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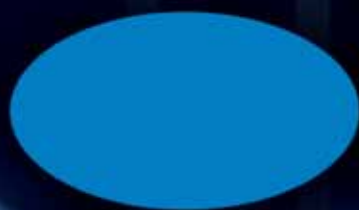
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JANUARY 2017

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The Year That Gave Us Monk, Dizzy, Ella, Buddy and the First Jazz Records

BY JOHN MCDONOUGH

One hundred years ago, jazz was captured on commercial recordings for the first time, suddenly projecting the music's reach from the back of the bar to the ends of the earth. Those first jazz records were made by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Additionally, four monumental jazz artists were born in 1917: Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Buddy Rich.

Dizzy Gillespie performs at Tivoli Gardens Concert Hall in Copenhagen in 1988.



JAN PERSSON

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On the cover, clockwise from top: Dizzy Gillespie—Photo by Joe Alper, Courtesy of Joe Alper Photo Collection LLC; Ella Fitzgerald—Photo by Ted Williams, from *Jazz: The Iconic Images of Ted Williams* (ACC Editions); Buddy Rich—Photo by Joseph L. Johnson; Thelonious Monk—Photo by Jan Persson.

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Ledisi (left), Danilo Pérez, Chris Potter, Avishai Cohen and Wycliffe Gordon perform at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York on Oct. 14.

Centennial for Jazz

WHAT ARE THE DEFINING MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF JAZZ?

It's a question that scholars and fans have wrestled with for decades. After all, jazz did not come with a birth certificate. And of course, it existed prior to the existence of commercial recordings. A people's music originating in the melting pot of New Orleans, jazz now inspires musicians and listeners on every continent.

It's easy to identify milestones along the timeline of this music. Some have called 1959 "The Greatest Year in Jazz," partly because of the releases of Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*, John Coltrane's *Giant Steps* and Ornette Coleman's *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*. In 1939, Charlie Parker moved to New York, helping to initiate the birth of bebop. And in 1925, Louis Armstrong made his first recordings as a leader. When some folks see the cover story for this issue, they might wonder, "What's so special about 1917?"

The answer is as complicated as it is fascinating. For one, 1917 was the year that gave us the first recordings in jazz history (though even *that* story, like many origin tales, comes with a healthy dose of debate). On page 27, John McDonough examines the tangled back-story of the first recordings by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.

It was also the year that gave us Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Buddy Rich. All were born in 1917, and each profoundly influenced the development of jazz. Starting on page 30, we explore the life stories of these iconic figures, and investigate how their legacies continue to thrive today—and, boy, are they thriving.

On Oct. 14, I attended a special concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center that paid tribute to the lives of Monk, Ella and Dizzy, as well as Mongo Santamaria (who, by some accounts, was also born in 1917). Curated by pianist Danilo Pérez, the concert was as reverent affair, full of solemnity and fine music. But it was also something more.

As Pérez and his ensemble—saxophonist Chris Potter, trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, trumpeter Avishai Cohen, bassist Ben Street, drummer Adam Cruz, percussionist Roman Diaz and vocalist Ledisi—performed, jazz history was happening right before our eyes. For as much as the concert celebrated legends of the past, it also showcased musicians who are putting their own unique stamp on jazz. Pérez, Potter, Gordon, Diaz—each of them has inspired a legion of students and followers, just as Monk, Dizzy, Ella and Buddy did before them. And with the wave of talented artists working today—Cohen, Street, Cruz and Ledisi are prime examples—this music is in great hands for the next 100 years.

So, as we look back at 1917, what we're *really* celebrating is an artist's ability to create music that is uniquely his or her own—music that could not have come from anyone else on the planet.

DB



Gerald Albright at the 2016 Légère NAMM Jazz Jam

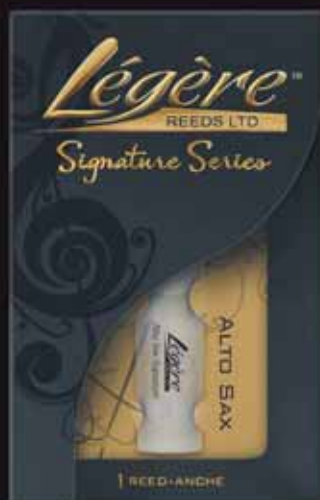


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KEITH OXMAN

East Of The Village

Keith Oxman is joined by Jeff Jenkins on organ and Todd Reid on drums. The bop infused organ trio weaves their way through 10 tunes including seldom heard standards and originals by members of the group.

Chords & Discords



Jerry Bergonzi

Essential Text

Thank you for publishing Claire Daly's interview with Jerry Bergonzi in your November issue ("The Mystic").

It great to see this "underground" saxophone hero get some much-deserved attention. Additionally, Daly's piece did a superb job

of capturing the intensity and commitment that lies behind all great art.

That article should be on the recommended reading list of *all* artists, not just musicians.

JOHN BOWMAN
SUNNYSIDE, NEW YORK

Do the Opposite

Many thanks once again to critic John McDonough. This time he gave a 1½-star rating to Kris Davis' album *Duopoly* (The Hot Box, December). So I had to hurry up and order it. And as always, it turned out to be the best choice.

So here's my advice to you, dear DownBeat readers: Pick up each and every recording that McDonough is under-rating, especially when the other three Hot Boxers maintain the contrary!

Also, I have a comment on the cover story for your November issue: A big hand for DownBeat's long-overdue recognizing of Wadada Leo Smith. So, do you have to turn 75 to be honored that way?

REINHARD SOMMER
HART BEI GRAZ, AUSTRIA

herself, a Britney Spears attempting to be a jazz performer. She is not on the same level as so many of the *real* jazz performers.

SG
STEELGUITAR@COMCAST.NET

Such Disrespect

I agree with the letter titled "Not Enough" in the Chords & Discords section of your December issue.

As a retired music teacher of 38 years—and someone who has every issue of DownBeat since 1968—I, too, was mystified by your very brief obituaries of both Rudy Van Gelder and Toots Thielemans. Anything that Van Gelder put his hands on became a gold and/or platinum recording.

And as for Toots Thielemans, he brought the harmonica to another place, as Béla Fleck has done for the banjo. Hopefully, both of these great jazz masters will get their proper homage in an upcoming issue.

RICHARD NIGRO
KENSINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Lack of Grace?

I'm writing in regard to the 81st Annual DownBeat Readers Poll in your December issue, and the fact that Grace Kelly's *Trying To Figure It Out* placed at No. 2 in the Jazz Album category.

Grace Kelly is an example of why I no longer support DownBeat or believe that DownBeat has a pulse on jazz. Her abuse of social media—with her whining and begging her online supporters to vote for her and supplying links via social media to the DownBeat voting page—is more than disgusting.

Ms. Kelly is only interested in promoting

Correction

■ In our November issue, the feature on Wadada Leo Smith should have indicated that TUM Records (tumrecords.com) released his album *The Great Lakes Suites*.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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Birthday Milestone: Corea Relives Davis Years at Blue Note

Chick Corea does not think small. Try to name another figure who, in celebration of his 75th birthday, could pull off an eight-week residency comprising 14 separate events with a cast of characters spanning pre-Baby Boomer to Millennial.

The celebratory program includes 2016 versions of such iconic Corea programs as the Elektrik Band, Three Quartets, the Leprechaun Band, Origin and an acoustic edition of Return to Forever; duo performances with Herbie Hancock, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Brad Mehldau and John McLaughlin; and several new projects, including an encounter with Norway's Trondheim Jazz Orchestra and two nights of Experiments in Electronica with Marcus Gilmore and Taylor McFerrin.

For week two, Corea presented another new project, "For Miles," in homage to his 1969-'70 employer, with what can only be described as a supergroup of three fellow Miles Davis alumni (saxophonist Kenny Garrett, electric guitarist Mike Stern and electric bassist Marcus Miller), as well as trumpeter Wallace Roney, through whom Davis speaks in the modern day, and drummer Brian Blade, who was born too late to have an opportunity to intersect with the master, but whose pan-stylistic ebullience made him a natural fit for any of Davis' bands.

On Oct. 27, the second night, before commencing the second set, Corea responded to the multitude of raised smart-phones targeted at the bandstand by pointing his own phone at the audience. He then wended his way into the refrain of "All Blues." Stern and Miller doubled the vamp, supporting Roney's opening solo. In the first chorus, the trumpeter hewed closely to Davis' original 1959 presentation on *Kind Of Blue*; then he counterstated with complex variations, creating long lines phrased to fall at odd places against the intense groove.

The groove got even more intense as Garrett began his solo at a low dynamic. First he toyed with the meter, and then, goosed by Stern's well-timed clusters, ratcheted to Pharoah Sanders levels of spirit-calling. Stern wore a compression glove on his right hand, with a pick glued between the thumb and index finger, to ameliorate the effects of nerve damage suffered in the aftermath of an accident in August.

He put to rest any concerns that his chops might in any way be compromised with a fleet solo, tracked by Blade's soft, percolating swing beats; he transitioned to full-bore rock, exploring blues variations with guitar-hero flair and skronking out with the pedals.



Chick Corea (left) performs with Marcus Miller, Wallace Roney and Kenny Garrett at the Blue Note jazz club in New York on Oct. 27.

The group nodded toward Davis' first quartet at the top of a medium-tempo treatment of "If I Were A Bell," highlighted by another efflorescent, horn-like solo by Corea, on which Blade switched between sticks and brushes. Later, Corea stood before the piano to play the melody of "Jean-Pierre," triggering another stretched-out, high-energy solo by Stern with the feel of Indian music, an effect reinforced by Garrett's long, drone-like commentary on soprano sax.

Garrett focused on tone and melody in his solo, which included an interpolated quote of "Oh! Susanna," which inspired Corea to comment with harp-like synth sounds, to which Garrett responded with a "St. Thomas" motif, to which Corea responded with "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" intimations.

After Corea had said his piece, Garrett, Miller and Blade explored the Indian threads at greater length.

When they were done, Corea, smiling broadly, approached each musician for a handshake. It seemed like a completely spontaneous gesture of respect and admiration for the artistry and team-first orientation of his partners, in keeping with his decision, in true Davis fashion, to function almost entirely as a co-equal participant rather than to feature himself, as he could easily have done.

—Ted Panken

Riffs >



Julian Lage

JUSTIN CAMERER

Lage Goes Live: As a follow-up to his March 2016 album *Arclight* (Mack Avenue), guitarist Julian Lage will release *Live In Los Angeles* as an Apple Music/iTunes exclusive on Nov. 11 and as a digital release worldwide on Nov. 25. The new album was recorded in June 2016 at L.A.'s The Blue Whale and consists of live performances of five tracks from *Arclight*: "Persian Rug," "I'll Be Seeing You," "Nocturne," "Stop Go Start" and "Activate." Lage appears on both albums in a trio featuring double bassist Scott Colley and drummer Kenny Wollesen.

mackavenue.com

Piano Comp: The 2017 American Jazz Pianist Competition will be held at the Henegar Center for the Arts in downtown Melbourne, Florida, on Feb. 4. The seven finalists chosen to compete will have the opportunity to win a grand prize valued at over \$10,000 (Grand Bohemian Award). The second-place finalist will win a cash prize of \$5,000 from piano manufacturer Bösendorfer (Bösendorfer Award). The five remaining finalists will each receive a cash award of \$500, a Yamaha digital piano and the chance to receive an additional \$1,000 in cash (Yamaha Award). Lynne Arriale, Martin Bejerano and Bill Mays will serve as judges, and Mays will present a concert at the Henegar Center on Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m. Applicants ages 18–25 can enter the competition electronically via the AJPC website. Deadline for entry is Jan. 15.

americanjazzpianistcompetition.org

Bob Cranshaw RIP: Bob Cranshaw, the rhythmically agile bassist best known for his role as an indispensable sideman to saxophonist Sonny Rollins, died of cancer on Nov. 2 at his home in Manhattan. He was 83. Throughout his prolific career, Cranshaw's bass could be heard in Broadway pit orchestras, in TV jingles and on numerous albums now considered classics, including Lee Morgan's 1964 album *The Sidewinder*, the title track of which featured one of the most famous bass lines in jazz. Cranshaw was also a member of the first *Saturday Night Live* Band and held positions in the late-night TV ensembles of Dick Cavett and Merv Griffin. jazzfoundation.org/donate

Caught >



FRANK STEWART

From right: Victor Goines, Wynton Marsalis, Sherman Irby and Vincent Gardner perform at Jazz at Lincoln Center in Manhattan on Oct. 29.

JLCO Launches '100 Years of Jazz' Series with Jazz Age Suite

ON FEB. 26, 1917, THE ORIGINAL DIXIELAND

Jass Band, a quintet from New Orleans, entered the Victoria Talking Machine Co.'s headquarters at 46 W. 38th St. in Manhattan, took the freight elevator up to the top floor and performed a rendition of "Livery Stable Blues" as a rotating cylinder captured their sound in wax.

The 78 r.p.m. record that emerged from that session might have been the first jazz recording ever made, and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of that milestone, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra has commissioned a series of concerts for the 2017 season that explores an era of jazz history through new and historic compositions.

The first of those commissions was performed on Oct. 29, as the orchestra premiered *Untamed Elegance*, a new work by JLCO reedist Victor Goines inspired by the music of the Jazz Age, that slice of time between 1919 and 1929 during which, said Goines, the country hitched up its skirt and "drew back into adolescence."

The group began its journey into the past with an arrangement of Horace Henderson's "Big John Special," a hurdling swing tune written by the younger brother of bandleader Fletcher Henderson. Goines' arrangement was careful to preserve the song's Jazz Age DNA—those crisp, popping trumpets, warbly trombones and velvety saxophones—while infusing the music with splashes of modern color.

The band's next song, an interpretation of "Singin' The Blues," required that the ensemble transition from a big band to a small combo, recalling the original 1927 recording by Frankie Trumbauer and Bix Beiderbecke, which many jazz historians agree was the first

recorded jazz ballad. Goines' arrangement featured lonesome swoops on the clarinet and a drum pattern light as rain.

Subsequent numbers reeled off like signposts on the jazz timeline. Duke Ellington was represented through arrangements of "Double Check Stomp," "East St. Louis Toodle-00" and "Mood Indigo." So, too, was Jelly Roll Morton, whose "Dead Man Blues" was played with faithful adherence to the original.

The second portion of the concert consisted entirely of Goines' six-part *Untamed Elegance* suite, and began with the reedist inviting guest artist Jon Irabagon to the stage.

Under Goines' leadership, the band swung through six compositions that resonated on harmonic and political frequencies. The suite-opening "The Business Of America Is Business" derived its title from a Calvin Coolidge quote, and placed Irabagon—whose style leans toward the avant-garde—into the context of traditional swing. He adapted to his new surroundings admirably, taking flight on solos that would have been at home on a 1920s dance floor.

Goines nodded to other illustrious aspects of the Jazz Age that night, evoking the giddiness of the repeal of Prohibition with his composition "Drunk As A Skunk," and later summing up the spirit of the era with "Bold, Naked And Sensational." But it was the title song, "Untamed Elegance: The 'It' Thing," that was the night's most alluring. Dedicated to the silent film star Clara Bow, the song was the suite's only ballad, and with its unhurried exoticism and compelling sense of mystery, it became a portal into another time. —Brian Zimmerman

Metal Guitarist Skolnick Gets Jazzy on Trio Project

ALEX SKOLNICK CARVED OUT A REPUTATION during the late 1980s with the thrash-metal band Testament, and in due time was praised in the pages of major music magazines. Thirty-three years since joining that San Francisco Bay Area band at the age of 18, Skolnick is still at it, gearing up a major tour in support of the group's recently released album, *Brotherhood Of The Snake* (Nuclear Blast). Meanwhile, the Berkeley, California, native and Brooklyn resident has been moonlighting as a jazz guitarist with his Alex Skolnick Trio.

While thrash-metal and jazz may seem like strange bedfellows, Skolnick cultivated an interest in jazz organically after experiencing a "jazz epiphany" some 30 years ago.

"I joined Testament in high school, so I was in my metal phase. It was around that time that I saw a television performance of Miles Davis' electric group with either Mike Stern or John Scofield. I had never been exposed to that before, and it was phenomenal. It was screaming electric guitar but in a jazz setting."

Later, when he wasn't touring with Testament, Skolnick would frequent the Bay Area jazz club Yoshi's, where he saw the likes of McCoy Tyner, Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Michael Brecker. "Eventually I just realized I needed to be in New York, so I moved there [in 1998] and began studying at the New School."

While still at the New School, he formed his Alex Skolnick Trio with drummer and fellow student Matt Zebroski. After recruiting upright bassist Nathan Peck, they recorded their 2002 debut, *Goodbye To Romance: Standards For A New Generation*, which including jazzy interpretations of tunes by Kiss, Scorpions, Black Sabbath, Aerosmith and Ozzy Osbourne. Their recently released fifth album, *Live Unbound* (Skol Productions), showcases the kind of

sophisticated chords and voicings that he could never play with Testament.

A good example is his beautiful chord melody playing on the ballad "Shades Of Grey." As he explained, "I always loved the elegance of great chords. Joe Pass was one of the first guitarists I heard that moved me with his amazing chord playing."

Elsewhere on *Live Unbound*, Skolnick and his crew turn in hip renditions of Scorpion's "Still Loving You" and Aerosmith's classic

"Dream On." The latter features Skolnick running the guitaristic gamut from lush chord melodies to Wes Montgomery-style octaves to screaming Sonny Sharrock-esque skronking.

Regarding his penchant for bringing a jazz aesthetic to familiar rock fare, Skolnick feels he has carved out a unique niche with his trio. "I'll stay away from Radiohead and Nirvana. Leave that to Brad Mehldau and The Bad Plus. But nobody else is doing jazz versions of Kiss and Scorpions tunes."

—Bill Milkowsky




Alex Skolnick

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European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK



Empire State of Mind

The foundations for the music of Frantz Lorient unquestionably come from Europe, but it took a four-year stay in New York for the French violist to forge the distinct musical identity that marks his striking work today. Although he's been living in Zurich, Switzerland, for the last four years, he admitted, "My solo work is pretty much representative to my New York years, even if I recorded it after I moved back to Europe."

Lorient, 36, grew up just outside Paris in a musical family—his Japanese mother was a classical pianist and his father was a student of Indian classical music. Lorient began classical violin studies when he was just three, following the Suzuki method. Over time he became attracted to the sound of the viola. "It is a bridge between violin and cello, and it has way more possibilities, sonically, than a violin," he explained. "I was also pretty tired of the violinist attitude thing—the soloist."

At 21 he switched to the viola, and his interests expanded. He discovered rock, reggae, hip-hop and jazz, but perhaps the most crucial realization came as he first heard music that challenged the conventional usage for string instruments. "I discovered Tom Cora with the Ex. I found out that it was really possible to play differently with a string instrument. I had dreamt of that and finally someone had actually done it 15 years earlier."

In 2007 he visited New York for the first time and was immediately won over by its openness. Feeling burned out by the Parisian scene, he moved to New York in the fall of 2008 with very few connections and even fewer plans. Five days after arriving he found a job as a prep cook despite having almost no restaurant experience, and during his first year he worked in three different restaurants, struggling to make rent and having little time to play music.

But things changed, and his network of friends and collaborators expanded. He began organizing a small concert series in his Bushwick apartment. In New York he formed some of his most important projects, such as the richly tactile trio Natura Morta with drummer Carlo Costa and bassist Sean Ali, a duo with clarinetist Jeremiah Cymerman, and the dazzling Systematic Distortion Orchestra—a group that includes both Costa and Ali, along with bassist Pascal Niggenkemper, trombonist Ben Gerstein and drummer Devin Gray. (The group recently released its debut album, *The Assembly*, for the OutNow Recordings label.)

As much as Lorient loved New York, he met a woman there who he loved more, and he eventually moved to Zurich to be with her—they now have a child together. While Lorient has maintained his ties to New York, including recording his arresting solo album *Reflections On An Introspective Path* (Neither Nor) during a return visit in December 2014. But he's also making new friends, including duo projects with Swiss musicians like reedist Christoph Erb and percussionist Christian Wolfarth.

Last year, Lorient released *Urban Furrow* (Clean Feed), the debut from one of his most remarkable projects, the Notebook Large Ensemble, where jazz, art-pop, noise, Gypsy sounds and contemporary classical collide in a giddy yet articulate pile-up.

"I have a lot of influences," said Lorient. "I am still looking for new things, feelings and sensations. I play different kinds of music because they are representative to my identity. I am interested in many things, and not only in music. Literature, painting, photography or architecture are big wells, which inspire me considerably. I think I have found my sound for now, although it might change and, I hope, evolve." **DB**



Andrew Cyrille's latest releases are *Proximity* (Sunnyside) and *The Declaration Of Musical Independence* (ECM).

Cyrille's Brilliant Gamesmanship

AT A RECENT TRIBUTE CONCERT HELD AT New York's Judson Church, drummer Andrew Cyrille performed in one of numerous ensembles to honor bassist Henry Grimes. Perched at the back of the stage as if occupying a holy vestibule, the 76-year-old Cyrille played like the wind, swinging hard, storming into abstractions and generally infusing the group with his timeless style.

How does this veteran of bandstands led by Cecil Taylor, Walt Dickerson, John Carter and Anthony Braxton remain fresh?

"You stay in the present moment," Cyrille replied from his home in Montclair, New Jersey. "To stay contemporary, I practice as much as I can. And when it's game time, I translate that to the drum set. The past is gone and the future is yet to be, so I deal with the now. Everything I have learned is who I am now."

Following a restlessness that keeps him as busy as musicians half his age, Cyrille still tours the globe, primarily with his longstanding group, Trio 3 (with bassist Reggie Workman and saxophonist Oliver Lake), and he continues to record meaningful work that brings out the best in his fellow musicians.

Cyrille's most recent recordings include *Proximity* (Sunnyside), a duo release with saxophonist Bill McHenry, and *The Declaration Of Musical Independence* (ECM), which features longtime Cyrille collaborator Richard Teitelbaum on piano and synthesizer, Ben Street on bass and Bill Frisell on guitar.

"Certain musicians get pegged for being outside or free, but that oversimplifies what is happening with Andrew," Frisell said. "You can hear Andrew's roots from when he played with Coleman Hawkins [on *The Hawk Relaxes* (Moodsville, 1961)]. The history is there. Andrew goes so far beyond categories. No matter how abstract he gets, the power in the beat is always there. Which makes him a joy to play with, because you can push up against it or get in there with it."

The Declaration Of Musical Independence is an uplifting, sprawling recording. Frisell hasn't sounded so free to explore in years, and his plectrum forays unite with Teitelbaum's not-so-subtle electronic palette to produce sparks. Street holds the lower frequencies, while Cyrille challenges by playing the unexpected, song after song.

"[With] the great musicians, like Charlie Parker, what makes the music so profound is the unexpected," Cyrille said. "What is he going to do next? This is really what jazz is all about. The surprises. And that's when great improvisation occurs. I am no Parker or Ellington or Max Roach. But once you have control of yourself and you feel as though you want to do something—like putting tomatoes on a hot dog—some people might love that."

The Declaration Of Musical Independence overflows with surprises, from a free-range reading of "Coltrane Time" (where Frisell brings forth the ghost of Jimi Hendrix), the sam-

ple-warped "Sanctuary" and Cyrille's "Dazzling (Perchordially Yours)." Throughout, atypical sounds and rambling rhythms swirl together, collide and are set free.

"I use my drum set to blend with those sounds," Cyrille explains. "The last vista of organic acoustic music is the drum set. You can dampen sounds; you can dampen the heads. You can get a glissando sound by putting your finger on the head and tapping the head as you slide another finger across it. Use your elbows. You learn these things to grow."

Cyrille and McHenry express a jovial mood on *Proximity*, the pair trading ideas like chattering chums in a friendly brawl.

"It's a game, in a way," Cyrille muses. "If both of us like having a conversation, we'll laugh. It's the same with music. Something goes down and you enjoy it. A bright light goes on at a moment and we smile at each other."

In addition to recording a new Trio 3 album, in support of which the group will tour in 2017, Cyrille also teaches at New York's New School, where he's influenced generations of young players for the past 27 years.

"Some students just want to know how to survive," Cyrille said. "Before I went to Juilliard I was making gigs, playing parties, bar mitzvahs, shows. You learn how to survive to buy some food and pay your rent. You survive the best way you can with your integrity, and keep your eyes on the prize." —Ken Micallef



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Kevin Spacey (left) and Andra Day perform at the Apollo Theater in New York on Oct. 24.

COURTESY APOLLO THEATER

'Ella 100' Celebrates First Lady of Song

It was more than 80 years ago, on Nov. 21, 1934, that a 17-year-old singer named Ella Fitzgerald stepped onto the stage of the Apollo Theater, sang a song and, after three encores, took first prize in the legendary concert hall's famed Amateur Night, launching an extraordinary career that would span decades.

So it was more than fitting that, in anticipation of the 2017 centennial of her birth, the singer who would come to be known as "The First Lady Of Song" should be feted in the place that first gave her a shot.

This spectacular show, titled *100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella!*, was hosted by Patti Austin with David Alan Grier, and featured four of today's finest female vocalists—Andra Day, Lizz Wright, Cassandra Wilson and Monica Mancini—plus the Howard University vocal jazz ensemble Afro Blue and the actor Kevin Spacey.

With musical accompaniment provided by The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra, directed by Scotty Barnhart, and The Quartet—pianist Shelly Berg, guitarist Brian Nova, bassist Nathan East and drummer Greg Field—the program offered an evening of music worthy of Lady Ella herself.

The ambitious program began with curtains closed and an off-stage announcement reenacting the famed November 1934 introduction of the teenaged Fitzgerald to the Apollo audience. The curtain was drawn, dramatically revealing the Basie band and string section stretched expansively across the stage. The young Afro Blue vocalist Ayodele Owolabi, in period dress as the young Ella, scampered out onto the bandstand to sing Hoagy Carmichael's "Judy" with a rousing sense of swing.

Austin came on to the stage next, proudly telling of her own Apollo debut, humorously recounting the story of sitting in as a 4-year-old

with her godmother Dinah Washington's band.

It was all serious business after that, as Austin—whose 2002 album *For Ella* earned a Grammy nomination—authoritatively delivered hard-swinging renditions of "A Tisket, A Tasket" and "When I Get High," before closing with a prayerful reading of "Miss Otis Regrets."

Noting that the Basie organization was celebrating its 80th anniversary, Grier invited the band to play a swinging rendition of Frank Foster's "Back In The Apple."

The second segment of the show kicked off with The Quartet center stage to re-create the sound of Fitzgerald's small groups featuring guitarist Joe Pass (1929-'94).

With Mancini out front, the group played Berg's arrangement of "Give Me The Simple Life," followed by an intimate recital of "Once In A While" by Mancini and guitarist Nova.

Austin next introduced Wright as a "vocal angel" to the cheering crowd. Taking no time to bask in the audience's thunderous approval, the celebrated singer dove right into a version of Ellington's "Love You Madly."

Praising Fitzgerald as a "musician, woman, humanitarian and singer ... without question one of the greatest of all time," Wright recalled a memory of being in a crowded airport terminal in which a recording of Ella's music provided "comfort and warmth" to all those around.

Spacey and Day next paid tribute to the Fitzgerald-Sinatra partnership with a bracing version of "The Lady Is A Tramp" followed by Spacey stepping into the solo spotlight, singing and dancing on "Without A Song."

At curtain call, the whole cast joined in with Austin and Grier for a grand finale of "You'll Have To Swing It (Mr. Paganini)," followed by the spontaneous singing of "Happy Birthday," Stevie Wonder-style, by everyone in the room.

—Russ Musto

Treasures Abound in 'Savory Collection'

IN OCTOBER, THE NATIONAL JAZZ Museum in Harlem launched its imprint label with the digital release of *The Savory Collection, Volume 1—Body And Soul: Coleman Hawkins And Friends* in partnership with Apple Music and iTunes. In keeping with NJMH's significantly increased footprint in recent years, the release immediately reached the top of the iTunes Jazz Chart.

Apart from the title track, a five-chorus Coleman Hawkins variation on "Body And Soul" from 1940 (seven months after his iconic recording of the same song), the 18-tune program contains an ebullient set by Fats Waller at New York's Yacht Club; two numbers by Ella Fitzgerald and Chick Webb with a radio orchestra; a Lionel Hampton jam with Basie tenor saxophonist Herschel Evans, trumpeter Charlie Shavers and drummer Cozy Cole; and single tracks by the Carl Kress-Dick McDonough guitar duo and Texas violinist Emilio Caceres.

This is the first of four prospective releases documenting material culled from the 975 platters that NJMH purchased in 2010 from the son of William Savory (1916–2004), who captured a slew of air-checks and phone line recordings direct to disc, at 33-1/3 rpm, on state-of-the-art equipment, while working at a Manhattan transcription studio between 1935 and 1941. Doug Pomeroy cleaned, transferred and digitized the platters, many in dicey condition after six decades in storage, imbuing each track with vivid clarity and aural presence.

Savory stashed the disks in 50 wood boxes, where they might still be moldering if not for the persistence of Loren Schoenberg, the 59-year-old saxophonist, bandleader, arranger, educator, historian and Grammy-winning essayist who is NJMH's founding director and senior scholar.

Schoenberg met Savory in 1980, soon after Benny Goodman employed him as an assistant, beginning a relationship that culminated when Goodman hired Schoenberg's orchestra en masse in 1985. But since that moment in 2010, Schoenberg has made it his mission "to make the collection accessible to anyone who wants to hear it anywhere in the world."

NJMH hopes eventually to release Savory's treasures on a multi-CD set, Schoenberg said,

"hopefully on a great jazz reissue label."

Among the holdings to which NJMH holds issuance rights are some 30 performances by the Count Basie Orchestra between 1937 and 1940, which constitute the entirety of Volume 2, a December release. Volumes 3 and 4, scheduled for 2017, include recordings by Eddie Condon, Bunny Berigan, Jimmie Lunceford, John Kirby, Albert Ammons, Louis Jordan, Bud Freeman and Dave Tough. —Ted Panken



Photo: Deneka Peniston

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Fiddle player Nils Økland was a featured artist at the 2016 Vossa Jazz Festival.

ODIN DRØNN/VOSSA JAZZ

NILS ØKLAND

Nordic Tradition Expanded

One of the cherished traditions of the venerable Vossa Jazz Festival goes by the title “Tingingsverket,” a commissioned work by an artist of note. A special meaning, depth and local angle were attached to the 2016 honoree, Nils Økland, the innovative and tradition-respecting master of the Hardanger fiddle (aka hardingfele).

His connection to the Norwegian town of Voss is integral to his artistic evolution. In the 1990s, as a student and then teacher at Voss’ widely respected Ole Bull Akademiet, Økland was on his way to finding a personalized path—including jazz, free improvisation and vestiges of rock—from the deep, loamy tradition of the indigenous Hardanger fiddle. The instrument’s unique resonance is created through a set of sympathetic strings, which are positioned beneath the bowed strings. This fiddle, which originated in the Norwegian region called the Hardanger, typically has a total of eight or nine strings.

Økland’s hour-plus suite at Vossa Jazz, titled *Glodetradar* (a rough translation is “glow thread”), played like a seamless blending—and synthesis—of two important recent albums on the ECM. The first is Nordic post-rock trio project *Lumen Drones* (2014) and the second is the hauntingly lovely and introspective 2015 release *Kjølvatn*. Økland’s compositions draw heavily on the influence of Norwegian folk music and the country’s vintage hymn tradition (to which he paid more direct tribute on the 2011 ECM album *Lysøen—Hommage À Ole*

Bull), but all through the prism of his own musical voice.

On the phone from his home in the small town of Haugesund, where he was born in 1961, Økland explained that creating the tapestry-like piece *Glodetradar* was a challenge, well rewarded by the outcome. “I’m not an educated composer,” he said. “The difficult part was to try to make some links between the different parts. It was quite easy to get ideas, but more challenging to put them together.”

What is it that makes the Hardanger fiddle so unique? “The sympathetic strings have a big influence on the sound,” Økland said. “And the bridge is almost completely flat, so you often play on two or three strings at a time. It’s a different way of playing, because you almost release the sound. When I play violin, I have to be quite active with my bow to make a good sound. But with the Hardanger fiddle, it’s more like you lift the sound out. You have to be more careful.”

While he has recorded for other labels, including Rune Grammofon, Økland has been strengthening his discography on ECM, thanks to an empathetic connection with the head of the label, Manfred Eicher. “I worked closely with him in Christian Wallumrød’s group,” Økland said, regarding his central role in the keyboardist’s mystical, radiant chamber-jazz project, as heard on the 2005 disc *A Year From Easter*. “But on my recordings I have done for ECM, [Eicher] has not been in the recording situation, but he had worked on

the material after that.” The basic tracks for *Kjølvatn*, for example, were recorded in an ancient stone church near Lena, Norway, and then Eicher added post-production touches.

One of Økland’s most trusted collaborators over the years, including on his latest ECM album and at the 2016 Vossa Jazz Festival, is the harmonium player Sigbjørn Apeland, with whom Økland also has a fascinating improvisational trio—with a drummer—called 1982. The trio has recorded for the muscular-ambient-inclined label Hubro, which will release its next album in February.

Økland describes Apeland as an extremely flexible musician. “Sigbjørn studied free improvisation with John Stevens in London, when he was young,” he says. “He also worked as a church organist close to my hometown.” They began making music together in the late ’80s, and the bond is stronger than ever now, as Økland raises his international profile. (Stateside, he hopes to make his New York debut in 2017, and has been invited to the acclaimed, adventurous Big Ears Festival in Knoxville, Tennessee, in March.)

Økland relates his eclectic musical evolution to the deep tradition of Hardanger fiddlers, which dates back to the 17th century. “Especially with old players who I have met, all of them play differently. They were like poets. I like that the music ... can be so individual. That makes it more personal. You can see that happening in jazz and rock and classical music, as well.”

—Josef Woodard

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COURTESY THE ARTIST

MEHMET ALI SANLIKOL

Grooving Across Cultures

It's Oct. 9, and the stage at Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport, Massachusetts, is set up for a large jazz ensemble, spiced with kettledrums, oud and a cane reed rack. A big band led by Mehmet Ali Sanlikol holds forth, and after swinging pieces echoing "Nardis" and "Man With The Golden Arm," the group edges Eastward: dotted rhythms stretching sinuously, the leader scatting in high nasal melisma over a microtonal keyboard, a Turkish kös drum booming and zurna horns braying amid the brass. Soon, Dave Liebman snakes his soprano saxophone through a concerto written for him, and trumpeter Toru "Tiger" Okoshi launches lip-busting cadenzas over a slinky 12/8 groove.

Occident meets Orient in the music of Sanlikol, a multi-instrumentalist whose career travels a Silk Road of vivid and fascinating styles and themes—jazz, classical, drama, nature, poetry, politics. Globetrotting reedist and educator Liebman had this to say: "Mehmet combines musical aspects of his native Turkish culture with first-rate big band arranging. It's quite entertaining for the listener and on the highest level, musically speaking."

Born in Istanbul, Sanlikol is a cheerful apologist for inclusive globalism. "We need to internalize and integrate a new musical language through practice and study, not reduce it to sound-byte stereotype," he said.

The genial polymath extended a line of Turkish musicians who thrived at Berklee College of Music when he arrived in Boston in 1993 (including Atlantic producer Arif Mardin and pianist Aydin Esen). He lucked into Herb Pomeroy's final year teaching his famed line-writing course. "It was structured, dogmatic, became ingrained in me," said Sanlikol.

You can hear its influence in exciting exchanges between clarinet and trumpets on "Turkish Second Line," the opener on Sanlikol's

latest release, *Resolution* (Dünya). Further study at New England Conservatory brought depth and experience. "Bob Brookmeyer helped me develop compositional motifs, proportions, varying time signatures," Sanlikol shared over late-night rakı (an anise-flavored spirit). "And George Russell! Even at 80 he exuded explosive force!" But he was in for a rude awakening. "My shocking re-education started with an innocent game of Risk when a friend put on an old Ottoman Janissary march: I could identify neither the rhythms nor the tonic. My cultural filters were alerted and my tastes sharpened as I gradually 'got' this huge, primal energy of double-reeds, trumpets and percussion."

Sanlikol went hermetic in Turkey for a decade, diving into Ottoman ethnomusicology and unearthing links to many Islamic subcultures. Returning to Boston bearing sheaves of new compositions, he diligently assembled orchestras to play them. He founded Dünya, a Turkish period-instrument classical ensemble that performs birdsong and integrates thematic concerts around opera and Byzantine history.

For his group Whatsnext?, his intriguing charts weave big band vernacular with Turkish makam and usul (modes and meters akin to Indian ragas and talas) into meticulous tapestries, with lovingly researched threads pairing lute with electric guitar. The group's self-titled 2014 debut was Grammy nominated.

Sanlikol plays keyboards, plectra and rare ancient winds. Most memorable among his historical Turkish treasures are pieces that instantly link East and West. "Whirl Around," a slinky earworm from *Resolution* sung in duo with Panamanian vocalist Nedelka Prescod, eases Sufi-inspired rhythms into Jamaican reggae. His "Turkish 2nd Line" magically links the familiar street-beat of New Orleans with a beloved dance pattern deep in the DNA of all Mediterranean peoples.

—Fred Bouchard

A high-angle, close-up photograph of the Roland FP-90 Digital Piano. The piano is black with a white keyboard. The control panel above the keys features a power button, a volume knob, and several buttons for sound selection and settings. The piano is shown from a side-on perspective, highlighting its sleek, modern design.

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Natalie Cressman and Mike Bono's new album is titled *Etchings In Amber*.

