represents its commitment to encouraging collaboration. As with previous versions, files can also be exported as MIDI, audio, or saved in the MusicXML open format. A new audio engine has been created to enhance playback performance and quality.

Experienced users will notice some interface changes with an overall streamlining of the on-screen tool pallets. Pallet size has been reduced to create more visible work space. Select toolbars have been removed, with access remaining available from the menus ("It's all about the notation, not the tools," Sorensen said of the less-obtrusive new interface). There are also some nice enhancements to the view modes, particularly the studio mode, which features a reworked on-screen mixer.

Despite these changes, seasoned users will have no trouble diving right in, and new users will benefit from Finale 2014's new online documentation and tutorials, which are extremely well orga-

nized and impressively thorough.

Responding to user feedback, Finale has added a finer level of control over score creation and increased functionality that simplifies the creation of your music and enhances the look of it. Layers, rests, smart shapes, scanning and parts linking have all been improved. Percussion has also been tweaked, with major advancements in the creating and playback of percussion staves. Another noteworthy addition is the simplification of "keyless" score creation, something that had been notoriously tedious in earlier versions.

Finale 2014 definitely takes a major step toward improving the creation of music, but it also makes a huge leap in its ability to play it back. Building on its 2011 acquisition of Garritan, MakeMusic has bundled an impressive array of new software instruments with Finale. Using the Aria player along with Finale's Human Playback controls allow for music to be played with a realistic feel that is not possible with standard MIDI. According to MakeMusic, Human Playback has been reworked in 2014 to pave the way for even tighter integration with Garritan in future releases.

With two years of hard work invested, MakeMusic has a lot riding on Finale 2014. Although not overflowing with glitzy new features, this upgrade delivers some solid advances and confirms Finale's commitment to the future. Well worth its \$600 price tag, and at only \$139.95 for upgrading users, it is simply a no-brainer. (Academic/theological pricing of \$350 is available as well.)

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: [finale.com](http://finale.com)

# Gretsch Catalina Club Classic

## Modernized Nod to Yesteryear

It has been a little more than a decade since Gretsch introduced the original Catalina Club drum sets. To celebrate 10 years of success, Gretsch has given the original Catalina Club series a modernization treatment in regards to hardware and some other sleek updates. While the series was originally inspired by the traditional Gretsch jazz drum sets, the company has worked hard to bring all the conveniences of modern design and production to the line.

The new Catalina Club Classic drum shell packs are still mahogany (seven-ply). Even though the original Gretsch drums used a maple-formula shell, mahogany was one of the widely used woods when Gretsch, Slingerland and Ludwig ruled the drum world, so these drums still deliver a sound reminiscent of that era. They still have no reinforcement hoops, in keeping with the Gretsch shell tradition.

Also giving the drums a sonic nod to yesteryear are the 30-degree bearing edges, which provide increased head contact with the drum—adding warmth and punch, and allowing more of the drum shell tone to resonate (as





opposed to the drum head tone).

Gretsch is now offering some very traditional sizes for this kit, which I see as a big plus. The drum set I play-tested had a 14- by 5.5-inch snare, 12- by 8-inch tom, 14- by 14-inch floor tom and a 20- by 14-inch bass drum. Gretsch also offers two other configurations with an 18-inch kick and a 24-inch kick. It's interesting to note that there is no 22-inch option, and all the kicks in this series are 14 inches deep. I've always preferred 14-inch depth for bass drums, as they tend to be very responsive, have more than enough low end and are easier to haul to the gig.

The bass drum tom mount now has a fancy new design that Gretsch calls the "gas cap," a subtle cosmetic feature that isn't overwhelming. The tom mount has been upgraded and now includes a spot for a cymbal arm if needed. The badge has been redesigned to match the original round Gretsch badge more closely. I have always thought the round badges were classier looking, so I'm glad to see that change.

Also upgraded are the mounted tom/floor-tom brackets and the GTS tom suspension system. All these items are now smaller in size and proportionally are a better visual match for the drums. The tom mounting system has a much smaller profile than the previous one. It loosely connects to two of the batter head tension rods and has a third contact point in the middle by way of a rubber-tipped cone that touches the shell when mounted. Because of the loose connection to the tension rods, the suspension system seemed like it had potential to bounce around a bit, but I actually found the tom and mount to be very solid—they didn't move at all when being played. The weight of the drum holds it all in place securely. Solid and lightweight are always a great combination. The T-wing used to tighten the tom brackets has also been updated to more closely resemble the classic Gretsch bass drum T-rod, which is also a nice visual touch.

But enough of the visuals. How did they sound? In a word, great. The Catalina Club Classic kits ship with single-ply coated Remos, but I wanted to hear them with my normal heads. I swapped the Remos out with some calfskin heads I have been using lately, and they instantly sounded warm and authentic. I used them at a few small group sessions and one big band session. The sound of the drums really blended well with the groups I was playing with—an observation I was able to confirm after listening to playback of the shows on a portable digital recorder I brought to the gigs. The mix of the mahogany, bearing edges and calfskin heads really made for an enjoyable experience. I didn't have an extra batter head for the kick, so I ended up using the pre-muffled ringed head that came with the kit. While this didn't totally match my personal sound, it still sounded quite good. If I need to use the drums in a high-volume setting like a funk gig, I can simply put the Remo heads back on and it will be a killer kit with plenty of attack.

The Catalina Clubs always had a great price-to-value ratio. After this latest round of upgrades, they're a ridiculously good deal. —Matt Kern

Ordering info: [gretschdrums.com](http://gretschdrums.com)

## Peavey AT-200 Guitar

### Perfect Pitch at the Throw of a Switch

Auto-Tune technology radically changed the music industry when it first came into common use in the late 1990s. Antares' groundbreaking digital pitch-correction software has since become a worldwide standard for vocal tracks. Antares has now developed Auto-Tune for guitar, and Peavey has partnered with the company to produce the AT-200 with on-board digital real-time auto-tuning capabilities.

Based on Peavey's Predator model, the AT-200 appears no different from your average solid-body electric guitar. (Peavey chose a moderately priced guitar in order to keep the price point under \$500 and make the technology accessible to a mass market.) The AT-200 can be played normally; however, once powered on, the instrument begins to show its true colors. Auto-Tune is invoked by a simple push of the tone pot knob with an LED indicating the system is powered up.

To tune the guitar, simply strum across all six strings and press down on the volume control knob to initiate "String Tune." A scooping sound and flashing LED embedded in the neck pickup indicate successful activation, and the AT-200 is instantaneously tuned up.

Unlike previous robotic auto-tuning guitars, the AT-200 does not mechanically tune each string, but actually alters pitch digitally on the fly as you play a note. This means that the guitar itself can be out of tune but still play perfectly when amplified. Amazingly, there is absolutely no latency in the process.

In addition to tuning the open strings via String Tune, the Antares software also uses Solid-Tune, which constantly monitors the pitch of each fretted note, correcting for inaccuracies and resulting in perfect intonation across the fingerboard. These capabilities alone make the AT-200 a slick piece of technology, but this is only the tip of the iceberg.

By fretting certain notes on the guitar prior to initiating the String Tune function, you can create custom tunings or even drop the pitch of the entire instrument. For instance, barring across fret 12 will result in the guitar dropping a full octave and functioning as a bass. By fretting a chord, you can generate an open tuning.

For those looking to expand the creative possibilities of the AT-200, Antares offers add-on software feature packs that can be purchased for direct download from its website. Three packs are available: the Essential Pack, Pro Pack and Everything Pack. These add an extensive array of enhanced capabilities, including alternate tunings, guitar and pickup modeling and virtual capo.

To utilize these, Antares came up with a brilliant solution called "Fret Control," which uses fret positions on individual strings to call up the various on-board MIDI parameters without the need for external devices such as pedals or a computer. Simply press down a specified

fret on one of the AT-200's strings while holding down the volume knob to call up the desired program change. The AT-200 even has the ability to store and recall custom user presets.

The technology embedded into the AT-200 is impressive, and its unique functionality will find numerous applications in the professional world.

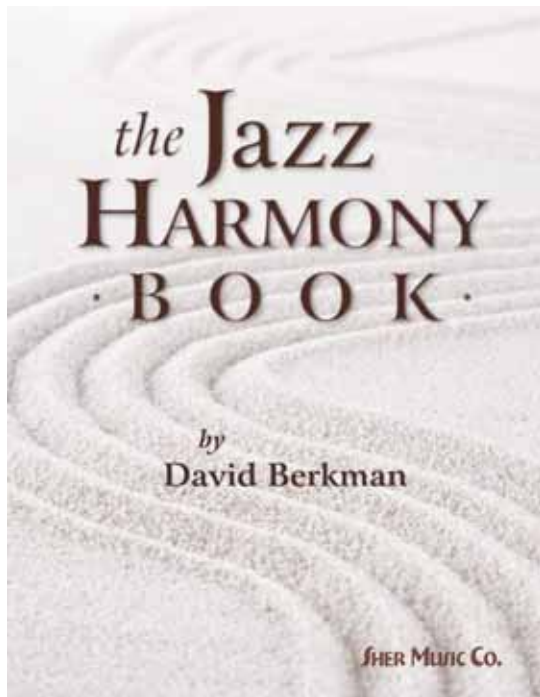
There are bound to be critics and skeptics who feel the Auto-Tune guitar provides an unnecessary crutch to musicians. However, I tend to agree with Peavey product manager Michael Smith, who said, "This is simply a tool that doesn't replace creativity and skill, but actually enhances it." —Keith Baumann

Ordering info: [peavey.com](http://peavey.com)



### Add Chords to Melody

*The Jazz Harmony Book* from Sher Music Co. is an engaging guide to developing a more nuanced sense of harmonic color, drama and movement. Written by New York pianist David Berkman, the book gives musicians a course in the process of adding chords to melodies and understanding how a single melody can give rise to rich harmonic variations. Learn to reharmonize songs freely, in the manner of jazz greats like Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Thad Jones and Jim Hall. **More info:** [shermusic.com](http://shermusic.com)



### Vocal Stabilizer

The Myrtle from Ear Trumpet Labs combines the look of a broadcast mic with high-quality electronics. Designed primarily for live vocal use, the Myrtle is a medium-large diaphragm condenser mic with a cardioid pickup pattern. Its transformerless FET circuit, with fully balanced output and thorough EMI protection, features a moderate bass roll-off to compensate for proximity effect. **More info:** [eartrumpetlabs.com](http://eartrumpetlabs.com)

