

DOWNBEAT 2017

HOLIDAY

GIFT GUIDE »



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Season of Giving

Ella, Albums, Books, Gear & More in our Fanatics' Shopping Guide



Champion Fulton

COURTESY OF ARTIST



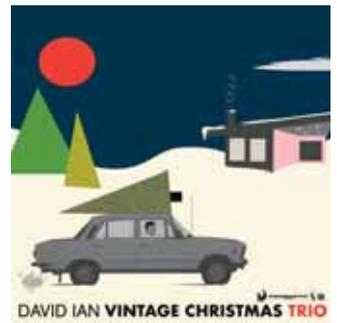
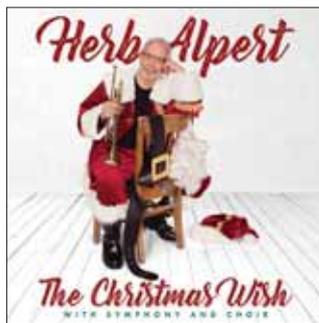
Diana Panton

JOSE CRESPO



Clockwise from top: Dave Koz, Peter White, David Benoit and Rick Braun

ANTONIO DIXON



Stellar Stocking Stuffers

By Frank-John Hadley

Unlike the ice slowing melting beneath Santa's North Pole digs, Yuletide music enjoys a state of permanence. Each year there are artists who rummage through the musical chestnuts and craft albums that allow listeners to rediscover the goodwill and cheer in which the worthiest holiday music is grounded.

The San Francisco organization **Jazz At The Ballroom**, which supports music education in Bay Area schools, has a stake in benevolence. On its album *Christmas* (**Jazz At The Ballroom**; 53:54 ★★★½), nine jazz artists soothe the souls of listeners with interpretations of mainly well-known songs. Singer-bassist Nicki Parrott and singer-pianist Champion Fulton convey warm, reserved demeanors. A sense of playfulness surfaces in Ken Peplowski's clarinet work on "Carol Of The Bells," while vocalist Kathryn Crosby quietly savors the romance of "White Christmas," the Irving Berlin classic made uber-famous by her late husband. Vocalist-pianist Tony Desare works his charm and pulls "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" back from treacly sentimentality. Still, all's not snug and cozy around this hearth: The venerable Freddie Cole has sung better in past Decembers, and Kitty Margolis isn't exactly convincing.

Ordering info: jazzattheballroom.com

As evidenced by her performances on the aforementioned *Jazz at the Ballroom* album, hol-

iday genialness comes naturally to **Champion Fulton**. Her album *Christmas With Champion* (**Champion Records** 001; 59:36 ★★★★★) finds her dispelling the deadening familiarity of dry evergreens like "Let It Snow," allowing listeners to hear a shopworn lyric and melody as if for the first time. Her attractive singing voice and piano playing fit well with David Williams' bass and Fukushi Tainaka's drums. She enjoys a familial bond by having her father, trumpet/flugelhorn player Steve Fulton, contribute to five tracks. On Fulton's original vocal number "Merry Merry Christmas," the only accompaniment is her expressive piano work.

Ordering info: champion.net

Herb Alpert hasn't trimmed a tree in a recording studio since 1968, but now he's back in Yuletide mode. On *The Christmas Wish* (**Herb Alpert Presents** 177; 54:07 ★★★★★), his trumpet crackles with joy in first-rate arrangements by Chris Walden that offer fresh approaches to chestnuts like "Santa Baby" and "Winter Wonderland." Judicious employment of a 45-piece orchestra and 32-person choir reduces the threat of excessive elaboration. The meticulous singing of Alpert's wife, Lani Hall, adorns the title track.

Ordering info: herbalpert.com

Another advocate of archangel Gabriel's horn, **Chris Pasin**, used his memories of child-

hood Christmases to inform the enjoyable jazz he presents on *Baby It's Cold Outside* (**Planet Arts** 301714; 55:17 ★★★★★). The trumpeter and several collaborators, including pianist Armen Donelian, toggle between calm introspection and swinging heat as required for their treatments of the usual carols and secular songs.

Ordering info: chrispasin.com

Hop aboard the golden sleigh steered by **Dave Koz & Friends** for a pleasant, smooth ride. Named for two decades of special holiday concerts, the album *20th Anniversary Christmas* (**Concord** 00567; 45:41 ★★★½) entertains with the saxophonist, pianist David Benoit, trumpeter Rick Braun and acoustic guitarist Peter White reappraising ye olde favorites plus one relative newcomer, Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah."

Ordering info: christmas.davekoz.com

If there's any justice in Santa's world, **Jason Paul Curtis** and *These Christmas Days* (self-released; 34:32 ★★★★★) will be appreciated far and wide. A Sinatra-influenced singer-songwriter based in the Washington, D.C., area, he's got a real feel for the fun or romantic words he's crafted for eight tuneful originals. Complementing Curtis' pleasant charisma are a Basie-ish big band called *Swing Shift* and his combo *Swinglab*.

Ordering info: jasonpaulcurtis.com

A vocalist whose career spans more than four decades, Nashville's **Debbie Williams** sounds at ease locating the prettiness in the mostly routine tunes on *When Christmas Was Christmas* (335 Records 1709; 34:35 ★★★★★). She usually keeps sentimentality at a tolerable level. Veteran producer Billy Terrell, who is more susceptible to insipidity, had a hand in composing the neat title track.