NATALIE CRESSMAN & MIKE BONO

Exploring New Territory

At a recent performance at Joe's Pub in New York, vocalist Natalie Cressman and acoustic guitarist Mike Bono wove unusual threads into rare shapes and sounds, their dense compositions alluding to jazz, folk and left-of-center pop. On the duo's debut album, *Etchings In Amber* (Cressman Music), crystalline vocals soar over dense acoustic guitar like a cool fall day holding onto the last rays of the setting sun.

"There's a lot of artists coming from the jazz world who are expanding its reach by bringing in [other] styles," said Cressman, 25. "It's always been an evolving art form. What I feel most comfortable doing is bringing in modern influences from my jazz background. Our music could appeal to a jazz listener who likes Joni Mitchell's *Court And Spark* period, or people our age who only listen to contemporary singer-songwriters or pop music."

Cressman—whose skilled trombone work was featured on her albums *Turn The Sea* and *Unfolding*—grew up in the San Francisco area performing in her parents' band, led by her trombone-playing father, Jeff Cressman, a long-time member of Carlos Santana's group. Aside from her duo with Bono, she also leads her own group (including Bono) and is a member of guitarist Trey Anastasio's touring band. Bono, also 25, is part of the new wave of New York players who count Ben Monder and Julian Lage as influences. *From Where You Are* was his leader debut.

Bono's angular compositions frequently challenge Cressman's vocal skills. "The pieces Mike and I collaborate on often begin as solo guitar pieces," Cressman explained. "So I'm limited by the shape of the melodies, which are very jumpy. Finding the right vowels or [crafting lyrics that] still sound like English—it can be a challenge. The limitation provides a form of innovat-

ing to find fresh words and phrases. We haven't tried setting [previously composed] words to music because I like hearing the song and feeling what I think it's about and blending the meaning and the sound of the words into the music as seamlessly as possible."

"When we started playing together and I began writing music for the duo, I wasn't necessarily writing jazz songs," Bono said. "I just follow the melodies I'm hearing. Some of them are more unusual and obscure; others are more folk-sounding. I believe Natalie follows a similar arc. Our crossover is harmonizing those melodies in a nontraditional way. The harmonies from both of our styles stem from jazz."

Cressman and Bono play a regular circuit of small clubs in and around New York, where they stretch their repertoire to include tunes from numerous genres, including Monder's "Charlotte's Song," Tove Lo's "Habits (Stay High)," Bon Iver's "Blindsided" and Norwegian vocalist Hanne Hukkelberg's "Do Not As I Do."

"I think of João Gilberto, or other artists who wrote great music on acoustic guitar with ethereal, floaty melodies," Cressman said. "Flora Purim was a big influence on me as well. That's still under the wider umbrella of jazz in my mind. Where I was raised, in the Bay Area, Brazilian and straightahead jazz are played as one. The musicians cross over freely."

The duo is entering intriguing musical territory with their jazz backgrounds attached.

"The acoustic guitar makes [our compositions] a little more deceiving," Bono said. "You might not realize the harmonies are as obscure as they are because you're hearing them from an instrument with a soothing timbre. It lends itself more to folk music or bossa nova. The jazz element in our music can be disguised if you don't have the ear for it."

—Ken Micallef

The members of Moksha are Sanskriti Shrestha (left), Oddrun Lilja Jonsdottir and Tore Flatjord.

MOKSHA

Global Travelers

Curious fans who Google “Moksha” will discover that the Norwegian jazz band shares a name with a tourist-friendly group based in Las Vegas. Norway’s Moksha couldn’t be further inclined in another direction than its American counterpart. Sitting down for a conversation during the Oslo Jazz Festival, news about coincidental band names gets a good laugh from the trio: Oddrun Lilja Jonsdottir (guitar), Sanskriti Shrestha (tabla, percussion) and Tore Flatjord (darbuka, dhol, djembe). Moksha, whose name derives from Indian philosophy, means liberation or release. The trio was one of many Norwegian bands performing at last year’s festival.

Formed in 2012, the band’s debut, *The Beauty Of An Arbitrary Moment* (Jazzland Norway), is available at its website (moksha.no). Combining elements of Nordic jazz and Indian raga, the music can veer off into intense realms of expression, while often leaning toward the contemplative and serene. Not unlike guitarist John McLaughlin’s Shakti groups, Moksha utilizes a mix of nontraditional percussion with both acoustic and hollowbody electric guitars, creating a novel hybrid of East and West.

The formation of Moksha is yet another example of likeminded musicians being in the right place at the right time. “We all studied in Oslo, and played in different styles and groups, and then met each other,” Jonsdottir explained. “And then I had this project in mind, and they played the instruments that would fit.”

Shrestha concurred, adding, “Yeah, we played in different combinations with others, and still work with other musicians, but then agreed that we wanted to play together.”

To develop its sound, the band practiced extensively during its first few years. “It’s not like we follow a genre,” Jonsdottir said. “We think of

one instrument and then add the others.”

Featuring all-original music variously composed by all three members, *Arbitrary Moment* illustrates how the musicians’ uncanny approaches helped them to create music that defies categorization. “We practice a lot, and focus on one instrument at a time,” said Flatjord, emphasizing how the group is very attuned to each instrument’s particularities.

Jonsdottir (who grew up in Norway and Iceland) and Shrestha were both exposed to South Indian music as youngsters, with Shrestha, who hails from Nepal, having even more of a direct experience of it. The band’s globetrotting has also informed its sound. “We’ve all been traveling a lot,” said Jonsdottir, “including [trips to] Africa and the Far East.”

“We’ve tried to incorporate more folk traditions from the places we have been to,” Shrestha said. “We take the sounds of the world and work with them to make our music.”

Incorporating the spirit of free-jazz and all their different cultural experiences, particularly South Indian classical music, Moksha is also, according to Flatjord, “about rock music.” A native of Norway, Flatjord demonstrated some of that rock energy during the festival. His playing even contained the faint presence of a backbeat. All three bandmates agreed that the spirit of rock is as much a part of their aesthetic as the rhythms themselves.

Working with other collaborators, including sitar player Ashraf Sharif Khan and flutist Rubin Shrestha, Moksha’s members stay connected to age-old traditions even as they forge ahead, creating their own original music. With each member bringing ideas to the table and with a spirit of democracy where all three voices are heard equally, there is much promise in the musical world they have built. —John Ephland

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1917

The year that gave us Monk, Dizzy, Ella, Buddy & the first jazz records

By John McDonough



Thelonious Monk (upper left) by Jim Marshall (© Jim Marshall Photography LLC / Reel Art Press, from *Jazz Festival: Jim Marshall*). Photos of Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald & Buddy Rich from DownBeat Archives.



The Original Dixieland Jazz Band made the first commercial jazz recordings in 1917.

One hundred years ago, in 1917, jazz finally stopped being an object of rumor and became an article of commerce. Early recording techniques sealed the primal energy of jazz in the amber of a disc for the first time, suddenly projecting the music's reach from the back of the bar to the ends of the earth—and, ultimately, through time itself.

Pretty important stuff, for sure. It is the effective beginning of jazz history. That's why 1917 deserves a few minutes of our attention.

Like many notable ideas of humble origin, though, it seems that recorded jazz has multiple birth certificates. One claims Jan. 30; the other says Feb. 26. Twenty-seven days may seem like small change in the shadow of 100 years. But each date has its own particular story to it, and therefore its own stake in a milestone moment of cultural history.

The date might be an issue of dispute, but the musicians are not. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band arrived in New York from New Orleans and opened at Reisenweber's restaurant on Columbus Circle in mid-January 1917. The leader, Nick LaRocca (1889–1961), was a hard-selling, trumpet-playing hustler who would tell anyone who would listen that he had “invented” jazz. It was an easy boast in 1917 because there was no one in New York who could argue that he hadn't.

The music was loud, rowdy and unlike anything the city had ever heard. “It takes a good deal of straining of one's aesthetic sense to apply the word *music* to the resultant concussion,” wrote a journalist in *The Sun* newspaper. But curious customers flood-

ed Reisenweber's and were dazzled by what they heard.

Which brings us to Jan. 30. Four-and-a-half miles south of Columbus Circle in the Woolworth Building near Park Place, the Columbia Graphophone Company was curious, too. On the strength of the band's enormous local publicity, the company decided to be the first to record the ODJB. On Jan. 30, the band made two test titles in Columbia's Woolworth studio. To hedge their risk, they recorded two popular songs—“Indiana” and “Darktown Strutters' Ball”—rather than any of the band's originals. Test pressings were struck and the next day management heard the blasting it had wrought. *This* was jazz? More like chaos. Columbia decided it could never be associated with such vulgarity. Accordingly, the world's first jazz record session went directly to deep storage, presumably never to be heard again.

Fortunately, the executives at Victor Talking Machine were not quite as sensitive to notions of respectability. They were curious, too. This brings us to Feb. 26, when LaRocca and his men gathered in Victor's 24th Street studio for their second shot at immortality. This time the repertoire came from the songs they had brought up from New Orleans: “Dixieland Jass Band One-Step” and “Livery Stable Blues,” each a mix of ragtime, stomp and pure novelty. Victor was eager to exploit the band's popularity and wasted no time.

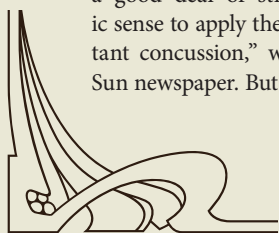
Within 10 days, the world's second jazz record session became the first to reach the public, and it was off to the races. When



Victor's sales began soaring toward seven figures, Columbia suddenly became more comfortable with vulgarity and rushed its January tests into release.

For most jazz histories written before 1990, the two sessions complement each other nicely. We are not asked to choose between them. Moreover, the source seems unimpeachable: Henry Brunn's compact little book, *The Story of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band*, which gathers just about everything we know about the group. Published in 1961 and based largely on 20 years of interviews and correspondence with LaRocca himself, it had the authority of living witnesses still relatively close to the events described.

But memory has conscious and unconscious agendas of its own. It can adapt, edit and revise reality. In 1987 LaRocca's memory was challenged when British discographer Brian Rust examined microfilms of the Columbia artist files after 1915 and found no



entry for any January 30 session. In fact, the only reference at all he found to the ODJB and those particular titles was four months later: May 31. According to Rust, the Columbia Graphophone disc finally was issued in late August. If true, these documents effectively rewrite jazz's Book of Genesis, giving Victor clear title to the first jazz record.

So, we have two credible but conflicting scenarios. Each lives now in the distant indecision of legend, and legend becomes more malleable the older it gets. It would not be the first time, for instance, that a recording date had been altered to avoid some legal embarrassment. And if the Columbia session was the second one, why would the company have insisted on recording pop songs when the success of the band's own material was already proven? Reasons can be supposed in defense of either option.

Which is right? Personally, I prefer the Jan. 30 birth certificate. I don't particularly care if it's true or not. It has drama. And it expresses the challenge of a new and boisterous modernity to established Victorian values, which Columbia felt obliged to defend by initially suppressing the record. At the core of all modernism—expressionist poetry, abstract art, dissonant music—lies the allure of the profane in the face of piety. And that was jazz in 1917.

Most Americans then had never heard of Stravinsky, Picasso and Joyce, or the high-culture quarrels their work was provoking in New York salons. But just as World War I came to America, jazz blundered its way directly into the parlors of bourgeois culture. It was modernism for the common man, yet it raised the same impolite issues.

Jazz would mingle the distinctions between high and low culture. It suggested subversive linkages between art and morality. It celebrated freedom, spontaneity and, most dangerous of all in 1917, pleasure. It challenged the ordered life of the farm, the small town and the church, which, in its suspicion of the city, would soon visit Prohibition upon the country in revenge. It's why we still call the 1920s the "Jazz Age."

The Original Dixieland Jazz Band bequeathed more to jazz than competing birth dates. Some of it was totally silly. LaRocca was a primeval figure who believed real jazz had to be the same. He had little technique himself and distrusted it in others. "None of the boys could read music," he boasted in 1936, "and I think that's what gave it its spontaneity."

But by then brilliant virtuosos such as Art Tatum (1909-'56), Benny Goodman (1909-'86), Roy Eldridge (1911-'89) and Dizzy Gillespie (1917-'93) were remaking the music into something LaRocca could not comprehend. Time and the music had passed him by.

Yet, while the life of the ODJB was relatively brief, the band laid the cornerstone of the first important repertoire unique to jazz, a canon of songs developed at Reisenweber's in 1917 and still basic to all traditional jazz: "Tiger Rag," "At The Jazz Band Ball," "Clarinet Marmalade," "Fidgety Feet," "Jazz Me Blues" and "Royal Garden Blues." All originated with the ODJB.

It seems appropriate, too, if only as a coincidental P.S., to note that 100 years after the ODJB brought jazz to New York, the same Columbus Circle real estate once occupied by Reisenweber's is now the home of jazz at Lincoln Center. The apple found its way back to the tree.

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THELONIOUS MONK

Vital Presence

By James Hale | Photo by Jim Marshall

Almost 35 years after his death, and in the year that he would've turned 100, Thelonious Sphere Monk continues to enthrall, confound and intrigue.

The best-loved among his 72 compositions continue to fill regular positions in many musicians' repertoires. His image continues to embody what his biographer, Robin D.G. Kelley, termed "an American original." His recorded work continues to find new ears, and—on April 15, Record Store Day—a previously unreleased album will join the ranks of the 293 recordings already in circulation.

Les Liaisons Dangereuses (Sam Records/Saga), a July 27, 1959, studio recording made for French director Roger Vadim's film of the same name, shows Monk plying his distinctive voicings and singular sense of rhythm on seven of his original songs and one gospel hymn.

"Monk's music sounds so different from his contemporaries," said John Beasley, the Los Angeles-based pianist and arranger who leads the 17-piece MONK'estra. "You can hear the entire preceding history of jazz, but it's so different harmonically. I hear New York City, trains, Broadway; it's music of the big city."

Yet Monk was born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, a town with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants in 1917. He was nearing 5 when his mother moved her children north to New York's San Juan Hill neighborhood, and 11 when he began taking piano lessons from an Austrian immigrant named Simon Wolf. Born with perfect pitch, Monk began studying jazz with a local teacher, Alberta Simmons, but also picked up bits and pieces of the idiom from neighborhood

residents, who included saxophonists Benny Carter and Russell Procope.

In 1933, Monk formed his first band, and music quickly came to dominate his life. At 16, he was on the road for the first time, in support of a traveling preacher.

Regarding his own music, Monk told *DownBeat* writer Frank London Brown in 1958: "Everything I play is different. Different melody, different harmony, different structure."

And because it was so different, so flamboyantly personal, and its creator so single-minded in the pursuit of his craft, Monk was constantly challenged about the legitimacy of his technique, the integrity of his art. Skeptics made puns of his name, while even well-meaning journalists called him the High Priest of Bop—a sobriquet that assigned shamanistic qualities to a man too complex to be pigeonholed as merely eccentric. Even years after Monk's death, critics continued to contend that he was an abysmal instrumentalist who hid behind his unconventional fingerings and onstage antics.

Beasley is having none of it. "I think we're just catching up to Monk," he said. "He was so far ahead of his time that it's shocking sometimes."

"The phrasing and timing of his playing reflected his own energy," said Zev Feldman, who co-produced *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* with French engineer François Lê Xuân and Sam Records owner Frédéric Thomas. "He unquestionably had his own voice, which is the goal of all musicians, and his music is still inspiring after all this time."

The 1959 soundtrack session—which gen-

erated music heard in the film but was overshadowed by the Fontana LP of music that Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers also recorded for Vadim—came at a time when Monk was in a period of rebuilding (see sidebar).

Monk's cabaret card, which was required to perform in New York City clubs, had been restored in mid-1957, but then suspended again the following year. His quartet with saxophonist Charlie Rouse, bassist Sam Jones and drummer Art Taylor had been together for a year, and once again he was forced to stay on the road if he wanted to work. He was busy, but the cost was high.

The revocation of his work permit in 1951—the result of Monk's refusing to testify in the drug-related arrest of fellow pianist Bud Powell—interrupted the momentum that began with his contributions to the nascent bop scene in the early '40s and recordings that started to appear in 1944. He had made up some of the lost time during his six-month stand at New York's Five Spot in 1957 with John Coltrane in his band, but now it seemed like he was starting over again. For a man with a fragile mental equilibrium, the forced exile from the primary venues of his adopted hometown dealt a staggering blow. Life on the road was harsh.

As Kelley richly details in *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original* (Free Press), in March 1959, Monk was refused rooms at two of Boston's large hotels and then arrested at the city's airport and confined to a mental institution. By summer, Monk was taking Thorazine, an anti-psychotic medication, along with amphetamines administered by



Thelonious Monk backstage at the 1964 Monterey Jazz Festival
(Photo by Jim Marshall, © Jim Marshall Photography LLC / Reel Art Press, from *Jazz Festival: Jim Marshall*)



Revealing Liaisons



Monk at a 1959 recording session for *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

In August 1958, when Thelonious Monk's manager, Harry Colomby, received a telegram from France, he felt the tide had dramatically turned for his client. "INTERESTED IN THELONIOUS MONK MUSIC. STOP. FOR MOVIE..." read the message from Marcel Romano, the music director for French filmmaker Roger Vadim.

Monk was already riding a wave, coming off appearances at the Newport and New York jazz festivals and successful runs at New York's Five Spot and Village Vanguard. Romano's telegram seemed to confirm that Monk was finally getting the recognition he deserved.

Corralling Monk into a studio to record music for Vadim's new film, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, proved challenging. A French tour, built around the planned recording date in the spring of 1959, was canceled, and in May Romano and Vadim arrived in New York to record Monk on his home turf.

As Robin D.G. Kelley described in his biography *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original* (Free Press), it took another two months to make the soundtrack a reality. Only after a screening of the unfinished film on July 24—a week before Vadim's deadline—and two more days of stalling did Monk sign the paperwork for the film and begin to rehearse his quartet: saxophonist Charlie Rouse, bassist Sam Jones and drummer Art Taylor.

When he arrived to record the soundtrack on July 27, Monk had no new music; however, the addition of French saxophonist Barney Wilen would differentiate the session from the pianist's previous work. The 44-minute program represented Monk's standard repertoire: "Rhythm-a-ning," "Crepuscule With Nellie," "Well You Needn't," "Ba-lue Bolivar Ba-lues-Are," "Light Blue" and "Pannonica"—the latter performed both solo and with the quartet. The session concluded with Monk playing unaccompanied on Charles Tindley's 1906 hymn "We'll

Understand It Better, By And By," a piece he learned in his teens while traveling with an itinerant preacher—one of the least understood periods of Monk's life.

At just under two minutes, the hymn is performed simply by Monk, with Rouse playing the melody with him on one chorus, and reveals the unusual weight and emphasis he would give certain notes—a bridge between Duke Ellington and Jaki Byard. Wilen adds a bop-inflected intensity to his contributions, bringing urgency to the session.

On a sprightly "Rhythm-a-ning" Wilen's long, flowing lines and clean tone contrast with Rouse's typically gruff sound. The two saxes blend effectively on a medium-tempo "Ba-lue Bolivar Ba-lues-Are." It proved to be a session that, while hardly a contender for the best work Monk had committed to tape, stood apart for the inclusion of Wilen and the pianist's compelling look back to some of his earliest years on the road.

As insurance, Romano had booked Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers for two additional nights and had them record music composed for the film by Duke Jordan. Although Monk's music appears in the film—with Tindley's hymn used to great effect in a church-based scene—only Blakey's session made it to record. Along with Blakey's 1958 recording for Edouard Molinaro's film *Des Femmes Disparaissent*, which was packaged by Philips with Miles Davis' score for Louis Malle's film *Ascenseur Pour L'échafaud*, the recording positioned Blakey as a hero of the New Wave film movement. Meanwhile, Monk's contribution was largely forgotten.

"To find a new studio album by Monk—it's incredible," said Zev Feldman, the producer who worked with François Lè Xuân and Frédéric Thomas to get the material released.

Les Liaisons Dangereuses (Sam Records/Saga) will be available on April 15 (Record Store Day) as a two-LP set. A CD version will be released at later date.

—James Hale

Robert Freymann, a New York doctor known for dispensing “vitamin shots” to celebrities.

Monk’s mental problems, exacerbated by the haphazard treatment he received, did little for his compositional creativity, but in 1960 his cabaret card was reinstated, the European concert scene opened up to him and he would soon be signed to Columbia Records and exposed to his broadest audience ever.

In early 1964, Monk landed on the cover of the Feb. 28 issue of *Time* magazine. While his appearance on the front of the nation’s most prominent news periodical symbolized greater recognition of his artistry, writer Barry Farrell’s portrayal of Monk did nothing to counteract the public’s perception of him as a child-like savant who relied on drugs and alcohol for inspiration, and the women around him for support.

Shortly after the *Time* profile, writes Kelley, Monk told *Saturday Evening Post* reporter Lewis Lapham, “That’s a drag picture they’re painting of me, man. ... A lot of people still think I’m nuts or something.”

But, despite the fact that Monk had already composed much of his canon by the time he was in his mid-forties, the exposure from the *Time* cover story and his prominence alongside Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck and Duke Ellington as Columbia Records artists buoyed his career



Monk performs at the 1962 Newport Jazz Festival as Duke Ellington looks on.

through some of jazz’s toughest commercial years. His resurgence in the ’60s, and his re-recording of many of his standby compositions for Columbia, also helped cement his place as a modern artist—propelling him beyond musicians like Powell, Lester Young and others who seemed to be from a previous generation.

Although Monk retreated from performing and recording in the ’70s, while still in his mid-fifties, the depth of his compositions and the strength of his musical personality kept him a vital presence in music.

“I think you can hear his influence in albums like [Lee Morgan’s] *The Sidewinder* and [Herbie Hancock’s] *Cantaloupe Island*, as well as in Afro-Cuban music and hip-hop,” said Beasley. “Monk’s music is swinging in so many different idioms.”

Feldman, who has mined private collections for illuminating work by Coltrane, Wes Montgomery and Stan Getz with João Gilberto, said: “This is probably the most exciting project for me. People still play Monk’s music. It’s incredible and transcends boundaries.” **DB**

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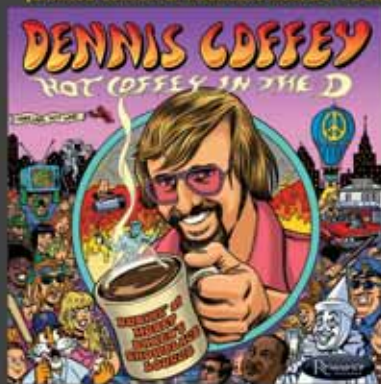


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DIZZY GILLESPIE

The Greatest Linguist in Jazz

By Ted Panken | Photo by Jan Persson

No jazz musician received more reverence or respect from his peers than John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie (1917–’93).

Benny Golson expressed his appreciation for the trumpeter during a 1996 interview on WKCR: “My life had two beginnings: when I was born of my mother and father, and when I heard Dizzy Gillespie.”

In *Miles: The Autobiography*, Miles Davis wrote: “Dizzy was my main influence. ... When I first went with Bird’s band I knew everything Dizzy was playing on trumpet with Bird. I had studied that shit up and down, backwards and forward. I couldn’t play it high, but I knew *what* he was playing.”

Born during the Jim Crow era in Cheraw, South Carolina, Gillespie transcended humble beginnings. Before his 30th birthday, the self-taught trumpeter conceptualized and codified the complex harmonic and rhythmic syntax that is core to the evolution of 21st-century jazz language. He developed an unparalleled trumpet technique to tell his stories, and sold his highbrow inventions to legions of “civilians” with warm, mildly sardonic humor and highly curated showmanship that helped the medicine go down smoothly. Countless musicians who crossed paths with him over the course of his 57-year career testify to how successfully and graciously he demonstrated, in granular detail, the precise components of his language.

“Every day that I was in his company, he’d be conscious of something musical, and he’d show you things,” saxophonist Jimmy Heath said in a 2006 *DownBeat* “Dizzy Gillespie Forum” conducted with members of an all-star band of distinguished Gillespians. “He’d

tap out a rhythm: ‘This is how you play in five, and this is how you play in seven—it’s all the same; you’ve just got to syncopate it differently.’ Or he’d get on the piano and show you some harmonic sequences. He was always teaching.”

Perhaps Gillespie’s generous attitude toward sharing information is why his various bands incubated so many truly consequential contributors to the canon. Excluding trumpeters, a short list of alumni and/or students includes saxophonists Golson, Heath, James Moody, John Coltrane, Phil Woods, Paquito D’Rivera and Sam Rivers; trombonists J.J. Johnson, Slide Hampton and Steve Turre; composer-arrangers Tadd Dameron, George Russell, Quincy Jones and Melba Liston; vibraphonist Milt Jackson; pianists John Lewis, Walter Davis Jr., Junior Mance, Kenny Barron and Danilo Pérez; bassists Ray Brown, Sam Jones and Chris White; and drummers Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Charlie Persip, Ignacio Berroa and Giovanni Hidalgo.

The difficulty of emulating Gillespie’s intricately complex style steered many major trumpet practitioners toward giants like Fats Navarro, Clifford Brown, Miles Davis and Kenny Dorham, who were easier to copy.

As trumpeter Freddie Hubbard remarked in *DownBeat*’s April 1993 “Remembering Dizzy” memorial issue, “I had all Dizzy’s records ... but I never did try to play any of his licks because they were so unorthodox. Dizzy’s ideas on the trumpet were different because he didn’t play scales; he played *across* the scales. He used auxiliary fingering, too. And Dizzy would play higher notes, then he’d stay up there.”

In his autobiography and numerous inter-

views, Gillespie cited trumpeter Roy Eldridge as his own primary inspiration. (Biographer Alyn Shipton persuasively suggests that Gillespie also paid close attention to generational contemporary Charlie Shavers’ cut mute playing with John Kirby’s slick late-’30s unit.)

Eldridge’s refracted influence is apparent on “Hot Mallets,” an all-star side led by vibraphonist Lionel Hampton in 1939, and “Bye Bye Blues,” with Cab Calloway, then his employer, in 1940. During his 1939–’41 stint with Calloway, Gillespie spent set breaks, off days and after-hours jam sessions exchanging ideas with bandmates (including bassist Milt Hinton) and generational contemporaries (such as Clarke and pianist Thelonious Monk), finding ways, in Sam Rivers’ words, “to layer advanced, substitute chords on top of basic chord structures.”

While passing through Kansas City with Calloway in June 1940, Gillespie spent a momentous afternoon jamming with saxophonist Charlie Parker. “I would say that I was more harmonically sophisticated than Yard,” Gillespie said. “But when I heard the way that he phrased, the first thing that came to mind was, ‘Man, yes, that’s the way the music ought to be played.’”

Gillespie severed ties with Calloway midway through 1941, then spent 18 months playing for high-profile artists like Benny Carter and Duke Ellington, before joining Parker in a new big band led by Earl “Fatha” Hines.

The Gillespie-Parker relationship deepened during a nine-month stint with Hines in 1943 and a mid-1944 sojourn with Billy Eckstine’s big band. They rehearsed together constantly, refining the ideas that came to fruition on the

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Thelonious Monk (left), Dizzy Gillespie and Gerald Wilson share a laugh backstage at the 1963 Monterey Jazz Festival.

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paradigm-shifting 1945 Gillespie-Parker recordings of Gillespie compositions like “Night In Tunisia,” “Shaw ’Nuff,” “Salt Peanuts” and “Groovin’ High” that introduced the vertiginous, phantasmagoric sound of bebop to a global audience.

After forming the Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra in 1946, Gillespie—abetted by arrangers Tadd Dameron, Gil Fuller and George Russell—extrapolated his harmonic and rhythmic ideas to the expanded context. “It was a wonderful shock,” Slide Hampton, who was 14 when the Gillespie orchestra recordings came out, stated in that 2006 article. Equally shocking was Gillespie’s incorporation of Afro-Cuban polyrhythms (executed by master *rumbero* Chano Pozo) on such 1947 and 1948 Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra recordings as the modal masterpiece “Manteca,” “Algo Bueno”/“Woody ’N You” and “Cubana Be, Cubana Bop.” Less heralded but every bit as meaningful were his frequent post-1960 explorations of Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Caribbean rhythms, culminating in the Pan-American oriented United Nations Orchestra during the late 1980s.

By 1948, Gillespie was functioning both as an art musician and a show business personality, whose audiences were as attracted to his stage presence and highly curated sense of style as to his musical innovations. “Everywhere the band played, people had on a beret and horn-rimmed glasses and bow-tie,” Moody recalled in the 2006 article, citing Gillespie’s trademark outfit.

Hampton added, “Dizzy was able to deal with people on all different levels of intelligence, with the guy in the street who spoke bad English or someone with an extensive vocabulary. He didn’t look down on someone whose intelligence was less developed than his.”

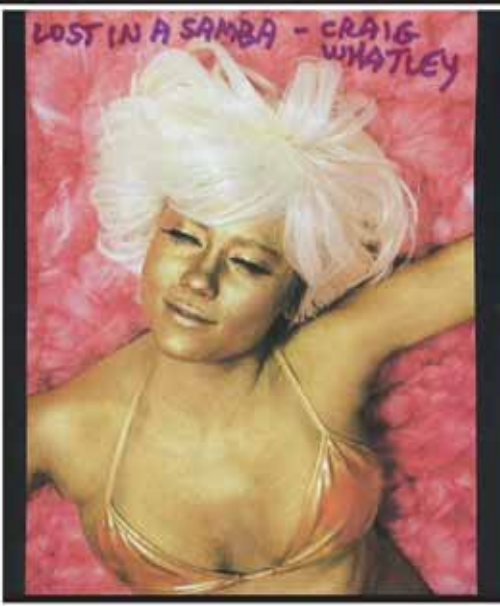
In 2006, Moody declared that Gillespie “never got the credit he was due” vis-à-vis, say, Miles Davis. “Miles got on Columbia Records, which made him popular, but Dizzy never got that kind of contract,” Heath opined.

“Do you know what Diz did?” Moody responded. “He looked at me and said, ‘Moody, you had a hit, but I never had one.’ I said, ‘Yeah, but I’d rather be you.’”

Nowadays, no jazz improviser can claim a true connection to the jazz timeline without absorbing Gillespie’s contributions.

“Every time Dizzy put his trumpet to his mouth, he got deep into the music and played great,” Pérez said of his experience in the United Nations Orchestra during a WKCR interview in 1993. “He may have been laughing and dancing, but he was dead serious. He found the weirdest notes to put in a chord and make it work, and the way he shaped his solos was amazing—so free and so strong. He sounded like a bunch of snakes rolling through the chords. He had all the ingredients for anybody, from any kind of culture, to fall in love with what he did.”

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Ella Fitzgerald

The Immortal 'First Lady of Song'

By John McDonough

In 1955, Ella Fitzgerald arrived at the watershed year of her career. Everything that had already happened led to it. Everything that was about to happen would flow from it. The former "First Lady of Swing" was about to become the eternal "First Lady of Song."

It began with an interview published in the Feb. 23 issue of *DownBeat*. Typically, Fitzgerald (1917-'96) was shy with reporters. Her interviews shed little light on anything, especially herself or her opinions. So imagine journalist Nat Hentoff's surprise when he visited Fitzgerald at Basin Street in New York and found her fuming over her relationship with Decca, her record label for 20 years.

"I don't like to say anything against anybody," she said, "but I sure would like to record with someone who would give me something to record. ... It's been so long since I've gotten a show tune to do ... or a chance to do a tune like 'The Man That Got Away.' ... They give me something by somebody that nobody else has, and then they wonder why the record doesn't sell. I'm so heartbroken over it. ... I don't know what they're doing at the record company. There must be *something* I can make that people who buy records would like to hear."

She and Decca had come a long way in 20 years. The label was formed in August 1934 and signed the Chick Webb band immediately. Fitzgerald joined in March 1935. She was 17, still a child, but a supernova behind a microphone. By the end of 1938, most of Webb's drawing power was being driven by his singer. But there was no resentment. Musicians admired Fitzgerald enormously.

Moreover, bandleaders of Webb's generation typically saw themselves as entertainers, not artists. Pleasing an audience was an honorable mission, not a degrading submission.

Fitzgerald's stardom could not have been predicted by today's superficial standards. Her onstage persona was not seductive. Her sweet smile was the antithesis of sophistication. She projected none of the sensual wattage of Lena



Horne or the extravagant showmanship of Louis Armstrong. Fortunately, these were the days of radio and records, when a singer and a song could spread their spells without the need to be conventionally gorgeous.

Her rise was swift. In the fall of 1937, *DownBeat* readers voted her the country's favorite singer. Billie Holiday, already well into her partnership with Teddy Wilson on Brunswick and Vocalion, was only 14th on that *DownBeat* roll call. Fitzgerald's next step might have been to think about a solo career. But she needed the protection of others' guidance. After Webb's death in 1939, his agent, Mo Gale, and her producer at Decca, Milt Gabler, became her caretakers. But neither had a vision for her beyond her next charted single. With some exceptions, a glance at her Decca discography is startling in the depth of its mediocrity.

As her voice and coloration matured to adulthood, her name sank in the wartime *DownBeat* polls. If she had retired in 1950, we might remember her today, perhaps with more fondness than reverence, only as the erstwhile "First Lady of Swing."

But after the war, Fitzgerald became fluent in the new language of bebop. Late in 1948, she attended a Jazz at the Philharmonic concert in Akron, Ohio. During the show, producer Norman Granz invited her to join an unannounced jam on "How High The Moon." The crowd went wild. In February 1949, she became part of the JATP tour. Her vocabulary of vocal onomatopoeia ingeniously mimicked the most elusive phrasing of the greatest instrumentalists. She lifted scat singing from an amusing

novelty to high art and became one of the wonders of the jazz world. Consequently, her name rose in the *DownBeat* polls.

But Granz saw more in Fitzgerald than just another singer. He saw a means and extension of his own rarefied tastes. He also saw a future for her that could not begin to happen until he knocked off Gale and Decca. Gale would be the first. In 1953 Granz persuaded Fitzgerald to let him take over her personal management. There would be no contract, but after nearly 20 years Gale was gone.

Then in 1955 he began to tee up Decca. In retrospect, Fitzgerald's *DownBeat* interview of February 1955 appears part of Granz's strategy of subversion. Years later I asked him directly if he had engineered the story. He said he hadn't. The words and frustrations were all Fitzgerald's, he insisted, although he didn't deny that he had often discussed his own plans for a prestigious new label built around her. So the waiting game went on. Then 11 months later, destiny dealt him an inside straight. With exclusive contracts on Gene Krupa, Teddy Wilson and Stan Getz, all featured in Universal's *The Benny Goodman Story*, Granz was suddenly in a position to block the release of Decca's cherished soundtrack album. The non-negotiable negotiation was swift. December 1955 would be Fitzgerald's final month at Decca.

Her switch to Verve in January would be the career tipping point of her life. Her first important project was the *Cole Porter Song Book*, the deluxe two-record set that would also launch Verve.

But that wasn't the only tipping point in motion that month. In a remarkable convergence of cultural allegory, just 10 days before Fitzgerald's first *Song Book* session on Feb. 7, Elvis Presley made his debut on national television. His impact was immediate and seismic. In a sense, Fitzgerald's songbook LPs would canonize and inter the Great American Songbook—and then, paradoxically, resurrect it into a kind classical liturgy of high pop-



ular culture just as the insurgent and tectonic tremors of rock 'n' roll were beginning to rumble underfoot. With the perspective of 60 years of hindsight, it now seems that the entire lithosphere of American music cracked wide open in the first week of February 1956.

If there were to be two discrete continents of American music, however, Granz had arrived just in time to colonize an enclave of excellence where Fitzgerald would always be safe—a place where she could be completely herself and never again have to prowl the alleys of contemporary music for another “hit.” It was a freedom that released her from the tyranny of trendsetters and immunized her against time.

Fitzgerald's Verve debut sold 100,000 albums in the first month, heated up Porter's reputation and became the matrix for seven more song book LPs that would help redefine the place of the classic popular song in the catalog of American arts. It also established Verve as prestige brand and spawned a huge body of concert and studio Fitzgerald albums in which the line between jazz and pop lost its meaning. Whether she was jamming at a Shrine Auditorium JATP concert or singing children's songs with Bing Crosby on The Hollywood Palace, it was all jazz because Ella Fitzgerald was fundamentally such a skillful musician.

She sang a song but never acted it. She never let listeners infer that a lyric was about her. Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday permitted their personal lives to feed their music. But Fitzgerald's life was a closed book. It never came near her songs.

Her voice and phrasing could manifest every nuance and irony of a song like Porter's “Love For Sale” without ever asking us to wonder if she had ever been a streetwalker. Fitzgerald transcended such theatrical static. No illusion of “authenticity” was required to enhance such a unique, and now immortal, endowment of sheer musicianship.

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Opening the Book on Ella

The life of Ella Fitzgerald, as well as the cultural context in which it was shaped, are examined in *Becoming Ella: The Jazz Genius Who Transformed American Song*, a major biography in preparation by Judith Tick, professor of music at Boston's Northeastern University and editor of *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion* (Oxford University Press).

Tick's research, which she says will challenge some of the prevailing assumptions about Fitzgerald, relies on material not available to previous biographers, including the Ella Fitzgerald Collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and recently digitized newspaper archives that illuminate the extensive coverage the singer received in the black press.

"I see Ella Fitzgerald as a transformative vocal genius," Tick said. "In this respect my biography is revisionist. It confronts a paradox about her fame: She is both celebrated and underrated at the same time. Despite the insightful critical literature about her musical gifts, the biographical narrative as it now stands diminishes her. It exaggerates her dependency, her lack of control over her musical choices onstage, both as an artist and a woman."