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### Compact Digital Grand Piano

Kurzweil's MPG200 is the company's first digital grand piano in more than eight years. The instrument combines a compact grand piano design with Kurzweil sound technology. Craftsmanship includes an all-wood rim and high-quality polyester finish combined with a built-in digital amplification system. **More info:** [kurzweil.com](http://kurzweil.com)







### Big Tone, Small Package

Blackstar Amplification's compact and affordable ID:Core series amplifiers feature the core attributes of the company's original ID:Series. The programmable, wide-stereo guitar amps—available in 10-, 20- and 40-watt configurations—include six onboard voices: Warm Clean, Bright Clean, Crunch, Super Crunch, OD1 and OD2. Each includes power amplifier modeling. **More info:** [blackstaramps.com](http://blackstaramps.com)



### Sound Trigger

Roland's TM-2 is an electronic percussion trigger module with high-quality onboard sounds, user sound expansion via SCHD cards and two trigger inputs for a variety of Roland pads and drum triggers. Battery-powered and compact, the TM-2 provides a solution for drummers who want to create a hybrid kit that brings acoustic and electronic elements together. **More info:** [rolandus.com](http://rolandus.com)



### Analog-Digital Nexus

Universal Audio has put all of the components of its Apollo audio interface into a high-resolution desktop form factor with the new Apollo Twin. The sleek 2x6 Thunderbolt audio interface for Mac combines the 24/192kHz audio conversion of the original Apollo with onboard Realtime UAD Solo or Duo Processing. It lets Mac users record in real time at near-zero latency through the full range of UAD powered plug-ins. **More info:** [uaudio.com](http://uaudio.com)



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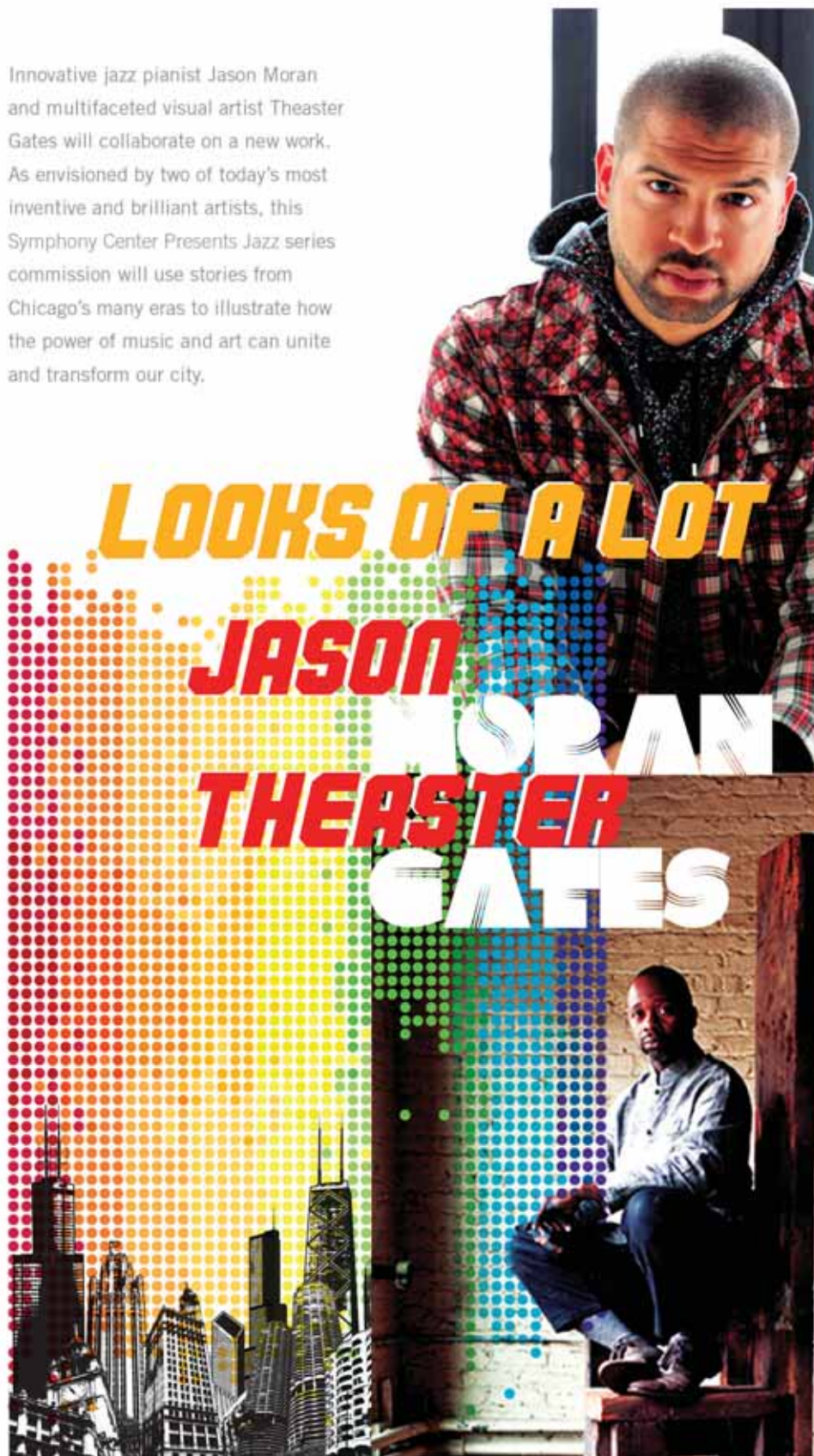
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Innovative jazz pianist Jason Moran and multifaceted visual artist Theaster Gates will collaborate on a new work. As envisioned by two of today's most inventive and brilliant artists, this Symphony Center Presents Jazz series commission will use stories from Chicago's many eras to illustrate how the power of music and art can unite and transform our city.



# LOOKS OF A LOT

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## THEASTER

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**FRIDAY**  
**MAY 30**  
**8:00**

**THEASTER GATES**  
*designer and vocals*

**JASON MORAN AND  
THE BANDWAGON**

**JASON MORAN**  
*piano*

**TARUS MATEEN**  
*bass*

**NASHEET WAITS**  
*drums*

**KEN VANDERMARK**  
*saxophones*

**KATIE ERNST**  
*bass and vocals*

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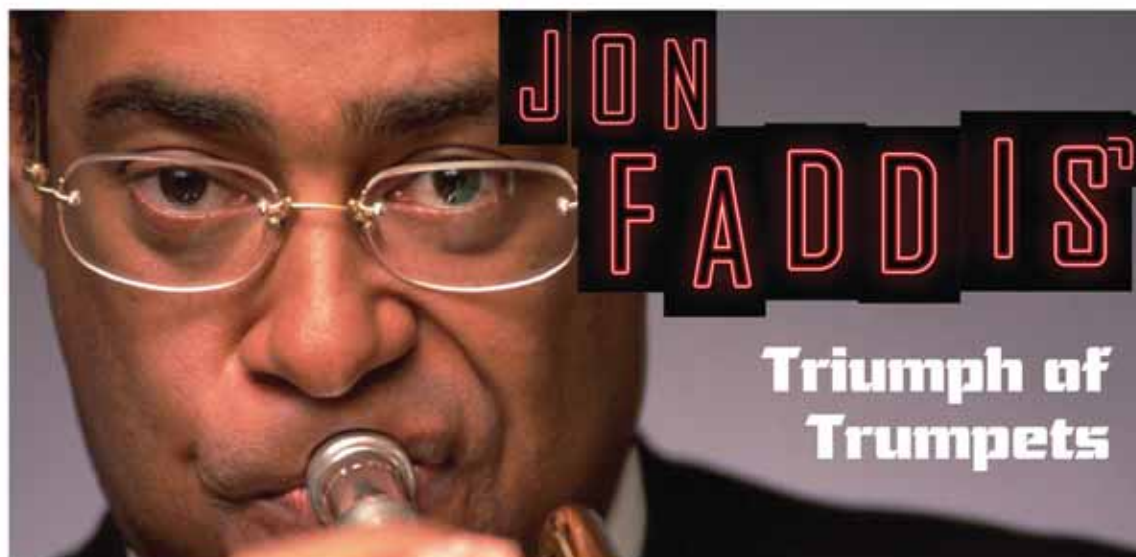
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Artists, prices and programs subject to change.



FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 8:00



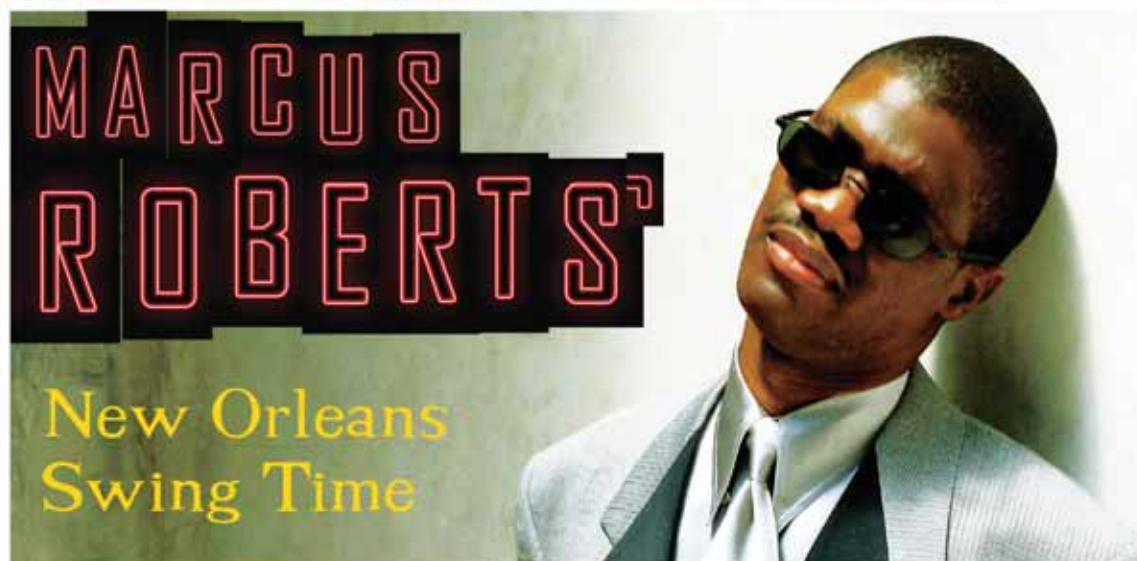
**JON FADDIS**  
*trumpet*

**TERELL STAFFORD**  
*trumpet*

**SEAN JONES**  
*trumpet*

**ORBERT DAVIS**  
*trumpet*

**MARQUIS HILL**  
*trumpet*



**MARCUS ROBERTS TRIO**  
**MARCUS ROBERTS** *piano*  
**RODNEY JORDAN** *bass*  
**JASON MARSALIS** *drums*

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# DOWNBEAT'S 37<sup>th</sup> Annual STUDENT