Tick received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to research the book, which is expected from W.W. Norton & Company in late 2018.

—John McDonough

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Buddy Rich

FIRE STARTER

By John McDonough



Thirty years after his death, Buddy Rich remains the most famous drummer in jazz history—and among the most famous of all jazz musicians. People who know nothing about the music know that the words “Buddy Rich” and “drums” have become chained to one another in the English language, each incomplete without the other.

So it may surprise you to learn that Buddy Rich once tried to abandon the drums. In 1955 he persuaded Norman Granz to record him as a vocalist. *DownBeat* gave the album four stars, and perhaps they went to his head. Being a jazz drummer could take him only so far in show business, he decided, and it wasn’t far enough.

Early in 1956 he announced that he would quit the drums to become a cabaret singer. “It may mean that a whole new career will open up for me,” he told *DownBeat*. “I hope so because you express more and reach more people by singing than by playing the drums.”

It was a vain hope, of course. Rich was an authentic captive prodigy. His particular gift obeyed the same law that applies to many prodigies. It chose *him*. He didn’t choose it. Rich was an 18-month-old toddler when he first grabbed a pair of sticks and began emitting coherent rhythms. By the earliest onset of self-consciousness (around age 4), he had no memory of ever *not* playing

the drums. His gift became his destiny without ever asking his consent.

During his supposed drum hiatus in 1957, he joined the cast of the CBS network’s *The Marge and Gower Champion Show*, playing Gower’s comic sidekick, Cozy. Years later, dancer Marge Champion described the real undiscovered asset she saw in Buddy Rich: his *persona*.

She compared him to—of all people—Oscar Levant, whom she knew well. Like Rich, Levant was a kind of prodigy himself. A brilliant classical pianist and composer, his friends included the show business elite who found him endlessly amusing at parties, thanks to a uniquely caustic and mordant wit. His music brought him honor and recognition. But his neuroses made him a popular celebrity in the ’40s and ’50s. Champion saw the same quality in Rich. “There were certain people like Levant,” she said, “who had this sort of private specialty talent, a unique personality that could be used in films and TV. With his New York street-kid attitude, Buddy probably could have taken that route.”

Champion’s insight would be prophetic in another decade. But when Rich first arrived in New York in 1937, nobody knew him or remembered the child famous briefly in vaudeville as “Traps, The Drum Wonder.” Still, his timing was ideal. The swing bands had put the drum chair in the spotlight.

Two of swing’s biggest stars were drummers Chick Webb and Gene Krupa, and their combination of technique and visual dazzle was setting the music on fire. Rich started setting fires with his drumming almost immediately, first with Joe Marsala and then Bunny Berigan.

Then on Christmas Day 1938 he joined Artie Shaw’s group. A drummer can define a big band as distinctively as a great leader-soloist. Where would Duke Ellington be without Sonny Greer, or Count Basie without Jo Jones? Rich pounced on Shaw’s orchestra like a hawk on a sparrow and made the rhythm section the engine room of the band: churning, explosive and spontaneous. For the next year the Shaw band moved at battle speed.

“My first thought [was] he was a prick,” Shaw told me in 1994. “But, oh God, he could play. He was totally out of control, but he brought a whole different feel to my band. It was amazing.” Rich had star power, too. When he made his first movie with Shaw in 1939 (*Dancing Co-Ed*), his aura of cool was radioactive.

After the breakup of the Shaw band in November 1939, Rich moved to the more stable surroundings of Tommy Dorsey, where he enjoyed featured billing along with Frank Sinatra and Jo Stafford. At MGM in 1942–’43, he was well showcased in the films *Ship Ahoy* and *Du Berry Was a*





Buddy Rich as a child prodigy

Lady. In 1941 he vaulted to the top of the DownBeat Readers Poll, where he remained through the war years.

Rich had become the most famous drummer in America, but he was still a sideman. By the end of 1945, he had yet to release a single record under his own name. He felt he deserved better, so in 1946 he formed his own big band. But big bands were waning, and drugs were settling over the jazz scene like a plague. He struggled to the end of the decade before returning to the safe ground of star sideman. He joined

the Norman Granz-Jazz at the Philharmonic empire (where he recorded often as a leader) and kept his big band chops sharp with Dorsey, Basie and Harry James.

Finally in 1966, after nearly 30 years as a star sideman, Rich made his big move. He formed what ultimately would become the only post-war big band to sustain and prosper on the road for the next 20 years. At the age of 50, Rich was finally the star of his own universe.

Fans who were expecting big band nostalgia, however, were disappointed. Rich embraced the rock music of The Beatles and The Doors while nurturing young arranging talent such as Bob Mintzer, Don Menza, Phil Wilson and others. Yet, it was never an "arranger's" band like Thad Jones/Mel Lewis. It was there to showcase the sheer physical marvel of Buddy Rich in action, the man whom much of the world believed was the "world's greatest drummer."

One believer was an amateur drummer himself: *The Tonight Show* host Johnny Carson. It was through Carson that Rich finally became more than a drummer, attracting those larger audiences he once thought he could reach only as a singer. Carson finally brought out Rich's Oscar Levant. His numerous guest appearances on *The Tonight Show* and his snappy banter with Carson turned Rich into an alpha-male celebrity with a benignly nasty wit that sizzled like a brush solo. Sure, a great drum solo may be exciting. But an interesting man is utterly fascinating.

So it is somewhat unfair that nowadays, many consider Rich's greatest hit not to be "Hawaiian War Chant," "Birdland" or "West Side Story," but instead a series of privately recorded temper tantrums in which he excoriates his musicians on seemingly trivial matters. Known as the "Buddy Rich Bus Tapes" (Google them for yourself), there is an emotional savagery, even terror, in Rich's rants; yet, also a certain comic counterpoint in their pointless fury. The tapes have circulated so widely, they are now part of our collective vocabulary of cultural reference points. (Indeed, they were quoted in at least three *Seinfeld* episodes.)

Many of the young musicians who were on the receiving end of those rants are now in their 60s and part of Rich's living legacy. For most, the tapes have become an amusing diversion.

"The rages became frankly tiresome," said Mintzer, who today regards Rich as a father figure. "But there are so many things he did for me that I'm forever grateful for. One was [telling] me I was playing too much like [John] Coltrane. I was 21 and totally into Trane and [Wayne] Shorter. He said I should explore older players like Lester Young more deeply, to get their thinking into my head. And he was absolutely right."

Buddy Rich may have been the world's greatest drummer. But maybe he was an even greater teacher.

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JONATHAN FINLAYSON

Jonathan Finlayson is not rushing anything. At age 34, the imperturbable trumpeter has been a member of saxophonist Steve Coleman's pioneering collective for half his life—and, for the moment, the message is that he's not going anywhere.

The role has provided him with artistic fulfillment, steady work and a high degree of visibility, even as it fed his natural reserve—offering a ready reason not to record an album under his own name. For years, it was an offer he could not refuse.

"I didn't have pressures to record," Finlayson said as he settled into the couch in the music room of his Harlem home in October. "I had people I was working with; I was among great company. It wasn't like I *needed* to make an album for fear that something wasn't going to happen for me."

A lack of pressure to record was not the only reason Finlayson did not do so. "When I looked at the bulk of the music I had, it really didn't say anything to me at the end of the day," he said. "So I took a step back. I didn't want to present young music that doesn't have a lot to say."

But that changed when he turned 30. In 2012, his quintet, Sicilian Defense, recorded its debut album, *Moment And The Message* (Pi Recordings), which was released the next year and generated critical acclaim. Now, having revamped the quintet, Finlayson has released the follow-up: *Moving Still* (Pi), which sharpens his message and raises the stakes for him—both personally and professionally.

"He's at a crossroads," Coleman said from Chicago, where he, Finlayson and his entire Five Elements group were in the midst of a series of residencies that would eventually span the nation. "From what I've seen over the years, he definitely has the chance to be one of the people who contribute to the language of playing the music through the trumpet, and maybe all of music."

Moving Still provides evidence for that claim. Together with his band—Matt Mitchell on piano, John Hébert on bass, Craig Weinrib on drums and, on guitar, Miles Okazaki, another member of Coleman's inner circle and the single holdover from the *Moment* quintet—

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by Phillip Lutz

photo by John Rogers

Finlayson has shaped a collection notable for his deft fusing of Coleman-like rigor with a lyrical spontaneity all his own.

"There is a certain intuitive logic," Coleman said. "That is what jumps out at me."

Throughout the album's six tracks, Finlayson transforms source material from his surroundings into transfixing sonic explorations. It is a mode of conceptualization for which he freely credits Coleman, whose work routinely draws on his extra-musical interests. (Coleman's last two albums, *Synovial Joints* and *Functional Arrhythmias*, both on Pi, developed musical analogs for bodily systems.)

"I've watched [Coleman] link together ideas—things he's interested in that I thought weren't even remotely accessible musically—and figure out a way to incorporate them musically," Finlayson said. "One of the things he has

"Flank And Center"; and the penultimate track, "Between Moves," though Finlayson admits to a bit of calculated ambiguity in that title, whose meaning extends to "the meditative space where one ponders things—not necessarily your next chess move, but moves in general."

Nowhere is the connection with chess more explicit than in "Cap Vs. Nim," which draws its raw material from a match between the grandmasters José Raúl Capablanca and Aron Nimzowitsch. Grabbing his laptop, Finlayson called up an Excel spreadsheet on which he had assigned musical values to the positions on the chessboard assumed in the match.

The plotting translates sonically into long phrases that dwell largely in the lower register, rendered in unison by the trumpet, guitar, bass and left hand of the piano while the right hand lays spare harmonies on top. Finlayson

lot of people," Okazaki said. "He gives it a sonic appeal, a bridge for the people who aren't interested in the machinery. So you can enjoy it on the groove level or you can try to figure out what's going on.

"It's challenging because there's a lot of precision involved. But there's a lot of vibe to it."

The same scenario applies throughout the album. On "Space And," Finlayson draws on a traditional Ghanaian bell pattern that he poached from a book he had at hand, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, by John Miller Chernoff. On "Flank And Center," he mines a pattern of attacks applied to a seven-note row by Joseph Schillinger. On "Folk Song," the album closer, he uses a rhythmic pattern from a Santeria religious rite he discovered on an early trip to Cuba with Coleman. The pieces share a subtle beauty that belies their mathematical underpinnings.

By and large, Finlayson said, the basics of his composition process have changed relatively little over the years. The process begins with him sitting at the piano in his music room, germinating ideas. "I'll find a sequence of harmony or a monophonic line I like. Then I'll take a look at it. Then I'll deal with numbers—how many notes it is, how many chords it is."

What *has* changed is the economy with which he executes the process. "There are certain parts of my last album I felt were just difficult," he said. "I wanted to achieve similar complexity with smoother edges, to be more effective with each instrument. By that I mean I was able to get more out of each instrument individually, and was able to do it with less notes."

The album-to-album refinement is perhaps most discernible when comparing "Cap Vs. Nim" and "Ruy Lopez," a tune from *Moment* that, like "Cap," derives its data directly from the chessboard. "There's a lot of paring or cutting away until I get to something that feels like a well-functioning vessel," Finlayson said.

The strategy of simplifying process without sacrificing complexity is reflected in his activities outside of the musical realm. "In life," he said, "there's a similar kind of motivation for me. I'd like to be effective in a way that's not excessive. In conversation I like to get to the point. I like people who know how to arrive at the conclusion with the least amount of words possible."

His taste for the economical is demonstrated in an ability to recycle artistic material. A two-inch-square detail of an abstract painting by a friend, Malik Crumpler, became the cover art for *Moment*. The painting hangs in his music room opposite stylized head-sculptures from Congo, Gabon and Mali, one on each of the other walls.

Sharing the space is a treasured photo of a 12-year-old Finlayson standing in front of the old Yoshi's club on Claremont Avenue in his native Oakland, California. Pictured with him are fellow trumpeters Ambrose Akinmusire, a longtime friend, and the late Robert Porter, an

Jonathan Finlayson performs at the 2013 Newport Jazz Festival.



STEVEN SUSSMAN

always said is that we are the factor between one thing—and checking it out—and music. Because we're all human and [humans] did both of those things, there had to be connections between the two of them. You just had to go find them."

A decade ago, Finlayson found chess. Though he had played casually for some years, he began dedicating himself to the game around the time Okazaki joined Coleman's band. Okazaki proved a worthy competitor who upped Finlayson's game and, as a byproduct, facilitated the incorporation of chess into his art.

"Those things build small bonds that manifest themselves musically in some way," Finlayson explained.

The most telling manifestation may be the name of Finlayson's band: The Sicilian Defense, a common chess maneuver. But evocations of chess are embedded in titles across Finlayson's oeuvre. On *Moving Still*, they include the opener, "All Of The Pieces"; the tune that follows,

rarely writes unison passages, but they lend an unadorned fragility to this work—evoking the tension of a high-pressure chess match in which the wrong move can spell sudden defeat (and the wrong note, for the musician, can break the spell).

"It sounds like it's simple and delicate," Okazaki said, "but it's so exposed that if you make one little slip, it just sticks out like a nail sticking out of the floor."

As the piece unfolds, the unison passages yield to improvised sections in which the tightly bound narrative unravels, shifting into a kind of contrapuntal colloquy that appears to flow freely. But for all their seeming independence, the lines must remain interdependent to maintain the integrity of the material.

"If you play something not consistent with something that came before, it's very obvious," Okazaki said. "It's like a delicate sculpture."

Unlike some composers who deal in algorithmic complexity, Finlayson does not fetishize the process. "There's an interface—an 'in' for a

early mentor who ushered both players into a jam session he hosted at the Bird Cage, a long-gone Oakland haunt.

Finlayson's penchant for the economical can be traced in part to Porter. "He was great at giving you just enough information," Finlayson said. "He was encouraging in a funny way; he would kid a lot. But I would let his word be the last." Porter's legacy includes a 1970 Elkhart trumpet that he sold to Finlayson. The large-bore instrument, which sits on a stand in Finlayson's music room, is one of three trumpets he has in active use.

Porter died while Finlayson was still attending Berkeley High School. By that time, Finlayson had already met Coleman. Recalling their first encounter, a relatively brief one at a workshop at Stanford University when Finlayson was 13, Coleman said he had been surprised at the young man's maturity: "He was already improvising. I could already see he was kind of a prodigy."

The two crossed paths at a Bay Area jam session when Finlayson was 15, and again when he was 17, at a workshop Coleman was holding at Berkeley High. Coleman remembered inviting student volunteers to play.

"Three kids jumped up," he said. "Two of them were Ambrose Akinmusire and Jonathan. We were like, 'Wow, these kids can play.' We were amazed kids that young could play anything."

Coleman tutored them for a time at his house in North Oakland, where he was living while teaching at the University of California, Berkeley. And when he wanted to assemble a group, in 2000, he reached out to them—plucking Finlayson from his studies at The New School, from which he graduated in 2005, and whisking him to the Chicago World Music Festival, where Coleman was giving a series of concerts and workshops.

"Chicago was a leap," Finlayson said, recounting a whirlwind of an engagement that involved a multidisciplinary ensemble with three percussionists, a dancer and guest saxophonist Von Freeman (1923–2012), with whom he found himself sitting in at the South Side's New Apartment Lounge between commitments on the Coleman itinerary.

"It was a pretty big cultural shock for me," he said. "I had never seen anything like it. I remember being lost. Not feeling defeated, but like, 'Wow, this is something else. You have to accept that you're not going to be able to take in all of the information at one time. Hopefully, you're going to get another chance.'"

That he did. "The music was demanding and difficult," Coleman said. "But Jonathan just stuck with it. And after a while, he started finding his own voice."

Since then, Finlayson, who won the Rising Star–Trumpet category of the 2014 DownBeat

Critics Poll, has gently and judiciously asserted that voice. Brilliant but never self-aggrandizing, it has been integral to bands like those of saxophonist Steve Lehman, guitarist Mary Halvorson and drummer Tomas Fujiwara.

Finlayson's contributions to Coleman's projects have been legion—in the studio, stretching from *Resistance Is Futile*, in 2002, to *Synovial Joints*, in 2015; on the bandstand, from the Jazz Gallery, where his workshops are storied, to the Village Vanguard, where Five Elements' much-belated, much-discussed debut finally took place in 2015. The band returned to the venue last May, to great effect.

Meanwhile, Finlayson is pushing his own agenda with far less fervor than many musicians who are entering mid-career. Everything in due course, he said, noting that it wasn't until July 2015, when the full personnel of the *Moving Still* band finally coalesced at a gig in Bushnell Park in Hartford, Connecticut, that he was ready to record that album.

"I believe you can't make anything happen; it's going to happen of its own accord," he said. "I knew I had the music and I knew I wanted to record an album, but it just wasn't the right time. I was waiting for things to fall in place, and then I did this gig in Hartford. With John Hébert playing bass, the last stone was set in place."

"I said, 'This is it. I can finish.' It all made sense after that. But you can't rush it." **DB**



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JAM OF THE WEEK

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MASTERPIECES ★★★★★

BILL CHARLAP TRIO *Notes From New York*

Impulse! May

With a program devoted to obscure but delightful songs from the world of Broadway, classic film and jazz, this album is a master class in class. Pianist Bill Charlapp is joined here by a finely calibrated trio—featuring Peter Washington on bass and Kenny Washington on drums—that is at once joyous, challenging, wistful and unpredictable.

BRIAN BROMBERG *Full Circle*

Artistry Music July

Featuring multi-instrumentalist Brian Bromberg on bass and drums, this album is replete with marvels of technical and musical engineering. While the material may be close to something of a personal statement, he's joined by some of the most gifted and hard-charging jazz musicians in Los Angeles for a galvanizing display of ensemble playing.

CARLA BLEY/ANDY SHEP- PARD/STEVE SWALLOW *Andando El Tiempo*

ECM Aug.

This trio with saxophonist Andy Sheppard and bassist Steve Swallow is in some ways the most appealing of pianist Carla Bley's various ensembles. Fresh and emotionally engaging, the album's title composition is a three-part suite driven by Bley's sense of melodic line and thematic structure.

DANIEL FREEDMAN *Imagine That*

Anzic July

In recent years, drummer Daniel Freedman has quietly become a primal force, creating a kind of people's music built on folk rhythms, ethnic melodies and joyous performances. *Imagine That* is an offering of Freedman's creativity and intellect, expressed by musicians who share his mission.

DAVID BOWIE *Blackstar*

Columbia Apr.

Blackstar was released on David Bowie's 69th birthday, two days before his untimely passing. The album is a quixotically beautiful "swan song" project, a left-of-pop masterpiece that stands among Bowie's more experimental works. More than a summation of Bowie's musical career, *Blackstar* suggests what might have been had the adventure continued.

DAVID FIUCZYNSKI *FLAM! BLAM! Pan-Asian MicroJam!*

RareNoise Web

For his second recording for the London-based RareNoise Records, guitarist David Fiuczynski recruited students from his non-tempered music program at Berklee to help him realize his grand vision, which involves paying tribute to French composer-organist Olivier Messiaen and to the inventive rap producer J Dilla (who popularized hip-hop's now ubiquitous "flam beats").

DWIKI DHARMAWAN *Pasar Klewer*

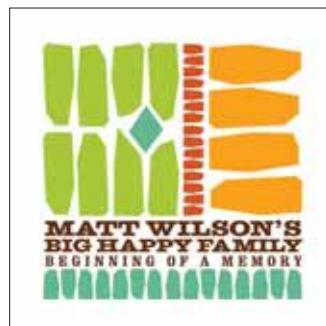
Moon June Dec.

With this ambitious two-disc set, Indonesian pianist Dwiki Dharmawan turns in a truly original work of art. Across 11 compositions, *Pasar Klewer* manages to incorporate wildly diverse styles of music. Eleven international musicians navigate these dense charts, which blend the Gamelan tonal system with Western harmonies.

ELI DEGIBRI *Cliff Hangin'*

Blujazz Aug.

What makes Israeli saxophonist Eli Degibri outstanding is his inner flame, which is allied to virtuosic melodic purity. The 11 originals on *Cliff Hangin'* engage without pretension, though some songs are feistier than others. The



way the group plays pretty and simple—then cranks through the gears—makes for an exhilarating trip.

LINA NYBERG *Aerials*

Hoob Jazz July

Featuring 17 tracks split between jazz quartet and string quartet, *Aerials* is a theme-based gem on which songs like "Skylark" and "Fly Me To The Moon" share company with unconventional arrangements, original music and fictional stories. The Swedish vocalist's writing is stunning, especially for strings, and her singing is more personal than ever.

LUCIAN BAN ELEVATION *Songs From Afar*

Sunnyside March

There is an alluring timelessness to the music created by pianist Lucian Ban's quartet on *Songs From Afar*. The group plays without artifice, whether mining Transylvanian folk music or paying tribute to Sun Ra. This is an especially powerful program that reveals new high points with each listen. Ban has tapped an essential source.

MARLENE VERPLANCK *The Mood I'm In*

Audiophile Records Apr.

Marlene VerPlanck has been exploring the Great American Songbook since her days singing in the bands of Charlie Spivak, Tex Beneke and Tommy Dorsey. On her 24th album, the singer continues to showcase her impeccable phrasing, sinuous melodic sense and flawless diction. She's a quiet vocalist, but she conveys an encyclopedia's worth of emotion with every word.

MATT WILSON'S BIG HAPPY FAMILY

Beginning Of A Memory

Palmetto June

With *Beginning Of A Memory*, drummer Matt Wilson re-enters the recording studio for the first time after the passing of his wife, Felicia. Convening all members of his best-known groups—the Matt Wilson Quartet, Arts & Crafts and Christmas Tree-O—Wilson created new arrangements of the old compositions his wife loved most. The result is as special an album as you will hear.

MICHAEL FORMANEK'S ENSEMBLE KOLOSSUS *The Distance*

ECM Apr.

This 18-piece ensemble is highly reminiscent of Gil Evans' early to mid-'60s orchestra. Leader-bassist Michael Formanek favors big sounds and enveloping silences, and on *The Distance*, he manages to sound intimate and close even as his lumbering outfit rumbles to and fro. This music doesn't hit listeners over the head; instead, it engages with small-group rumblings and large-ensemble swirls.

WOLFGANG MUTHSPIEL *Rising Grace*

ECM Dec.

Guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel reunites with drummer Brian Blade and bassist Larry Grenadier for *Rising Grace*, which also features the talents of pianist Brad Mehldau and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. As a unit, these musicians enjoy a five-way interplay on a tranquil, sometimes subtly shimmering canvas. With its understated aesthetic and gentle sense of propulsion, this is a beautifully realized album full of elegance and poise.

HISTORICAL ★★★★★



COUNT BASIE & LESTER YOUNG

Classic 1936-1947 Count Basie & Lester Young Studio Sessions
MosaicAug.

JOHN COLTRANE

The Atlantic Years-In Mono
Atlantic/RhinoAug.

MILES DAVIS

Freedom Jazz Dance: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 5
Columbia/LegacyDec.

ROBERT DICK

Our Cells Know
TzadikWeb



PETER ERSKINE/JOHN TAYLOR/PALLE DANIELSSON

As It Was
ECMSept.

BILL EVANS

Some Other Time: The Lost Session From The Black Forest
Resonance June

BILL EVANS

Time Remembered (DVD)
TBADec.

ELLA FITZGERALD

Jazz At The Philharmonic: The Ella Fitzgerald Set
VerveJuly



CHARLIE HADEN LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA

Time/Life
Impulse!Dec.

THAD JONES/MEL LEWIS ORCHESTRA

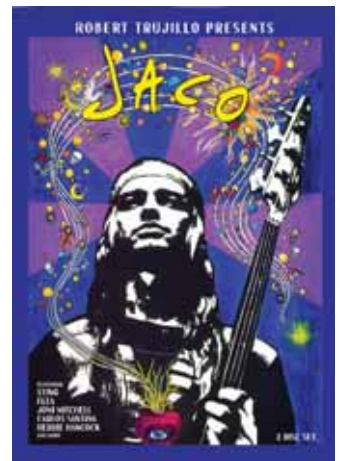
All My Yesterdays
ResonanceApril

JANIS JOPLIN

Janis: Little Girl Blue (DVD)
MVDvisualDec.

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK

The Case Of The Three Sided Dream (DVD)
Arthaus MusikDec.



MAGIC SAM BLUES BAND

Black Magic
DelmarkApril

JACO PASTORIUS

JACO: The Film (DVD)
JPFeb.

NINA SIMONE

What Happened, Miss Simone? (DVD)
Eagle Rock Entertainment Dec.

NEW ★★★★★ ½

RALPH ALESSI

Quiver
ECM May

DAVE ANDERSON

Blue Innuendo
Label 1 Sept.

BADBADNOTGOOD

IV
Innovative Leisure Nov.

BLACK ART JAZZ COLLECTIVE

Presented By The Side Door Jazz Club
Sunnyside Oct.

BOULEVARD

Groove!
Captured TracksAug.

AZIZA BRAHIM

Abbar El Hamada
GlitterbeatAug.

BRO/MORGAN/BARON

Streams
ECM Nov.

JAIMEO BROWN

Transcendence Work Songs
MotémaMarch

CORTEJ

Live In New York
Clean Feed Oct.

THE DINING ROOMS

Do Hipsters Like Sun Ra?
Schema Sept.

BILL DOBBINS

Composer Series, Vol. 1 & 2
Sons of SoundMay

DAVE DOUGLAS

Dark Territory
Greenleaf Web

ELECTRIC SQUEEZEBOX ORCHESTRA

Cheap Rent
OA2 Records March

BILL EVANS

Rise Above
Vansman Records Nov.

ROBERTO FONSECA

ABUC
Impulse! Dec.

PAOLO FRESU & OMAR SOSA

Eros
OT4 Records Nov.

DAVID GILMORE

Energies Of Change
Evolutionary MusicFeb.

TOM HARRELL

Something Gold, Something Blue
Highnote Dec.

HEARTS & MINDS

Hearts & Minds
Self-Released Oct.

PABLO HELD TRIO

Recondita Armonia
Pirouet Jan.

LOUIS HERIVEAUX

Triadic Episode
Hot ShoeSept.

FRED HERSCH

Sarabande
SunnysideMarch

BRET HIGGINS' ATLAS REVOLT

Bret Higgins' Atlas Revolt
Tzadik March

VIJAY IYER/WADADA LEO SMITH

A Cosmic Rhythm With Each Stroke
ECM June

OCHION JEWELL QUARTET

VOLK
Self-Released Feb.

GUILLERMO KLEIN

Los Guachos V
SunnysideSept.

CHARLES LLOYD & THE MARVELS

I Long To See You
Blue Note March



ISABELLA LUNDGREN

Somehow Life Got In The Way
Ladybird July

BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET WITH KURT ELLING

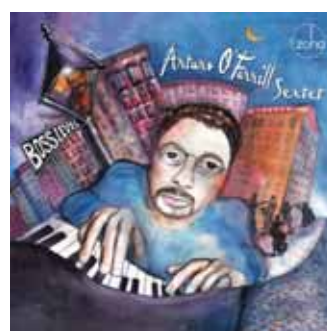
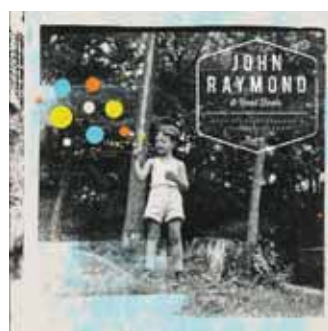
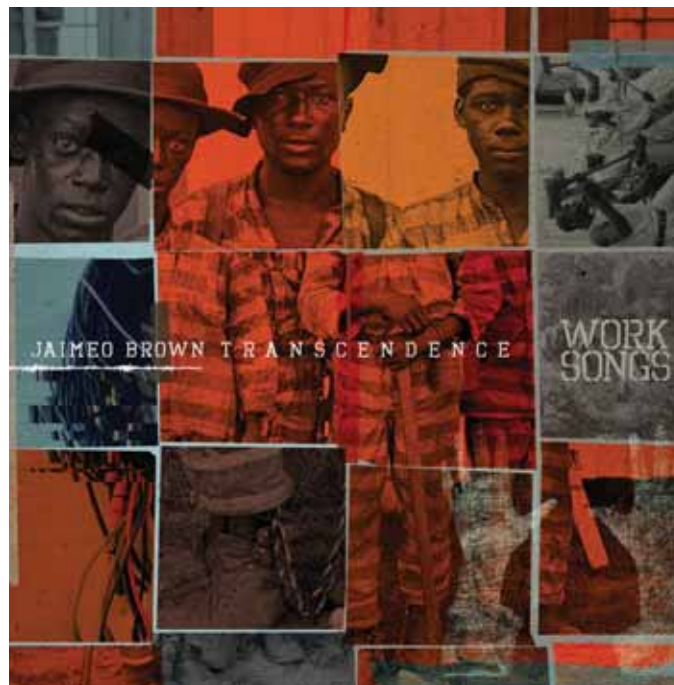
Upward Spiral
Marsalis Music/OkehAug.

HECTOR MARTIGNON

Banda Grande The Big Band Theory
ZohoAug.

PETE MCCANN

Range
WhirlwindJan.



MURRAY/ALLEN/CARRINGTON
Perfection
Motéma July

LAURA MVULA
The Dreaming Room
RCA Victor..... Oct.

ARTURO O'FARRILL SEXTET
Boss Level
Zoho May

MATT PARKER TRIO
Present Time
BYNK June

CRISTINA PATO QUARTET
Latina
Sunnyside..... Jan.

KEN PELOWSKI
Enrapture
Capri Records June

ENRICO PIERANUNZI
Proximity
Cam Jazz.....Feb.

ENRICO PIERANUNZI
New Spring: Live At The Village Vanguard
Cam Jazz..... Dec.

RANTALA/DANIELSSON/ERSKINE
How Long Is Now?
ACT..... Dec.

JOHN RAYMOND & REAL FEELS
Real Feels
Shifting Paradigm.....April

ALFREDO RODRÍGUEZ
Tocororo
Mack Avenue Records June

SONNY ROLLINS
Holding The Stage: Road Shows, Vol. 4
Doxy/OKEH May

XENIA RUBINOS
Black Terry Cat
Anti-.....Aug.

IAN SHAW
The Theory Of Joy
Jazz Village.....Web

OMAR SOSA
JOG
OTÁ Records..... March

STRYKER/SLAGLE BAND EXPANDED
Routes
Strikezone..... May

JUSTIN SWADLING FEAT. PIATTI QUARTET
A Place To Be
33 JazzDec.

STEVE SWELL'S KENDE DREAM
Hommage À Bartók
Silkheart..... March

TILLERY
Tillery
Larrecca Music..... Oct.

SCOTT TIXIER
Cosmic Adventure
Sunnyside.....Nov.

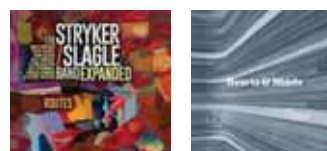
STEVE VAI
Modern Primitive/Passion And Warfare 25th Anniversary Edition
Epic Legacy.....Nov.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Rough Guide To Bottleneck Blues
Rough Trade.....July

VARIOUS ARTISTS
All Things Must Pass (DVD)
MVD.....Dec.

WILL VINSON
Perfectly Out Of Place
5Passion.....Sept.

ALEXANDER VON SCHLIPPENBACH
Jazz Now! Live At Theater Gütersloh
Intuition..... May



DENNY ZEITLIN
Early Wayne
Sunnyside..... Oct.

JOHN ZORN
The Painted Bird
Tzadik..... Oct.

JOHN ZORN
49 Acts Of Unspeakable Depravity In The Abominable Life And Times Of Gilles De Rais
Tzadik..... Oct.

HISTORICAL ★★★★★ ½



BÉLA FLECK
Drive
Rounder Feb.

**UMO JAZZ ORCHESTRA
WITH MICHAEL BRECKER**
Live In Helsinki 1995
Random Act Jan.

SARAH VAUGHAN
Live At Rosy's
Resonance July

NEW ★★★★★



DAVE ALVIN & PHIL ALVIN
Lost Time
Yep Roc Feb.

ROBBY AMEEN
Days In The Night
Two And Four April

**BRIAN ANDRES AND
THE AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ
CARTEL**
This Could Be That
Bacalao April

RON APREA
*Pays Tribute To John Lennon &
The Beatles*
Early Autumn Jan.

**DARCY JAMES ARGUE'S
SECRET SOCIETY**
Real Enemies
New Amsterdam Nov.

BOBBY AVEY
Inhuman Wilderness
Inner Voice Oct.

THE BAD PLUS
It's Hard
OKEH/Sony Masterworks Nov.

KENNY BARRON TRIO
Book Of Intuition
Impulse! June

NIK BÄRTSCH'S MOBILE
Continuum
ECM July

**FRANCESCO BEARZATTI
TINISSIMA 4TET**
This Machine Kills Fascists
Cam Jazz Feb.

JEFF BECK
Loud Hailer
ATCO Nov.

LORI BELL QUARTET
Brooklyn Dreaming
Self-Released March

CHERYL BENTYNE
Lost Love Songs
Summit July

JOSH BERMAN TRIO
A Dance And A Hop
Delmark Feb.

ERIC BIBB/JJ MILTEAU
Lead Belly's Gold
Story Plain Feb.

JIM BLACK
The Constant
Intakt Web.

SEAMUS BLAKE
Superconductor
5Passion Sept.



BLOODMIST
Sheen
5049 Records June

JANE IRA BLOOM
Early Americans
Outline Records Sept.

FIONA BOYES
Box & Dice
Blue Empress Jan.

**GREG ABATE & PHIL WOODS
WITH THE TIM RAY TRIO**
Kindred Spirits: Live At Chan's
Whaling City Sound April

RAUL AGRAZ
Between Brothers
OA2 Records Aug.

CYRILLE AIMÉE
Let's Get Lost
Mack Avenue Records April

ALCHEMY SOUND PROJECT
Further Explorations
Artists Recording Collective..Web

MELISSA ALDANA
Back Home
Wommusic July

RAHIM ALHAJ/AMJAD ALI KHAN
Infinite Hope
UR Music March

KRIS ALLEN
Beloved
Truth Revolution Oct.



ANDREA BRACHFELD

Lotus Blossom
Jazzheads April

GEOF BRADFIELD QUINTET

Our Roots
Origin Jan.

ANDY BROWN

Direct Call
Delmark Oct.

MEL BROWN & THE HOMEWRECKERS

Under Yonder: Mel Brown Live
Electro-Fi Oct.

DAVID BROZA & THE ANDALUSIAN ORCHESTRA

Ashkelon
Magenta June

JANE BUNNETT & MAQUEQUE

Oddara
Linus Entertainment Dec.

BUSELLI-WALLARAB JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Basically Baker Vol. 2
Patois Records Dec.

TAYLOR HO BYNUM

Enter The PlusTet
Firehouse Dec.

TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS

Method To My Madness
Alligator Jan.

JOE CHAMBERS

Landscapes
Savant Aug.

CHRIS CHEEK

Saturday Songs
Sunnyside Sept.

CHRIS CHEEK & SEAMUS BLAKE

Let's Call The Whole Thing Off
Criss Cross Jazz Sept.

BENJAMIN CLEMENTINE

At Least For Now
Capitol March

AVISHAI COHEN

Into The Silence
ECM April

FREDDY COLE

He Was The King
Highnote June

THE COOKERS

The Call Of The Wild And Peaceful Heart
Smoke Sessions Oct.

MARC COPLAND

Zenith
Innervoice June

DAN COSTA

Suite Très Rios
Self Release Web.

JAMES COTTON

Mighty Long Time
New West March

STANLEY COWELL

Reminiscent
Steeplechase March

THEO CROKER

Escape Velocity
OKEH/Sony Masterworks July

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DAVE ANDERSON'S

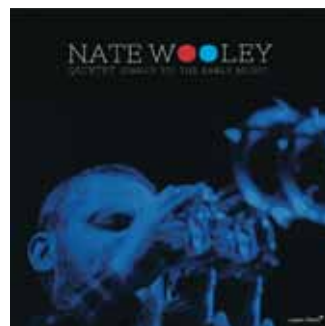
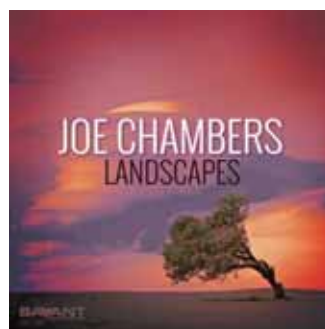
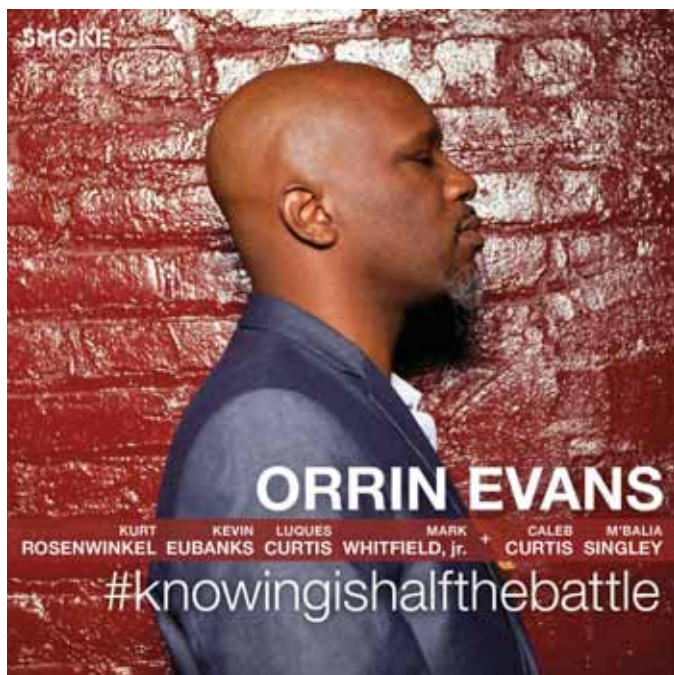
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MATT WILSON, Drums
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STEPHAN CRUMP'S RHOMBAL
Rhombal
Papillon SoundsNov.

ALEXIS CUADRADO
Poetica
Sunnyside.....Web

JEREMIAH CYMERMAN
Badlands
5049 RecordsWeb

ANDREW CYRILLE QUARTET
The Declaration Of Musical Independence
ECM.....Dec.

LAURIE DAPICE
Parting The Veil
Self-Released March

KRIS DAVIS
Duopoly
Pyroclastic RecordsDec.

ORBERT DAVIS' CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
Havana Blue
316 Records Oct.

GEORGE DELANCEY
George DeLancey
Self-ReleasedDec.

CATINA DELUNA
Lado B Brazilian Project
Self-ReleasedJuly

JEFF DENSON QUARTET
Concentric Circles
Ridgeway Records Oct.

TONY DESARE
Christmas Home
AJD EntertainmentDec.

DAVE DOUGLAS QUINTET
Brazen Heart
Greenleaf Jan.

SCOTT DUBOIS
Winter Light
ACT..... March

YELENA ECKEMOFF
Leaving Everything Behind
L & H ProductionAug.

DONALD EDWARDS
Prelude To Real Life
Criss Cross Jazz.....July

SINNE EEG/THOMAS FONNESBAEK
Eeg Fonnesbaek
Stunt Records Jan.

MATS EILERTSEN
Rubicon
ECM.....Nov.

HARRIS EISENSTADT
Old Growth Forest
Clean Feed June

PETER ELDRIDGE
Disappearing Day
Sunnyside.....Nov.

MOPPA ELLIOTT
Still, Up In The Air
Hot Cup June

TOMMY EMMANUEL

Christmas Memories
CGP Sounds.....Dec.

BRIAN ENO

The Ship
Warp.....Sept.

ELLERY ESKELIN

Trio Willisau Live
Hatology.....Sept.

ORRIN EVANS

#knowingishalfthebattle
Smoke Sessions.....Nov.

PETER EVANS

Gensis
More Is More.....Web

DOMINICK FARINACCI

Short Stories
Mack Avenue Records.....Aug.

ALAN FERBER NONET

Roots & Transitions
Sunnyside.....July

AMINA FIGAROVA

Blue Whisper
In + Out.....Feb

ROBERT FINLEY

Age Doesn't Mean A Thing
Big Legal Mess.....Dec.

GREG FISHMAN

New Journey
Self Release.....Web.

SULLIVAN FORTNER

Aria
Impulse!.....Jan.

**FRESU/GALLIANO/
LUNDGREN**

Mare Nostrum II
ACT.....Oct.

BILL FRISELL

When You Wish Upon A Star
OKEH.....April

**ANTHONY GERACI &
THE BOSTON BLUES
ALL-STARS**

Fifty Shades Of Blue
Delta Groove.....Feb.

**ROBERT GLASPER
EXPERIMENT**

ArtScience
Blue Note.....Nov.

GOGO PENGUIN

Man Made Object
Blue Note.....April

BENNY GOLSON

Horizon Ahead
High Note.....Aug.

ANDY GONZÁLEZ

Entre Colegas
Truth Revolution.....Aug.

VICTOR GOULD

Clockwork
Fresh Sound New Talent..... Oct.



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GRUPO FANTASMA

Problemas
Blue Corn May

GUNWALE

Polynya
Aerophonic Sept.

VASIL HADZIMANOV

Alive
MoonJune Web

MARY HALVORSON OCTET

Away With You
Firehouse Dec.

HAMASYAN/HENRIKSEN/ AARSET/BANG

Atmosphères
ECM Nov.

SCOTT HAMILTON & JEFF HAMILTON TRIO

Live In Bern
Capri Records Feb.

NANCY HARMS

Ellington At Night
Gazelle Records June

ALLAN HARRIS

*Nobody's Gonna Love You
Better*
Love Productions Nov.

BILLY HART & THE WDR BIG BAND

The Broader Picture
Enja Dec.

MATTHEW HARTNETT

Southern Comfort
D2LAL May

ERWIN HELFER

Last Call
The Sirens Dec.

PAUL HEMMINGS

Blues And The Abstract Uke
Leading Tone Jan.

FREDDIE HENDRIX

Jersey Cat
Sunnyside April

CORY HENRY

The Revival
Groundup June

MARQUIS HILL

The Way We Play
Concord Jazz Aug.

LAURENCE HOBGOOD

Honor Thy Fathers
Self-Released March

DERRICK HODGE

The Second
Blue Note Nov.

MIKE HOLOBER

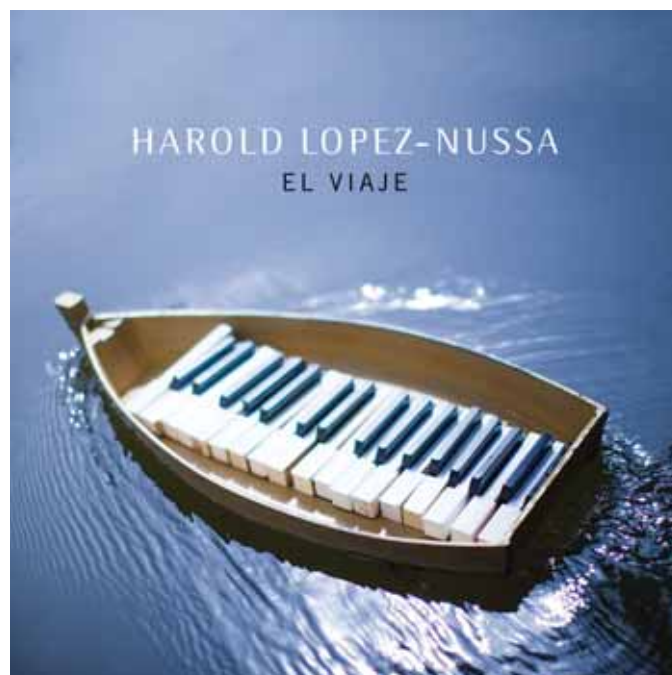
Balancing Act
Palmetto Feb.

HONEY EAR TRIO

Swivel
Little (i) Nov.

HOT JAZZ JUMPERS

The Very Next Thing
On The Bol Feb.



THE HOT SARDINES*French Fries & Champagne*

DeccaAug.

CHARLIE HUNTER*Everybody Has A Plan Until
They Get Punched In The Mouth*
Groundup/UniversalSept.**ZAKIR HUSSAIN***Distant Kin*

MomentFeb.

I AM THREE*Mingus Mingus Mingus*

Leo RecordsWeb

ROB ICKES & TREY HENSLEY*The Country Blues*

CompassDec.

INSTANT COMPOSERS POOL*Restless In Pieces*

ICPJuly

**ROBERT IRVING III
GENERATIONS***Our Space in Time*

Sonice Portraits JazzFeb.

**CHUCK ISRAELS JAZZ
ORCHESTRA***Garden Of Delights*

Dot Time RecordsMay

ANDY JAFFE NONET + 4*Arc*

PlayscaleMay

ERNEST JAMES ZYDECO*Automatic Harvester*

Jam RatFeb.

THE JIMMYS*Hot Dish*

Brown CowFeb.

MIMI JONES*Feet In The Mud*

Hot ToneSept.

NORAH JONES*Day Breaks*

Blue NoteOct.

SHEILA JORDAN*Better Than Anything: Live*

There RecordsMarch

JOHN JORGENSEN*Divertuoso/From The Crow's**Nest*

Cleopatra RecordsFeb.

**LAURENCE
JUBER TRIO***Holidays & Hollynights*

HologramDec.

**RYAN KEBERLE &
CATHARSIS***Azul Infinito*

GreenleafMay

SECKOU KEITA*22 Strings/Cordes*

ARCMarch

STACEY KENT*Tenderly*

OKEHApril

COREY KING*Lashes*

RopeadopeDec.

**DAVE KING TRUCKING
COMPANY***Surrounded By The Night*

SunnysideAug.

GUY KING*Truth*

DelmarkJuly

**KING LOUIE & LARHONDA
STEELE***Rock Me Baby*

Self-ReleasedJan.

KNEEBODY & DADELUS*Kneedelus*

BrainfeederApril

SERGIO KRAKOWSKI TRIO*Pássaros, The Foundation Of**The Island*

Ruweh RecordsOct.

ERNIE KRIVDA*Requiem For A Jazz Lady*

Capri RecordsMarch

**TAKUYA KURODA***Zigzagger*

ConcordDec.

ROBERT LANDFERMANN*Night Will Fall*

PirouetApril

INGRID LAUBROCK*Ubatuba*

FirehouseFeb.

IAN HENDRICKSON-SMITH
PLAYS RW SAXOPHONES

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STEVE LEHMAN & SÉLÉBÉYONE
Sélébéyone
 Pi Recordings Oct.

EXPANSIONS: DAVE LIEBMAN GROUP
The Puzzle
 Whaling City Sound March

LITTLE CHARLIE & ORGAN GRINDER SWING
Skrunky Tonk
 EllerSoul Oct.

HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA
El Viaje
 Mack Avenue Records Oct.

LIONEL LOUEKE
GAIA
 Blue Note Jan.

KAREN LOVELY
Ten Miles Of Bad Road
 Kokako April

GARY LUCAS
Fleischerei
 Cuneiform Rune June

JON LUNDBOM
EPs
 Hot Cup Records Dec.

NATALIE MACMASTER & DONNELL LEAHY
A Celtic Family Christmas
 Linus Dec.

JANIVA MAGNESS
Love Wins Again
 Blue Elan July

TONY MALABY PALOMA RECIO
Incantations
 Clean Feed Sept.

STEVE MARTIN/EDIE BRICKELL
So Familiar
 Rounder Feb.

TERRACE MARTIN
Velvet Portraits
 Ropeadope Web

GABRIELA MARTINA
No White Shoes
 Self-Released July

ETIENNE MBAPPE & THE PROPHETS
How Near How Far
 Abstract Logix Dec.

SYLVIA MCNAIR
Subject To Change!
 Harbinger Web

MYRA MELFORD & BEN GOLDBERG
Dialogue
 Bag May

HENDRIK MEURKENS
Harmonicus Rex
 Height Advantage June

BOB MINTZER
All L.A. Band
 Fuzzy Music Sept.

MATT MITCHELL
Vista Accumulation
 Pi Jan.

NICOLE MITCHELL/TOMEKA REID/MIKE REED
Artifacts
 482 Music Jan.

ROSCOE MITCHELL
Sustain And Run
 Selo Sesc Sept.

LARS MØLLER
ReWrite Of Spring
 Da Capo April

JANE MONHEIT
The Songbook Sessions: Ella Fitzgerald
 Emerald City Records May

MIKE MORENO
Lotus
 World Culture Music April

TONY MORENO QUINTET
Short Stories
 Mayimba Jazz Dec.

LUIS MUÑOZ
Voz
 Pelin Music Feb.

KIM NALLEY
Blues People
 Self Release Feb.

KIM NAZARIAN
Some Morning
 Kimj Music Feb.

NEW STANDARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA
Waltz About Nothing
 OA2 Records Oct.

RUSS NOLAN
Sanctuary From The Ordinary: Live At Firehouse 12
 Rhinoceros Music June

NOLATET
Dogs
 Royal Potato Family Web

CAECILIE NORBY AND LARS DANIELSSON
Just The Two Of Us
 ACT July

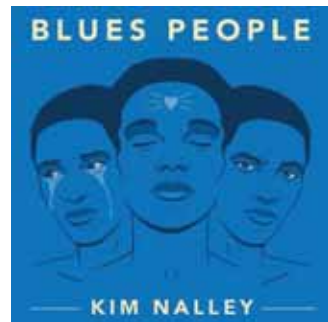
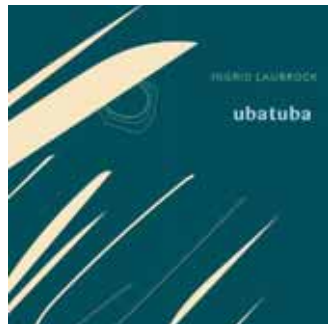
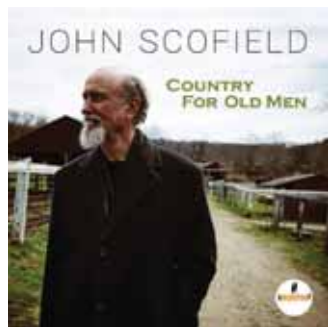
LUCA NOSTRO QUINTET
Are You OK?
 Via Veneto Jazz/Jando Music April

LARRY NOVAK
Invitation
 Delmark March

EVA NOVOA
Butterflies And Zebras
 By Ditmas Quartet
 Fresh Sound New Talent Aug.

BILL O'CONNELL/THE LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS
Heart Beat
 Savant July

FERIT ODMAN
Dameronia With Strings
 Equinox May



LESLIE ODOM JR.

Leslie Odom Jr.
S-Curve Oct.

ONE FOR ALL

The Third Decade
Smoke Sessions Aug.

ARUÁN ORTIZ TRIO

Hidden Voices
Intakt April

ANDERSON PAAK

Malibu
OBE/Steel Wool/
Art Club/Empire Aug.

ED PALERMO BIG BAND

One Child Left Behind
Cuneiform Rune June

DIANA PANTON

I Believe In Little Things
eOne June

JEFF PARKER

The New Breed
International Anthem Sept.

BEN PATERSON

For Once In My Life
Origin April

HOUSTON PERSON & RON CARTER

Chemistry
High Note Sept.

RALPH PETERSON TRIO

Triangular III
Onyx July

ANA POPOVIC

Trilogy
ArtisteXclusive Web

JONATHAN POWELL & NU SANGHA

Beacons Of Light
Truth Revolution April

NOAH PREMINGER

Dark Was The Night, Cold Was The Ground
Self-Released June

VICTOR PRIETO

The Three Voices
Self-Released Oct.

TOM RAINEY TRIO

Hotel Grief
Intakt Jan.

BONNIE RAITT

Dig In Deep
Redwing May

JOHNNY RAWLS

Tiger In A Cage
Catfood May

ROB REDDY

Bechet: Our Contemporary
Reddy Music Jan.

BLIND ALFRED REED

Appalachian Visionary
Dust To Digital May

MARC RIBOT & THE YOUNG PHILADELPHIANS

Live In Tokyo
Enja/Yellowbird Sept.

LOGAN RICHARDSON

Shift
Blue Note May

HERLIN RILEY

New Direction
Mack Avenue Records May

STEVE RILEY & THE MAMOU PLAYBOYS

Party At The Holiday, All Night Long!
Mamou Playboys Records Dec.

JASON ROEBKE OCTET

Cinema Spiral
No Business Nov.

RENEE ROSNES

Written In The Rocks
Smoke Sessions March

JIM ROTONDI

Dark Blue
Smoke Sessions April

RUDD/SAFT/DUNN/PÁNDI

Strength & Power
Rarenoise July

CHARLES RUMBACK

In The New Year
Ears & Eyes Feb.

BOBBY RUSH

Porcupine Meat
Rounder Nov.

CATHERINE RUSSELL

Harlem On My Mind
Jazz Village Nov.

JAMIE SAFT'S NEW ZION FEAT. CYRO BAPTISTA

Sunshine Seas
Rarenoise Sept.

KENNETH SALTERS HAVEN

Enter To Exit
Destiny Jan.

MIGHTY MIKE SCHERMER

Blues In Good Hands
VizzTone Feb.

JOHN SCOFIELD

Country For Old Men
Impulse! Dec.

ADAM SCONE

I Scream Scone!
Rondette Jan.

SARA SERPA/ANDRÉ MATOS

All The Dreams
Sunnyside Nov.

DEBORAH SHULMAN

My Heart's In The Wind
Summit May

EDWARD SIMON

Latin American Songbook
Sunnyside Nov.

SÉGAL

Musique De Nuit
Six Degrees March

ROTEM SIVAN TRIO

A New Dance
Fresh Sound New Talent March

MARK TURNER PLAYS RW REEDS

UNLEASH YOUR SOUND
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CHES SMITH

The Bell
ECM.....April

WADADA LEO SMITH/JOHN LINDBERG

Celestial Weather
TumMarch

SON LITTLE

Son Little
Anti-.....Jan.

ESPERANZA SPALDING

Emily's D+Evolution
Concord.....May

RON STABINSKY

Free For One
Hot Cup.....Sept.

MAVIS STAPLES

Livin' On A High Note
Anti-.....March

BILL STEWART

Space Squid
Pirouet.....March

KEITH STONE

The Prodigal Returns
Self-Released.....June

C.W. STONEKING

Gon' Boogaloo
King Hokum.....Web

DAVE STRYKER

Eight Track II
Strikezone Records.....Dec.

YUHAN SU

A Room Of One's Own
Inner Circle Music.....Dec.

TIERNEY SUTTON BAND

The Sting Variations
BFM Jazz.....Nov.

GREGORY TARDY

Chasing After The Wind
SteepleChase.....Dec.

HENRY THREADGILL

Old Locks And Irregular Verbs
Pi Recordings.....June

THREE REEDS QUINTET

Across Two Centuries
To Be Jazz.....Nov.

THREE'S COMPANY

We'll Be Together Again
Chesky.....May

THUMBSREW

Convallaria
Cuneiform.....Web

ALLEN TOUSSAINT

American Tunes
Nonesuch.....Sept.

ALLISON ADAMS TUCKER

WANDERlust
Origin.....Nov.

THE U.S. ARMY BLUES

Live At Blues Alley
Self-Released.....June

MATT ULERY'S LOOM/LARGE

Festival
Woolgathering.....Dec.

CHUCHO VALDÉS

Tribute To Irakere (Live In Marciac)
Jazz Village.....March

MANUEL VALERA & GROOVE SQUARE

Urban Landscape
Destiny.....Feb.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Detroit Jazz City
Blue Note.....March

VARIOUS ARTISTS

God Don't Never Change: The Songs Of Blind Willie Johnson
Alligator.....May

CARLOS VEGA

Bird's Ticket
Origin.....June

GABRIEL VICÉNS

Days
Inner Circle Music.....April

JASON VIVONE & THE BILLY BATS

The Avenue
Self-Released.....April

CUONG VU TRIO

Meets Pat Metheny
Nonesuch.....July

WALKER FAMILY SINGERS

Panola County Spirit
Daptone.....June

JOANNA WALLFISCH

Gardens In My Mind
Sunnyside.....Oct.

JOEL WEISKOPF

Where Angels Fear To Tread
SteepleChase.....May

CAROL WELSMAN

Alone Together
Welcar Music.....March

BEN WENDEL

What We Bring
Motéma.....Oct.

SPIKE WILNER

Koan
Posi-Tone.....Sept.

ANTHONY WILSON

Frogtown
Goat Hill.....May

**PHIL WOODS**

Live At The Deer Head Inn
Deer Head Records.....May

NATE WOOLEY QUINTET

(Dance To) The Early Music
Clean Feed.....Feb.

LAYLA ZOE

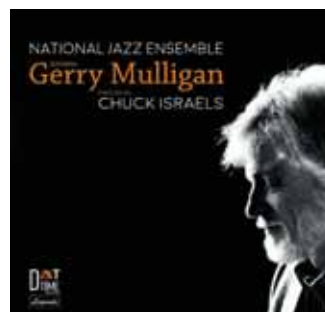
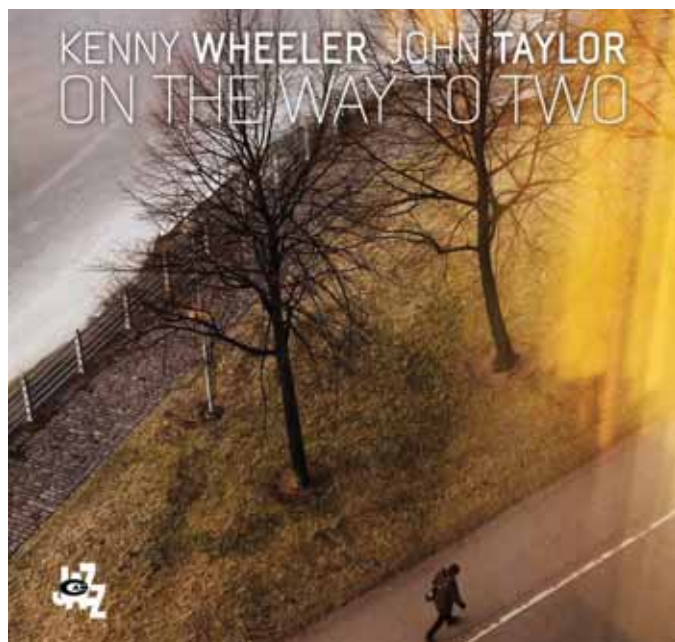
Breaking Free
Ruf.....Oct.

JOHN ZORN

The True Discoveries Of Witches And Demons
Tzadik.....Oct.

CHRISTOPHER ZUAR ORCHESTRA

Musings
Sunnyside.....June

HISTORICAL ★★★★★**JOHN ABERCROMBIE QUARTET**

The First Quartet
ECM.....March

DAVID ANGEL

Camshafts And Butterflies
V.S.O.P.....April

ALBERT AYLER

Bells/Prophecy-Expanded Edition
ESP-Disk.....June

ETTA BAKER

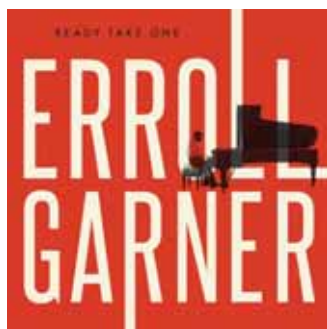
Railroad Bill
Music Maker.....May

COUNT BASIE

Netherlands On Kurhaus Concert 1954
Doctor Jazz.....April

THE PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND

Live 1966
Real Gone Music.....Sept.



GEORGE CRUMB
Voice Of The Whale (DVD)
MVD.....Dec.

FATS DOMINO
Fats Domino And The Birth Of Rock 'n' Roll-The Big Beat (DVD)
Shanachie..... May

MAYNARD FERGUSON
Live From San Francisco
Omnivore.....April

ELLA FITZGERALD
Live At Chautauqua, Vol. 1
Dot Time Legends Jan.

ERROLL GARNER
Ready Take One
Legacy.....Nov.

DIANA KRALL
Christmas Songs
VerveDec.

JOE MCPHEE
Alone Together
Corbett v. DempseyWeb

BRAD MEHLDAU
10 Years Solo Live
Nonesuch Jan.

BLUE MITCHELL/SONNY RED
Baltimore 1966
Uptown..... Oct.

TETE MONTOLIU
Piano For Nuria
MPS..... May

DEWAN MOTIHAR TRIO, IRENE SCHWEIZER TRIO, MANFRED SCHOOF, BARNEY WILEN
Jazz Meets India
MPS..... May

NATIONAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE DIRECTED BY CHUCK ISRAELS
Featuring Gerry Mulligan
Dot Time RecordsApril

THE SERAPH CHOIR
Christmas In Africa
NorthstarDec.

SONNY SHARROCK
Ask The Ages
M.O.D. Technologies..... March

WOODY SHAW/LOUIS HAYES
The Tour-Volume One
HighNote Oct.

FRANK SINATRA
The Frank Sinatra Collection: Ol' Blue Eyes Is Back/The Main Event (DVD)
Eagle Rock Entertainment.....Dec.

JOHN TAYLOR
2081
Cam Jazz..... Jan.

BOBBY TIMMONS
Holiday Soul
PrestigeDec.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
JACO: Original Soundtrack
Columbia/Legacy Feb.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Joyful Jazz! Christmas With Verve, Vol. 1: The Vocalists
VerveDec.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Pride And Joy: The Story Of Alligator Records (DVD)
MVD.....Dec.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Rough Guide To The Blues Songsters
Rough Guide Jan.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Rough Guide To Brazilian Jazz
World Music Network.....July

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Rough Guide To Gospel Blues
Rough Trade.....Sept.

WEATHER REPORT
The Legendary Tapes: 1978-1981
Legacy Feb.

KENNY WHEELER/JOHN TAYLOR
On The Way To Two
Cam Jazz..... Feb.

PHILLIP WILSON
Esoteric
Corbett v. DempseyWeb

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RENEE ROSNES
STEVE NELSON / STEVE WILSON / PETER WASHINGTON
Written in the Rocks

RENEE ROSNES piano
 STEVE WILSON saxophones & flute
 STEVE NELSON vibraphone
 PETER WASHINGTON bass
 BILL STEWART drums

SMOKE SESSIONS RECORDS

NEW RELEASES FOR 2016



JIM ROTONDI
JOE LOCKE / DAVID HAZELTINE / DAVID WONG / CARL ALLEN
Dark Blue

JIM ROTONDI trumpet & flugelhorn
 JOE LOCKE vibraphone
 DAVID HAZELTINE piano & rhodes
 DAVID WONG bass
 CARL ALLEN drums



GEORGE COLEMAN
MIKE LEDONNE / BOB CRANSHAW / GEORGE COLEMAN, JR.
A Master Speaks

GEORGE COLEMAN tenor saxophone
 MIKE LEDONNE piano
 BOB CRANSHAW bass
 GEORGE COLEMAN, JR. drums



PETER BERNSTEIN
GERALD CLAYTON / DOUG WEISS / BILL STEWART
Let Loose

PETER BERNSTEIN guitar
 GERALD CLAYTON piano
 DOUG WEISS bass
 BILL STEWART drums



ONE FOR ALL
ERIC ALEXANDER / JIM ROTONDI / STEVE DAVIS / DAVID HAZELTINE / JOHN WEBBER / JOE FARNSWORTH
The Third Decade

ERIC ALEXANDER tenor saxophone
 JIM ROTONDI trumpet
 STEVE DAVIS trombone
 DAVID HAZELTINE piano
 JOHN WEBBER bass
 JOE FARNSWORTH drums



STEVE TURRE
KENNY BARRON / RON CARTER / JIMMY COBB / JAVON JACKSON / CYRO BAPTISTA
Colors for the Masters

STEVE TURRE trombone
 KENNY BARRON piano
 RON CARTER bass
 JIMMY COBB drums
 plus
 JAVON JACKSON tenor saxophone
 CYRO BAPTISTA percussion



THE COOKERS
EDDIE HENDERSON / DAVID WEISS / DONALD HARRISON / BILLY HARPER / GEORGE CABLES / CECIL MCBEE / BILLY HART
Call of the Wild to the Peaceful Heart

EDDIE HENDERSON trumpet
 DAVID WEISS trumpet
 DONALD HARRISON alto saxophone
 BILLY HARPER tenor saxophone
 GEORGE CABLES piano
 CECIL MCBEE bass
 BILLY HART drums



ORRIN EVANS
KURT ROSENWINKEL / KEVIN EUBANKS / LUQUES CURTIS / MARK WHITFIELD, JR. / CALEB CURTIS / M'BALIA SINGLEY
#knowingishalfthebattle

ORRIN EVANS piano
 KURT ROSENWINKEL guitar
 KEVIN EUBANKS guitar
 LUQUES CURTIS bass
 MARK WHITFIELD, JR. drums
 plus
 CALEB CURTIS saxophone & flute
 M'BALIA SINGLEY vocals

Masterpiece ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★ Good ★★★ Fair ★★ Poor ★

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Reviews >



Brian Lynch *Madera Latino*

HOLLISTIC MUSICWORKS 13/14

★★★★

What a gift that Brian Lynch, one of the most accomplished, dynamic trumpet players in jazz, has chosen to interpret the music of Woody Shaw—one of his most important precursors—through the lens of Latin jazz. Even better that he invited eight other esteemed trumpet players to the party, including Dave Douglas, Sean Jones and Diego Urcola. Talk about dream projects.

This double-CD dream turned out remarkably well, even for listeners who may recoil at the stereotype of so much brass bravura in the same room. Because let's face it, there's lots of fiery, athletic playing here. But the accent isn't on one-upmanship; it's on subtle blends, lyricism, dynamics and the sweet openings that

emerge when you cross-pollinate Shaw's asymmetrical tunes and multidirectional harmonies with clave rhythms.

Exploring material from albums such as *Rosewood*, *Love Dance*, *Song Of Songs* and others, as well as an original blues and a 15-minute suite dedicated to Shaw, Lynch and company create a panoramic landscape, with trumpets in solo, duo, trio and quartet formation. One of the catchiest arrangements—a real earworm and a textbook example of how Shaw's music can be adapted to Latin beats—is “Joshua C,” its witty, arpeggiated vamp skipping dissonantly over Shaw's slippery half-step modal chord progression.

Delights abound. On the percolating “Zoltan,” Lynch shows he can go anywhere he chooses, zipping up to high notes, kissing sudden substitutes or displacing rhythms as he runs downfield. He and Michael Rodriguez create a band-of-trumpets feel on the roman-

tic “Sweet Love Of Mine,” and a trio of Lynch, Jones and Philip Dizack sound like a brass choir scored by Gil Evans on “Time Is Right.” Etienne Charles spits a lean, lyrical solo on the driving “On The New Ark,” and Josh Evans evokes Miles-ish languor on the urgent “Song Of Songs.” Throughout, percussionists Pedrito Martinez, Little Johnny Rivero and Anthony Carrillo provide snappy solos and create rhythm section momentum with brothers Luques (bass) and Zaccai Curtis (piano).

Lynch deserves kudos for making this dream come true.

—Paul de Barros

Madera Latino: Disc 1: Zoltan; Sweet Love Of Mine; Time Is Right; Just A Ballad For Woody; In A Capricornian Way; Blues For Woody And Khalid. (55:28) Disc 2: Tomorrow's Destiny; Joshua C.; On The New Ark; Song Of Songs; Madera Latino Suite. (54:04)

Personnel: Brian Lynch, Dave Douglas (1, 5, 10), Diego Urcola (1, 12), Etienne Charles (1, 10, 12), Michael Rodriguez (2, 4, 8, 9, 11), Sean Jones (3, 6, 7), Philip Dizack (3, 6), Josh Evans (4, 8, 9, 11), Bryan Davis (12), trumpet; Zaccai Curtis, piano; Luques Curtis, bass; Obed Calvaire (2–9, 11), drums; Pedrito Martinez, timbales (1, 3, 5–7, 10, 12); Anthony Carrillo, bongo, campana (1, 5, 10, 12); Little Johnny Rivero, congas (1, 2, 4, 5, 8–12).

Ordering info: hollisticmusicworks.com



George Cables *The George Cables Songbook*

HIGH NOTE 7292

★★★★½

You won't find a lot of widely shared repertoire in the songbook of George Cables, whose tallest tent pole in the general jazz catalog is "Think On Me" written around 1970. But there have been only about 16 recorded versions over the years, 10 of them by Cables himself. The lesson is that for the jazz musician who dabbles in composition, self-advocacy is the essential part of creative valor.

So here is Cables' chance to self-advocate.

Le Boeuf Brothers + JACK Quartet *Imaginist*

NEW FOCUS/PANORAMIC

★★★★½

Tricky business, this jazz/classical confluence. Bridging a chamber aesthetic and a bandstand vibe risks impairing each element. No question about one thing: On this new collaboration, the coherence between the respected string ensemble and the feisty improv group is lacking naught. Performance-wise, the Le Boeufs and JACK Quartet pull it off.

"It" is a union of strings, reeds and rhythm that's meant to parallel a reader's experience of traversing a storyline. A rich suite that boasts both prologue and epilogue, *Imaginist* finds composer-pianist Pascal Le Boeuf and his sax-playing brother Remy alluding to Russian poetry, speculating on the *exquisite corpse* process and spinning one of Kafka's existential tales so that it has antecedents in both Prokofiev's *Peter And The Wolf* and Ken Nordine's *Word Jazz*. A somewhat dizzying venture, indeed.

The sound of the two groups uniting is sumptuous. Moving from vivid instrumental passages that feature saxophonist Ben Wendel to an extended narration of Kafka's "A Dream" (featuring actor Paul Whitworth), Pascal's rig-

Five of his pieces have been augmented with new lyrics by Sarah Elizabeth Charles, a former student who also collaborates as a vocalist, thus doubling the quotient of self-advocacy. Far and away her brightest contribution in both roles is "Face The Consequences," which springs to life with an abrupt vitality after a rather lethargic sax chorus by Craig Handy. But the contrast sets her up for a very hip entrance. "Colors Of Light" and "Suite For Sweet Rita" have the dreamy, stream-of-consciousness ambiance of art songs, while "Honey Lulu" invites Charles to stretch out those long vowels on top of Handy's tenor in a way that is both playful and lovely.

Cables is journeyman classicist capable of a hard-swinging attack, but he is also at ease hovering over harmonic ambiguities. If he has a signature style, it is elegance written with a fine point, not a magic marker. It takes time for unfamiliar songs to take on meaning, so judgments on specific compositions are best postponed. Better instead to enjoy this less as a songbook and more as a showcase of Cables' fine piano playing.

—John McDonough

The George Cables Songbook: Traveling Lady; AKA Reggie; The Dark The Light; For Honey Lulu; Melodious Funk; Face The Consequences; Colors Of Light; Think On Me; The Mystery Of Monifa Brown; Baby Steps; Suite For Sweet Rita. (72:45)

Personnel: George Cables, piano; Essiet Essiet, bass; Victor Lewis, drums; Sarah Elizabeth Charles, vocals (3, 4, 6–8, 11); Craig Handy, tenor saxophone, flute (3, 4, 6, 8); Steven Kroon, percussion, (3, 4, 8).

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



orous pieces do everything they can to utilize the breadth of hues a double ensemble can conjure.

There are moments where it seems a tad puckish, but ultimately the Le Boeufs' compositional change-ups are fetching.

—Jim Macnie

Imaginist: Prologue; Alkaline; Pretenders; A Dream: Introduction; A Dream: Grave Mound; A Dream: An Artist; A Dream: Here Lies ...; A Dream: He Began To Cry; A Dream: At Long Last; Exquisite Corpse I; Foreshadow; Exquisite Corpse II; Flashback; Epilogue. (48:25)

Personnel: Remy Le Boeuf, alto saxophone, bass clarinet, oboe; Pascal Le Boeuf, piano; Ben Wendel, tenor saxophone; Ben Street, Martin Nevin, bass; Justin Brown, Peter Kronreif, drums; Ari Streisfeld, violin; Christopher Otto, violin; John Pickford Richards, viola; Kevin McFarland, cello; Paul Whitworth, narrator.

Ordering info: newfocusrecordings.com



Aziza *Aziza*

DARE2 008

★★★★½

Assembling four artists with such unimpeachable talent, *Aziza* should be magnetic listening all the way through. In places it is just that, thrilling and memorable, but there are also patches that coast—perfectly fine playing that feels almost hand-in-glove, tensionless, too modest in its stakes for these heavies. *Aziza* is a solid record that feels like it could be more exciting.

Half the team is pretty much always fascinating. Guitarist Lionel Loueke and drummer Eric Harland, for their part, are consistently surprising, shaping the overall music and contributing solos that matter.

On "Sleepness Nights," the album's standout track, Loueke takes his singular sound to the stage, starting with a Tinariwen-esque desert blues, through ripping solos and lurking like Jaws underneath Chris Potter's tenor.

He's as sensational on Potter's frolicsome "Summer 15," where Harland's rolling snare is as light and buoyant as it is heavy and frantic on "Blue Sufi"; on that track, the guitarist delivers again, unexpectedly dwelling on a drone, plucking kora-like arpeggios mixed with psychedelic wah-wahs and envelope effects as well as straightforward jazz lines.

Potter is deft, but not always scintillating. He plays soprano on Dave Holland's gauzy, calypso-tinged "Finding The Light," locking his tenor into the tricky-metered funk on "Aziza Dance," voicing a less memorable theme on the ballad "Friends."

Holland, meanwhile, is reliably powerful, a rudder for the ship, steering Harland's beautiful, flowing "Aquila," and tacking his way at the helm on "Walkin' The Walk."

—John Corbett

Aziza: Aziza Dance; Summer 15; Walkin' The Walk; Aquila; Blue Sufi; Finding The Light; Friends; Sleepless Nights. (68:53)

Personnel: Dave Holland, bass; Chris Potter, saxophones; Lionel Loueke, guitar; Eric Harland, drums.

Ordering info: daveholland.com

The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Brian Lynch <i>Madera Latino</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★
George Cables <i>The George Cables Songbook</i>	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★
Le Boeuf Bros. + JACK Quartet <i>Imaginist</i>	★★★★	★★★	★★★★½	★★
Aziza <i>Aziza</i>	★★½	★★★★½	★★★	★★½

Critics' Comments

Brian Lynch, *Madera Latino*

The Shaw songbook has circled mostly in its own orbit. But Lynch's nine trumpets, deployed in various detachments, turn it into a fairly fiery Afro-Cuban brass summit, full of muscular virtuosity and some close-in, hand-to-hand exchanges.

—John McDonough

Luscious arrangements and varied formats lend this thoughtful tribute/songbook the winning edge. Woody Shaw's spirit may be in the house, but having Gabriel's trumpets on hand helps tip the scales.

—John Corbett

Wise concept, and making it an all-hands-on-deck deal definitely keeps things poppin'. From Douglas to Jones to Urcola, lightning bolts are always in the air.

—Jim Macnie

George Cables, *The George Cables Songbook*

This album is irrefutably Cables' own—even if the change-up in the arrangement and orchestration of songs adds something very different to the excellent program. I slightly prefer him in other settings, but applaud the expanded vista.