## MUSIC AWARDS



Jazz Education  
Hall of Fame  
José Diaz  
Page 118

Jazz Education  
Achievement Awards  
Kent Devereaux  
Page 121  
Steve Sveum  
Page 123

# YOUNG STARS SHINE

## THE BEST STUDENT MUSICIANS OF 2014

## Jazz Soloist

### Junior High School Winner

#### Esteban Castro

##### Piano

Spring School  
Oscar Perez  
Tenafly, NJ

### Junior High School Outstanding Performance

#### Gus Hurteau

##### Vibes

Westlake Middle School  
Randy Porter  
Oakland, CA

### High School Winners

#### Fernando Ferrarone

##### Trumpet & Alto Saxophone

Felix Varela Senior High School  
Daniel Strange  
Miami, FL

#### Zoe Obadia

##### Alto Saxophone

Glen Ridge High School  
Kevin Lagos  
Glen Ridge, NJ

### High School Outstanding Performances

#### Anton Derevyanko

##### Tenor Saxophone

Medfield High School  
Douglas Olsen  
Medfield, MA

#### Andrés Rovira

##### Piano

Paideia School  
Kevin Bales  
Atlanta, GA

#### Aris Kare

##### Guitar

Palos Verdes High School  
Shellie Parkinson  
Palos Verdes Estates, CA

### Performing Arts High School Winner

#### Max Lesser

##### Tenor Saxophone

Colburn School of the Arts  
Lee Secard  
Los Angeles, CA

### Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performances



#### Cole Davis

##### Bass

LaGuardia High School  
Kevin Blancq  
New York, NY

#### Josh Bermudez

##### Guitar

New World School of the Arts  
Jim Gasior  
Miami, FL

#### Andy Arditi

##### Tenor Saxophone

Colburn School of the Arts  
Lee Secard  
Los Angeles, CA

### Undergraduate College Winner

#### Patrick Bartley

##### Alto Saxophone

Manhattan School of Music  
Justin DiCioccio  
New York, NY

### Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances

#### Ethan Phillion

##### Acoustic Bass

Oberlin Conservatory  
Peter Dominguez  
Oberlin, OH

#### Brian Scarborough

##### Trombone

University of Kansas  
School of Music

Dan Gailey  
Lawrence, KS

#### Nick Hetko

##### Piano

University of Miami  
Martin Bejerano  
Coral Gables, FL

### Graduate College Winners

#### José Valentino

##### Piano, Flute, Saxophone

University of South Florida  
Dr. David Williams  
Tampa, FL

#### Aaron Hedenstrom

##### Saxophone

University of North Texas  
Brad Leali  
Denton, TX

### Graduate College Outstanding Performance

#### Quentin Angus

##### Guitar

University of Adelaide  
Elder Conservatorium of Music  
Mark Carroll  
Adelaide, Australia

## Small Jazz Combo

### High School Winner

#### Trio Collective

Bloomington High School North  
Janis Stockhouse  
Bloomington, IN

### Performing Arts High School Winner

#### Precollege Combo

Manhattan School of Music  
Jeremy Manasia  
New York, NY

### Performing Arts High School Outstanding Performances

#### BTW Jazz Combo I '13

Booker T. Washington HSPVA  
Bart Marantz  
Dallas, TX

#### Colburn Jazz Workshop Monday Night Band

Colburn School of the Arts  
Lee Secard  
Los Angeles, CA

### Honors Ensemble Winner

#### Berklee Jazz Workshop Shades

Berklee College of Music  
Rick DiMuzio & Terri Lyne  
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Medford, MA





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Steve Zegree, Director



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Tucson Jazz Institute  
Brice Winston  
Tucson, AZ

**Jazzschool Advanced  
Jazz Workshop I**  
California Jazz Conservatory  
Michael Zilber  
Berkeley, CA

**Undergraduate  
College Winner**

**Fantasy V**  
Brubeck Institute  
Joe Gilman & Nick Fryer  
Stockton, CA

**Undergraduate College  
Outstanding Performances**

**A Little Big Band**  
Oberlin Conservatory  
Peter Dominguez  
Oberlin, OH

**Manny Echazabal Group**  
University of Miami  
Frost School of Music

Gary Keller  
Miami, FL

**Balchemy**  
New School for  
Jazz & Contemporary Music  
Chris Stover  
New York, NY

**Graduate College Winner**

**José Valentino Ensemble**  
University of South Florida  
Dr. David Williams  
Tampa, FL

**Graduate College  
Outstanding Performances**

**MSM Chamber  
Jazz Ensemble**  
Manhattan School of Music  
Justin DiCioccio  
New York, NY

**Mereneu Project**  
University for Music and  
Performing Arts Graz  
Ed Partyka  
Graz, Austria

**Large Jazz  
Ensemble**

**Junior High School Winner**

**Folsom Middle  
School Jazz Band**  
Folsom Middle School  
John Zimny  
Folsom, CA

**Junior High School  
Outstanding Performances**

**Walnut Creek  
Intermediate Jazzers**  
Walnut Creek Intermediate School  
Rita Zigas-Brown  
Walnut Creek, CA

**Stanley Middle School  
Jazz Messengers**  
Stanley Middle School  
Bob Athayde  
Lafayette, CA

**High School Winner**

**Folsom High School  
Jazz Band I**  
Folsom High School  
Curtis Gaesser

Folsom, CA

**High School Outstanding  
Performances**

**Jazz Band "A"**  
Buchanan High School  
Paul Lucckesi  
Clovis, CA

**Honors Ensemble Winner**

**Caleb Chapman's  
Crescent Super Band**  
Caleb Chapman Music  
Caleb Chapman  
Salt Lake City, UT

**Honors Ensemble  
Outstanding Performance**

**Ellington Big Band**  
Tucson Jazz Institute  
Doug Tidaback  
Tucson, AZ

**Undergraduate  
College Winner**

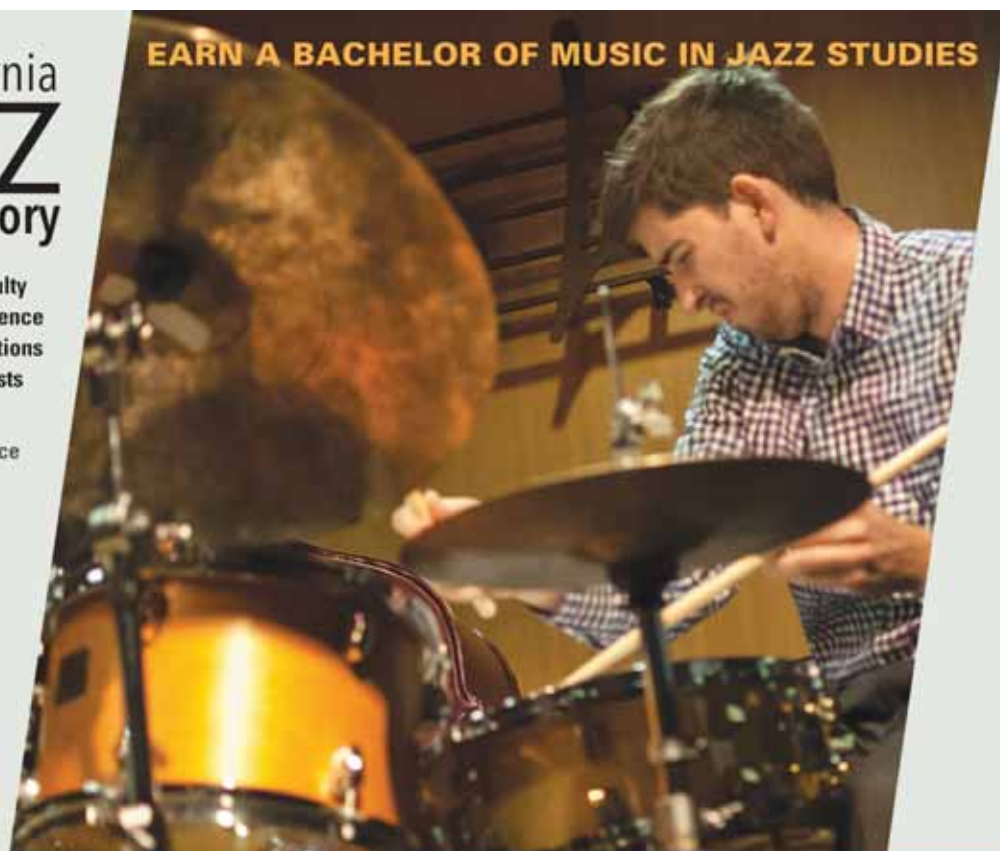
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## Jazz Instrumental Soloist

# Fully Committed

This year's winners in the **Jazz Instrumentalist Soloist** category came to jazz via different paths, but they are each fully committed to having a career as a musician.

Though he started playing without any formal training, Patrick Bartley, an undergraduate at Manhattan School of Music, attributes elementary-school exposure to a wide range of performing arts with preparing him for success in music.

Early in his life, he gravitated toward visual arts and developed a passion for drawing, but after he picked up the clarinet, he was subtly pushed toward music as his primary path. Bartley said he "started getting serious" about the clarinet at age 9.

"I got serious about the instrument because I liked it, not because I wanted to be a professional musician," Bartley said.

The studious Bartley—who won this year for a solo on alto saxophone—said the notion of him playing as a professional didn't even enter his mind until late in high school, when he participated in the Grammy jazz band program. In that atmosphere, he realized there were students his age who were also dedicated to jazz and had professional aspirations.