—John Corbett

The pianist's level of refinement, especially in the blues vernacular, continues to grow. And he's correct in stressing his own writing. His pieces are small jewels.

—Jim Macnie

Warm, romantic and technically nimble, Cables is one of our best pianists, but this album featuring attractively gamine-ish Sarah Elizabeth Charles singing her lyrics to Cables' often fetchingly delicate tunes doesn't hang together particularly well.

—Paul de Barros

Le Boeuf Brothers + JACK Quartet, *Imaginist*

A nervous emotional anxiety pervades this jumpy, sometimes spiky encounter of classical and jazz temperament. But they engage each other well. The centerpiece, "A Dream," accompanies a short but absorbing 17-minute Kafka radio drama like a film score.

—John McDonough

Beautifully played, aimed at Claudia Quintet territory, braving pretense via the Kafka recitation and (mostly) surviving. In places, a little too reliant on sugar. "Pretenders" is a schizo split between light classical soundtrack and something more creative.

—John Corbett

A couple of tracks into this arty setting of Franz Kafka's short story, "A Dream," warning signs of "Grant Project!" started to flash. Some attractive moments, but the structure feels random and it's often impossible to make out the (pretentiously delivered) narration.

—Paul de Barros

Aziza, *Aziza*

A funky ostinato can galvanize a crowd. But alone in one's headphones, it can become labored fast. *Aziza* starts that way, then opens into more interesting territory. Harland paves a bumpy road, which the music navigates with a jerky, staccato lurch.

—John McDonough

It has the weightiness you expect, but there's a glib vibe that saves some of the intense time signatures from swamping the music. Holland is wildly graceful throughout.

—Jim Macnie

With guitarist Lionel Loueke taking the chordal slot once occupied by Gonzalo Rubalcaba, this quartet featuring Dave Holland creates a mixture of jazz-funk-world-fusion. But the blend of buoyancy and heavy intentions feels oddly unresolved.

—Paul de Barros

MONIKA HERZIG
 Pianist-composer arranger **Monika Herzig** has long been a passionate advocate for women in jazz. With her new album, recruiting an all-female roster of ten international jazz luminaries, playing an eclectic mix of straightahead, modal, pop tunes, ballads and many originals. Each song is engaging, the playing accomplished and inspiring.

—JAZZIZ Fall '16

See Monika and the Band at:
BIRDLAND
 Thurs. Dec. 15th @ 6:PM
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MGMT: Suzi Reynolds & Assoc. | Suzi@suzireynolds.com
 MonikaHerzigMusic.com

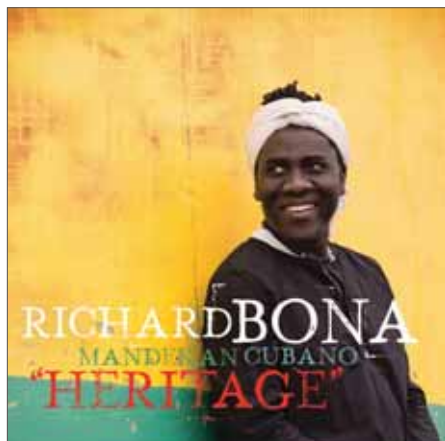


"On her debut release, **Kristen Lee Sergeant**, whose vocals can be buttery or deliciously tart, offers up her dramatically fresh arrangements of standards selections and three hit tunes from MTV's early 80's rotation with enhanced flair. "Inside Out" is a solid debut from a classically trained vocalist whose journey into the jazz realm has already yielded gems; we hope to hear more in the future."

—DOWNBEAT Sept. '16 EDITORS' PICKS

MGMT: Suzi Reynolds & Assoc.
 Suzi@suzireynolds.com
 KristenLeeSergeant.com

See Kristen Live:
Gotham Bar & Grill, NYC
 Tuesday, Feb 14th, '17 | 7-10:PM



Richard Bona with Mandekan Cubano *Heritage*

QWEST

★★★★½

Bona was born in Cameroon and blessed with perfect pitch, Richard Bona began playing balafon at age 4, quickly moving on to organ, guitar and, at 16, bass, inspired by a Jaco Pastorius record.

He moved to Europe to study music and eventually landed in Paris, where he became a session player for Manu Dibango and Salif Keita. Never content to stay in one place, musi-

cally or geographically, he moved to New York and worked with Pat Metheny, Larry Coryell and Steve Gadd. His blend of soul, pop, jazz, folk, Latin and African music make his style hard to pin down, and the sounds of *Heritage* continue to document his unpredictable creativity.

Wanting to explore the connections between jazz, Cuban and African music, Bona put together Mandekan Cubano with five like-minded compatriots. The result is another outing with the loose feel of an improvised session. Pianist Osmany Paredes is a particular delight, his brief, sharp solos on “Cubaneando,” “Santa Clara Con Montuno” and “Kivu” sparkling with a gem like brilliance.

The playing is energetic, but Bona mixed the tracks to produce a dreamy, trance like state. Mandekan Cubano plays with an understated virtuosity, their laidback grooves carrying you forward with supple, elastic brilliance. The music explores the interlocking rhythms of Cuba and Africa, as well as ensemble pieces that show off the band’s expertise. —j. poet

Heritage: Aka Lingala Tè; Bilongo; Matanga; Jokoh Jokoh; Cubaneando; Essèwè Ya Monique; Santa Clara Con Montuno; Ngul Mekon; Muntula Moto; Eva; Kivu; Kwa Singa. (40:25)

Personnel: Richard Bona, bass, vocals, guitar, electric sitar, percussion, keyboards; Osmany Paredes, piano; Luisito Quintero, percussion; Rey Alejandro, trombone; Dennis Hernandez, trumpet; Roberto Quintero, percussion.

Ordering info: quincyjones.com

Ethan Iverson *The Purity Of The Turf*

CRISS CROSS JAZZ 1391

★★★★

Your high expectations for this combination of musicians—pianist Ethan Iverson, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Nasheet Waits—probably aren’t high enough for what they deliver, in terms of letting their distinctive attributes shine while also interacting at the highest levels of listening and invention.

The freedoms they achieve are conceived within self-imposed limitations. Iverson avoids technical excess; his improvisations unfold sparsely in his right hand, usually with very little or no emphasis on his left hand (with one significant exception, noted below). He plays deliberately, nurturing his ideas sometimes in unhurried quarter notes or eighth notes. Similarly, Waits works maybe 90 percent of the time on ride cymbal and snare alone. When he does accent something on one of his toms, it’s for a very good reason.

With that understood, all three musicians conspire to create a landmark session, one that targets both the visceral pleasures of swing and more cerebral levels of appreciation. On the title track, written by Iverson, the specter of Monk hovers over the piano solo. But Iverson stretch-



es tonality through single lines, which grow more adventurous the longer they unfold.

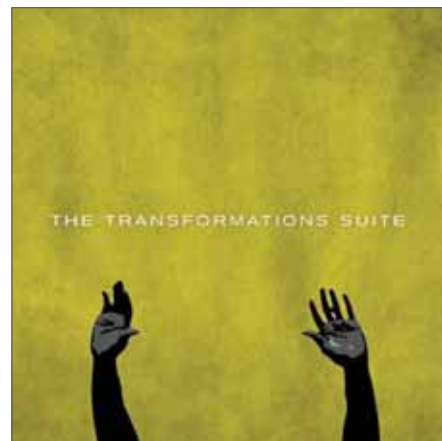
One of the most arresting moments of the album occurs on Iverson’s solo treatment of “Darn That Dream.” Here he reanimates his left hand, conjuring a sense of obsession if not outright menace—not an easy feat with one of the loveliest ballads in the catalog.

—Bob Doerschuk

The Purity Of The Turf: The Purity Of The Turf; Song For My Father; Darn That Dream; Along Came Betty; Graduation Day; Confirmation; Kush; Sent For You Yesterday; Strange Serenade; Little Waltz; Einbahnstrasse; So Hard It Hurts. (58:46)

Personnel: Ethan Iverson, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums.

Ordering info: crisscrossjazz.com



Samora Pinderhughes *The Transformations Suite*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★½

The Transformations Suite is a mix of theatrical poetry and jazz, played with the utmost passion and intensity. Envisioned by composer-director-pianist Samora Pinderhughes, funded via Kickstarter and brought to life with the help of flutist Elena Pinderhughes (Samora’s sister) and others, the album is broken up into five movements and six tracks that run for nearly an hour.

This work, which began while Pinderhughes was attending Juilliard in 2011, is here to soundtrack a revolution, and if Pinderhughes succeeds in one thing, it is creating a work of art that matches the intensity of these troubled times better than any Twitter hashtag or Facebook debate ever could. At times challenging, it is nonetheless a powerful work of art.

He eases into it. The opening title track begins with Pinderhughes’ pleasant piano playing. Before long, Jehbreal Muhammad Jackson is crooning, repeatedly, “Give us justice now,” a mission statement for the work.

Powerfully, saxophonist Lucas Pino follows suit as he delivers a robust solo that exclaims a similar message. That power comes to a rapid boil during “Momentum, Pt. 2” amidst claims that “we have got to change America” and screams of “now!”

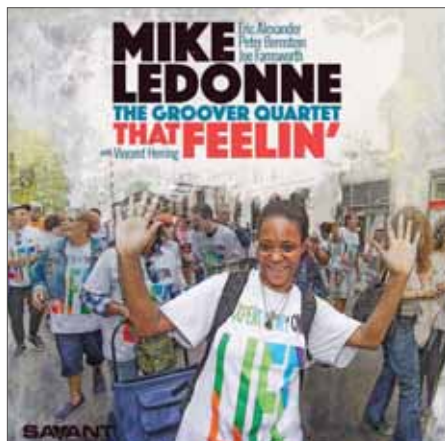
The decompression follows with “Ascension,” complete with lyrics from the spiritual “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.” It’s the most straightforward jazz moment on the album, but not without a detour into dramatic poetry that asks us to “give our thoughts wings, wrap us tight in rings of resistance, and let us fly.”

—Chris Tart

The Transformations Suite: Transformation; History; Cycles; Momentum Pt. 1; Momentum, Pt. 2; Ascension. (58:36)

Personnel: Samora Pinderhughes, piano; Jeremie Harris, spoken word; Elena Pinderhughes, flute, vocals; Jehbreal Muhammad Jackson, vocals; Riley Mulherkar, trumpet; Lucas Pino, tenor saxophone; Tony Lustig, baritone saxophone; Clovis Nicolas, bass; Jimmy Macbride, drums.

Ordering info: samorapinderhughes.com



Mike LeDonne Groover Quartet *That Feelin'*

SAVANT 2159

★★★★

Like those old married couples who finish each other's sentences, Mike LeDonne and his bandmates know each other so well that they have an appropriate response for every musical idea. But what makes for boring dinner conversation becomes scintillating musical interplay on *That Feelin'*, thanks to skilled arranger, bandleader and keyboardist LeDonne.

The album's cover photo was taken at the 2016 Disability Pride Parade in New York, a cause near to the heart of LeDonne, who has a disabled daughter.

Indeed, his love for his daughter may inform almost every aspect of this project. There's the tender sentiments expressed through covers of The Delfonics' 1968 Philly soul hit "La La (Means I Love You)," a rousing reading of trumpeter Donald Byrd's "Fly Little Bird Fly" and a cosmic takeoff on Lee Adams and Charles Strouse's *Bye Bye Birdie* production number "A Lot of Livin' To Do."

LeDonne also serves up a greasy-good take on "Gravy Blues," the Ray Brown tune that featured vibraphonist Jackson; LeDonne's "I'd Never Change A Thing About You," with the intricate solos of tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander and alto sax man Vincent Herring laced with LeDonne's chopping chords; and the deep-in-the-groove title track, featuring the impeccably clean fretwork of guitarist Peter Bernstein.

LeDonne produces a booming organ sound reminiscent of earlier B-3 king Jimmy Smith. And as always on *That Feelin'*, the Groover is at the heart.

—Jeff Johnson

That Feelin': I'd Never Change A Thing About You; That Feelin'; La La Means I Love You; Fly Little Bird Fly; Gravy Blues; Sweet Papa Lou; At Last; This Will Be An Everlasting Love; A Lot Of Livin' To Do. (59:38)

Personnel: Mike LeDonne, Hammond B-3 organ; Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Vincent Herring, alto saxophone (1, 5, 6); Peter Bernstein, guitar; Joe Farnsworth, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Leadership Premieres

All of the following releases are debut recordings made by artists leading their own groups, rather than as sidemen. This sometimes means that they've already been on the scene for several years, steadily building reputations. A pair of tenor saxophonists lead the pack, with Chicagoan **Nate Lepine** and New Yorker **Adam Schneit** delivering albums on ears&eyes and Fresh Sound New Talent.

Lepine's **Vortices** (ears&eyes 054; 45:03 ★★★) presents an angular density, nervous and dynamic, following in the Tim Berne tradition. His serpentine solos develop an odd relationship with the harmonic foundation—at times heading into stately Middle Eastern developments, and at other junctures suggesting an Ornette Coleman-esque jostle. An ambulatory process acts as the basis for Lepine's untethered blowing, which intertwines nicely with the playing of alto saxophonist Nick Mazzarella. The compositions are short and punchy, busy in their targeted intentions, and sometimes just a touch too brief, barely reaching their arguments before concluding. Album-closer "Aye Lads" is an atypical achievement. With its bluesy, cheery swagger, it could be the album's single.

Ordering info: earsandeyesrecords.com

The compositions on Schneit's **Light Shines In** (Fresh Sound New Talent 518; 48:03 ★★★) often carry a rock-pop flavor, like songs without a singer. The leader's tenor saxophone voice is up-close and warm, with Sean Moran's organic guitar acting as a fitting partner. Bassist Eivind Opsvik and drummer Kenny Wollesen complete the quartet. Schneit (previously a member of Old Time Musketry) is seeking emotional communication, giving space to lyrical ideas. "Different Time" features a grainy guitar solo, and has a freer nature, delineated by a chasing tenor solo. Schneit's clarinet takes over "Hope For Something More," with a slow melodic punctuation. "My Secret Hobby" is another volatile piece, with hyperactive tenor and strafing guitar.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

Jumping across to Los Angeles, drummer **Matt Mayhall's Tropes** (Skirl 036; 35:00 ★★★) harbors a softly psychedelic vibe, with a fuzzed-up Jeff Parker amongst the band-ranks. Mayhall wrote the pieces on the piano, and the result is a dreamy soup, complete with switchback drums, lingering bass lines and floating, tangled-up guitar riffs, maximally phased. Many of the tunes employ the technique of cascading elements, making up a melody via relayed



parts. On "Maybe Younger," Chris Speed's tenor saxophone sounds uncannily like a bassoon. Submerged in an ocean of effects, this album stressed group composition over individual exhibition.

Ordering info: skirlrecords.com

The Andrew Endres Collective is led by a guitarist and composer from Portland, Oregon. His **Desolation** (AEC 01; 57:45 ★★½) is populated with titles such as "Destitute" and "Hatred Of A Thousand." A prospective listener could be forgiven for expecting a set of industrial-noise angst, but the prime orientation of its contents is surprisingly placid. Endres is concerned with a light fusion, packed with conjoined themes that feature guitar, piano and saxophones (alto and baritone). The music is rich in texture, frothy in its weave of solos that are inherently linked to the overall compositions. At times, these can sound like TV themes for a light drama series. "Misonicism" is distinctive, with its repeating figures and wordless vocal parts, and "Consciousness" has the guitar moving into the center, something that should happen more often on this album.

Ordering info: andrewendrescollective.bandcamp.com

The least impressive issue of this batch is the self-released **Melodies And Fantasies** (Rodbrosmusic 1001; 53:17 ★★) by pianist Robert Rodriguez (mostly familiar as half of the Rodriguez Brothers), whose original compositions lack distinctiveness. His playing is continually elaborate, but has the feel of mere musical exercise, noodling to no end. The bass (Hans Glawischnig) and drum solos (Marcus Gilmore) during "Untitled Melody In Swing 2" sound almost revolutionary amidst a plane of rarely changing dynamics. Here, there is no space, no structural contrast, and no relief from an endless gushing of lounge pianism.

DB

Ordering info: rodbrosmusic.com

Bill Laurance

Live at Union Chapel

GROUNDUP
★★★★

Snarky Puppy has risen to success because of virtuosic chops and youthful energy, but another huge factor in their broad appeal has been their music videos. Sneak a peek at their YouTube channel and you will find some of their major albums performed live in their entirety—in high-definition video, no less.

The latest release from the Snarky Puppy family comes from English keyboardist Bill Laurance. In consistent fashion, the video footage is being released along with the music. It's a live album, but could pass as studio work due to the uber-tight playing of Laurance and bassist Michael League, who are joined by drummer Robert "Sput" Searight, percussionist Felix Higginbottom, a string section and a French horn player.

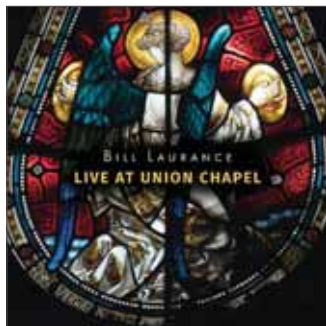
Musically, the recording pits Snarky virtuosity against the brand of spellbinding, emotive jazz that has swept through the U.K. of late. GoGo Penguin comes to mind on the album's second track, "Never-Ending City," with its introspective melody and spiritual chord structure. And on "Swift," Laurance borrows from dance music's rhythms to create something that fits in with his peers, but is still uniquely his own.

—Chris Tart

Union Chapel: The Rush; Never-Ending City; The Good Things; December In New York; Red Sand; The Real One; Swift; Gold Coast; Denmark Hill; Swag Times; Fjords; Ready Wednesday. (87:49)

Personnel: Bill Laurance, piano; ROU Seaboard, Fender Rhodes; Michael League, Moog Little Phatty, electric bass; Robert "Sput" Searight, drums; Felix Higginbottom, percussion; Vera Van Der Bie, violin; Isabella Petersen, viola; Annie Tangberg, cello; Katie Christie, French horn.

Ordering info: store.groundupmusic.net



John Escreet

The Unknown

SUNNYSIDE 1473
★★★★

English pianist John Escreet has been living in New York for the last decade, where he's formed a regular trio with bassist John Hébert and percussionist Tyshawn Sorey. For this live album, recorded during a four-date European tour, the group is joined by saxophonist Evan Parker, who proves a natural fit for the group's environment of intense improvisation.

The Unknown unfolds in two parts, the first at 45 minutes long, the second at 30. Escreet begins with a ruminative solo piano, concentrating on a brooding bass note presence, savoring its decay. He emits dark, coiling clouds of ill portent. When Hébert enters, he's almost a subliminal presence, bowing deeply, slowly gaining definition. Sorey sets his cymbals a-shimmer, then Parker blows a mournful call.

Part two introduces a violent sensitivity, until a surprise swerve occurs, creating a vibe that's almost exotic. Sorey rattles the drums with his hands as if playing a North African or Middle Eastern goblet drum. This prompts Escreet to overlay an almost conventional solo, before everything cuts again, Parker launching into one of his circular-breathing spirals. Spellbinding and epic, the final climax involves a relay of sinewy and simultaneous soloing.

—Martin Longley

The Unknown: Part I; Part II. (74:47)

Personnel: John Escreet, piano; Evan Parker, tenor saxophone; John Hébert, bass; Tyshawn Sorey, drums, vibraphone, percussion.

Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com



Earprint

Earprint

ENDECTOMORPH MUSIC
★★★★

Ah, freedom—the opportunity to do something your way, and then enjoy the bonus of sharing your venture with anyone interested.

That's the story of Earprint, a quartet of young men not long out of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. The group is Tree Palmedo on trumpet, Kevin Sun on tenor saxophone and clarinet, Simón Wilson on bass and Dor Herskovits on drums. (A quick comment on Herskovits—you'd better like drums, because he'll put lots of prints on your ears.)

The group opens with "Nonsense," a minute and a half of pure bopishness. "Happy" follows with strong gusts of originality, featuring a high-pitched Sun on tenor, just one example of his wide-ranging tonality. "School Days" is a backbeat ballad that becomes a bit dreary until a fierce trumpet solo and bombastic drum turn wrap it up.

Sun's "Malingering," inventive and dramatic, stands apart because it seems through-composed and shows off individual and band strengths. Not far behind is Herskovits' "Clock Gears." It's full of surprises—you don't know who among the four will play as each makes subtle changes to the tune. If they stay together and keep working hard, there's no telling how good Earprint will become.

—Bob Protzman

Earprint: Nonsense; Happy; School Days; Boardman; The Holy Quiet; Golden Gilder; Strikes Again; Malingering; Clock Gears; Anthem; Colonel; Six Nine.

Personnel: Tree Palmedo, trumpet; Kevin Sun, saxophones; Simón Wilson, bass; Dor Herskovits, drums.

Ordering info: endectomorph.com



Daniel Foose

Of Water And Ghosts

BJU 059
★★★★½

Double bassist/composer Daniel Foose's ambitious *Of Water And Ghosts* can be absorbed on multiple levels, but musically, it's a guitar/bass/percussion project with a string quartet that shares an approximate instrumentation with John Zorn's Bar Kokhba Sextet—minus drums and with additional strings.

The schema makes for some inspired listening. "Bokor, The Diviner" opens the album with Foose's pizzicato explorations, accentuated by Keita Ogawa's percussion pronouncements and Sebastian Noelle's guitar atmospherics. Later, Foose imbues deep wisdom into "Blue For Jay Bird."

Knowing the conceptual narrative behind *Of Water And Ghosts* gives the listener an additional layer of appreciation. The title refers to the natural and perhaps mythical forces that are key to the Mississippi Delta, from where both sides of Foose's family hail. Foose traveled to both locations to compose onsite, bringing his large instrument to its cemeteries, fields and roads. He's included the GPS coordinates to where he penned each piece, so with programs such as Google Earth, one can see the exact location at which the compositions were written.

—Yoshi Kato

Of Water And Ghosts: The Sonora Suite: Bokor, The Diviner; The Judge; Sonora; Rites At The Grave; Pluto; Blues For Jay Bird; Monk's Mississippi Milk; Pike Tricks The Haint With Fire; What Remains; Wedding Place (For Sueyoung). (44:31)

Personnel: Daniel Foose, bass; Sebastian Noelle, guitar; Keita Ogawa, percussion; Tomoko Omura, Maria Im, violin; Allyson Clare, viola; Jennifer DeVore, cello.

Ordering info: bjurecords.com



Ware & Shipp Duo Live In Sant'Anna Arresi, 2004

AUM FIDELITY 100

★★★★½

Subtraction won't increase your numbers, but try pruning a tree and see how it grows. In 2004, when this concert was recorded, the David S. Ware Quartet was 15 years old. While undeniably formidable, it was a known quantity, and therefore ripe for a change. This set, which took place at a jazz festival in Sardinia, did the trick. Not only did it remove the rhythm section, but by presenting the two musicians as a duo, it shook up the quartet's leader-combo hierarchy.

Both players respond with a freshness of approach that makes one wish that they could have explored this setting further. In the quartet, Shipp provides sonic ballast and a harmonic foundation; he could also be an agent of chaos, laying waste to tunes like "The Way We Were." But without a bass and drums to support or challenge, he is more of a builder than a destroyer, using block chords and wide screens of silence to create a rich environment for Ware, who create rivers of sound that feel like they're doing millennia of geography-transforming work in a span of minutes. Shipp also spends considerable time under his piano's lid, creating otherworldly bursts of pure, fragile sound that contrast most productively with Ware's fiery blowing.

—Bill Meyer



Joshua Breakstone Cello Quartet

88

CAPRI 74144

★★★★½

Guitarist Joshua Breakstone did some thoughtful preparation for his new album. His best-laid plans paid off almost perfectly, as his unique ideas are excellently executed by the leader and quartet.

An admirer of pianists, Breakstone decided on a repertoire of tunes composed by pianists, thus the album title. His second twist was having cellist Mike Richmond utilize the pizzicato technique (picking rather than bowing) to give the group the feel of a jazz quartet.

The album divides itself evenly between swing and balladry, and Breakstone, Richmond, bassist Lisle Atkinson and drummer Andy Watson are a cohesive group, thanks to strong individual technique.

The album opens with the group's terrific cover of Harold Mabern's "The Chief." Breakstone is in equal measure hushed and swinging, and Richmond is nearly as quiet. "News For Lulu" has a hummable theme that provides a magnificent platform for Richmond's pizzicato. Similarly, a cover of Cedar Walton's "Black" also showcases the cellist in an exciting solo. Mal Waldron's "Soul Eyes," a tender ballad, is played so well here that it could have been written for explicitly this group. —Bob Protzman



Live In Sant'Anna Arresi, 2004: Tao Flow Part 1; Tao Flow Part 2; Encore. (45:58)

Personnel: David S. Ware, tenor saxophone; Matthew Shipp, piano.

Ordering info: aumfidelity.com

88: The Chief; News For Lulu; Black; Soul Eyes; Eighty-Eight; Moe Is On; Lolita; If You Could See Me Now; Lennie's Pennies. (64:31)

Personnel: Joshua Breakstone, guitar; Lisle Atkinson, bass; Andy Watson, drums; Mike Richmond, cello.

Ordering info: caprirecords.com

fresh sound new talent PRESENTS

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Marius Neset/ London Sinfonietta *Snowmelt*

ACT 9035

★★★★

Though still young and evolving, Norwegian-born, Copenhagen-based saxophonist Marius Neset, 31, has followed a steep curve of musical maturity, outdoing himself with his fourth solo album for ACT.

With *Snowmelt*, Neset fully engages in the challenging world where a jazz quartet meets orchestra (in this case, the formidable London

Sinfonietta) on musical terrain carefully balanced between through-composed scores and integrated improvisational journeys.

Neset's bold quartet—pianist Ivo Neame, bassist Petter Eldh and drummer Anton Eger—provides a sturdy but ever-flexible “jazz band” foundation, counterbalancing the ample orchestral elements in the overall sonic palette. Neset's soaring, singing tenor saxophone serves as the melodic protagonist and conceptual epicenter, and he brings to the compositional table a variety of influences, including Mahler, Alban Berg and Stravinsky, without slipping into Third Stream dilution.

The singular statement on the album is the title track, a 15-minute suite originally written for the Oslo Sinfonietta and premiered in 2013. Rapid, jabbing and jagged-edged rhythms contrast with atmospheric, wintry passages, with Neset's soprano saxophone sounding at once heroic, optimistic and vulnerable.

In *Snowmelt*, Neset has created a dramatically varied and effectively cross-genre journey of an album, to majestic ends. —Josef Woodard

Snowmelt: Prologue; Arches Of Nature; Sirens, Acrobatics, Circles, Caves, Paradise, Rainbows, Pyramids; The Storm Is Over; Introduction To Snowmelt; Snowmelt. (52:00)

Personnel: Marius Neset, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Ivo Neame, piano; Petter Eldh, bass; Anton Eger, drums; London Sinfonietta, conducted by Geoffrey Paterson.

Ordering info: actmusic.com



Mark Dresser Seven *Sedimental You*

CLEAN FEED 385

★★★★

Veteran bassist Mark Dresser has delivered one of his most ambitious, profound and satisfying recordings as a leader with this superb septet—a group drawn from his long history in New York and his more recent stint as an educator in Southern California.

Jazz and improvised music often struggle to impart a particular political bent, but between the openness of the performances and some of the sharper titles cooked up by the leader—whether his dig at the hobby supplier in “Hobby Horse Lobby” or the self-evident mockery behind “TrumpinPutinStoopin”—there's no missing his sly humor and progressive sensibility. But any such commentary has little to do with the power and inventiveness of the performances here.

There's a wonderful cognitive dissonance at work, and in fact, the entire album thrives upon a tension between form and freedom, with a carefully engineered strain of displacement generating excitement.

The title track abstracts certain phrases from the standard “I'm Getting Sentimental Over You,” but with steadily shifting bar lengths and terse, wonderfully tactile stabs from the exciting young violinist David Morales Boroff and jagged flurries from flutist Nicole Mitchell, clarinetist Marty Ehrlich and trombonist Michael Dessen. But there's no missing the empathic tenderness behind “Will Well,” which Dresser composed for the brilliant trombonist Roswell Rudd during a period when the veteran hornman was fighting an illness.

—Peter Margasak

Sedimental You: Hobby Horse Lobby; Sedimental You; TrumpinPutinStoopin; Will Well (For Roswell Rudd); I Can Smell You Listening (For Alexandra Montano); Newtown Char; Two Handfuls Of Peace (For Daniel Jackson). (67:20)

Personnel: Mark Dresser, bass; Nicole Mitchell, flutes; Marty Ehrlich, clarinet, bass clarinet; David Morales Boroff, violin; Michael Dessen, trombone; Joshua White, piano; Jim Black, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

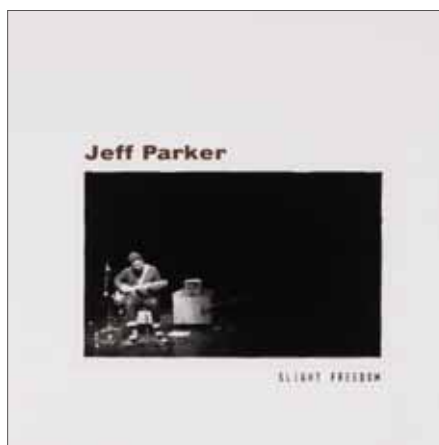
Jeff Parker *Slight Freedom*

EREMITE 65

★★★★½

Jeff Parker is an inveterate collaborator who seems to relish opportunities to realize other musicians' ideas. Consider the guitarist's work with Rob Mazurek, Makaya McCraven, Fred Anderson, and the instrumental quintet Tortoise; in all of these settings he has found ways to make the ensemble sound bigger and more eventful without demanding the spotlight. So 2016 is a remarkable time for him, since it's the year that he released two solo albums.

The first, *The New Breed*, was named after a clothing shop that his dad ran, which says a lot about the priorities and experiences that informed that album. Not only did it feature hip-hop-influenced grooves and compact melodies that Parker could play for the whole family; his daughter Ruby closed the record with a vocal turn. *Slight Freedom* presents the more adventurous side of Parker's playing, but it is rooted in the same African-American pop lineage. The title track starts with an echoing figure that is close kin to the O'Jays' “For The Love Of Money,” only to patiently morph into a liquid ambient reverie; on “Super Rich Kids,” he re-contextualizes a Frank Ocean theme by sub-



verting the original's airtight production.

On the other side of the LP, Parker uses delays to fashion an elaborate yet uncluttered interpretation of “Mainz,” which was written by former Chicagoan Chad Taylor. The LP closes with a return to aquatic motion in the form of a drifting yet exquisitely constructed rendition of “Lush Life.” Parker dials back both bitterness and sweetness in order to isolate the composition's implications of memory.

—Bill Meyer

Slight Freedom: Slight Freedom; Super Rich Kids; Mainz; Lush Life. (37:20)

Personnel: Jeff Parker, electric guitar, effects, samplers.

Ordering info: eremite.com



Richie Cole *Plays Ballads & Love Songs*

RICHIE COLE PRESENTS

★★★★

Those who know and love the “Alto Madness” originator Richie Cole—likely the same fans who rejoice whenever he blows the roof off a venue—are going to be even bigger fans after they hear this surprising album.

Cole’s followers know that the alto saxophonist usually includes at least one ballad in his live sets, the mellower tempo offering a brief respite from his high-energy bebop fare.

Cole has now recorded the first all-ballads album of his 45-year career. Other than occasional softening and sweetening, his singular sound remains.

Cole is joined on this project by fellow Pittsburghers Eric Susoeff (guitar), Mark Perna (bass) and Vince Taglieri (drums) for a terrific album of 11 tunes, most taken from the pop and jazz world of the ’50s and ’60s.

One of the hippest jazz ballads ever—“Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most”—is the opener. Cole plays beautifully, smoothing his bright sound just enough and using his trademark vibrato judiciously. Susoeff’s warm tone and thoughtful, decorative solos are heard throughout, beginning with Sinatra’s “Second Time Around.” Other songs include such classics as Johnny Mathis’ “Chances Are,” movie themes “Emily” and “Alfie,” the alliterative “Bewitched, Bothered And Bewildered,” Nat “King” Cole’s “That Sunday, That Summer” and several other gems.

Saxophonist Cole sounds just right on nearly every tune, playing delicately at times without diminishing the energy of his tone. The more we listen, the more we begin to appreciate his balladry. He shouldn’t have waited 45 years.

—Bob Protzman

Plays Ballads & Love Songs: Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most; Second Time Around; Sarah; Internationale; Chances Are; Alfie; Emily; Bewitched, Bothered And Bewildered; That Sunday, That Summer; It’s Magic; Sunday Kind Of Love. (61:23)

Personnel: Richie Cole, alto saxophone; Eric Susoeff, guitar; Mark Perna, bass; Vince Taglieri, drums.

Ordering info: richiecole.com

Blues / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY



MARTY MOFFATT

Cream of the Crop

Johnny Nicholas, *Fresh Air* (Self Release; 64:07 ★★★★★) Austin’s Johnny Nicholas, a singer and multi-instrumentalist originally from Rhode Island, has absorbed the melodic and rhythm elements within several blues styles. It’s taken him nine albums to get it just right in the studio.

Free of clichés, the album reveals a sense of self-discovery in the process of recording strong, quick-witted originals and shining arrangements of Willie Dixon’s “Back Door Man” and Sleepy John Estes’ “Kid Man Blues.” Nicholas’ working band and regional guests including Hammond B-3 whiz Red Young never falter.

Ordering info: johnnynicholasmusic.com

Fiona Boyes, *Professin’ The Blues* (Reference 140; 54:07 ★★★★★) Fiona Boyes’ 13th album continues her successful run as a world-class performer. This Australian’s voice is a subtly remarkable instrument, combining her natural understanding of country blues with a finely judged sense of drama to produce music of emotional breadth.

With offhand ease, she makes her acoustic, metal-body resonator and cigar-box guitars spring forward as commentators on cheating, rootlessness and other topics broached in the lyrics to 14 of her own warm, humane songs.

Ordering info: referencerecordings.com

Joe Bonamassa, *Live At The Greek Theatre* (J&R Adventures DVD 56876; 137:00 ★★★★★) The emotional authority of Joe Bonamassa’s vocals and guitar playing in tribute to B.B., Albert and Freddie King drives this ballyhooed performance in 2015, expertly filmed by Philippe Klose. He folds his personality into those of the three masters, eschewing hysterical affectations.

There aren’t any lapses in the excitement generated by his tight band with pros like ex-Double Trouble keyboardist Reese Wynans. The bonus disc has an interview with Bonamassa’s parents, a music video and more.

Ordering info: jbonamassa.com

Colosseum, *Live* (Esoteric 22545; 74:43/73:58 ★★★★★) Active between 1968 and 1971 and led by drummer Jon Hiseman, England’s Colosseum was a nuclear reactor of mingled blues, jazz, classical and rock that typically exploded in concert with colossal waves of creativity, inspiration and stellar musicianship.

The original U.K. concert album of seven tracks, including “Stormy Monday Blues,” now comes with a second disc of rare concert tracks, capped by bold and brilliant 21-minute “The Valentyne Suite.” Chris Farlowe’s mega-dramatic singing is an acquired taste.

Ordering info: cherryred.co.uk

David “Honeyboy” Edwards, *I’m Gonna Tell You Somethin’ That I Know* (Pro Sho Bidness CD/DVD 1752; 63:47 ★★★★★) In 2010, Edwards, then age 95, amazed a small Los Angeles club audience, five supporting musicians and a film crew with his control of a guitar on “Goin’ Down Slow” and nine more warhorse standards.

As a singer, this last-of-the-breed Delta bluesman scrapes by with a minimum of power and elasticity. Edwards’ charming demeanor masks undiminished resolve and survival instinct. The DVD adds about 15 minutes of Edwards reminiscing about his career and his colleague Robert Johnson. Some woozy, restless camera work poses a minor distraction.

DB

Ordering info: jeffdaleblues.com

Mara Rosenbloom Trio

Prairie Burn

FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT 510

★★★★½

Prairie Burn, the latest album from New York pianist Mara Rosenbloom, begins at a gallop. An opening 5-minute improvised overture, "Brush Fire," precedes a four-part title suite, which dominates this excellent trio debut.

The opener sets the scene with an immediate flood of dense activity, Sean Conly bowing his groaning bass alongside the leader's agitated clusters. Very soon, this flurry settles into open space, and Rosenbloom finds her flow, repeating cycles in a near-minimalist manner.

"Prairie Burn" itself begins with a playful introduction from Rosenbloom, who grew up near the Great Plains of Wisconsin, before moving to New York 12 years ago. Her runs are full of hopeful traipsing, delicate and optimistic, and drummer Chad Taylor eloquently comments on and responds to her every phrase. The bass and drums are almost linear, but Rosenbloom is already off on an altering course, subverting what the listener might expect of the piece's melodic direction.

—Martin Longley



Prairie Burn: Brush Fire (An Improvised Overture); The Prairie Burn Set: Red-Winged Black Birds, Turbulence, Work, Songs From The Ground; I Rolled And I Tumbled; There Will Never Be Another You. (55:00)

Personnel: Mara Rosenbloom, piano; Sean Conly, bass; Chad Taylor, drums.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

Alex LoRe Quartet

More Figs And Blue Things

INNER CIRCLE MUSIC

★★★★½

At times, Alex LoRe's sophomore album sounds slightly more complicated than it needs to be, almost too clever for its own good. The saxophonist's compositional chops are formidable, and he and his quartet have many beautiful things to say. But the turns here can at times feel a bit too clever by half. Nevertheless, as an adventurous walk in the quartet form, LoRe isn't taking things too far.