"I saw that there were people who were way more serious than I was," he recalled. "I felt like I was new to the game."

Alto saxophonist Zoe Obadia, a 17-year-old senior at Glen Ridge High School in New Jersey, is quite accustomed to the jazz game, having picked up the saxophone at age 8. Obadia, who plans to continue her studies at The Juilliard School this fall, said she first fell in love with music as a young girl, picking up the sounds of jazz from her father, a guitar teacher.

She said winning a Student Music Award validates her decision to become a professional jazz musician.

"DownBeat represents the jazz world, I think it's a great institution, and I just wanted to be part of it," she said.

Kevin Lagos, Obadia's band director, characterizes her as quiet and reserved.

"You would have no idea this was such a quiet person when you hear her play," Lagos said.

Dedicated, curious and humble are all adjectives Brad Leali of the University of North Texas used to describe Aaron Hedenstrom, a saxophonist who was one of the winners at the Graduate College level. Leali characterized him as a "natural talent," adding that Hedenstrom soaks up and retains new concepts "like a sponge to water."



Hedenstrom, who is pursuing his doctorate in jazz composition, said his dedication to jazz started when he was a high school student in the Minneapolis area, booking gigs in his spare time. He said he decided to pursue jazz because there wasn't anything else he'd rather be doing.

"There were obviously times when I wasn't sure if music was what I wanted to do," he said. "Eventually it just became the path. It was something I had a passion for that never died out, even after the periods of questioning."

Hedenstrom hopes to make a living as a player and a composer, and he said winning a Student Music Award reinforces his feeling that he has made the right decisions in his career choices.

"It does a little bit to validate my choice to be a professional," he said. "It's definitely a boost of encouragement."

—Jon Ross



*Undergraduate College  
Outstanding Performances*

**Eastman Chamber  
Jazz Ensemble**

Eastman School of Music  
Jeff Campbell  
Rochester, NY

**Utah State University  
Jazz Orchestra**

Utah State University  
Jon Gudmundson  
Logan, UT

**Get Jazz Orchestra**

Senzoku Gakuen College of Music  
Yoshihiko Katori  
Kawasaki, Japan

*Graduate College Winners*

**Two O'Clock Lab Band**

University of North Texas  
Jay Saunders  
Denton, TX

**Cal State Long Beach  
Concert Jazz Orchestra**

California State University, Long  
Beach  
Jeff Jarvis  
Long Beach, CA

*Graduate College  
Outstanding Performances*

**Jazz Lab Band I**

University of Northern Colorado  
Dana Landry  
Greeley, CO

**Concert Jazz Band**

University of Miami  
Frost School of Music  
John Daversa  
Miami, FL

**Concert Jazz Ensemble**

University of Colorado—Boulder  
John Gunther  
Boulder, CO

**Vocal Jazz  
Soloist**

*Junior High School Winner*

**Phillip Solheim**

Eckstein Middle School  
Cauahatemoc Escobedo  
Seattle, WA

*High School Winner*

**Claire Dickson**

Home-Schooled Student

Michael McLaughlin  
Medford, MA

*High School Outstanding  
Performances*

**Lizzi Trumbore**

Rancho Bernardo High School  
Mike Holguin  
San Diego, CA

**Allison Taylor**

Oxbridge Academy  
Cleve Maloon  
West Palm Beach, FL

*Performing Arts High  
School Winner*

**Melinda Rodriguez**

Miami Arts Charter School  
Christine de la Rosa  
Miami, FL

*Undergraduate  
College Winners*

**Alyssa Allgood**

North Central College  
Janice Borla  
Naperville, IL

**Harris Long**

Willamette University  
Wallace Long  
Salem, OR

*Undergraduate College  
Outstanding Performances*

**Megan Ugarte**

American River College  
Dr. Art LaPierre  
Carmichael, CA

**Erin Bentlage**

Berklee College of Music  
Aubrey Johnson  
Boston, MA

*Graduate College Winners*

**Ashlee Varner**

University of Northern Colorado  
Kerry Marsh  
Greeley, CO

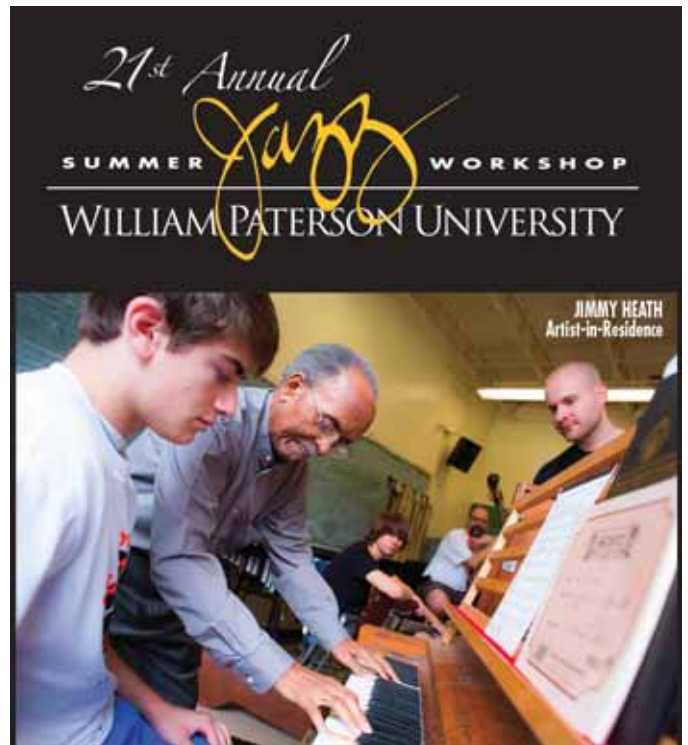
**Michelle Alonso**

University of North Texas  
Richard DeRosa  
Denton, TX

*Graduate College  
Outstanding Performances*

**Mihwa Kim**

University of North Texas  
Rosana Eckert  
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Washington, DC

**Seth Weaver**

Manhattan School of Music  
Luis Bonilla  
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*Undergraduate College Winner*

**Four Corners**

Western Michigan University  
Tom Knific  
Kalamazoo, MI

*Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances*

**JAZZ-ology**

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San Pablo, CA

**Extensions**

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Indiana University  
Dr. Steve Zegree  
Bloomington, IN

*Graduate College Outstanding Performances*

**Blue Note**

Howard University  
Connaitre Miller  
Washington, DC

**Mihwa Kim Band**

University of North Texas  
Rosana Eckert  
Denton, TX

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*Junior High School Winner*

**Sinaloa Middle School Jazz Choir**

Sinaloa Middle School  
Jason Eckl  
Novato, CA



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Outstanding Performance*

**BRIAN SCARBOROUGH, Trombone**

**ORIGINAL COMPOSITION – LARGE ENSEMBLE**

*Graduate College*

*Outstanding Performance*

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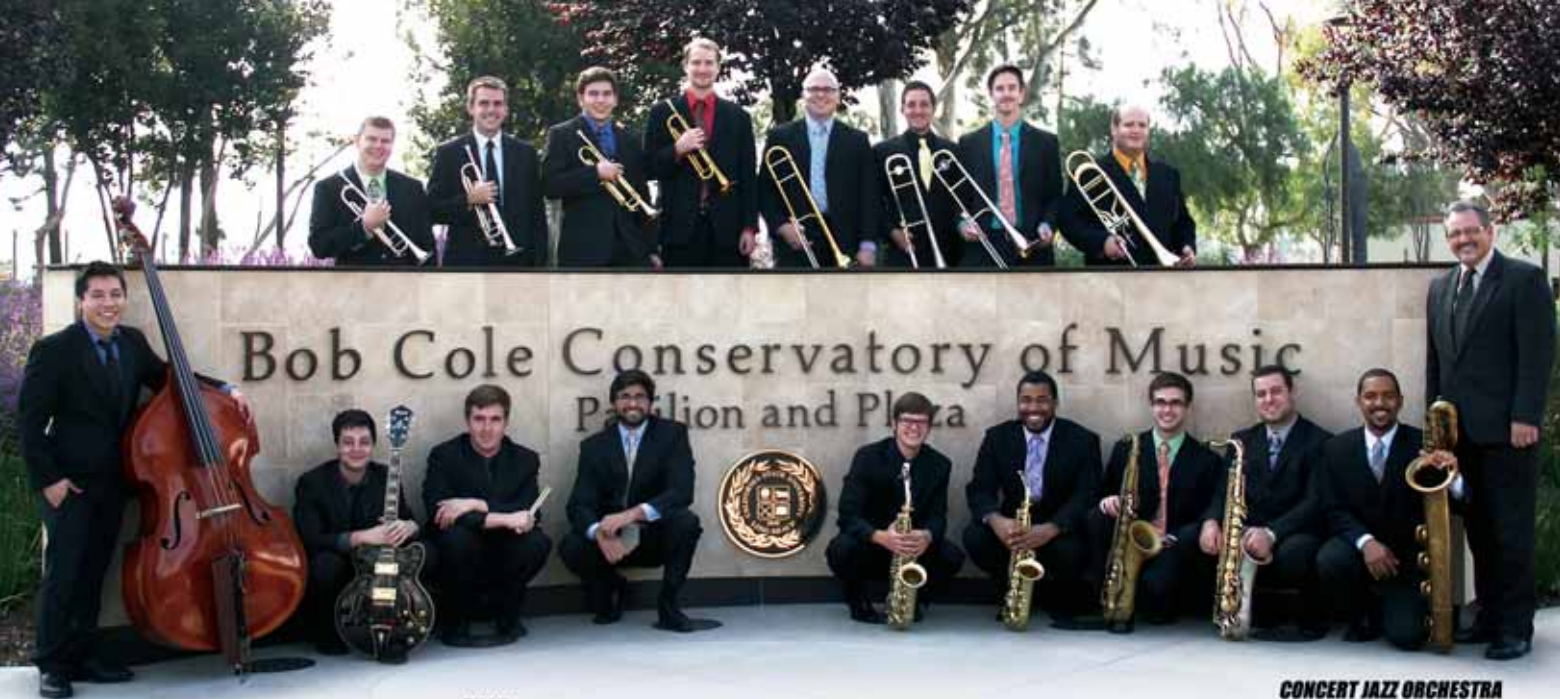
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- 2013-2014 guest artists include: Dave Douglas, Jaleel Shaw and Miguel Zenón

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- Brandon Draper, *Lecturer in Jazz Drums*
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*Undergraduate College Winner*  
**Marcus Carline, "Car 24"**  
 Christine Guter

*Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble*  
*Graduate College Winners*  
**Pacific Standard Time**  
 Christine Guter

DOWNBEAT'S  
 37th ANNUAL  
 STUDENT  
 MUSIC AWARDS  
**WINNERS**



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Rafael de Lima, University of Miami, Frost School of Music

*Junior High School  
Outstanding Performance*

**Grass Valley Vocal Jazz 2014**

Grass Valley Elementary  
Natalie Wilson  
Camas, WA

*High School Winner*

**Jazz Choir I**

Folsom High School  
Curtis Gaesser  
Folsom, CA

*High School  
Outstanding Performances*

**Midnight Voices**

Rochelle Township High School  
Cory Jones  
Rochelle, IL

**Impressions**

Meadowdale High School  
Jeff Horenstein  
Lynnwood, WA

*Performing Arts High  
School Winner*

**Vocal Jazz Ensemble**

Hamilton High School  
Academy of Music  
R. John Hamilton  
Culver City, CA

*Performing Arts High School  
Outstanding Performance*

**Vocal Jazz Ensemble**

Milwaukee High School  
of the Arts  
Raymond Roberts  
Milwaukee, WI

*Undergraduate  
College Winner*

**Jazz Vocal I**

University of Miami  
Frost School of Music  
Dr. Kate Reid  
Coral Gables, FL

*Undergraduate College  
Outstanding Performances*

**Sac State Vocal Jazz**

Sacramento State University  
Gaw Vang  
Sacramento, CA

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NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE**

**WINNER**  
DOWNBEAT'S 37TH ANNUAL  
STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS -  
VOCAL JAZZ SOLOIST -  
UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE  
**Alyssa Allgood**  
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- Monday, July 14
- Monday, July 28
- Monday, August 11

Transfer Visit Day:

- Friday, June 20

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**Jazz Faculty**

- |                          |  |
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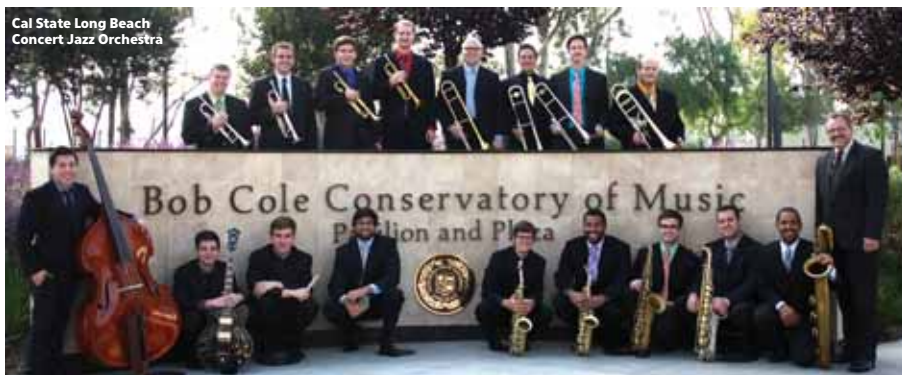
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## Large Jazz Ensemble

# United They Swing

A top-performing school big band is a reflection of a strong overall music department, a high-quality jazz program and a sense of unity among the players.

California State University, Long Beach, has developed a distinctive sound during the past nine years under the direction of Jeff Jarvis. "About 85 percent of our effort is directed toward good music-making, with the



At Folsom Middle School in Folsom, Calif., jazz band director John Zimny starts the school year with a focus on building a sense of ensemble. "We spend the majority of our time on good intonation, quality of sound and harmony within the section," said Zimny, who encourages students to take improv lessons a year before auditioning for jazz band. "When we start our repertoire, the emphasis begins to shift to jazz style articulations and phrasing. Once the band starts to produce a strong body of sound and has a good grip on the piece, we then focus on balance between sections and a higher level of performance."

For decades, Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Ill., has boasted one of the Midwest's finest collegiate big bands. The group continually works to refine its ensemble playing, as well as the ability of individual players to improvise. "We work to improve balance, blend and conception," said Doug Beach, director of jazz studies. "Listening is an important part of our study of the music. So we are always paying attention to melody, harmony and how to make the improvised work fit well into each piece of music. Much of the growth in the band comes from everyone working to make the group a better band."

Beach said that Elmhurst College Jazz Band members take pride in maintaining the tradition of excellence and accomplishment the reputed ensemble has built over the years.

"Playing in this band has not only taught me about jazz style and ensemble playing, but also how to conduct myself as an industry professional," said tenor saxophonist Shelley Bishop, a student from Australia who is graduating from Elmhurst College this year with a degree in music business. "We have been given the opportunity to play with some of the biggest names in jazz, both at our college jazz festival and abroad, as well as the chance to tour internationally. What I love most about our group is that we can joke around with each other and have a good time during rehearsal, but when it comes time to work, we work hard."

The graduate-level Concert Jazz Orchestra at Cal-



remainder addressing jazz-specific skills," said Jarvis, director of jazz studies at Cal State's Bob Cole Conservatory of Music. "Our overall strategy is a combination of careful attention to detail and developing our interpretation of the music—essentially adding what is not on the page." Jarvis frequently asks band members to self-critique during rehearsals, a learning approach that he said reveals great insights, promotes a spirit of teamwork and prepares students to eventually lead their own ensembles.

Preparing musicians for professional careers is a primary goal for Jay Saunders, who directs the Two O'Clock Lab Band at the esteemed University of North Texas. "When you've got that level of competition, like in the real world, and you get a spot in one of our upper bands, then it's your responsibility to get everything together and to hang on to that gig just like you would if you had two crying babies at home," Saunders said. "My job is to keep it kind of fun-loving. You have to learn to be challenged and be happy about it. There's nothing worse than being bored in the music business."

—Ed Enright



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## Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble

# Milestones & Challenges

Returns, beginnings and endings were grand themes for this year's Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble category winners.

At Sinaloa Middle School in Novato, Calif., director Jason Eckl said his group came back to vocal standards such as "Route 66" and "At Last" for its audition repertoire. "In the past, we'd do something more jazz-oriented, like a version of a Miles Davis tune," he said.

Others entered the school year with significantly altered rosters. "We had a big turnover this year, with only half of the members returning, so that's always a challenge," said Christine Helferich Guter, director of California State University, Long Beach's Pacific Standard Time, which was the Graduate College winner. "It took some time to all get on the same page, but they learned the ropes of how to do things—not just the music but professionalism and also being as precise as possible. And the icing on the cake is to be expressive and sing from the heart."

Miko Shudo, an undergraduate who was honored with an Outstanding Performance in last year's Student Music Awards, recalled the transitional year for Pacific Standard Time. "[Helferich Guter] didn't know what to expect from us, since so many were new to her group," she said. "But a lot of the transfer students came from programs that have a strong jazz vocal department."

The issue of matching new and returning jazz choir members wasn't strictly a collegiate one. "There were a lot of new kids in the group," said Curtis Gaesser, director at Folsom High School in Folsom, Calif. "We had to work harder than in years past to get to that [award-winning] level. It takes a while to get the homogenous sound and also for them to mix and blend socially." Gaesser realized that cohesion would be achieved through performing, so he had the group do more than 40 concerts. The work paid off, as Jazz Choir I was the High School winner.

And it's not only student choir members who were new. Last year, Dr. Kate Reid replaced Larry Lapin, a 45-year veteran of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music and founder of its longstanding jazz vocal degree program.

"It's different from last year, because Dr. Reid is a vocalist and Larry's primary instrument is piano," said Danielle Wertz, a sophomore majoring in jazz vocal performance. "There was a lot more focus on the lyrics and emotional intent of the songs, as opposed to just on the line."

"Once you know somebody's personality and also their musical traits, you can build a blend of voic-



es and shape phrases accordingly," said Reid.

One educator in transition was R. John Hamilton, former director at Hamilton High School in Culver City, Calif. After an extensive career as a high school music educator, he was in his last year teaching prior to returning to school to pursue his doctorate. "That group was the best overall group I've had in 20 years," he said of the ensemble, which was the Performing Arts High School winner. "They were really fine musicians. I was able stretch a little bit out of the idiom. They did an arrangement of 'Amazing Grace' with a 12/8 blues feel, and there were always interesting reactions when we performed it in competition."

"Mr. Hamilton did something different this year," said Andrew Weitz, who is now a freshman studying music composition at Tulane University. "He gave us assignments over the summer to listen to pieces [such as 'A Warm Breeze' by Sammy Nestico] and to transcribe and to write lyrics for the solos. I don't remember having that much student involvement in years past."