LoRe is particularly ecumenical in his group. As a leader, his voice on saxophone never seems to overpower the rest of his quartet. Desmond White has plenty of opportunity to play around on bass in these songs, not always functioning as an anchor but more as the rudder. Colin Stranahan is impeccable as usual on drums, and pianist Glenn Zaleski sweetly executes what's at play here. The songs work when this band is functioning as a whole, often with sections playing in sync, but the musicians aren't going for fireworks. The goal is to capture the natural beauty of the night sky.

In some ways, it indeed achieves its grasp, yet all the while one can hear the effort in the strain.

—Anthony Dean-Harris



More Figs And Blue Things: Southbound; Next Time; Normal; Away; Cold Spring; Interlude; Figs For Birds; And Mending; No More Blue Skies; Wild Things. (59:09)

Personnel: Alex LoRe, alto saxophone, xaphoon (6); Glenn Zaleski, piano; Desmond White, bass; Colin Stranahan, drums.

Ordering info: innercirclemusic.com

Shabaka and the Ancestors

Wisdom Of Elders

BROWNSWOOD RECORDS 0155

★★★★½

Three years after winning the U.K.'s MOBO Award for Jazz Act of the Year with his main ensemble, Sons of Kemet, tenor saxophonist and composer Shabaka Hutchings returns with another fascinating project. This time he fronts an octet consisting of South African musicians. The steely improvisations and arid tone of Hutchings' tenor saxophone remains, as does his penchant for probing excursions that sound at once ancient and futuristic.

Given the galvanizing success of Kamasi Washington's 2015 debut, *The Epic*, it might be tempting to chalk up *Wisdom Of Elders* as a ripple effect of the L.A.-led spiritual jazz renaissance. But that assertion cheapens and distracts the enticing music on *Wisdom Of Elders*. Hutchings and Mlangeni have been building their own respective bodies of works based upon some of the same historical references Washington employed.

For sure, there's a kindred spirit between *The Epic* and *Wisdom Of Elders*, but the latter should be embraced by own its artistic merits.

—John Murph



Wisdom Of Elders: Mzwandile; Joyous; The Observer; The Sea; Natty; OBS; Give Thanks; Ngumi. (60:09)

Personnel: Shabaka Hutchings, tenor saxophone; Mthunzi Mvubu, alto saxophone; Siyabonga Mthembu, vocals; Nduduzo Makhathini, Fender Rhodes, piano; Ariel Zomonsky, bass; Gontse Makhene, percussion; Tumi Mogosi, drums.

Ordering info: brownswoodrecordings.com

Mark Murphy

Slip Away

MINI MOVIE 001

★★★★★

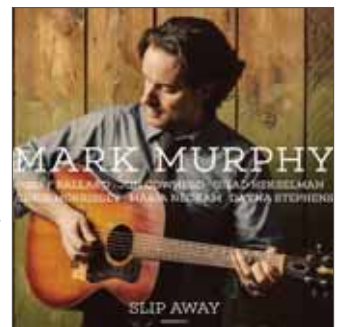
Easy listening in the best sense, vocalist-guitarist Mark Murphy's sophisticated and catchy *Slip Away* blends expert jazz with imaginative updates of pop classics and distinctive Murphy originals.

Murphy's voice is slight but penetrating, evoking an even mellower Michael Franks or Kenny Rankin, similarly light-touched vocalists whose sensibility Murphy also shares. In such vocal showcases as the tantalizing title track and the Jimmy Webb-like "Bobcaygeon"—both originals—Murphy paints vivid pictures of affairs on the verge of either consummation or dissipation. These are come-hither songs, indeed, pretty and melodic.

"Conversations," meanwhile, sparkles with Jon Cowherd's Wurlitzer and Fender Rhodes, Jeff Ballard's drums and Chris Morrissey's bass. "All Things Turn" is simply a beautiful love song, and "Kiwi," the fleet, brooding instrumental that caps the disc, proves Murphy is a master of mood and atmosphere.

Fans of intimate, heartfelt jazz and folk music will find themselves returning to *Slip Away*. It's an assured debut by a gifted musician with stories to tell.

—Carlo Wolff



Slip Away: Dayton, Ohio—1903; Conversations; Tell Me Why; Boots Of Spanish Leather; Slip Away; All Things Turn; Waterfalls; Bobcaygeon; Kiwi. (46:50)

Personnel: Mark Murphy, vocals, guitar; Jeff Ballard, drums; Jon Cowherd, piano; Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Chris Morrissey, bass; Maria Neckam, vocals; Dayna Stephens, tenor saxophone, EWI.

Ordering info: markmurphy1.com

Michael Musillami/ Rich Syracuse *Of The Night*

PLAYSCAPE 032816

★★★★

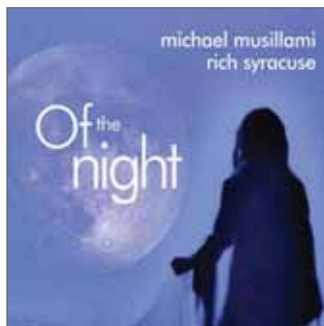
Taking Wayne Shorter's compositions as inspirations rather than floor plans, Michael Musillami stretches guitar artistry as exemplified by Joe Pass—sans chordal counterpoint—into outer realms of lyrical abstraction on *Of The Night*. Casting long, single-note lines that climb, lope and spin from their familiar themes for destinations unexpected, Musillami uses his nuanced touch, pearly sound, tuneful instincts and rhythmic musicality to fine effect, matched by responsive bassist Rich Syracuse.

In intimate, collaborative duet, both players let their music flow as loosely associated ideas through mostly subdued moods. Musillami and Syracuse approach their chosen source material with respect and thoughtfulness, but they're also eager to take chances. Shorter's pieces often take the form of slender slip-knotted threads, and it's daring to deconstruct them—the generative motifs may be lost entirely. But Musillami pulls apart "Footprints" every which way, stamps "Juju" with highly personal, fluid improvisation, and lets episodes of "Black Nile" slip into suspended time.

—Howard Mandel

Of The Night: Footprints; Juju; Black Nile; Children Of The Night; Iris; One By One; Virgo. (54:48)
Personnel: Michael Musillami, guitar; Rich Syracuse, bass.

Ordering info: playscape-recordings.com



Shawn Maxwell *New Tomorrow*

ORIGIN 22135

★★★★

Reedist Shawn Maxwell has won fans with a handful of provocative albums that helped make him an exciting figure on the Chicago jazz landscape. *New Tomorrow*, which adds trumpet voices to Maxwell's regular quartet, sees the leader taking even more chances in his ongoing quest to surprise the listener.

"Embraceable Excuses," the opening and strongest track, points to what's to come: a plethora of riff-driven themes punched up with a heavy backbeat, embracing odd meters and leaning toward funk. What elevates these idiosyncratic tracks above mere compositional self-indulgence is the marvelously collaborative spirit that informs the album.

That said, things fall off a bit after the opening piece. The decision to make just about every element subservient to the thudding drum beat gradually turns the heavy vamps into an assault on the senses. Nevertheless, the innovative impulse that motivates this colorful project is refreshing. All in all, this latest display of Maxwell's adventurous spirit is bound to move admirers both new and old to say, "Vamp on, Shawn!"

—Michael Barris

New Tomorrow: Embraceable Excuses; Work In Progress; Responsibility Run; Inside Back; Whole Hearted Half The Time; Unexpected Heel Turn; Progressive Regression; Saturday Morning Dance; Catbird Seat; Three Kinds Of Heat; Throw Away Tune #2; Eustachian Tube Dysfunction; Hitting Streak; Bye For Now. (65:49)

Personnel: Shawn Maxwell, alto saxophone, flute; Victor Garcia (1, 4, 5, 7, 10), Chad McCullough (2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14), Corey Wilkes (11), trumpet; Matt Nelson, piano; Fender Rhodes; Wurliitzer; Junius Paul, bass; Phil Beale, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com



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Emiliano Sampaio Mereneu Project *The Forbidden Dance*

SESSION WORK 90

★★★★

Emiliano Sampaio Meretrio *Óbvio*

SESSION WORK 89

★★★★

Multi-instrumentalist Emiliano Sampaio has fared well in the DownBeat Student Music Awards, winning Outstanding Performance mentions in the Small Jazz Combo category in 2014 and for his large-ensemble song “Vienna” in 2015. These accolades serve to reinforce Sampaio’s reputation as a composer and performer capable of adapting to scale, and his two most recent recordings—one with the Mereneu Project nonet, the other with his three-piece Meretrio—reflect that versatility.

Diversity is the key to the success of the Mereneu Project’s *The Forbidden Dance*. The ensemble was assembled from members of the University of Graz, who come from countries spanning the European continent and Brazil. The material on the disc is equally far-reaching, and it is genuinely thrilling to follow along as New Orleans brass-band mashups like “Drums

Your Mind” and “Mereneu Project Sings In The Rain” dissolve into tearful, Gil Evans-esque *cris de coeur* like “Sax Off” and “Wrong And Beautiful.” There’s a real sense of drama in all that tension and release.

Meretrio’s *Óbvio* condenses the energy of *The Forbidden Dance* into a compact space, without losing an ounce of the larger ensemble’s power or agility. Featuring Sampaio on guitar, Gustavo Boni on bass and Luis André on drums (plus Heinrich Von Kalnein on two tracks), Meretrio is a cohesive unit that favors a tight, groove-oriented sound, but one that allows for immense freedom within that space.

On several compositions, the group seems to hover in a kind of musical stillness, which provides a nice contrast to the disc’s more propulsive tracks. But stellar composition remains the through-line. With a voice loud or soft, and in settings big and small, Sampaio finds a way to make meaning.

—Brian Zimmerman

The Forbidden Dance: Drums Your Mind; Sax Off; Mereneu Sings In The Rain; Wrong And Beautiful; Die Pousane; Der Verbotene Tanz; Maxixe; Cheese Race; Drums Your Mind (Part II). (49:56)

Personnel: Emiliano Sampaio, guitar; Max Ranzinger, bass; Luis André, drums; Nicolò Ravenni, alto saxophone, clarinet; Mike Ilevtushenko, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Patrick Dunst, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, flute; Marko Solman, Pol Omedes, trumpet; Adám Ladányi, trombone.

Óbvio: Why Not; Bandit; Minas; Last Da; Borges; Small Blues; Onda; Óbvio; Valsa; Simples. (43:00)

Personnel: Emiliano Sampaio, guitar; Gustavo Boni, bass; Luis André, drums; Heinrich Von Kalnein, saxophones, flute.

Ordering info: sessionworkrecords.com

Dinosaur *Together, As One*

EDITION RECORDS 1078

★★★★

All of the music on this debut album is penned by the band’s leader, trumpeter Laura Jurd, but the London-dwelling Dinosaur is made up of members who also front their own outfits—keyboardist Elliot Galvin, bassist Conor Chaplin and drummer Corrie Dick—so it can already be considered a “supergroup,” even though its members are in their mid-20s. It’s a sneaky debut, as this lineup has been together for six years under a different moniker.

The initial “Awakening” sounds like its name, with a spacey opening phrase that centers on a repeated bass figure. Jurd infiltrates the sound with piercing trumpet, even as layers of twinkling synths hang in the air. The following “Robin” has a cheesy Wendy Carlos tone to its electronics before its precarious theme grows, drums wandering with intent toward what could almost be a calypso bass line. Her tip-toed, Miles Davis-esque quips alternate with a graceful, gliding theme as moods shift unexpectedly over the almost seven-minute narrative.

While inhaling all matter of electrical jazz—from Miles Davis to Dave Douglas’ *High Risk*, via *Soft Machine* and *Thundercat*—Dinosaur has nevertheless concocted its own dynamically hybridized signature sound.

—Martin Longley

Together, As One: Awakening; Robin; Living, Breathing; Underdog; Steadily Sinking; Extinct; Primordial; Interlude. (46:53)

Personnel: Laura Jurd, trumpet, synthesizer; Elliot Galvin, Fender Rhodes, Hammond B-3 organ; Conor Chaplin, bass; Corrie Dick, drums.

Ordering info: editionrecords.com



Matt Brewer *Unspoken*

CRISS CROSS JAZZ 1390

★★★★½

On this quintet recording, bassist Matt Brewer takes a painterly approach. Aside from a couple of covers, his compositions constitute the rest of *Unspoken*. Each of these original songs creates a somewhat static impression, as if we were pondering an artwork in a gallery or museum.

Brewer’s writing can be elusive. Take “Aspiring To Normalcy,” for example. Its form is clear, but even in the first bar, with guitarist Charles Altura playing the chords, the tonal center isn’t at all obvious. Things don’t become any more apparent as tenor saxophonist Ben Wendel plays the theme through to a final note that neither resolves nor reveals the key. This mystery extends through a “B” section, in which the meter switches from 6/8 to 10/8 and the tempo picks up a bit.

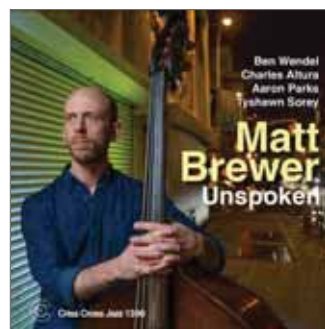
There’s also a sense of Brewer’s ability to nurture a musical statement into a broader and deeper conception. But there is no real feeling of building; even though his verse, chorus and bridge structures are clear, the listener isn’t taken from a point of initiation to a point of arrival. Intelligence and craftsmanship are both evident throughout *Unspoken*. It’s a matter of taste whether these traits are best appreciated at rest or as parts of a story being told.

—Bob Doerschuk

Unspoken: Juno; Unspoken; Twenty Years; Lunar; Evil Song; Chery; Anthem; Aspiring To Normalcy; Tesuque. (56:25)

Personnel: Matt Brewer, bass; Ben Wendel, tenor saxophone; Charles Altura, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Tyshawn Sorey, drums.

Ordering info: crisscrossjazz.com





Tim Davies Big Band *The Expensive Train Set*

ORIGIN 82720

★★★½

Like the veteran Hollywood film and TV orchestrator he is, Tim Davies understands instinctively how to blend orchestral colors and textures to create moods, aligning himself with his hero, Nelson Riddle. Tonal and textural artistry abound on *The Expensive Train Set*, an ambitious endeavor that dwells largely in a meditative atmosphere with touches of melancholia. It features two Davies-led groups: a Los Angeles band of session and touring musicians and an Australian band with which the drummer-bandleader worked in 1998 before moving to the United States.

Davies develops his basic themes with a plethora of rhythmic and melodic variations, key changes and long transitional passages, invoking an era of symphonic jazz works stretching back to George Gershwin's 1924 composition for solo piano and jazz band, "Rhapsody In Blue." It also points to jazz's continuing growth from folk music to art music.

Davies, who released the CD *Epic* in 2002 and the Grammy-nominated *Dialmentia* in 2009, spent three-and-a-half years producing *The Expensive Train Set*, the first four tracks of which commemorate his newfound fatherhood, the last putting the two bands together via the miracle of remote recording despite being a world apart. The listener may have to work to appreciate the enormous amount of craft that has gone into this project, but in the end it will be worth it.

—Michael Barris

The Expensive Train Set: Conceivization; Sarahbande; Minor Incidents; The Expensive Train Set (An Epic Sarahnade); Sing Sing Sing (The TMix); Let Sleeping Questions Lie; Circadian Rhythms; Jazz Vespas; Goon Juice. (65:07)

Personnel: Los Angeles Band: Alex Budman, Ann Paterson, Mike Nelson, Lee Secard, Ken Fisher, saxophones; Jon Papenbrook, Rich Hofmann, Walt Simonsen, Ken Bausano, Brian Owen, trumpets; Jacques Voyemant, Kerry Loeschen, Martha Catlin, Steve Hughes, trombones; Mark Cally, guitar; Alan Steinberger, keyboards; Ken Wild, bass; Tim Davies, drums; Melbourne Band: Greg Clarkson, Tim Wilson, Tony Hicks, Andrew O'Connell, Stuart Byrne, saxophones; Greg Spence, Michael Fraser, Eugene Ball, Paul Williamson, Thomas Jovanovic, trumpets; Dave Palmer, Jordan Murray, Daryl McKenzie, Matt Amy, trombones; Jack Pantazis, guitar; Marty Hicks, keyboards; Kim May, bass; Tim Davies, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Leonard Cohen

ADAM COHEN

Matters of Experience

David Bowie's extraordinary last act has raised the bar for other veteran pop musicians. Victory laps are not enough when it's possible to make late-career work that will not only stand with the best of your oeuvre, but cast new light upon it. The albums under consideration here feature four musicians, all born before Bowie, who remained creatively viable several decades into their careers.

Just like Bowie and his album *Blackstar*, singer-songwriter **Leonard Cohen** (1934–2016) passed away tragically, soon after the release of a major project. Cohen's son Adam produced *You Want It Darker* (Columbia B01KN6XDS6; 36:14 ★★★), giving it a slick vibe midway between the electronic pop sound that his father had favored since the late 1980s and something you'd hear coming out of a memorial chapel. Gospel keyboards frame Cohen's rasping voice, which sings about reckoning with old flames and cherishing still-present love. Like everything Cohen did, it is heartbreaking in its sagacity.

Ordering info: columbiarecords.com

Death also haunts *Killer Road: A Tribute To Nico* (Sacred Bones 154; 50:42 ★★★½), which takes lyrics from the late Velvet Underground singer's songbook and frames them with the last sounds that she might have heard as she lay dying at the side of a rural Spanish road after taking a tumble off of her bicycle. Singer **Patti Smith** (born Dec. 30, 1946) joins **The Soundwalk Collective** and **Jesse Paris Smith** (her daughter) for an album featuring elongated synthesizer tones and field recordings of insects that create an

eerie backdrop for Smith's quietly emphatic narration. In doing so, the record poetically evokes a liminal state that lingers after the music goes silent.

Ordering info: sacredbonesrecords.com

Earth (Reprise 55414; 48:18/49:16 ★★★½), the second album by **Neil Young & Promise Of The Real**, is all about staying creatively and literally alive. Young (born Nov. 12, 1945) sounds invigorated on these refurbished live tracks, which rail against corporate control over the human food chain. He's been singing about environmental concerns since scoring a hit with the post-apocalyptic "After The Gold Rush," but he's never been so up-front about who the bad guys are. In post-production, Young added the cries of various animals, such as cawing crows and barking seals; the entire animal kingdom, it seems, is aghast at Monsanto's genetically modified seeds.

Ordering info: nellyoung.com

Michael Hurley (born Dec. 20, 1941) has never raised much of a roar, and he's not about to start now. In fact, on *Bad Mr. Mike* (Mississippi MRP-103; 42:07 ★★★), Hurley carries on much as he has throughout a career that stretches back to his 1964 debut. He sounds like he's singing in the front room of a backwoods cabin, accompanying himself on whatever keyboard or stringed instrument comes to hand. His playing is resolutely anti-virtuosic and he makes no effort to paper over the cracks of his aging voice, but Hurley knows how to speak volumes with one perfectly placed harmonic or wobbly word.

DB

Ordering info: lightintheattic.net

Lauren Bush *All My Treasures*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★½

Lauren Bush is a Canadian singer who moved to London four years ago to further her career. Although she's previously toured the U.S., Canada and Europe, things took off after settling in the U.K.

Her unique phrasing, perfect diction and scatting abilities make this a solid debut. On Bob Dorough's "I've Got Just About Everything I Need," she manipulates the melody, jamming words together to keep up with Andrew Robb's double-time bass, and on the jubilant "Secret Love," her vocal dances in and around Robb's lyrical bass line to highlight Brandon Allen's saxophone work and the sparse rhythms of drummer David Ingamells.

Her delivery of the Horace Silver/Lambert, Hendricks and Ross classic "Doodlin'" is as impressive as the original. Robb and Dunachie stay in the background to let Bush show off her phrasing, which emphasizes the witty lyric. Her dusky midrange is featured on "Detour Ahead," one of the album's few down-tempo tunes. Allen's doleful sax and Dunachie's hushed piano cushion her ironic vocal, as she laments a narrow escape from heartache and, by implication, happiness.

—j. poet

All My Treasures: I've Got Just About Everything I Need; I'm Old Fashioned; Dindi; Secret Love; A, You're Adorable; I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter; Detour Ahead; Charade; Sweet Georgia Brown; Doodlin'; You're Nearer; Feelin' Alright. (52:17)

Personnel: Lauren Bush, vocals; Liam Dunachie, piano; Andrew Robb, bass; David Ingamells, drums; Brandon Allen, tenor saxophone; Kieran McLeod, trombone; Miguel Gorodi, trumpet; Ian Shaw, backing vocals.

Ordering info: laurenbushjazz.com



Steve Heckman *Legacy: A Coltrane Tribute*

JAZZED MEDIA 1074

★★★★½

Saxophonist and Bay Area resident Steve Heckman first discovered John Coltrane at age 15. He listened to *A Love Supreme* in its entirety every day after school during his 11th- and 12th-grade years. Heckman's debut album, *With John In Mind* (Lifeforce Jazz 2003), paid tribute to Coltrane, as does his most recent release, a live recording from October 2013.

Featuring compositions that Coltrane recorded from 1961 through 1965 (as well as "Reverend King," from John and Alice Coltrane's 1968 *Cosmic Music*), *Legacy* showcases Heckman's assured playing and a simpatico rhythm section. The quartet's version of "26-2" opens with a fervent drive, and Heckman's ballad playing (on "It's Easy To Remember") and soprano work (on "The Promise") stand out during this well-received concert date recorded at the Hillside Club in Berkeley, California.

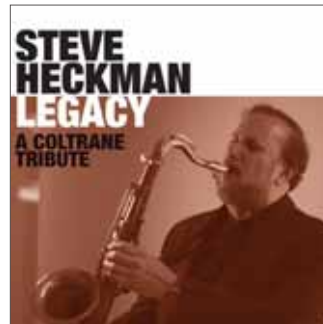
As a whole, the album serves as both a thoughtful nod to Coltrane and a companion album to *With John In Mind*. That Heckman chose to conclude *Legacy* with a keen interpretation of "Resolution" from *A Love Supreme* brings the narrative full circle and the bandleader's inspiration back to its source.

—Yoshi Kato

Legacy—A Coltrane Tribute: 26-2; Impressions; It's Easy To Remember; The Legacy; Dear Lord; The Promise; Reverend King; Fifth House; Wise One; Resolution. (62:11)

Personnel: Steve Heckman, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Grant Levin, piano; Eric Markowitz, bass; Smith Dobson, drums.

Ordering info: jazzedmedia.com



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Patrick Zimmerli Quartet *Shores Against Silence*

SONGLINES 1619

★★★★★

Liberated from the jazz underground where a tape of it has circulated for nearly 25 years, Patrick Zimmerli's elegantly titled *Shores Against Silence* leans abstract without giving short shrift to melody.

The tracks touch on modern art, Greek mythology and psychoanalysis, and Zimmerli clearly has a penchant for the intellectual. For example, the complex "Conceptualysis" sets up cross-talk among Zimmerli, pianist Kevin Hays and drummer Tom Rainey and aims to incorporate "20th-century techniques into improvised music," Zimmerli writes in his liner notes.

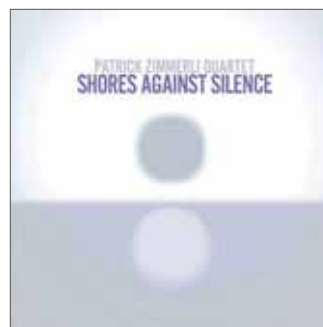
The rhythmic welter underlying these pieces suggests Zimmerli and his crew, which also included bassist Larry Grenadier and, on the unusually lyrical "Three Dreams Of Repose," percussionist Satoshi Takeishi, rehearsed them to a fine point. Yet they don't feel studied. Zimmerli, in particular, is a player of varying tone and attack, sinuous on "Three Dreams" and aggressive on the urgent "Hephaestus." Hays, too, spans the delicate and the powerful.

—Carlo Wolff

Shores Against Silence: The Paw; Three Dreams Of Repose; Hephaestus; Conceptualysis; Athena; Soft Blues. (38:36)

Personnel: Patrick Zimmerli, saxophones; Larry Grenadier, bass; Kevin Hays, piano; Tom Rainey, drums; Satoshi Takeishi, percussion (2).

Ordering info: songlines.com





Miles Mosley *Uprising*

WORLD GALAXY/ALPHA PUP

★★★★

Miles Mosley can coax more sounds out of his upright bass than the average Joe with a toolbox full of gadgets can produce on electric guitar. Just take a peek at the 2008 YouTube video of Mosley playing “Voodoo Child” using only a bow, a wah-wah pedal, feedback and amazing sleight-of-hand to conjure Jimi Hendrix.

So you might expect that his new album *Uprising* would be a nonstop testament to his virtuosity. But the instrumental talent that has placed him atop many critics polls and even led to his own line of basses and related gear plays second fiddle (bass fiddle?) to his prowess as a composer, vocalist and bandleader.

Mosley and saxophonist Kamasi Washington are co-founders of the West Coast Get Down, a collective of South Los Angeles-born musicians who grew up on hip-hop as much as bebop.

Mosley and other Get Down members appeared on Washington’s acclaimed triple album *The Epic*, and now Washington returns the favor, along with several other Get Down pals.

Mosley’s lyrics are anthemic, socially conscious exhortations that avoid the banal. “Heartbreaking Efforts Of Others” acknowledges the contradictions between good intentions and effecting positive change. At his most self-confident on “Sky High,” he proclaims, “I’m as good as I’ll ever get.”

But the most impressive tracks—the funkified, Prince-like opener “Young Lion” and the closing “Fire”—seem to reference each other as matching bookends. It’s that solid.

—Jeff Johnson

Uprising: Young Lion; Abraham; L.A. Won’t Bring You Down; More Than This; Heartbreaking Efforts Of Others; Shadow Of A Doubt; Reap A Soul; Sky High; You Only Cover; Tuning Out; Fire. (43:53)

Personnel: Miles Mosley, vocals, bass; Kamasi Washington, tenor saxophone; Brandon Coleman, keyboards; Cameron Graves, piano; Tony Austin, drums; Ryan Porter, trombone; Dontae Winslow, trumpet; Zane Musa, saxophones.

Ordering info: milesmosley.com

Historical / BY CARLO WOLFF



At Home Anywhere

Known for its performance prowess and irrepressible songs, **NRBQ** is a musician and fan favorite, an unclassifiable but deeply rocking band that has been around since 1966. **High Noon: A 50-Year Retrospective (Omni-vore 190; 62:34/53:41/61:33/70:52/60:22 ★★★★★)** is a five-CD overview of the New Rhythm and Blues Quartet, a malleable group that brings drive to every project.

The 106 tracks on *High Noon* begin with Sun Ra’s “Love In Outer Space” and end with “See You Soon,” a pop missive by the group’s founder and most singular talent, Terry Adams. The tracks in between feature all iterations of a band that, at its core, remains a quartet, occasionally adding a fifth member and employing a horn section known as the Whole Wheat Horns.

The repertoire bristles with great originals, like guitarist Steve Ferguson’s “Flat Foot Flewzy,” Adams’ “Rain At The Drive-In” and bassist Joey Spampinato’s “How Can I Make You Love Me,” a sweet pop plea. It also features a very cool take on Monk’s “Ruby, My Dear” (with strings, no less), an affectionate update of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Getting To Know You,” several more Sun Ra tracks and an indelible, pumped-up version of Johnny Cash’s “Get Rhythm.” Its repertoire spans Ra and Eddie Cochran, both of whom graced the band’s debut on Columbia.

The reason **NRBQ** is at home anywhere is its versatility and skill. For proof, check out Ferguson’s guitar welter on “Get Rhythm” (he played with the right hand of a country guitarist and the left hand of a blues guitarist, he once told the *New York Times*). Then immerse yourself in Adams’

astonishing pianistics on “Wacky Tobacky,” one of numerous ravers. Adams acts as the group’s magnet—punishing the keyboard with a well-placed elbow or manning two keyboards at once.

Other kinds of keyboards also succumb to his spell on this set, which is replete with unreleased tracks, B-sides (remember those?) and limited re-issues.

This is all-American music, but it’s *not* Americana. It’s too eclectic and is anything but laid-back. But it *is* a product of the American vernacular, as exemplified by vivid allusions to drive-ins (“Rain At The Drive-In”), minor celebrities (“Capt. Lou Albano”) and life on the road (“Next Stop Brattleboro”). Not counting compilations, the group has released more than 30 albums, including a recording with Spampinato’s wife, the country singer Skeeter Davis.

NRBQ’s roots go deep, and even though the band is unmistakably rock ‘n’ roll, its music touches on jazz, pop, blues and country. Few bands can span the sweet pop of the brilliantly harmonized “Never Take The Place Of You” and the otherworldly improvisations of “Paris,” a Sun Ra piece near the end of the box.

The music, whether a waltz, stomper, polka or ballad, is assured. **NRBQ** is that rare band that keeps you on the edge of your seat by way of its confidence. And while it often feels about to collapse into sloppiness—the live cuts, in particular, pack that threat—it always winds up on its feet, lifting the listener up in the process.

High Noon is a box to cherish, visit and revisit.

DB

Ordering info: omnivorerecordings.com



Jo Ann Daugherty

Bring Joy

SELF RELEASE

★★★★

It's been almost a dozen years since the release of Chicago-based pianist Jo Ann Daugherty's excellent sophomore outing, *Range Of Motion* (Blujazz, 2005). Her versatility pulled her into theater pit work, including stints conducting and performing for *Jersey Boys* and *Motown: The Musical*. Her new release, *Bring Joy*, is influenced by the communicative experience of touring with such smash musicals, but borne out of the intimate simpatico of her long-run-

ning trio with drummer Ryan Bennett and bassist Lorin Cohen.

Daugherty's playing always has kick, bounce and a structural precision that recalls the nimble smarts of Cedar Walton, but she elected to rein it in for this odyssey, seeking lyrical message over complexity. You can almost visualize this former farm girl from Missouri skipping to retrieve "Water From An Ancient Well," as she reimagines Abdullah Ibrahim's sublimely simple theme, bookended here with his poignant and profound "The Wedding."

Cohen contributes three effective originals, including the episodic "Unconditionally"—during which piano deftly flips bottom-end duties under a bass lead line—and his classy dependability is key to the joyous spring in Daugherty's digits.

The fine Stevie Wonder and Herbie Hancock covers notwithstanding, the central moment of *Bring Joy* is the beautifully bluesy restraint that the trio lays down (abetted with fills from guitarist Felton Offard) on Daugherty's unpretentious "BJ's Tune," written for succinct Chicago trumpeter BJ Levy.

—Michael Jackson

Bring Joy: Water From An Ancient Well; The Way You Know Me; Unconditionally; The Secret Life Of Plants; Alive; Elsewhere; BJ's Tune; Hope For Love; Dolphin Dance; The Wedding. (42:19)

Personnel: Jo Ann Daugherty, piano; Ryan Bennett, drums; Lorin Cohen, bass; Neal Alger, Felton Offard, guitar.

Ordering info: joannndaugherty.com

James Brandon Lewis Trio

No Filter

BNS SESSIONS

★★★

This is the third album from New York tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis, who is joined by bassist Luke Stewart and drummer Warren G. Crudup III.

The album's opener, "Say What," sets up a strutting, wiry groove that holds Lewis aloft with overloaded bass and turbulent drums. The reedist's own gritty riffing blurs the perimeter with soloing freedom.

Stewart's bass line is central on the following title track, supporting Lewis as he honks and belches. The two players lock together to form a rolling riff before breaking out into staccato halts. Such tight unison playing underlines the empathy between this pair: Stewart's singing high notes often echo the leader's horn phrases, while drums stutter and cymbals splash.

"Y'all Slept" features vocals by rapper P.SO The Earth Tone King, set beside a chiming, grainy guitar figure, courtesy of Anthony Pirog. And the closing "Bittersweet" is a bid for entrance into the commercial world, a single to share, featuring wordless falsetto vocals from



Nicholas Ryan Gant.

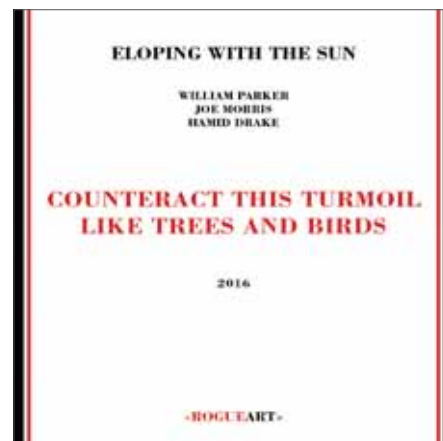
No Filter is difficult to categorize. iTunes doesn't even include the word "jazz" in its genre specification for the album. And while this studio set doesn't fully harness the ferocity and extremity of the trio's live performances, the group still makes a forceful statement, stripped down and old school.

—Martin Longley

No Filter: Say What; No Filter; Y'all Slept; Raise Up Off Me; Zen; Bittersweet. (37:49)

Personnel: James Brandon Lewis, tenor saxophone; Luke Stewart, electric bass; Warren G. Crudup III, drums; Anthony Pirog, guitar (3, 6); P.SO The Earth Tone King (3, 6), Nicholas Ryan Gant (6), vocals.

Ordering info: jblewis.com



Eloping With The Sun

Counteract This Turmoil Like Trees And Birds

ROGUE ART 0069

★★★★

Hamid Drake and William Parker have been playing together for over 20 years. Their mutual understanding of rhythmic and improvisational priorities is close and complete, but there's more to their partnership than that. They also share a faith that music facilitates spiritual experience, and they often signal their engagement with this facet of music by playing folk instruments from around the world. This practice becomes a dominant mode when they play with Joe Morris, a highly accomplished guitarist and bassist who likewise favors an assortment of other acoustic instruments.

The trio is named after another album that the group recorded 15 years ago, and while they haven't spent the time between making records they've continued to play together. The passage of time has added to the three men's musical empathy, and one suspects that they've also spent some of that time in music stores; there are quite a few more instruments on this record than there were on the first one. There are clear antecedents for this approach: Don Cherry's duo with Edward Blackwell and the large ensembles he convened during his sojourn in Sweden come to mind, as well as the Art Ensemble Of Chicago.

But Morris, Drake, and Parker have been living with their little instruments and the ethnographic sources they draw upon for a lot longer than Cherry or the AEC had when they made classic records like *Mu* and *People In Sorrow*. They've had more time to learn the roots, and more time to forget what they've learned and forge a language specific to this ensemble. —Bill Meyer

Counteract This Turmoil Like Trees And Birds: The Sky Was Purple Blue; Profound Branches; Elxir; Grass Beneath The Cracked Shells; Endless Galaxies; Energy Of Patience; Light Across A Leaf; The Rhythm Of Butterflies; Out Of This; Exact Intuition. (62:28)

Personnel: William Parker, double bass, shakuhachi flute, sinter, n'goni kemlah n'goni, thumb piano; Joe Morris, guitar, banjo, double bass, barjo, fiddle, pocket trumpet, whistles; Hamid Drake, drum set, frame drum, cymbals, gongs.

Ordering info: web.rogueart.com



MAST
Love And War
ALPHA PUP RECORDS

★★★★½

Love And War by multi-instrumentalist Tim Conley—aka MAST—is a heady concept album with multiple parallels to Flying Lotus' 2014 album, *You're Dead* (Warp). Both albums dwell in mostly jazz territory, despite being made by producers best known for their contribution to the instrumental hip-hop beat scene.

Both records also boast an impressive cast of musicians that help to get the job done: Flying Lotus had Herbie Hancock, Kamasi Washington and Thundercat, among others, while Conley has enlisted the likes of electronicist Taylor McFerrin, bassist Tim Lefebvre, drummer Makaya McCraven and keyboardist Brian Marsella. They are also both concept records, using the frantic take on "jazztronica" to accomplish a bigger task than simply creating sound output.

The album is set up in three acts. In Act 1, Conley finds love, in Act 2 he loses that love and in Act 3 he learns to let go. It's a familiar story, but the producer utilizes his own zany experience as a musician to get the point across. Quirky titles like "Should've Swiped Left" bring the record into modern territory, but truth be told the music does the talking here.

The fusion of hip-hop and jazz has been prevalent since A Tribe Called Quest brought it to prominence by rapping over Jimmy McGriff samples, but MAST is mixing free-jazz with left-of-center instrumental rap beats, and this record thrusts him into the ever-popular jazz/hip hop conversation.

—Chris Tart

Love And War: Love's Metamorphosis Theme; The Rendezvous; You, Every Second Minute Hour Day; The Temptation; She's Chasing The Dragon; The Sorrow; The Breakup; The Night Drive; The Downward Spiral; The Letting Go; On the Prowl Again; Again, Should've Swiped Left; A New Love; Feels; Me And You; The Liberation; Transcendence/Love's Metamorphosis Theme. (52:45)

Personnel: Tim Conley, guitars, keyboards, electronics; Anwar Marshall (2); Louis Cole (11); Nigel Sifantus (15); Makaya McCraven (16); drums; Marta Bagratuni, cello (4); Fresh Cut Orchestra (5); Ryat, keyboards, vocals (7); Tim Lefebvre, bass (8); Josh Johnson (8); Gavin Templeton (11), saxophones; Brian Marsella, keyboards (9); Taylor McFerrin, electronics (10); The Koreatown Oddity (12); Andrée Belle (15), vocals.