—Yoshi Kato



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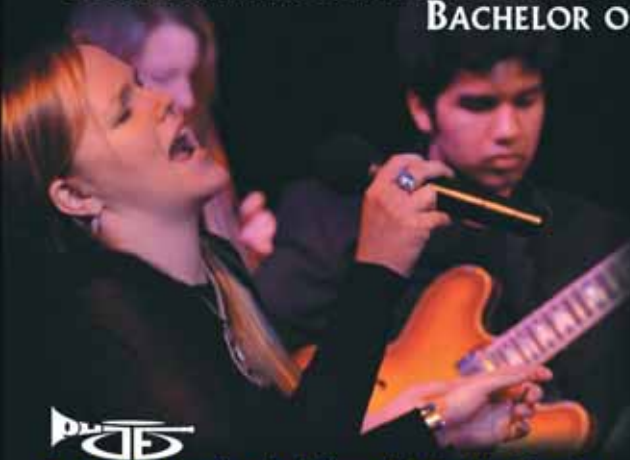
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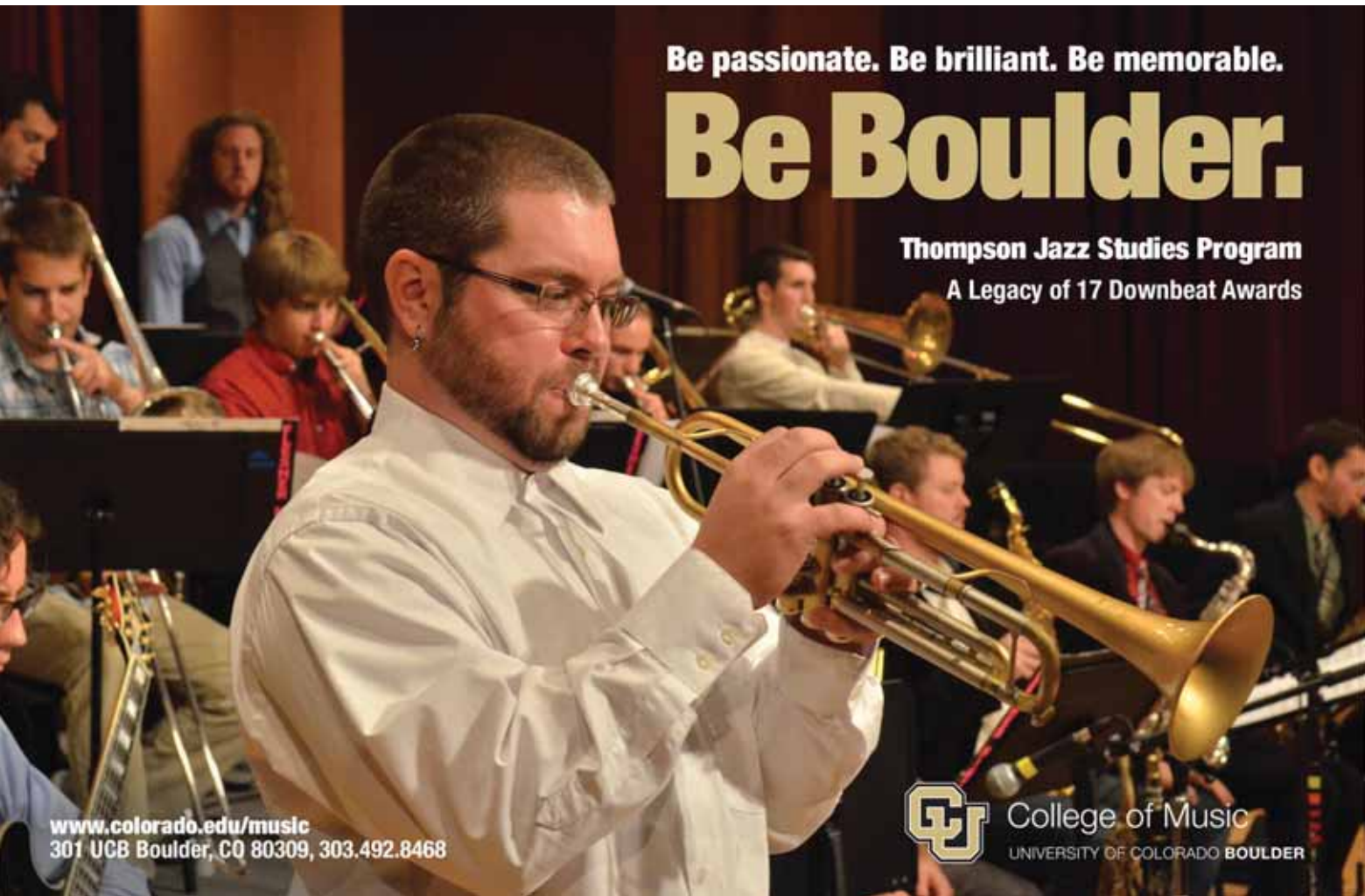
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## Tradition & Beyond

This year's winning entries in the Jazz Arrangement category tapped diverse influences ranging from spirituals to bebop to hip-hop. Today's students—even those who entered progressive submissions—share a voracious appetite for learning the roots of jazz.

One example is graduate student Reginald Bowns from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. His stunning a cappella piece "Rockin' Jerusalem" features dense jazz harmonies and swinging grooves. "The piece is a Negro spiritual," Bowns said. "My first encounter with it was as a teenager at a Baptist choir convention. I was asked to write a jazz-influenced arrangement, including beat-boxing and bass. I mixed several elements together and added a little gospel to bring it back home to its original state."

Ly Wilder, professor of voice at IU, characterized Bowns as "joyful." "When Reginald sings, he takes you on a journey," Wilder said. "He has combined influences he's grown up with in a very modern, hip and also very stirring way because he's connected to the lyric."

The Performing Arts High School winners—collaborators Henry Solomon and Tevan Goldberg of Michigan's Interlochen Arts Academy—took a very different tack, drawing from a film musical. As a child, Solomon heard "Pure Imagination" from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, and its endearing melody lingered. "We didn't necessarily want to 'jazz-ify' it; we just wanted to play it in a quintet setting," explained the saxophonist. "The original melody was sung almost entirely without pulse. We thought that the way to convert that lyrical phrasing was to write it in 5/4 to allow the time to feel free and expressive—assigning a groove while not losing the song's lyrical nature."

Pianist and composition major Goldberg added, "I wrote a lot of harmonies out and I was trying to maintain the lushness of the orchestra from the original." Bill Sears, Interlochen's director of jazz studies, noted that the duo's dedication has served as "a great inspiration to all the other students at the program."

Andrew Herring of Central Dauphin High School in Harrisburg, Pa., is described by educator Brandon Bitner as "one of the most well-rounded musicians I've ever encountered." Herring embraced the traditional with his octet version of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday." But his creative process was thoroughly modern. "I created the arrangement as a collaborative online project through a group called Carnegie Hall Music Exchange," Herring said. "At various steps, I would post it to a forum, and other participants responded with comments and advice. I got good feedback from that. When I got out my bari sax and started playing with the original recording, that's how



Devin Wright

KIM LARSEN PHOTOGRAPHY



Reginald Bowns

I eventually made it my own."

Devin Wright of the University of Oregon transformed Thelonious Monk's "Evidence" with his delightfully askew big band version. "My first goal was to see if I could expand on Monk's rhythmic tension," he said. "I wanted to bring it to the 21st century. I then realized that it needed a 'disgusting' harmony to go with it. I was imagining a gross exaggeration of Monk." Citing his mentor, Wright added, "I loved working with Professor Steve Owen. He teaches in a way that allows you to become effective with your own imagination."

—Jeff Potter



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*Graduate College Winners*

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Dr. Eric Richards  
Lincoln, NE

**Quentin Angus, "Happy"**  
University of Adelaide  
The Elder Conservatorium of Music  
Mark Carroll  
Adelaide, Australia

*Graduate College Outstanding Performances*

**Cesar Orozco, "Orozcojam"**  
The Johns Hopkins University  
Peabody Conservatory  
Tim Murphy  
Baltimore, MD

**Kenyon Brenner, "Pensitivity"**  
Erik Applegate  
University of Northern Colorado  
Greeley, CO

**Original Composition – Large Ensemble**

*High School Winner*

**Sam Wolsk, "Effervescence"**  
Princeton High School  
Joe Bongiovi  
Princeton, NJ

*High School Outstanding Performance*

**Andrew Herring, "High Of 95"**  
Central Dauphin High School  
Brandon W. Bitner  
Harrisburg, PA

*Undergraduate College Winner*

**Gene Knific, "A Change Of Heart"**  
University of Miami  
Frost School of Music  
Chuck Bergeron  
Coral Gables, FL

*Undergraduate College Outstanding Performances*

**Jon Rarick, "Blues For A Nearly Perfect Line"**

Elmhurst College  
Doug Beach  
Elmhurst, IL

**Viola Hammer, "Erinnerungen"**  
University of Music & Performing Arts, Graz  
Ed Partyka  
Graz, Austria

*Graduate College Winner*

**Keith Karns, "The Square"**  
University of North Texas  
Mike Steinel  
Denton, TX

*Graduate College Outstanding Performances*

**David von Kampen, "May Or May Not"**  
University of Kansas  
School of Music  
Dan Gailey  
Lawrence, KS

**Mike Conrad, "West Point"**  
Eastman School of Music  
Bill Dobbins  
Rochester, NY

**Rafael de Lima, "Brookmeyer Motives"**  
University of Miami  
Frost School of Music  
Gary Lindsay  
Coral Gables, FL

**Jazz Arrangement**

*High School Winner*

**Andrew Herring, "Come Sunday"**  
Central Dauphin High School  
Brandon Bitner  
Harrisburg, PA

*High School Outstanding Performances*

**James Fernando, "All The Things You Are"**  
Needham High School  
Margaret McLallen  
Needham, MA

**Chase Goldman, "Troupeau Bleu"**  
Westlake High School  
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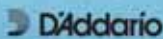
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## Jazz Education Hall of Fame

**José Diaz**

MacArthur High School, Houston, Texas

### Developing a Culture of Respect

**Fresh out of the master's of music** education program at Texas Christian University, José Diaz was being interviewed for the job of assistant director of bands and director of jazz ensembles at MacArthur High School in Houston when a skeptical interrogator asked him—point blank—why he wanted to teach. With his musical abilities, he was told, he could make it as a player and composer.

"I want to do for other people what my high school band director did for me," he shot back.

The answer apparently worked. He got the job and, as his mentor Herbert Yancey did at James H. Bowen High School on the South Side of Chicago, Diaz has been molding at-risk student musicians into powerhouse ensembles ever since—at MacArthur since 1985 and in parallel programs in Latin jazz at Diaz Music Institute, a nonprofit he founded in 2000.

"He's dealing with a lot of low-income kids with social and economic problems and ending up with programs as strong as programs for the well-to-do," said percussionist Ndugu Chancler, a former member of Santana. Chancler has known Diaz and worked with his students for more than 20 years.

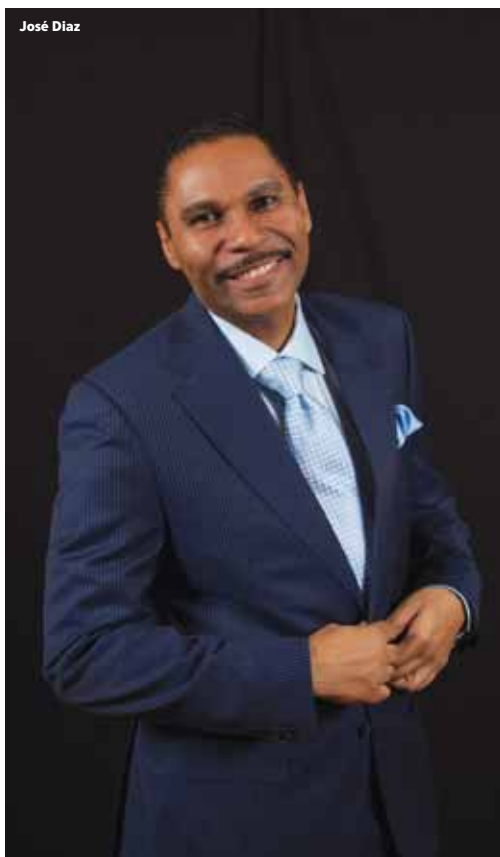
Personal accolades from prominent musicians like Chancler are nothing new for Diaz, who became MacArthur's director of bands in 1993. His ensembles have gained domestic and global notice, performing multiple times for both the Midwest Clinic and the International Association of Jazz Educators. But for all the outside attention, it is the wins in the University of Houston's competitions that most hit home, said Diaz, who is adamant about maintaining his local focus.

When Diaz arrived at MacArthur, jazz-ensemble members garnered little respect; some were even caught up in the subculture of drugs and gangs. So Diaz decided on a strategy of image-shaping. "I had to develop a culture for the music I wanted to introduce them to," he said. "And to do that, the kids who were involved with the band had to be the cool kids in the school."

The turning point came in the early years, he said, when the student body "went crazy" over arrangements he had written of pop tunes that were radio hits. Since then, the band's book of Diaz arrangements has grown markedly, as have the band members' self-regard and the community's respect for them and their leader, said Margaret Guerra, a faculty member who has worked with Diaz for 25 years.

"He doesn't just teach music," she said. "He is a model of how to conduct yourself in public."

Scrupulous attention to public image is one aspect of Diaz's philosophy that has not changed. But, at age 53, he has begun de-emphasizing competitions. Rather than "looking to the trophy" and perfecting no more than eight tunes a year, he said, the MacArthur band has been covering as many as



José Diaz

40 songs. The three-week summer workshop at his institute covers as many as 30 tunes.

"It's more of a realistic approach," he said, "reflecting what they'd be expected to know if they decided to become a professional player."

Three former students have won Grammy awards and alumni have performed with many famous artists, from Harry Belafonte to Beyoncé. The ensembles have welcomed as guest artists a long list of jazz and Latin luminaries, from Terence Blanchard and Branford Marsalis to Johnny Pacheco and Celia Cruz.

In July, Diaz said, Chancler will travel to Houston to be the soloist on "The Drum," part of a suite Diaz is writing for the institute's ensemble. Chancler will interact with the student musicians for several days, as he typically has done for decades.

Percussionist Johnathan Hulett, who played in Diaz's bands for nine years, recalled such visits as high-intensity periods that prepared him for classes at the University of Miami, where he is now a junior studying under trumpeter Brian Lynch, who is scheduled to visit Diaz's institute in June.

"He created an environment where you'd have pride in your work ethic," Hulett said of Diaz. "The only competition you were in was with yourself."  
—Phillip Lutz



Cooper Leith,  
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Mihwa Kim Band; Rosana Eckert, mentor

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**Matt Sazima, "Skylark"**  
Willamette University  
Wallace Long  
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*Graduate College Winners*

**William Longo, "You Don't Know What Love Is"**  
University of Miami  
Frost School of Music  
Gary Lindsay  
Coral Gables, FL

**Reginald Bowens, "Rockin' Jerusalem"**  
Indiana University  
Jacobs School of Music  
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Bloomington, IN



# Jazz Education Achievement Award

**Kent Devereaux**

Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle, Washington

## Nurturing Boldness & Creativity

In the lead-up to the inaugural Seattle Jazz Experience, Cornish College of the Arts Music Department Chair Kent Devereaux and the festival steering committee spent nearly a year in intense discussions about how to create a different kind of jazz festival. By the time the event happened in March, the idea had become so familiar to the organizers that Devereaux was stunned to see just how successful they'd been.

"It was almost comical," Devereaux said. "When you get together and talk about something for nine months, there's a lot of stuff that becomes assumed, but when the bands all arrived they didn't have any of that back-story. We suddenly realized that the things we thought were natural evolutions seemed like a fundamentally different type of festival to people who were just walking in cold."

Organizers wanted the focus of the Seattle Jazz Experience to be on interaction and connection, rather than competition. "Some parents are only interested in a festival where their child's band can compete and be first or second place," Devereaux said. "But that's really not what the arts are about. We're trying to broaden the conversation."

These changes are necessary, Devereaux explained, in a world where the landscape is rapidly

transforming both on and off campus. "Higher education in general is changing. We've also seen the economics of the music industry completely change in the last 10 years. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the jazz program at Cornish, which is something to be proud of, but at the same time we realize that the students who we educate today are going to be growing up in a very different world."

The first incarnation of the Seattle Jazz Experience aimed to offer students a path into the future through access to working artists and connections with other bands. "Kent Devereaux and his staff were wonderful, keeping the atmosphere of the festival upbeat with the focus on the sharing of ideas," said Steve Owen, director of jazz studies at the University of Oregon. "In a culture that needs to find its sense of community, anything that we can do to encourage and give just worth to the arts and arts education is important."

A composer, director and producer of opera and musical theater, Devereaux arrived at Cornish College in 2008 determined to reinvent the idea of the music conservatory. "I coined the word 'exploratory' because we really wanted to create something that changed the central dynamic and aesthetic of an



arts college," Devereaux said. "The motivating factor is based around the creation of the new, the bold and the challenging. Jazz is a hundred years old, so it's entering the phase when in the academic world it has swung too much towards the conservative and retaining the tradition. We want to make sure that the balance leans toward being bold and creative—and failing. You should try and fail in school, because you're not going to have too many opportunities to do that in real life."  
—Shaun Brady



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Harris Long (far right)  
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# Jazz Education Achievement Award

**Steve Sveum**

Sun Prairie High School, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

## Teaching Teamwork, Embracing Enthusiasm

For Steve Sveum, directing the jazz band at Sun Prairie High School in Wisconsin is not just about achievement—although his school's ensembles have won an impressive string of accolades. He chalks it all up to a sense of community.

"I feel fortunate to be a part of a solid music program," said Sveum, who has led his students to the finals at the Jazz at Lincoln Center Essentially Ellington competition eight times. "I see alumni come back to watch rehearsals, or offer to do a sectional. I say to my students, 'Those guys could be doing anything on their break, but they come back to see you guys. They care about you and want you to do well.'"

Sveum, a saxophonist, knows all about such dedication. Not only has he taught at Sun Prairie for 28 years, he was a student there himself.

"I was in the jazz ensemble, wind ensemble, marching band and ran a polka band," Sveum recalled. "We made a lot of money with that polka band. I loved it, but I didn't know that I could make a living out of it."

So Sveum attended the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire to major in business, but also because of its reputable music program. After the first semester, playing music remained his true passion, so he

switched his academic focus. Just after graduation, he ran into his former high school band director, Bernie Powers. As it turned out, there was an opening at his alma mater, but Sveum was reluctant to return to his teenage stomping grounds.

"Bernie talked me into applying," Sveum said. "I wanted to go out in the world. But he said, 'Where are you planning on going that's better than what's here?'"

During the job interview, Sveum learned that there was no jazz band at the school, so he got one going. Students were excited about it, and he credits them for its initial, and continued, success. But there's no denying his own extracurricular efforts helped, including establishing the Sun Valley Jazz Festival in 1990. One of that event's guest artists, Richard Davis, a professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison, has provided ongoing support to the high school, as have other music faculty members, like Les Thimmig and Johannes Wallmann. (Sveum studied under Thimmig while earning his master's of music education degree in 1992.) Sveum has also been a longtime faculty member at Birch Creek, a jazz camp in Door County, Wis.

Sveum's students say that his focus on teamwork



is the root of his program's ongoing success.

"He's always emphasizing how we're not just a group of individuals," said trombonist Alex Valigura, a senior. "We have to work together, or nothing gets accomplished."

The enthusiasm they have today should endure, if Sveum's past, and recent, successes are any indication.

"A lot of [alumni] are still attending concerts," Sveum said. "That they're staying that excited about music is what I feel best about." —Aaron Cohen

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### **Jeremy Fox**

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### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- 1) Overall sound
- 2) Presence or authority
- 3) Proper interpretation of idiom
- 4) Improvisation or creativity
- 5) Technique
- 6) Intonation
- 7) Phrasing
- 8) Dynamics
- 9) Accurate rhythm/time
- 10) Material

### ENGINEERING CRITERIA

- 1) Perspective: balance of channels; amount and type of reverb; blend (Do all sounds seem to have been performed at the same time and place? Do solos seem natural or do they stick out?).
- 2) Levels: saturation or other overload, under modulation resulting in excessive hiss, consistency of levels, left/right balance, etc.
- 3) Transparency and apparent transient response.
- 4) Special effects: Are they appropriate? Do they add or detract?
- 5) Extraneous noises, clicks, hum, etc. (for a non-live performance, any non-musical sound).
- 6) Professional etiquette.

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**Janice Borla:** Vocalist, Director of Vocal Jazz, North Central College; vocal jazz camp founder.

**Don Braden:** Saxophonist; Coordinator of Jazz Studies, Montclair State University; Music Director, Litchfield Jazz Camp.

**Jeff Coffin:** Saxophonist, composer, educator/clinician.

**Claire Daly:** Baritone saxophonist, recording artist and composer.

**John Daversa:** Chair, Department of Studio Music and Jazz, Frost School of Music, University of Miami.

**Orbert Davis:** Trumpeter, clinician; professor at University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Les Hooper:** Composer, arranger for film, TV, commercials, orchestra and recordings; clinician.

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Trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire (second from left) performed with a group of student musicians that included saxophonist Aaron Shaw and trombonist Jeffery Miller at Yoshi's in San Francisco on Feb. 26.

## Monk All-Stars Hit the Road

**DURING ITS WINTER TOUR OF NORTHERN** California, the Thelonious Monk National Performing Arts High School All-Star Jazz Sextet made music, important connections and even a bit of history.