Ordering info: alphapuprecords.com

Books / BY DAVID KUNIAN

Modern Guide, Historic City

Thomas W. Jacobsen sets himself a difficult goal in his new book, *The New Orleans Jazz Scene Today: A Guide to the Musicians, Live Jazz Venues, and More* (Bluebird Publishing). Surveys of jazz scenes—no matter where the location—can be challenging. Clubs and venues open and close between the finishing of the manuscript and the publishing date. Musicians move in and out of town. Bands form and break up. But Jacobsen is well qualified for the task of capturing a freeze-frame of the present state of affairs in New Orleans jazz.

Jacobsen has been writing and documenting the music of the Crescent City via books and articles for more than three decades, but he has been a devoted jazz fan since his teenage years in Minnesota. It was there that he was first introduced to New Orleans jazz, which he would listen to via broadcasts of the New Orleans Jazz Club over the Crescent City radio station WWL. Upon retirement from his lengthy career in higher education, Jacobsen moved to New Orleans, where he lived for a quarter century and became involved in the local music scene.

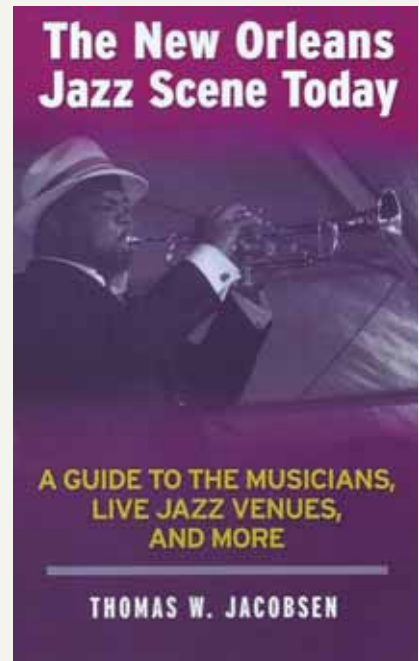
In his new book, he accurately categorizes the different aspects of jazz in the Big Easy, despite the continual metamorphosis of the genre—and the city itself.

He divides the book into different sections with brief descriptions of relevant venues, musicians, bands and festivals. And then he digs deeper, cataloging the weekly gigs held down by the city's hardworking local musicians.

He's also inclusive, absorbing into his research many of the musicians and genres of music not typically associated with New Orleans, shining an especially bright light on the creative/avant-garde scene that has developed in the last 20 years.

In his opinions regarding controversial topics in the realm of New Orleans jazz, Jacobsen remains objective and factual, weighing both sides of a crucial question: whether musicians who have moved to New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina have diluted the traditional music of New Orleans or infused it with new energy and ideas. He doesn't discount the way that newer brass bands' use of rhythm-and-blues and hip-hop in their music has kept the music appealing to younger African-Americans.

Several pages are dedicated to the history of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, with its declining percentage of jazz programming, but the eventual diagnosis is a positive one. For Jacobsen, the festival continues to be an important cultural and economic engine.



In addition, Jacobsen doesn't neglect other parts of the New Orleans jazz world. Both jazz education and jazz history are a large part of New Orleans, and Jacobsen shows great discernment to include them, outlining in detail the programs, teachers and resources that are the city's treasures (though he leaves out several noteworthy archives, such as the Louisiana State Museum archive and New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation archive).

With respect to the deep history of jazz in New Orleans, he gives a basic guide to where to explore and how to find sites essential to the jazz tradition, such as Storyville, South Rampart Street and the homes of early jazz pioneers.

There are a couple faults to the book. Sometimes Jacobsen falls into the habit of simply listing musicians who play a certain kind of music, without distinguishing them from each other.

Also, Jacobsen includes photographs of many of the people who play jazz and the places where it is played, but the shots are of a low quality. They can come off as flat, even unflattering to the subject, and they don't necessarily convey the excitement of the music as often as they could.

However, they do not take away from the well-written and informed assertion that jazz in all its incarnations and developments in New Orleans is varied, vital, creative and passionate.

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Jazz School



Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival at 50

Organizers recharge
fest with student
competitions

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Lionel Hampton performs in Moscow, Idaho, at his namesake jazz festival.

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Teaching Artist Bobby Broom (right) works with students at the Chicago High School for the Arts.

Living the **Dream**

How to get a job in jazz education

By JB Dyas, Ph.D. 

Today's jazz landscape is exploding with opportunities in education. Unlike the hey-days of traditional jazz, swing and bebop, in which jazz was virtually all self-taught and learned via apprenticeship by playing in groups led by edifying bandleaders, the contemporary jazz scene is dominated by formal, structured and professional jazz education. There are literally thousands of institutions and organizations around the globe, especially in the United States, where jazz is studied under the guidance of professional teaching artists and jazz educators.

But just where are these jobs, and how does one go about getting them? What skill set is required? Based on my years of diverse experiences as a jazz educator and jazz pedagogy teacher—and having helped myriad musicians secure employment in jazz education—I offer the following advice on how to find, prepare for, and get a job in this exciting field.



Institutions & Organizations

Where to begin: The Student Music Guide that appears annually in the October issue of DownBeat provides a comprehensive list of nearly every university, college and conservatory that offers a bona fide jazz program. In addition to these institutions of higher learning, thousands of high schools have at least one jazz ensemble. This includes more than 100 performing arts high schools (located throughout the country) that offer courses in jazz improvisation, combo performance, piano, history and more. Many middle schools also have jazz bands. All of these programs require the services of skilled jazz musicians who know how to teach.

Additionally, there are many independent and nonprofit community arts organizations around the nation that offer music instruction and employ jazz-teaching artists and educators. Besides the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, where we engage dozens of musicians each year to teach students at all levels from middle school through graduate school, other organizations employing jazz educators include Jazz at Lincoln Center (New York City), Jazz House Kids (Montclair, New Jersey), B'Town Jazz (Bloomington, Indiana), Levine Music (Washington, D.C.) the Colburn School (Los Angeles) and copious others throughout the United States and beyond.

Summer jazz camps and workshops have proliferated as well, not only in the United States, but also around the world. Notable examples include the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshops (Louisville, Kentucky), Litchfield Jazz Camp (Litchfield, Connecticut) and Jazz Port Townsend (Port Townsend, Washington).

Many camps and workshops are affiliated with renowned schools, such as Stanford University, the University of Miami and the University of

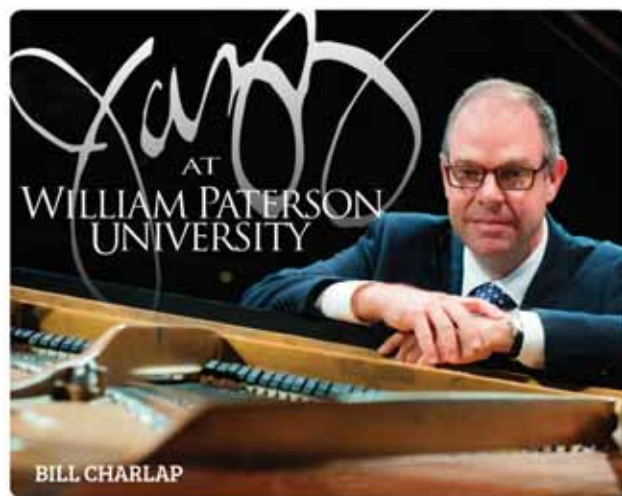
North Texas. International summer jazz programs include the Dutch Impro Academy (The Hague, Netherlands), the Samba Meets Jazz Workshop (Rio de Janeiro) and Funote Summer Music Camp (Jia Ding, China). The Jazz Camp Guide in DownBeat's March issue contains comprehensive lists.

Other venues to consider are musical instrument retailers. Whether they are small, "mom-and-pop" operations or part of a major chain, many music stores hire jazz musicians to teach private lessons, present workshops and direct jazz and rock combos. Houses of worship, Boys and Girls Clubs, recording studios, civic organizations, private learning centers and websites also employ jazz educators.

Skill Set & Credentials

In today's precarious jazz performance business, in which gigging alone often falls short of providing financial security, many musicians look to teaching to supplement their incomes. Most of the jazz musicians I've encountered over the years have viewed teaching not only as a moral obligation—passing the art form along to the next generation, just as it had been passed on to them—but also a joyous, fulfilling experience. Even jazz greats like Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter (who work with our graduate students at the Monk Institute) find teaching to be among the most gratifying components of their careers.

But what if you're not a household name like Herbie and Wayne, or you're not an eminent jazz musician with an impressive discography, such as Geri Allen (who teaches at the University of Pittsburgh), Terri Lyne Carrington (Berklee College of Music), Benny Green (University of Michigan), Antonio Hart (Queens College), Bob Mintzer (University of Southern California), Terrell Stafford (Temple University) or Bobby Watson (University of Missouri–Kansas City)? Well, in order to get a job in jazz education, you must be an *obviously* effective and dynamic jazz educator, band director, administrator and pedagogue. And you *must* be able to play. Versatility is key. This means you not only need to be an accomplished and well-versed jazz musician on your respective instru-



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ment, but a functional player on all rhythm section instruments—especially piano. (See the sidebar on page 89 for the minimum skill set required for each rhythm section instrument.)

You also should be able to teach students of all ages and levels, especially beginning and intermediate because those are the levels of most jazz students. Strive to have your teaching and band-directing sessions focus on active learning, with your students actively *doing* (e.g., playing their instruments), as opposed to passively listening or taking notes. I always provide my students with handouts that include

all pertinent information regarding the topic at hand. Not having to take notes allows them to be completely engaged throughout the entire session.

When teaching private lessons, the cardinal rule is to do whatever is necessary so your students continue. This means teaching them not only what they *need*, but also what they *want*. After all, if they quit, you lose any chance of ever giving them what they need. Also, I've found that time spent pontificating about how your students should practice more and be more disciplined usually just results in valuable time

wasted. Rather, I suggest you spend the entirety of each session getting something *accomplished*; in other words, getting something solid under their fingers (in addition to giving them a definite assignment). The progress your students make is far more likely to inspire them to practice on their own accord than any sermonizing you might do. And always be as encouraging as possible and never, *ever* demeaning. Following these recommendations will likely make you a better teacher, increasing your reputation as such and the demand for your services. I always say that if you want to know how well a jazz musician plays, listen to him or her play; if you want to know how well a jazz musician teaches, listen to his or her *students* play. They are your best promoters and strongest advocates.

Today's jazz educator also needs to have administrative skills and be a competent writer. Being computer proficient and knowing a variety of software programs (including Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro, photo applications, and Finale or Sibelius) is definitely a prerequisite. The ability to write articles, design and create publications, and run a department have all come into play throughout my career. Organization, efficiency and people skills are paramount.

Regarding credentials, for teaching positions in middle and high schools, performing arts high schools and, especially, colleges and universities, the more advanced degree you have from the more prestigious institution, the better. A minimum of a bachelor's degree is required for a full-time position as a band director in middle and high schools. And it's almost impossible to get a full-time college gig without at least a master's degree (doctorate preferred). However, the degree and university prestige level doesn't matter nearly as much in all other arenas. This is often true for college and university adjunct (part-time) positions as well. How well you play and teach is what is most important.

College & University Positions

I suggest you join the College Music Society, which produces a Music Vacancy List that is continually updated to show virtually all college and university openings. Check these listings frequently. Then apply to as many schools as possible—even if the job description is not perfectly aligned with your skills—because university music department needs are often in flux. For instance, if the opening is for, say, someone to primarily teach jazz composition and arranging, and your forte is, say, trumpet playing and band directing, the powers-that-be just might engage an adjunct instructor to teach composition and arranging and hire you to teach trumpet and direct jazz ensembles if they're *really* impressed with you. Or



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they might remember you in the future when a trumpet/band directing position does eventually open up. Perhaps they will recommend you to a friend or colleague at another school where you would be a perfect fit. You never know. The more schools to which you apply, the more people who see how fabulous you are, the greater your odds of landing a job.

All applications must include a cover letter and resume. Your cover letter should succinctly include an overview of your experience and qualifications, respectfully state why you think teaching at their institution would make a great fit and, most important, make a positive impression. Of course, it must be grammatically correct with no typos or misspelled words. If writing such letters is not your strong suit, go to someone who can help you. It's important. Your resume should include your name, contact info and a listing of your education, experience and references. It should look professional and have standard formatting. (There are many good online resources with resume tips, such as Resume Genius: resumegenius.com/how-to-write-a-resume.)

Interviews & Auditions

If your letter and resume strike a chord and rise to the top of the search committee's stack of applications, you will be invited for an interview and audition. Make sure you are thor-



Levine Music faculty member Brad Linde (left) works with Levine School jazz students in Washington, D.C.

oughly knowledgeable about the school, its jazz program and the faculty members on the hiring committee prior to your visit. Don't wait until the last minute to decide on what you are going to wear. Select a nice outfit (a jacket and tie for men, a dress or blouse and pants for women). Be personable, animated, upbeat and likeable during your interview. Engage your committee members, subtly letting them know

you are aware of and admire their accomplishments. Say nothing disparaging, never use any foul language, don't complain about anything and say "yes" as often as you can. Be positive. Make it obvious that you would not only be a teacher of the first order, but an exceptional colleague as well, willing to go well beyond what is expected or required of you. This includes an enthusiastic willingness to serve on commit-

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tees, do recruitment work and contribute to the community.

Besides interviewing, you also will have to perform, teach a class or two, and perhaps direct an ensemble in front of the search committee, other faculty members, administrators and current students, all of whom have a say in whether you get the job. Your goal is to impress *everyone*. For your performance, pick a diversified, exciting and impressive set list featuring tunes that require no rehearsal with the house rhythm section and that will blow everyone away. Be sure to bring very readable lead sheets for piano, bass and drums.

Your teaching session should reflect your knowledge, organization, flexibility, warm personality, dynamism, sense of humor and pedagogic prowess. Come in with a definite, *practical* topic (e.g., II-V-I's in minor) and predetermined goal, but be flexible. Provide a concept, examples that can be learned/completed in class and a strategy for continuing. Demonstrate on your instrument and/or piano whenever possible and applicable. Also provide students with meticulous handouts (color-coded for faster accessibility), keeping the students' note-taking to a minimum so they can participate *actively*. Be profoundly clear, interesting, educative and entertaining. Be sure to speak loudly and articulately so that those sitting in the back can easily hear and understand you.

Use eye contact and humor (but not *too* much).

If the job description includes ensemble directing, you will be asked to direct a big band and small group during your visit. For big band, I suggest you bring a few of your own charts that include different level arrangements (beginning, intermediate and advanced) that you know especially well. But first, listen to the band perform what they consider the best tune currently in their repertoire. After hearing them play, make general comments with a positive spin, then address weaknesses with tangible suggestions that will improve their playing immediately. Rehearse those sections again with everyone seeing (and hearing) marked, immediate improvement.

Follow this up by handing out one of your charts, choosing the one best suited for the level of the group. After talking through the form, have the band sight-read the arrangement from beginning to end, then rehearse particular sections focusing on phrasing, blend, feel, time, dynamics, intonation, articulation, rhythmic interpretation and the like. Demonstrate on both your primary instrument (which should be easily accessible) and piano whenever applicable. And don't forget to address the rhythm section. The session should culminate with the ensemble playing the tune again from beginning to end with everyone awed by how incredible the band sounds and how much it

improved in such a short time. Again, make sure that whatever chart you choose to rehearse will be playable by the band at hand and that their performance of it at the end of the session will impress everyone involved.

Similar methodology can be used for working with a small group, especially with regard to first hearing the group play a tune they know, then working on an appropriate level tune that you select. In the combo setting, you can (and should) spend far more time on head arranging, groove, improvisation, rhythm section/soloist interaction and the like. And it doesn't hurt to show the pianist and guitarist some contemporary chord voicings, the bassist a couple of great walking lines, and the drummer a hip samba groove. Again, demonstrate as much as possible and *play* with the group, *demonstrably* enjoying what you're doing. The period should end with the ensemble sounding much better than at the beginning of the session, with all participants having gained *tangible* jazz skills and further knowledge, tremendously inspired to take all they learned and apply it to the next tune.

Middle & High Schools, Other Venues

To find teaching gigs outside the college and university setting, visit the websites of the public school district(s) in your area, as well as the websites of all private schools in which you may



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Rhythm Section Instruments: *Minimum Skill Sets*

Besides being an accomplished and well-versed jazz musician on their primary instrument, well-rounded jazz educators should be *functional* players on all rhythm section instruments, especially piano. Below are the minimum skill sets required for each instrument. These skills can generally be acquired within one or two years by practicing 75 minutes daily: 30 minutes on piano, and 15 minutes each on guitar, bass and drums.



Piano

- ✦ Be able to comp two-handed jazz voicings for blues in B-flat and F, "Rhythm" changes in B-flat, major and minor II-V-I's in all keys, and all tunes in Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 54 and 70.
- ✦ Be able to comp one-handed jazz voicings in the right hand while walking bass lines in the left hand for all of the above.
- ✦ Be able to play the idiomatic keyboard patterns associated with easy jazz tunes (e.g., "Cantaloupe Island," "Maiden Voyage," "All Blues," "Killer Joe," "Watermelon Man").



Bass (upright and/or electric)

- ✦ Be able to play a simple bossa nova bass line for easy jazz tunes (e.g., "Blue Bossa," "Song For My Father").
- ✦ Be able to walk a blues in B-flat and F, "Rhythm" changes in B-flat, and all swing tunes in Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 54 and 70.
- ✦ Be able to play the idiomatic bass patterns associated with easy jazz tunes, (e.g., "Footprints," "Cantaloupe Island," "Maiden Voyage," "All Blues," "Killer Joe").



Guitar

- ✦ Be able to comp basic four-note jazz voicings for blues in B-flat and F, "Rhythm" changes in B-flat, and all tunes in Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 54 and 70. (This can be done with just a half dozen or so simple, but authentic, movable chord forms.)



Drums

- ✦ Be able to play a basic swing beat (in 2 and 4) with both sticks and brushes, a bossa nova, a samba and a basic rock/funk beat.

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Teaching Artist Claire Daly (left) works with Monk Institute National Performing Arts High School Students, including bassist Kanoa Mendenhall and trombonist Khayla Williams, at the 2015 JEN Conference in San Diego.

be interested in teaching. Review the job openings and follow the college and university guidelines I have set forth for your benefit. For all other teaching venues (arts organizations, music stores, etc.), send a cover letter and resume even if there are no available positions at the moment. A week later, follow up with a phone call requesting an appointment to meet with the director in person (this is often granted), make a superb impression and offer a *free* workshop. Then, knock their socks off! I suggest you do this at *all* possible teaching venues and institutions (including all colleges and universities) that are within reasonable driving distance from your home. Remember, the more people you interact with, the greater the chances that someone will hire you or recommend you to a colleague who is seeking a musician with your skill set.

General Tips

When auditioning for a job, be punctual, be likeable, don't be opinionated and do have an open mind. Don't insist on anything extra (e.g., rehearsals, longer class periods, extra equipment, etc.) Don't make *any* excuses; even if they're legitimate, keep them to yourself. Don't make numerous phone calls asking questions of the search committee chair, director of jazz studies, dean, head of human resources or anyone else who might find this annoying. Most everything you need to know can be found on the school's website. Make sure you have the "must know" list of standards and jazz classics solid under your fingers; you don't want to get caught not knowing what others consider obvious. Don't discuss salary until *after* an offer is made; *then* negotiate, realizing that the first proposal is often significantly lower than what they're willing to pay—if they really want you. Be savvy. Negotiate confidently yet respectfully. Be willing to compromise, and never dig your heels in so far that the venue might retract the offer altogether.

Just as it is for finding employment in most any field nowadays, networking has never been more important. This is especially true in jazz education. Join the Jazz Education Network (JEN) and attend its annual conferences. See if your area has any local jazz associations, and then attend their meetings. Apply to perform and present a clinic. Meet as



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Suggested **Resources**

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- ✦ *Jazz Piano Voicings for the Non-Pianist* (Mike Tracy)
- ✦ Jamey Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 1, 54 and 70
- ✦ Transcribed Piano Voicings for Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 1, 54 and 70

Bass

- ✦ "Linear Bass Line Construction" (JB Dyas), DownBeat, August 2006
- ✦ "Linear Bass Line Construction, Part 2" (JB Dyas), DownBeat, August 2007

Drums

- ✦ Drum Styles and Analysis for Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 54 and 70 (Steve Davis)
- ✦ *The Ultimate Play Along for Jazz Drummers* (Steve Davis)

Guitar

- ✦ *Easy Jazz Guitar: Voicings & Comping* (Michael DiLiddo)

Tune Learning

- ✦ "Methods for Fighting the Epidemic of Tune Illiteracy" (JB Dyas), DownBeat, May 2010
- ✦ "Methods for Fighting the Epidemic of Tune Illiteracy, Part 2" (JB Dyas), DownBeat, August 2010

Teaching Venues

- ✦ The College Music Society: music.org
- ✦ Jazz in America: jazzinamerica.org/JazzResources/JazzEducation/College
- ✦ Arts Schools Network: artsschoolsnetwork.org/membership-list.html
- ✦ Public School Districts: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_school_districts_in_the_United_States
- ✦ National Guild for Community Arts Education: nationalguild.org/MemberSearch/Member-Directory.aspx

many potential employers as possible. Impress them. Impress everyone.

It all comes down to three basic steps: learn to play and teach as well as possible, be entrepreneurial and, most important, *do everything to the nines*. Following these guidelines will put you well on your way to enjoying one of the most satisfying and rewarding careers in the arts: teaching *jazz* for a living. **DB**

Dr. JB Dyas has taught jazz to students of all levels in a variety of venues, including middle and high schools, performing arts high schools, summer jazz camps, colleges and universities, jazz institutes and more. His video series "How to Teach Jazz to High School and College Students" can be found free online at artistshousemusic.org. Formerly the executive director of the Brubeck Institute, Dr. Dyas currently serves as Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development at the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz at UCLA.

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Lionel Hampton teaches Lapwai, Idaho, School District students, as part of the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival's Jazz in the Schools program.

Thriving *in Idaho*

Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival celebrates 50 years of jazz education

Garrett Bigger distinctly remembers the thin figure seated behind a vibraphone, pounding out a melody with his mallets while an enthusiastic big band dipped and swung behind him.

In 2001, Bigger was a seventh-grader at Sacajawea Junior High School in Lewiston, Idaho, who had traveled 30 miles north to compete at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival with his school ensemble. Today, Bigger doesn't recall many specifics about his first trip to the festival, held annually at the University of Idaho in Moscow. But the sight of the event's namesake artist performing on the main stage is cemented in his memory.

That memory sustained Bigger's interest in

By Jon Ross

jazz, and he returned with student ensembles to the northern Idaho jazz jubilee year after year. Bigger is now a fifth-year music education major at the university. A baritone saxophone player who performs with the university's top jazz band, he's continued his involvement with the festival throughout his college career. He has a stack of programs to prove it.

"The way [the festival] has evolved over time has kept up with the same spirit and energy that I have known for the past 15 years," he said.

There have been significant changes along

the way, but the overarching theme of the event has remained focused on students. Shepherded by the avuncular Lynn Skinner for most of its existence, the festival's outlook shifted slightly in 2006 when Skinner retired. His eventual replacements—Artistic Director John Clayton, who had a long performance history in Moscow, and Executive Director Steve Remington—instituted a number of changes. The most significant of these shifts was the move away from the adjudicated student competitions that had been the festival's hallmark. Essentially, the organizers did not want to rank student jazz musicians. The duo replaced the festival's awards program with a performance system in which bands still received feedback,

but were not ranked against one another. That was hardly the only adjustment, though.

Clayton booked fewer artists for longer sets, and venues changed. Historically, the festival's evening concerts were held at the Kibbie Dome, home to the Vandals—the University of Idaho's football team. Clayton instead used the entire university to create a series of smaller concerts where artists would play multiple sets on a given night, and the small town of Moscow got more involved with after-hours concerts.

As the festival prepares for its 50th annual edition, organizers are looking back at the history of the event, but also looking forward to a bright future. Remington and Clayton have been replaced by a team from within the university's Lionel Hampton School of Music. After years as its own entity, the jazz festival is once again part of the music school.

When Lionel Hampton passed away in 2002, the festival lost a key champion (and a headliner who had performed at the festival for more than 25 years). But five years later, the festival was named the winner of a 2007 National Medal of the Arts.

For the fest's golden anniversary edition, to be held Feb. 23–25, organizers are bringing back the option for student groups to compete for festival awards and a chance to perform at the nightly artist concerts, which will once again be held in the football stadium. Among this year's marquee performers will be bassist/vocalist Esperanza Spalding, singer René Marie, trumpeter Claudio Roditi and the vocal quartet New York Voices. Marie and Roditi will perform with the University of Idaho jazz choirs and the university's top jazz band.

Newly appointed Educational Advisor Vanessa Sielert hopes that once again offering the option for bands to compete will excite both new and veteran jazz educators.

"We're trying to update the festival to make it more in line with what we understand the educators want it to be," Sielert said. "We're trying to make some improvements to the educational side of things, and we're trying to continue the great legacy of the evening concerts with the artists that we bring in."

Sielert said she has heard from a number of band directors who have been clamoring for a return to a competition-based event. She explained that these directors like competitions because they are a tangible way to quantify success. Educators have also been reaching out to Torrey Lawrence, director of the Lionel Hampton School of Music, who said, "We have heard nothing but strong praise for this decision." He added that bringing the festival back to the music school allows for stronger links between the music faculty, their curriculum and the festival itself.

Officials have now closely aligned the jazz event with a music school that is primarily clas-

sically focused but offers a jazz studies minor and a range of jazz ensembles and courses. Lawrence said half of the music students pursue some form of jazz education, and that the appointment of a number of jazz-focused faculty members in recent years reflects this appetite for jazz.

Andrew Kersten, dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences, echoed Sielert's thoughts. He said the move means the mission of the festival can be more closely aligned with the academic experience.

"In my mind, it became such a big thing that the [music] school couldn't quite handle all the logistics," he said. "It became its own entity, but in doing that, it lost its connection to the academic environment."

One of the first steps in re-inventing the jazz festival, he said, was to map out a list of goals and present them to the university administration. To do this, Kersten worked with Lawrence, Vanessa Sielert and Artistic Advisor Vern Sielert to establish the guiding principles that would create a sustainable event.

One of the main objectives is to use the event to highlight the university's offerings, making sure that the festival helps increase university enrollment and also serves as a development tool. Another objective is to strength-

ture," Kersten said. "For an art form like this, we need to get our students involved. We need to get more students in Idaho and the region involved."

After the festival's modest beginnings, organizers booked a nationally known act in 1969, when trumpeter Bud Brisbois flew to Moscow to perform with the university jazz band. The festival grew exponentially under Skinner, who began running it full-time in 1976.

While Skinner is not the festival's founder, even in retirement he remains its guiding light and the force behind what the event has become. "Doc," as he is affectionately called by nearly everyone at the university, remembers the event as being a mostly regional fest until Ella Fitzgerald came to Moscow in 1981, along with the festival's first big sponsor, Chevron.

Lionel Hampton was a revered jazz icon when he arrived in 1984, bringing with him a \$15,000 check for the festival's fund and a promise to return next year. In 1985, Skinner proposed naming the event after Hampton, and a long collaboration and friendship blossomed. Over the years, with Hampton's assistance, dozens of famous jazz musicians performed at the festival, including Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Brown, Hank Jones and Clark Terry. Many musicians, like trumpeter Roy Hargrove and singer Roberta Gambarini, returned year after year.



en the festival's impact on the local and state economies. Kersten said they were also mindful to "embody the very best of the traditions and future of jazz music" and to maintain an unwavering focus on the festival's educational mission. Prioritizing these goals, he said, would help keep the festival going for decades to come.

"Universities ... are the preservers of cul-

Skinner's programming focused on bringing in as many artists as possible. This meant that on any given night, attendees might see close to 20 artists. Many of them would play one or two songs with the house band before leaving, but to Skinner, presenting as many top-flight musicians as possible was a way to get the visiting students excited about jazz. By design, he has

wanted to flood the senses with world-class jazz ever since he took the reins of the event.

"When I took over the festival ... you'd talk to the kids [and] say, 'Who's your favorite trumpet player?'" Skinner remembered. "They'd just look at you. *Nothing*—it just didn't register."

Singer Dee Daniels, who first performed at the festival in 1992, is one of those artists who came back time and time again. Daniels developed a deep friendship with Skinner and Hampton, but is careful to not give Hampton too much credit for making the event what it is. She pointed out that the university had been holding a successful, albeit smaller, series of concerts for 20-odd years before Hampton

added his name to the festival.

"When Lionel came in, that raised it to a more national and international level because of his visibility," she said.

Current and former festival administrators say jazz education is the heart of the festival. While there's no debating this overarching theme, how best to achieve that goal remains an open question. Trumpeter Terell Stafford has been a mainstay at the festival, first attending the event when it was organized around student competitions. Stafford—who is currently the director of jazz studies at Temple University—returned to Moscow during the years when students played simply for the valuable experience

of performing. While he says both methods of jazz education have merit, he stresses that jazz education, especially when entire bands are involved, shouldn't be about declaring a winner. Stafford feels that awarding first place to a group guarantees that many kids and band directors will go home disappointed.

"Someone's opinion whether a band is good or not shouldn't matter," he said. "Music is supposed to be a community-based thing that brings folks together, not pushes them apart for the sake of a competition."

Stafford knows a lot of band directors enjoy competition-based festivals, but to him, it's easier to reach jazz students if competition is taken out of the equation. Some band directors, he said, are so focused on the competition that they spend the entire school year prepping kids for the contest.

In an interview a few months after the university decided not to renew his annual contract, Clayton described his pedagogical philosophy: Jazz education is not a contest. "It remains important to me to recognize achievement, but never to do so by trying to measure and reward something which cannot objectively be measured," he said.

Remington, who helped run the festival from 2011 until 2016, expanded on Clayton's beliefs on competition, adding that the two of them found that younger students were more motivated by their peers than by awards.

"John's philosophy was one of protecting the budding musicians from having his or her love for music crushed by comparison and judgment," he said.

Finding ways to entice more students to participate in the festival is essential to its evolution. In the past six years, the total number of schools participating in the event, as well as the number of students involved, fell.

In 2010, a total of 237 schools brought 7,090 students to the University of Idaho campus; by 2016, those numbers had shrunk to 130 schools and 3,728 students. Former festival administrators have estimated that students make up more than half of the evening concertgoers.

During that time, financial support from the administration fell, Remington said. When he arrived at the University of Idaho, the administration contributed \$600,000 each year, but that amount significantly decreased during his tenure. While Remington said the decline in student participation had stopped by the time of his departure, the sustainability of the event has never been tied to numbers. The Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival is focused on jazz pedagogy.

"The festival will never, and has never, 'paid for itself,'" he said. "It has always been an investment in the quality of life in Idaho, in the recruitment process for the university, for bragging rights, and as a part of the university's

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overall mission.”

While the event’s budget has never rivaled those of top-tier jazz festivals, the familial atmosphere helped attract world-class talent. Skinner is the type of generous person who treats even a passing acquaintance as a dear friend. His attitude is one of the key reasons that certain artists have attended the festival.

Stafford said the “warm, loving” environment created by Skinner and perpetuated by Clayton made him jump at the chance to participate in the festival. “Of course, we have to make a living, but I felt that the festival was always fair to the musicians,” he said.

Ticket sales for the evening concerts accounted for nearly half of the festival’s revenue in 2016, while the event generates a little more than one-fourth of its revenue from school registrations. For at least the past five years, the university has covered around two-thirds of the cost of the festival. These contributions include financial support, in-kind gifts and unassociated faculty time spent on the event, according to officials.

“This is a festival that has a 50-year legacy,” Festival Manager Aaron Mayhugh said. “I imagine that funding has ebbed and flowed through the various administrations and school of music faculty, but ultimately, the university continued to fund it to date. All indications are that the current administration will

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continue that support.”

Today’s festival staff is intent on extending that legacy through new educational offerings. Vanessa Sielert stressed that educators who simply wish to play for productive feedback have a home at the festival, but that the re-in-

troduction of competition will help the festival return to—and build upon—its roots.

“For years, we’ve been on the forefront of what’s been going on in education in the area,” she said. “What we’re trying to do is improve upon what we know worked in the past.” **DB**

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Alpert Shines Spotlight on Community College Programs

Now more than ever, jazz is thriving in Los Angeles. Young artists in this city have developed a home-grown brand of music that incorporates elements from hip-hop, rock and pop, attracting new fans who have embraced jazz with an insatiable appetite.

But these young musicians are hardly the first Angelenos to bring jazz to the masses. Long before Kamasi Washington or Thundercat ever took to a bandstand, there was pioneering trumpeter and L.A. native Herb Alpert. As the leader of the Tijuana Brass band, Alpert had numerous commercial hits in the 1960s, expanding jazz's appeal to a global audience and bringing countless listeners into the fold.

How popular was Alpert back in the day? In 1966, he won four Grammy awards, and his record sales outpaced The Beatles. Of the 20 albums on the Billboard Pop Album charts that year, Alpert's name was on five, and in 2013, he received the National Medal of Arts from President Obama.

During his unique career, Alpert, 81, has worn many hats: record company executive (he co-founded A&M Records), visual artist and philanthropist. But he's a musician first, and in September, he released *Human Nature*, his fourth new release in three years. Featuring interpretations of songs by Michael Jackson, Burt Bacharach, Elvis Costello and others, the album finds Alpert once again building bridges between jazz and pop, but with materials borrowed from a new source: electronic dance music. While EDM may well be foreign territory for Alpert, he never once felt out of place in the recording process. For the 2006 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, a groove by any other name is still a groove.

"I never even thought about electronic music," he said. "I just heard a groove that I liked and started playing over it. I had a good time doing it, and that was it. I never analyzed it as electronic dance music—I didn't even know

what it was, to tell you the truth."

But performance and recording aren't the only facets of Alpert's outreach. Through his personal foundation he has helped develop music departments at UCLA and CalArts. Both schools named their music programs after him.

Recently, his foundation announced another philanthropic contribution; this one was his-

For Alpert, the decision to invest in his hometown's community college was an easy one. He believes that community colleges hold a special place in the jazz education pipeline.

"I love that LACC has helped so many low-income students who have financial challenges, but have a strong commitment to education and to self-improvement," he said. "There are quality teachers at [LACC], and they want to give kids a chance to follow their dreams."

Los Angeles Community College is one of the nine community colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and provides the largest selection of performing arts classes and majors among the campuses. According to the LACCD, 40 percent of the music students within the district study at LACC.

Like community colleges nationwide, LACCD serves as an integral link between top-tier bachelor's degree-granting institutions and students who may lack access to funding.

"The vast majority of our students are from underserved communities and faced with enormous financial challenges as they strive to attain their academic and career goals," said Robert Schwartz, executive director of the Los Angeles City College Foundation, in a press statement. "This generous gift from the Herb Alpert Foundation allows these talented students to focus on their studies while pursuing their individual pathways towards successful careers in the music industry."

Alpert hopes that his donation will set a precedent for other philanthropists seeking to invest in arts education.

"People with the money usually want to put their names on buildings where they already have the funds," he said. "But to do it at a community college, where you get to enable people to follow their dreams who otherwise couldn't—I think that's just a very special thing to do."

—Brian Zimmerman



Herb Alpert recently donated more than \$10 million to the Los Angeles City College Foundation.

toric in scale. In September, the Los Angeles City College Foundation received a \$10.1 million donation from the Herb Alpert Foundation, the largest gift ever bestowed upon the LACC. Funds will go toward providing current and future music majors tuition-free attendance, private music lessons and further financial aid. The support extends to all students, whether enrolled in the two-year certificate program or applied music major program.



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Improvising over Contemporary Harmonies Using Common Tones

What divides us is often not as important as what we have in common, and that can lead to greater successes. The same can be true regarding chord progressions, especially the contemporary harmonic colors that don't follow a cycle-of-fifths pattern (iii-vi-ii-V-I). Here I'll illustrate such a practical path.

When I composed "A Question Of Hope," commissioned by the Illinois Music Educators Association (ILMEA) for the January 2018 ILMEA All-State Honors Jazz Band (and published by Doug Beach Music), I decided to base it on the chord changes to George Gershwin's "S Wonderful." Experimenting with the three notes that begin the last four bars of the tune, then adding different bass-tones, I created new harmonies that I could see would provide ensembles and soloists the opportunity to explore contemporary harmonies in a very approachable way.

FIRST GLANCE

At first look at measure 77 (see Figure 1), the chord changes over the

even-eighth groove look daunting: Cm7, A \flat m(maj7)/C \flat , and later Fm9, Emaj7(\flat 5#9), B \flat 13sus and B \flat 13. How do we approach a minor-major chord? And who puts a #9 over a major-seven chord? A gut reaction might be to decide on using some sort of C minor scale, then an A \flat melodic minor, some F minor scale, who-knows-what for the Emaj7(\flat 5#9), B \flat mixolydian-but-avoid-the-third and B \flat mixolydian—a highly uncertain route that would confound if not halt so many of the very soloists the piece is intended to inspire.

COMMON GROUND

Accurate chord symbols can often mask the very truth within them: that their sonic palettes share so much. Rather than approach each chord as some scale from a different root, see what's possible when you view each chord as a variation from just one scale—often the tonic (home) scale of the piece.

In this case, the tune is in Gershwin's key of concert E \flat (where the

changes are headed following this example); so let's examine the chords as variations on an E \flat major scale. The Cm7 can be within the key of E \flat major, as a C aeolian (natural) minor scale (i.e., the vi chord in the key of E \flat). So the soloist can improvise using the E \flat major scale.

The A \flat m(maj7)/C \flat indeed calls for an A \flat melodic minor scale. If you view that from the pitch E \flat and on, it's "E \flat major-lower-the-sixth-and-seventh": It's combining the first five notes of the E \flat major scale with the last two notes of an E \flat aeolian (natural) minor scale. So it's two accidentals off of the E \flat major scale. Some might call it the E \flat Hindu scale, or a G altered-dominant scale (a.k.a. G super locrian or G diminished whole-tone). No matter what you call it, it includes a D \flat .

But what if you wanted to stay even closer to the context you started in—the key of E \flat major—including instead a D natural? By editing that one pitch, you've found the E \flat harmonic major scale: It's the major scale with a lowered sixth degree (from C natural to C \flat).

So for the first 32 bars of improvising, you have the option of soloing as simply as with either E \flat major or "E \flat major-lower-the-sixth"—done! At measure 97, you can address the Fm9 chord as again within the key of E \flat major by playing F dorian minor (i.e., the ii chord in the key of E \flat). And that brings us to the most unusual chord on the page.

A CONVERSATION

When encountering as striking a symbol as Emaj7(\flat 5#9) at measure 101, I like to have a conversation with it: "What are your required tones to be consonant, and how closely to our home key can I view you?" The answers revealed—as in most conversations with the unknown—are far more settling than unnerving.

The chord's answer to the first question provides two possible scales. The one shown on top of the staff at measure 104 is A \flat melodic minor, which we've already addressed as being two accidentals off of the E \flat major scale. The other scale, shown at the bottom of measure 104, is E \flat mixolydian with lowered second and sixth degrees. Exotic as that may seem, it's still *just* three pitches off the E \flat major scale (or two off of E \flat mixolydian).

After a return of the Fm9 (the ii chord in the key of E \flat) comes a B \flat 13sus and a B \flat 13 (both being versions of the V chord or dominant). Think of them as an E \flat major scale over B \flat —done! So of the 48 bars of soloing shown, 28 measures (58 percent) can be soloed over consonantly using *just* the E \flat major scale. Of the remaining 20 bars, 16 of them (33 percent overall) could be addressed using a scale *one pitch off* the E \flat major scale (with additional options to change two pitches). The four bars left, measures 101–104, can be soloed over by varying either *two or three pitches off* of the E \flat major scale.

Figure 1

A solo section where 91 percent of the blowing can be one major scale, or a pitch or two varied off that scale, is not a difficult context for improvisation, no matter what the chord symbols look like. And when those chords shown then yield to swinging over the original chord changes to Gershwin's "S Wonderful," less-experienced soloists will find that the E \flat major scale will suffice for all but one of the "A"-section bars of that AABA form. The key shifts to G major one bar before the bridge for five measures and back to E \flat one bar before the last "A" section. So just two major scales—E \flat and G—can cover 90 percent of the swing solo changes, with the remaining bridge keys of C, F and B \flat major. For more on that key-center approach to improv, see my book *Cutting the Changes: Jazz Improvisation via Key Centers* (Kjos Music).

ONLY THE BEGINNING

These are, of course, only paths to the improvisatory colors that are most consonant with these chords. There are infinite soloing possibilities to add with dissonances, additional keys, the diminished scale and more.

Try them all yourself, using the accompaniment audio tracks housed with the digital form of this article on my website (garciamusic.com/educator/articles/articles.html).

DB

Trombonist, vocalist, composer and educator Antonio Garcia (ajgarcia@vcu.edu) is director of jazz studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is an executive board member of The Midwest Clinic, associate jazz editor of the International Trombone Association Journal, past editor of the IAJE Jazz Education Journal and network expert (improvisation materials) for the Jazz Education Network. His newest book, *Jazz Improvisation: Practical Approaches to Grading* (Meredith Music), explores improv-course objectives and grading.



Rod Morgenstein

Breaking 'The Medium Phenomenon' Condition

My career as a full-time, professional musician began in the fall of 1975 when, upon graduating from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, I moved to Augusta, Georgia, with the Dixie Dregs. Through the early years of recording and touring with the band, I would give the occasional drum lesson here and there to drummers who sought me out. As an inexperienced teacher, I would teach things based on what I had learned from my years taking private drum lessons as a teenager, often going back to some of the drum method books I had used with my teachers: big band drummers Howie Mann and Al Miller, and New York City Ballet Company percussionist Ron Gould. And, quite often, a student (who was invariably a fan of the Dregs) would be interested in having me show him/her how to play some of my grooves and fills from one of the Dixie Dregs records.

When the Dregs' popularity expanded beyond the state of Georgia to the southern part of the United States and beyond, each of the band members began securing endorsements with various musical instrument manufacturers. When I became an endorser, I eventually got involved with the educational side of endorsement agreements, which often involved doing drum clinics. It was during this process of prepar-

ing to do clinics that I first started to seriously analyze my drumming.

There is much to learn about oneself when evaluating the way you play, as there are so many aspects to playing the drums. Some things are obvious, others less so. Favorite go-to grooves and fills, oft-used rudiments, how you hold the sticks, whether you play the bass drum pedal heel-up or heel-down—these are relatively obvious observations.

However, it wasn't until several years into analyzing my drumming and traveling the clinic circuit that I was struck by an interesting observation of my practice habits. It occurred to me that, for all of my years studying out of books, I would go through page after page of a particular book, playing each and every exercise pattern the same way—same tempo, same dynamic level, same ride surface. Additionally, I discovered that, on most practicing occasions, when sitting down at the drumset, I would immediately start playing one of my favorite, go-to grooves, in my usual comfort-zone tempo and dynamic level, on a closed hi-hat.

Not long after I started teaching at Berklee College of Music in Boston in the fall of '97, I decided to create an "experiment" to use with my private drumset students in an attempt to prove a theory I had developed regarding my own practice habits. I named this theory, or condition,

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Terell Stafford, Director of Jazz Studies (trumpet) and **Dick Oatts** (saxophone/jazz faculty) with the **Temple University Studio Orchestra** during a performance of "Frank Sinatra Suite," commissioned by the Boyer College of Music and Dance from Michael Abene. Photo: Janette McVey

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“The Medium Phenomenon.” The basic idea is, as partially explained in the previous paragraph, that every one of us has a comfort zone in which nearly every exercise we play in a particular book is performed at the same medium tempo, in the same medium dynamic range and on the same ride surface. I define “medium” as follows: medium tempo as a general range of 90–110bpm (give or take a few bpm on either side), medium dynamic level as *mf*–*f* and, in the case of a rock or funk book, medium ride surface as a closed hi-hat.

Over the past 15-plus years, I have been conducting my evil experiment on hundreds of unsuspecting Berklee students (obviously, I let them in on the secret after the fact).

The experiment goes as follows: I open one of my drumset books, *The Drumset Musician* (an introduction/intermediate method book from Hal Leonard written in collaboration with Rick Mattingly, shown at right), to page 11. The left-hand side of page 11 consists of seven basic quarter-note/eighth-note, kick/snare patterns, with an eighth-note ride pattern written on the top line of the staff. The only direction I give the student is to play each example for four measures.

With extremely rare exception (maybe one in 50), every student proceeds to play Example 1 through Example 7, no questions asked, one after the other, four measures each, at a medium tempo, medium dynamic level, on a closed hi-hat—which continues to prove my theory day after day, week after week, year after year. It is only on that extremely rare occasion that a student will ask about tempo or ride surface.

With the student still unaware that this is an experiment, I ask him/her to name a favorite band. As I teach many rock-oriented drummers at Berklee, the response involves him/her naming any number of rock bands. As every rock band drummer in the world plays these tried-and-true kick/snare patterns regardless of their particular band’s genre, I then present an imaginary scenario where I ask the student to pretend he/she is auditioning for the drum position in the band they just mentioned. I ask them to pick one of the beats they just played from page 11 of the book, think of a song by the band they just mentioned, and give it their all. “Play your heart out to show one of your favorite bands that you are the drummer they have been searching for,” I like to say.

Well, with nearly every single student, The Medium Phenomenon goes out the window, and their drumming comes alive as the tempo increases, the dynamic level rises, and the closed hi-hat either opens up to a sloshy hi-hat or the riding hand moves over to slam the ride or crash cymbal. And so, after years of secretly putting student after student through this process, my theory is continually proven. And my conclusion is that, without a doubt, when it



A Dixie Dregs publicity photo from the late 1970s. Top row: keyboardist Mark Parrish (left) and violinist Allen Sloan. Bottom row: bassist Andy West (left), drummer Rod Morgenstein and guitarist Steve Morse.

really counts, when how we play really matters, we play differently.

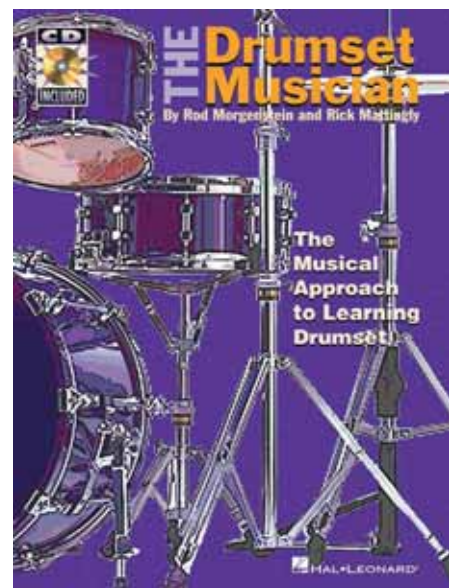
This then raises the question: Is there a more effective and efficient way to practice, to force oneself out of The Medium Phenomenon, in an effort to better prepare oneself for the real-world music challenges that lie ahead? I believe there is.

The first thing to do is analyze your practice habits to see if you, in fact, are a card-carrying member of The Medium Phenomenon club. Once that is assessed, consider changing your approach when working out of drum books. Real life is not static; it is not “medium.” It is filled with variety of every kind. In the world of music, every level of dynamic, tempo and sound is experienced.

The next time you open a drum book to a page of combination quarter-note/eighth-note grooves, consider playing the first exercise at one particular tempo and dynamic level for several measures, and then play the next exercise with a completely different set of parameters (including a different ride surface). In fact, think of a different band or artist, or a particular song or drummer, for playing each exercise. By the time you go through this one page of groove patterns (which should not take any longer than running down the entire page in The Medium Phenomenon mode), you will, potentially, have covered a vast range of tempos, dynamic ranges and ride surfaces.

Let’s face it: A page in a drum book that’s filled with a dozen or so variations of rhythms on a particular subject can look monotonous and appear two-dimensional. By playing each exercise at a different tempo and dynamic level, and changing up the ride surfaces, we can breathe life into these otherwise static-looking patterns and make them sound three-dimensional.

The same holds true for when you sit down



at the drums and jam. Be aware of whether you always seem to go to your favorite comfort-zone tempo, dynamic and groove pattern. Try to vary your jamming tempos, dynamic levels and grooves.

In addition to helping better prepare you for the countless styles of music out there in the real world, this approach to breaking The Medium Phenomenon condition will also make practicing considerably more interesting and, I believe, will be of tremendous value towards making you a more musical drummer.

DB

In addition to his extensive recording and touring credits, Rod Morgenstein is an active drum educator. Currently a professor of percussion at Berklee College of Music, Morgenstein teaches a 12-week, three-credit college course called Rock Drums that he created for Berklee’s online division. He has written numerous instructional books and videos, his most recent being *Drum Set Warm-Ups*, a text for developing and improving all aspects of drumset playing. Morgenstein is an international clinician who is involved with product development for Sabian Cymbals and Vic Firth Sticks. Visit him online at rodmorganstein.com.

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Erik Friedlander's Cello Solo on '26 Gasoline Stations'

For a cello-fronted quartet album, one might expect something straightahead, with the cello fulfilling the role typically occupied by a horn. But Erik Friedlander's 2014 album *Nighthawks* (Skipstone) has a lot of blues and rock influence. Take "26 Gasoline Stations," which has a heavy groove in D minor that lies somewhere between "Peter Gunn" and ZZ Top, only in 3/4 (for the most part). Friedlander has the guitar double the bass line (notated below the cello transcription) rather than defining chords, adding to the rock/blues attitude. Instead of playing his solo arco, which would elicit a timbre more similar to a saxophone, Friedlander plays this solo pizzicato, making it more guitaristic.

The construction of Friedlander's solo is quite interesting. He opens in rock 'n' roll style with some minor pentatonic licks, with a lot of space and syncopation. But rather than using the obvious D minor pentatonic, Friedlander instead chose to go with A minor pentatonic, even though the accompanying bass line implies D minor. There is only one note difference between the two scales: the E natural in the A minor pentatonic that replaces the F in D minor. By playing in A minor, Friedlander emphasizes the ninth rather than the third, but in a way that hints at polytonality. This technique of using the minor pentatonic off of the V has been used in the melodies of such standards as "Tequila" and "Pipeline," and here to create the same effect.

But at bar 12 we hear a dense string of triplets, starting one bar after the time signature has changed to 4/4. As well as intensifying the rhythmic density, Friedlander also adds in that missing F note, but retains the E, going into that scale sound between pentatonic and dorian (or aeolian). However, he

also brings in the flat fifth (or sharp 11), providing some bluesiness.

Then, before the meter reverts back at bar 15, he goes in a different rhythmic direction, playing three measures of quarter notes. Such a straight rhythm is generally considered "unhip," but since it doubles the supporting rhythm it creates a counterpoint. He dials back his note choices, going back to pentatonic, but in this case D minor. Both of these changes help relax the vibe.

So, to dial it up again, Friedlander jumps back into triplets, but this time for almost 10 measures, across bar 22 where the meter goes back to 4/4. As before, he goes from triplets into quarter notes from the middle of bar 27 to the end of bar 29, so although the triplet run was much longer, the quarter-note run is a bit shorter. Also, we still hear Friedlander matching his rhythmic alterations with his note choices. This latest string of triplets also boasts the most chromaticism that we've heard in this solo, with not only G#'s (the sharp-four "blue note") but also some F#'s, D#'s and even a C#. And when he comes out of the triplets, we're back to simpler scales, although he does make it a bit spicy by playing a Dm7(b5) arpeggio.

Friedlander's final measures are triplets again, but in measure 30 he plays octaves, and by playing triplets in pairs of notes he implies a quarter-note triplet. He drops this idea when we go back to 3/4 in order to incorporate slides into his descending triplet octaves. He also stays in D minor pentatonic for this final statement, descending down to the tonic on a downbeat, so the listener can make no mistake that this is the end of his solo. **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at jimidurso.com.

0:54

cello

pizz.

bass/guitar

5

11

17

22

25

29

Theo Wanne Slant Sig Classic Otto Link Tenor Sound

Theo Wanne, an expert on vintage saxophone mouthpieces, set out to create the ultimate version of the highly sought-after Otto Link Slant Signature when he developed his company's new "Slant Sig" model for tenor saxophone. Wanne incorporated what he considered to be the best design principles from his collection of Slant Sig mouthpieces—from original 1950s versions through early Babbitt-made models of the '70s—to accomplish his goal.

The result is a great-sounding, versatile mouthpiece that plays with the projection and expressivity you tend to find in vintage Slant Signatures. It even has the classic look to match.

The Theo Wanne Slant Sig tenor mouthpiece is finely sculpted, featuring a large chamber with a roll-over baffle and perfect side and tip rails. The mouthpiece is made of a special formulation of a highly stable material called Fiberrod (by Harry Hartmann) that sounds like vintage hard rubber but will not discolor or smell when exposed to heat, sunlight or prolonged use. The Slant Sig is available in size 7* or 8 tip openings and is shipped in a vintage-style box with a microfiber drawstring pouch. Wanne recommends pairing the mouthpiece with his Tenor XL Enlightened Ligature.

To play-test the 7* Slant Sig, I paired it with two types of ligatures (a Rovner and a Vandoren M/O) and two types of reeds (a #2½ Vandoren Java Red Box and a #3 Hemke). All setups worked out well as I enjoyed the classic vintage Otto Link sound produced on both my Selmer Mark VI and Conn "Chu Berry" tenors. The Slant Sig was consistently responsive

and warm throughout all registers. Both tenors produced especially rich low tones from strong vibrations. Articulation was impressive and pitches were reliably in tune and focused.

In big band performance, the Slant Sig mouthpiece blended nicely with the saxophone section and the full ensemble, and provided ample volume and projection for soloing. It is a mouthpiece that one can quickly get used to and enjoy.

One of the best things about the Theo Wanne Slant Sig tenor mouthpiece is its affordable list price of \$325—far less than what many saxophonists have been paying for good-condition Otto Link Slant Signatures on the used market for years. Students and professional saxophonists who play a wide variety of styles and seek a consistent, classic tenor sound should give it serious consideration.

—Bruce Gibson

thewanne.com

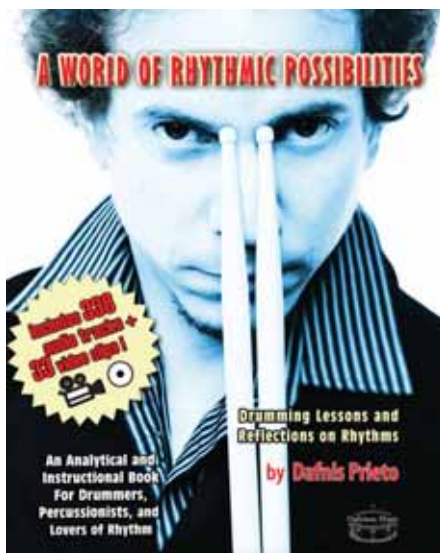


Dafnis Prieto's *A World of Rhythmic Possibilities* Transcending the Drum Method Book

Drummer, composer and educator Dafnis Prieto's new publication *A World of Rhythmic Possibilities: Drumming Lessons and Reflections on Rhythms* (Dafnison Music) is one of the most comprehensive, mind-opening instructional books I've encountered in a long while. As a teacher of private drum lessons for many years, I'm impressed at how Prieto has organized and seamlessly assembled exercises, personal anecdotes and a deep knowledge of history in a fun and easy-to-understand narrative.

This book is unique in that it is mainly a drum method book, but it goes far beyond that in concept and philosophy. Any musician who has an interest in Cuban rhythms, their history and why they exist needs to give this a read. Yes, there are sections in the book that are drum-specific and extremely advanced, but Prieto, a Cuban American, spends considerable time discussing important players in the origins of Cuban music. Topics include: What is 3-2 or 2-3 clave and its cultural origins? Where did the tumbao bass line come from? Where did songo rhythm come from? How can I improve what I hear in my head in relation to what I actually play? Any musician could benefit greatly from Prieto's knowledge on these subjects.

On the drum-specific side, highlights of the book include an explanation of clave and why and how it works within the context of Cuban music.



Prieto goes beyond that, though, and gives many examples of how it works over cascara, songo and even a phrase from a Max Roach solo. One of my favorite parts of the book is where he talks about George Lawrence Stone's famous book *Stick Control*. Prieto developed a fascinating take on this book because when he was much younger, he couldn't read the English instructions. Through sheer creativity, he made it his own by assigning the sticking exercises between one hand and foot, then superimposed clave and cascara over that with the other hand. The result is an amazing and challenging re-imagining of traditional sticking exercises.

The second half of *A World of Rhythmic Possibilities* is dedicated more to drum set coordination skills and technique/control-building exercises. The final section gives fascinating insight on the concepts and manipulation of time, feel and beat placement.

There is a lot of material to digest here, but Prieto provides hundreds of demonstration audio clips and several videos (which can be accessed as supplemental material) to help point you in the right direction. As a teacher and performer, I think this book should be mandatory reading for any drum set student—but more importantly, any musician who is interested in Cuban music and its inner workings.

—Ryan Bennett

dafnisonmusic.com

Roland FP-90

Superb Action, Dynamic Control

Weighing 52 pounds, Roland's FP-90 portable digital piano has considerable depth to match its girth. With 88 weighted keys and four onboard speakers, there is good reason for its heft.

Since digital pianos often aim to replicate the experience of playing a real piano, the instrument's action and touch are of primary importance. Here Roland has done its homework. The FP-90's PHA-50 progressive hammer action keyboard—with escapement and hybrid wood and ivory-feel keys—is superb. It really does feel like a grand piano, and it affords the performer a substantial amount of dynamic control. A good test of a piano's playability for me is ragtime. A quick run-through of “Maple Leaf Rag” had me believing. Perfect balance of weight and bounce coupled with the previously mentioned dynamics give this keyboard excellent playability.

The typical assortment of piano sounds are here, with the Concert Piano being the highlight to these ears. Roland's SuperNATURAL Piano Modeling recreates the entire sound process of an acoustic piano, resulting in rich, complex sounds. The electric pianos are well done; “1976Suitcase” (Rhodes) and “Wurlry200” (Wurlitzer) are my favorites, with nice tremolo and bite when you dig in. The clavs seem an afterthought, with just two patches, both of which are too bright for my taste; however, a very accessible three-band EQ lets you mellow these out. The organs are slightly better than typical for this type of keyboard. Strings and pads sound lush and useful, especially when layered with a piano in dual mode. In the Other category, there are some poly synths and quite a few D50-esque sounds as well as an excellent acoustic bass that really shines in Split mode with Concert Piano up top. Finally, there are eight decent drum sets, an SFX patch and a full General MIDI implementation.

Four speakers placed along the back of the FP-90 allow the instrument to be played without additional amplification in the home as well as in small, intimate settings such as jazz duos and trios—but I'm not completely sold on the quality of the speaker sound.

There is a rudimentary MIDI recorder and a handy metronome that can be used anytime (yes!). You can also record audio performances as WAV or MP3 audio directly onto your own USB flash drive. There is a mic input (¼-inch) with some simple but useful effects available. Finally, Bluetooth audio/MIDI support is a welcome addition. You can use it to play audio from your smartphone or tablet as well as turn sheet music pages on your tablet using a pedal.

I recommend the FP-90 for families who want a quality digital piano for the home (pair it with the optional KSC-90 stand and KPD-90 three-pedal configuration), and the additional sounds and bluetooth functionality make it a good pick for working musicians.

—Rick Gehrenbeck

rolandus.com



T-Rex Replicator

Compact Analog Tape Delay

Denmark's T-Rex Engineering, producer of handmade guitar pedals since 1996, gained wide recognition with its Replica delay pedal, which offered studio-quality clarity combined with vintage warmth. Now, with one of the best digital delays already under its belt, T-Rex has created the Replicator, a new tape echo pedal that provides authentic analog tape delay in an impressively small package.

Digital technology has come a long way over the years, with tape echo simulation continually improving. But there is still nothing like the real thing. Vintage tape-based units have the sound but are bulky, fragile and finicky, requiring frequent maintenance. Even newer tape units like the Fulltone Tube Tape Echo are still large, heavy boxes that are practically impossible to integrate into a pedalboard. The Replicator is actually small enough to fit into a guitarist's rig, and its compact footprint and rugged construction definitely place it into a class all by itself.

T-Rex co-founder Lars Dahl-Jorgensen had been toying with the idea of making a real tape echo for years. “The digital units have tried to achieve the real analog tape echo sound, but as you know, the algorithms are missing all the secret harmonics,” he said. His solution was to construct the Replicator using ⅛-inch tape in order to keep the unit compact and portable. T-Rex also designed its own magnetic heads for the Replicator.

Right out of the box, the Replicator shines in terms of its rugged metal housing and sleek appearance. For safe traveling, a nice padded case is included. At the heart of the box is the tape cassette cartridge, which can easily be removed for painless replacing of the tape loop, and T-Rex even ships the delay with an extra cassette. The Replicator features two playback heads in addition to the record head and uses BASF C-30 chrome tape, which is the thickest ⅛-inch tape available and is capable of holding up to the stress of regular use. There are six rotary control knobs on the face of the unit that offer an extremely high level of control over shaping your sound. Four stomp switches provide foot control over functions such as bypass, playback head selection, chorus modulation and even a tap-tempo function.

The instant you play through the Replicator, it becomes apparent that this is a true tape echo with all the nuances and quirks that only analog tape can provide. It takes a bit of experimentation to dial in your desired sound, but there is enough flexibility to create everything from classic '50s slapback to a wide array of special effects. The head selector allows for three modes—head one, head two, or both—which will offer up an ample array of delay times. You can even control tape speed and delay repetitions (feedback) with optional expression pedals.

The T-Rex Replicator is absolutely one of a kind, and, as Dahl-Jorgensen noted, “It has created its own standard.” There is nothing like the real deal, and for those that appreciate it, this modern take on a vintage classic is well worth the \$899 price tag.

—Keith Baumann

t-rex-effects.com

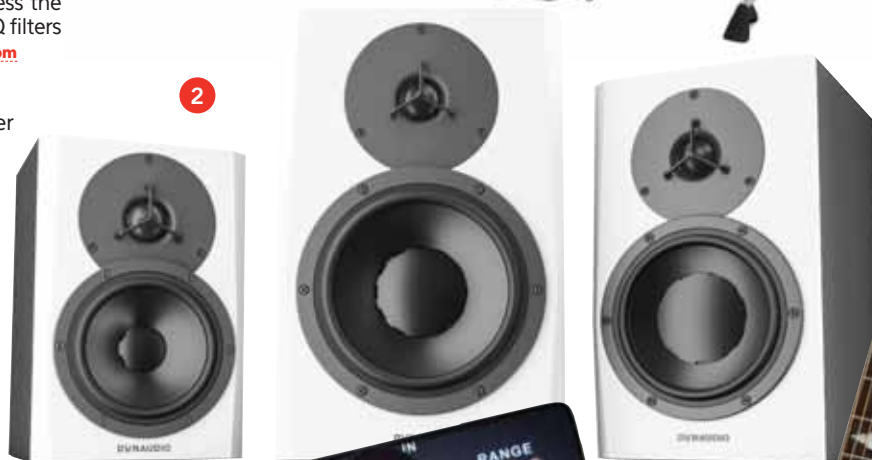
1. Galactic Finishes

Pearl has added three new finish options to its Decade Maple series, available in two all-maple shell packs. Each new Decade Maple kit showcases high-density Galaxy Flake sparkle finishes for a dazzling dual-dimensional visual effect. Options include Ocean Galaxy Flake, Crimson Galaxy Flake and Slate Galaxy Flake wraps made exclusively for Pearl by Delmar USA. pearldrums.com



2. Extended Sweet Spot

Dynaudio's LYD 5, LYD 7 and LYD 8 monitors offer consistent sound across various listening levels, as well as an extended sweet spot that eliminates the need for studio collaborators to take turns in the dead-center position while mixing. The monitors also address the issue of phase errors when applying EQ filters to adjust for room acoustics. dynaudio.com



3. Small Wonder

Mojo Hand FX has released the Wonder Filter, which was inspired by the original Musitronics Mu-Tron III envelope filter frequently employed by Stevie Wonder. The refined pedal features a Mode selector switch, Notch Filter and a No Filter setting that offers preamp standalone boost capability. With a full-range Attack knob, the Wonder Filter offers users the ability to fine-tune a wider range of sounds and sensitivity by tweaking response in conjunction with the Gain knob. The pedal also adds a Boost knob and Mix control, a feature not typically found on envelope filters. mojohandfx.com



4. True Acoustics

Epiphone's Masterbilt Century Collection of archtop guitars are designed to be played as true acoustic instruments. The company's original Masterbilt archtops from the 1930s were known for their wide tonal range, punchy volume and warm, woody tone. The new collection updates the design with the eSonic HD preamp and Shadow NanoFlex HD under-saddle pickup.

epiphone.com

5. Percussion Transcriptions

Sher Music's *The Language of the Masters: Transcriptions and Etudes of 10 Great Latin Percussion Artists*, by Michael Spiro and Michael Coletti, is a collection of solos by Tito Puente, Ray Barretto, Mongo Santamaria, Guillermo Barreto, Yeyito, Tata Guines, Johnny Rodriguez, Orestes Vilato, Manny Oquendo, Armando Peraza and Giovanni Hidalgo. In addition to the transcriptions, the authors have included etudes that summarize each artist's approach to soloing. Each etude comes with downloadable play-along tracks—one with and one without the solo being present.

shermusic.com





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DALE PRESTON

Jazz Essential at Oberlin

OBERLIN COLLEGE FIRST APPEARED ON the jazz map in March 1953, when the Dave Brubeck Quartet performed at the school's Finney Chapel. The concert yielded a landmark album on Fantasy Records, *Jazz At Oberlin*, and proved to be something of a watershed in the acceptance of jazz in the academy.

These days, jazz is an essential component at many of the top music schools, Oberlin's among them. Located in northern Ohio, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music boasts about 85 jazz-studies majors and as many as 25 small ensembles in any given semester. The star-studded faculty includes trumpeter Eddie Henderson, saxophonist Gary Bartz, trombonist Robin Eubanks and drummer Billy Hart.

In 1973, jazz courses became part of the Oberlin curriculum with the hiring of composer Wendell Logan (1940–2010), who began teaching jazz theory, arranging and aural skills. In 1988, Oberlin hired Bobby Ferrazza to teach guitar, and the following year, at Logan's urging, the school established a jazz studies department and a major in jazz studies. Gradually, the number of students choosing the major grew, as did Ferrazza's stature in the school. He is now a professor of jazz guitar and director of the division of jazz studies.

Paralleling the growth in jazz majors has been an increase in small ensembles. While the number can vary from semester to semester depending on the need—students form the combos, and the level of demand helps determine their number—they distinguish the jazz program and serve as a selling point when potential recruits hear of them.

The students have plenty of latitude in forming the groups; the main constraint is that no single student can participate in more than two. Like the big band maintained by the jazz

program, the small groups provide outlets for students seeking to hear their music performed and help shape the compositions of others.

"What they learn from this is how to develop their own artistic vision," Ferrazza said.

Eubanks, who is part of the visiting faculty, is integral to guiding that vision. Recommended for the job by J.J. Johnson, who briefly taught trombone at Oberlin, Eubanks not only teaches the instrument—currently, he gives lessons to about a half-dozen performance majors—he also oversees the handful of students who are majoring in composition. Their output runs the stylistic gamut. "It's very individualistic," he said. "And I like it that way."

Eubanks also takes on what he called "secondary" students—those from the classical side of the conservatory who want to broaden their perspective by picking up pointers in areas like improvisation or jazz composition.

With the addition of faculty like Eubanks, the jazz department has become a major presence in the 580-student conservatory. While Ferrazza said the department isn't necessarily looking to expand that presence generally, it is seeking growth in the area of vocal instruction, having added its first voice professor, La Tanya Hall, in fall 2016.

A key to attracting interest in Oberlin is the elegant Bertram and Judith Kohl Building. Opened in 2010, it houses spaces for the teaching, practice, rehearsal, recording and performance of jazz, as well as more than 100,000 jazz recordings.

An ultramodern structure, it symbolizes the college's commitment to jazz and the degree to which it has moved beyond the skepticism about the music that held sway in some quarters when Brubeck made his famous trip to campus.

—Phillip Lutz



GREG KESSLER

Coffin, Caleb at JEN: Saxophonists Jeff Coffin and Caleb Chapman will lead their "Inside of the Outside Project"—featuring saxophonists Branford Marsalis and Kirk Whalum, bassist Victor Wooten, trumpeters Randy Brecker and Rashawn Ross, and pianist John Beasley—in a ticketed concert at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans on Jan. 6. The concert will be held as part of the 2017 Jazz Education Network Conference. Caleb Chapman's Crescent Super Band, an after-school jazz ensemble for musicians ages 15–18, will also perform. Chapman, a 2015 DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award winner, has been leading the group since 2001. The JEN Conference is scheduled to take place Jan. 4–7. jazzednet.org

Next Generation Applicants: Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 Next Generation Jazz Festival, an extension of the Monterey Jazz Festival that recognizes the nation's most talented music students. Qualified applicants can apply through Jan. 15. Finalists will be selected through recorded auditions that are reviewed and ranked by a panel of renowned jazz educators. The top student groups will receive cash awards and will be invited to perform at the 60th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival, scheduled to take place Sept. 15–17, 2017.

montereyjazzfestival.org/NGJF

Positive Lab Results: The One O'Clock Lab Band from The University of North Texas has released a new recording under the direction of Jay Saunders. *Lab 2016* (North Texas Jazz) is a collection of modern large-ensemble music that includes jazz standards and new compositions written and arranged by student musicians. An original chart by drummer Dennis Mackrel, a recent guest artist at UNT, is included as a bonus. jazz.unt.edu

Music Therapists in Panama: The 2017 Panama Jazz Festival will host the V Latin American Music Therapy Symposium, bringing music therapists from Latin America and the United States together for presentations on the therapeutic effects of music. The 14th Annual Panama Jazz Festival will be held Jan. 10–14 at The City of Knowledge in Panama City. panamajazzfestival.com

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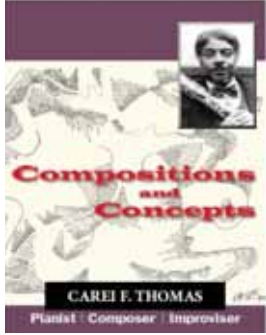
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Christian McBride

Christian McBride has grown into the role of jazz statesman, ranging from his artistic director gigs (at Newport, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, Jazz House Kids) to his radio shows, including NPR's *Jazz Night in America* and SiriusXM's *The Lowdown: Conversations With Christian*. At the 2016 Monterey Jazz Festival, the Mack Avenue recording star served as the musical director for the opening night orchestral tribute to Quincy Jones, "The A&M Years," and he led his trio on a Saturday night showcase. The following afternoon, McBride took his fourth DownBeat Blindfold Test in front of a live audience at Dizzy's Den on the Monterey Fairgrounds.

Kenny Barron/Dave Holland

"Segment" (*The Art Of Conversation*, Impulse, 2014) Barron, piano; Holland, bass.

I loved it. It felt like I was at Bradley's, that legendary club in Greenwich Village that I was able to catch [during] the last seven years of its existence. Even though I went to Juilliard for college, I got my *real* education at Bradley's. The core of the shows there were piano and bass duos. So this took me back to the '90s when I was getting my butt kicked by probably one of the people on this track. So I'd say Kenny Barron and Dave Holland. A couple of things clued me to that: the song choice and Dave's style—he does a skip when he plays this style. It's definitive. Kenny, pound for pound, is one of the greatest unsung heroes of modern piano. I recognized a couple of harmonic things that he does on this tune.

Ron Carter

"Blues Farm" (*Blues Farm*, Sony, 2003, rec'd 1973) Carter, bass; Richard Tee, piano; Hubert Laws, flute; Billy Cobham, drums; Ralph MacDonald, percussion.

Funky. That's my wheelhouse. The bass player has to be Ron Carter from one of the CTI albums. Is it *Blues Farm*? I loved this, too. Ron has one of the most distinctive sounds and feel. That groove and the sound were early '70s CTI, when Hubert and Ron were the backbone of all the recordings there.

Stanley Clarke

"Come On" (*The Toys Of Men*, Heads Up, 2007) Clarke, bass; Ruslan Sirota, keyboards; Jef Lee Johnson, guitar; Mads Tolling, violin; Ronald Bruner Jr., drums.

Now, this is muscle fusion, and I like it a lot. I think I know who the bassist is—it's the sort of fusion and classic soul that was my gateway into straight-ahead jazz. The first name that came to mind was Stanley Clarke. That's what I thought at first, but I was waiting for one of Stanley's signatures, like eye-popping lines in the upper register. So when I didn't hear that I was second-guessing myself. But I'll say Stanley. That's his groove.

Victor Wooten

"Medley: Someday My Prince Will Come, Misty, A Night In Tunisia, Victor's Blues" (*A Show Of Hands 15*, Vix Records 2011, rec'd 1996) Wooten, bass.

What an amazing display of virtuosity. The four-song medley is cool, but I wish he would've stretched more on "Someday My Prince Will Come" instead of a quick scene from song to song. But that's my preference. The concept seems geared to the technical aspect of the bass instead of elucidating on the musical aspect. Even so, this guy's got plenty of chops. It's Victor Wooten. Like Stanley, I know the sound of his bass and I've been a fan for some years. I know all those Wooten 101 licks. He's always had a strong funk sense, but his harmonic concept has grown exponentially over the years. There was a lot of counterpoint and harmony in here. That's years of shedding and spending time with people who know something about harmony. I love everything Victor does.

Christian McBride performs with his trio at the 2016 Monterey Jazz Festival.



Wadada Leo Smith& John Lindberg

"Feathers And Earth, Part II" (*Celestial Weather*, TUM Records, 2015) Smith, trumpet; Lindberg, bass.

What year? 2015? OK, I'm screwed. I was going to say Malachi Favors and Lester Bowie. So, you got me. I dig the tonal center. It was very free and elastic and I dig the experimentation. I remember Herbie Hancock saying about the Miles band that they were playing "controlled freedom." That's what this is like.

Thundercat

"Oh Sheit It's X" (*Apocalypse*, Brainfeeder, 2013) Thundercat, bass; other artists.

In the first couple of seconds, I was thinking, 'Oh, this was something from middle school, but I don't remember the tune.' Then after listening to the lyrics, I thought, 'No, this is recent.' My guess is Thundercat, who is crazy good. As I kept listening to it, I was thinking, 'Somebody's playing a Moogerfooger.' Not a lot of cats do that, and there were the electric drums and synths. I've seen Thundercat a lot of times live. I like that stuff. It's so funky. Anything with a strong groove, I like. I don't care what you do on top, as long as the foundation is strong, I'm there.

Derrick Hodge

"Don Blue" (*The Second*, Derrick Hodge, Blue Note, 2016) Hodge, all instruments.

Is this Derrick Hodge? When I was the artistic director of the summer camp at Aspen Snowmass, Derrick was a student. So I've been following his career with Terence Blanchard and the last couple of projects he's done. This was excellent. It sounds like he's playing a six-string fretless bass so that he could play those notes really high. I've never heard him play this way before, so I'm impressed.

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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