Six young musicians from around the country (including students from New York, Houston and New Orleans) gathered at the UCLA-based institute before heading north to conduct a week of Peer-to-Peer Jazz Education programs in San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland public schools. The tour, which included a concert at Yoshi's in San Francisco, introduced the student-performers to the rigors of the road and provided the opportunity to work with and learn from professionals, including trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and vocalist Lisa Henry.

Even more valuable, the school sessions enabled the teens to deepen their understanding and appreciation of jazz's timeless values. In speaking with and performing for their Bay Area peers, the student-musicians came to embody jazz's core tenets of celebrating diversity with unity and fostering individual creativity with group cooperation. They also exemplified the direct correlation between hard work and achieving your dreams.

"The ensemble is teaching kids that there is more to music than rock 'n' roll and hip-hop," said Dr. J.B. Dyas, Monk Institute vice president for education and curriculum development. "But the larger message is, 'We are doing good things with our lives—and you can do something good with your lives.' And when kids see peers up there, they say, 'Maybe I can do my thing.'"

The week concluded with a different variety of peer interaction as the Monk Institute All-Star Jazz Sextet visited the Dave Brubeck Institute at University of the Pacific. Founded in 2000, the Stockton institute's mission is to further Brubeck's lifelong dedication to education, community engagement and having music serve as a

catalyst for social change.

The two organizations enjoy a close relationship. Dyas served as the Brubeck Institute's first executive director from 2001-'05. Three of the five current Brubeck Institute Fellows are Monk Institute All-Star Jazz Sextet veterans with Peer-to-Peer experience.

"That helped me come to the Brubeck Institute," vibraphonist Joel Ross, 18, said of the program. "I learned musical ideas on that tour, and I found a best friend. It was the first step toward becoming a professional musician."

"It's definitely been a life-changing experience," said sextet pianist Franchesca Romero, 18. "Ambrose Akinmusire is a really good person, and he inspired all of us and literally changed our perception of and approach to music."

Given the institutes' ties, there were plenty of warm greetings and familiar faces when the two ensembles met on a Friday night during the tour. Some musicians in the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet were backing a local pianist at a night-spot just off campus and members of both groups dropped by to sit in. The musicians had a more formal combo session the next morning at Pacific's Conservatory of Music.

This type of peer interaction is essential to every musician's development, said Brubeck Institute Associate Director Nicholas Fryer, noting that connections made now can yield collaborators and gigs in the years to come.

"For the students to come together and collaborate, that's always great," Fryer said. "But it's more than that. These people are not only your peers; you're also starting out your professional careers together."

The Monk Institute All-Star Jazz Sextet concluded its tour in concert with the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet at Stockton's San Joaquin Delta College. The evening ended with the ensembles sharing the stage for a rousing Monk-Brubeck medley.

—Brian McCoy

Gerri Allen at Howard University on April 7



RON CESAR

**Howard Centennial:** Students and faculty at Howard University in Washington, D.C., had two reasons to celebrate recently. The university's music department marks its 100th anniversary in 2014, and Howard presented its seventh annual Jazz Week on April 7–12. Pianist Geri Allen, an HU alumnus, was a guest artist for the Alumni Jazz Concert Gala. Also featured were Afro Blue, Traces of Blue, the Howard University Jazz Ensemble and the HUJE Alumni Jazz Ensemble with guest flugelhornist Hugh Masekela. Other Jazz Week activities included a panel discussion tracing the history of jazz studies at HU; several seminars on the business of jazz; a master class for high school students; and a concert by The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra Small Ensemble. **More info:** [howard.edu](http://howard.edu)

**Minnesota Workshops:** McNally Smith College of Music will offer Summer Workshops at its campus in downtown St. Paul, Minn. Weeklong camps for teenage musicians (age 13 and up) focusing on voice, guitar, jazz and hip-hop are scheduled for June 26–July 1, while an immersive Music Industry eXperience (MIX) camp is scheduled for Aug. 20–25. All campers enjoy access to the same professional-grade facilities available to the college's full-time students. **More info:** [mcnallysmith.edu/summer/workshops](http://mcnallysmith.edu/summer/workshops)

**Rising Trajectory:** On April 16, pianist Aaron Diehl's trio (with bassist Paul Sikivie and drummer Lawrence Leathers) became the most recent act to play the "Live at RWU" concert series at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. "Aaron Diehl is an emerging jazz superstar whose trajectory continues to rise," said Robert M. Eisinger, dean of the university's Feinstein College of Arts and Sciences. "[Diehl's] trio embraces the past as they imaginatively forge the future of jazz." The free, open-to-the-public concert was offered in association with the Newport Jazz Festival. **More info:** [rwu.edu](http://rwu.edu)

**Summer Immersion:** The University of Central Oklahoma will present its fourth annual summer jazz camp, open to all instrumentalists age 14 and up, June 22–27. The camp will be an immersive musical experience and will provide the opportunity to learn from UCO faculty and special guests. **More info:** [ucojazzlab.com](http://ucojazzlab.com)



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## Dave Liebman

A major force in jazz and improvised music since he emerged with Elvin Jones and Miles Davis at the cusp of the '70s, NEA Jazz Master Dave Liebman is a singular voice on soprano and tenor saxophones and a master educator. A prolific recording artist, Liebman's discography includes recent collaborations with guitarist John Stowell, vocalist Basak Yavuz and the quartet Quest (with pianist Richie Beirach, bassist Ron McClure and drummer Billy Hart). This was Liebman's third Blindfold Test.

### The Cookers

"Believe, For It Is True" (*Believe*, Motéma, 2012) Billy Harper, tenor saxophone; Eddie Henderson, trumpet solo; David Weiss, trumpet; Craig Handy, alto saxophone; George Cables, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

I recognize Billy Hart's rolls across the drums. An admirable job keeping the rhythmical hits in place during the solo. A long, convoluted Lee Morgan-ish head, with a "Maiden Voyage"-type harmonic thing in the background. I would have abandoned the figure by now, or asked the rhythm section to go into something a little smoother. The tenor got a really good bottom register, full-throated, all out, all the time. Nice rhythmic ideas. Played off the vamp, which was tricky. Not much nuance, but perhaps the tune demanded it—or perhaps it's that player's style. Azar Lawrence plays like that, or Billy Harper to an extent. The trumpet player is on another level. 5 stars.

### Richie Beirach & George Coleman

"Flamenco Sketches" (*Convergence*, Triloka, 1990) Beirach, piano; Coleman, tenor saxophone.

That's from the duo record Richie and George Coleman made 20 years ago. "Flamenco Sketches." At this tempo, in this mood, Richie is a king at establishing a harmonic and rhythmic ambiance. George is a very melodic player. He's a little sharp here, and sometimes he's mechanical, playing patterny, letting the fingers do the walking. But he's a complete master. His sound is light, airy, towards the high side, a real smooth, buttery, watery sort of thing. He's been consistently like that since the time with Miles in the '60s. Probably not a very large mouthpiece, or, if it is, a small opening with a hard reed. He's got a lot of agility and technique, and I think the mouthpiece enables that. 5 stars.

### Branford Marsalis Quartet

"A Love Supreme, Pt. 3: Pursuance/A Love Supreme, Pt. 4: Psalm" (*Footsteps Of Our Fathers*, Marsalis Music, 2002) Marsalis, tenor saxophone; Joey Calderazzo, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.

Is this the Bimhuis date, where they did that DVD [*A Love Supreme Live In Amsterdam*]? The studio? To get this kind of power for that long in the studio is an accomplishment. A tour de force. They're keeping almost the curve of Trane's solo, except a bit longer—more like what Trane played in Antibes after the original recording of *Love Supreme*. Branford has a lot of facets to his playing. He sounds good. At that tempo, in that pentatonic-chromatic style, there's nothing missing. I do miss the sense of a melodic motif, though. On a couple of choruses he went in the higher register, where you'd most likely do the repeated note, ornament it, play a motif around it. Maybe I'm stuck on Trane's rhythm section, but to my taste, Jeff Watts is overplaying a bit—a lot of toms, building, action, a sense of fire. Yes to all of that, but there has to be some leveling off—what I call plateau playing—to allow the stuff to breathe. Collect yourself, then rise again. Only upward trajectory is less interesting to me. 5 stars.

### Anthony Braxton

"Composition 40 (O)" (*Dortmund (Quartet)* 1976, HatArt, 1991) Braxton, soprano saxophone, contrabass saxophone; George Lewis, trombone; Dave Holland, bass; Barry Altschul, drums.

If it's not Anthony Braxton, I don't know who it is. Maybe George Lewis. Today, everybody writes long heads, but this is the '70s and those guys are



playing heads that go on for 2-3-4 minutes, and it stays on track and sounds so *together*. You might think it was edited. But it's live. It's absurd, how much they must have practiced. Then the bass joins in. Was that Dave Holland? Barry? From a saxophone standpoint, the articulation that Anthony is capable of, what appears to be single-tonguing ... I can't speak that fast, let alone play that fast. Also, he went from soprano to that contrabass whatever-it-is, then they go into the texture stuff, with the mutes on trombone. These guys are experts at sound sources, colors, wide, difficult intervals, and odd rhythm—up-and-down, weird, amazing stuff. 5 stars.

### Evan Parker—Matthew Shipp

"Rex 2" (*Rex, Wrecks & XXX*, RogueArt, 2013) Parker, tenor saxophone; Shipp, piano.

Very nice conversation between the piano and saxophone. The pianist is excellent, a lot of ideas; the saxophone player picked things up quickly when the pianist threw him a bone. I've done quite a bit of this kind of playing, and it's good for you, because you do things you wouldn't normally do in a more contained environment. But there's no up-and-down, no dynamic curve. It's basically music for musicians only, and people who are in that zone. I think it's someone who's been doing this for a long time. Initially I thought it was Archie Shepp, but he'd be more in the upper register. Then I thought David Ware, but his style was very particular, too. I think the player is from that era; all the free tenor players then came out of Coltrane. Of course, Coltrane also could play "Giant Steps," which separated him from the pack. Late Coltrane still made incredible harmonic sense. I can't say this does; there's no real melody or harmony. This is about texture—color for color's sake—and rhythm. 5 stars. This is what these guys do; they do it well, too.

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.

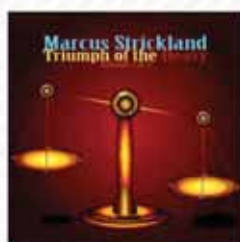


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