Ordering info: 335records.com

Eugene Marlow's Heritage Ensemble recognized the stale orthodoxy of much holiday music and chose to do something about it on *A Not So Silent Night* (MEII Enterprises; 37:44 ★★★★★). The Hanukkah, Noel and New Year's songs derive a good part of their ecumenical chutzpah from the inventiveness of Marlow's arrangements and the spry individuality of his pianism. It's a blessing that the ensemble approaches "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel," "Jingle Bells" and the rest with the right mix of audacity and familiarity.

Ordering info: eugenemarlow.com

The Canadian band **Sultans of String** keeps imaginative imperatives in overdrive for the entirety of *Christmas Caravan* (self-released; 72:45 ★★★★★), a generous pitch for global unity through the music of Christmas, Kwanza and Hanukkah. These five musicians have jubilantly recharged the classics with arrangements that demand attention. "Greensleeves" has a Turkish flair as violinist Chris McKhool and the other Sultans are joined by Istanbul's Gündem Yayli Grubu string ensemble. The Ukrainian New Year's carol "Shchedryk" ("Carol Of The Bells")—performed here with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra—progresses with uplifting energy. The Sultans can slow down and be reflective, too: "Silent Night" is simply beautiful.

Ordering info: sultansofstring.com

Also hailing from Canada is **Diana Panton**, a sensitive singer with a lovely voice who brings a warm glow to all 15 tracks on *Christmas Kiss* (eOne 5605; 62:16 ★★★★★). She deftly uses gossamer shading and rhythmic subtlety to recondition conservative picks like "Winter Wonderland" and more thoughtfully chosen tunes, such as Ted Shapiro's 1941 composition "Winter Weather" and John Leslie McFarland's "Kissing By The Mistletoe."

Ordering info: dianapanton.com

Another native Canadian with polite merri-ness to share, pianist **David Ian**, gives us *Vintage Christmas Trio* (Prescott 0005; 34:06 ★★★★★), his third and best holiday release. Supported by the fine acoustic bassist Jon Estes and the agile drummer Josh Hunt, Ian explores the strengths of "Silver Bells," "Good King Wenceslas," "Up On The Housetop" and seven more tunes. Ian has an intelligent playing style, always avoiding the weak emotion

that plagues less thoughtful musicians.

Ordering info: lanttunes.com

Out of Norway comes *December Songs* (Losen 157; 51:29 ★★★★★). The longtime duo of pianist Olga Konkova and guitarist Jens Thoresen crafts spare versions of European carols and commercial chestnuts ("Jingle Bells," "White Christmas") with a sense of repose. Even when their instincts for the lyrical don't always pan out, they communicate a deep empathy for the dignified joy inherent in the material.

Ordering info: loosenrecords.no

Silent Night: Christmas Carols On Acoustic Guitar (Acoustic Music 319.1564.2; 36:47 ★★★★★) tenders rare rewards with a dozen tracks by five Europeans who display exceptional skills as soloists and as arrangers. Steve Hicks, an Englishman, delves into the beautiful melodies of carols from Great Britain as well as Paraguayan classical guitarist Augustín Barrios' "Villancico De Navidad." Germany's Peter Autschbach is poised, precise and loving with his version of "Silent Night," while countryman Ernie Rissmann follows the way of his heart as he interprets the handsome old Albion tune "In The Bleak Midwinter." Brazil's Rainer Mafra treats both lighthearted and reflective songs with understanding. Thomas Ruez's folkly picks "Oh You Little Merry One" and "Come Children" may not be particularly Christmassy, but this Austrian, playing resonator guitar, articulates a sense of elation.

Ordering info: acoustic-music.de

Better known in Europe than in the States, **Liz McComb** sings the carols and spirituals on her album *Merry Christmas* (GVE; 44:02 ★★★★★) with a conviction rooted in her experience growing up in an African-American church. Her supple, limber voice conveys not only religious devotion but also the more secular warmth of the season, equally persuasive on "When Was Jesus Born?" and "The Christmas Song." No stranger to jazz and blues, McComb is a skilled pianist, and her accompanists furnish guitar, drums, percussion, organ and additional piano.

Ordering info: lizmccomb.com

The Supremes' two-disc set *The Ultimate Merry Christmas* (Real Gone Music 0642; 71:11/71:00 ★★★★★½) has the original 1965 album in mono and stereo versions plus all manner of remixes, alternate mixes and outtakes—a whopping 16 previously unissued. The melodic obscurity "Bright Little Star" is more luminous than the carols here. Among the noteworthy bonus tracks are a fun 1967 club performance of "Greensleeves" and a moving rendition of "Silent Night" that features the perennially overshadowed Florence Ballard.

DB

Ordering info: realgonemusic.com



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Glorious Gifts for Ella's Centennial

Every fall, record labels release lavish, extravagant box sets that few of us would buy for ourselves but that cause us to make imperial proclamations of our generosity toward others during the holidays. If you feel generous and wish to emphasize your own good taste as well, check out the lineup below. Why? Because very few Baby Boomers—or their offspring and maybe even *their* offspring—would not delight in getting a new **Ella Fitzgerald** or **Louis Armstrong** collection this holiday season. The gift of Ella's music is a fine way to salute the immortal "First Lady of Song" as her centennial year comes to a close.

In hindsight, it's surprising that Fitzgerald (1917-'96) didn't collaborate with Armstrong (1901-'71) sooner in her career. You'd think they would have found each other quickly. Each had recorded for Decca for a full decade, but their paths didn't cross until January 1946. It might have been the beginning of a productive musical friendship, except that their first session together would be Armstrong's last for Decca for three-and-a-half years. That accounts for the cutoff date on *The Complete Decca Singles 1935-1946* (Verve Records/UMe; ume.lnk.to/louiscompletedecca), a digital-only

compilation of 136 titles covering Armstrong's most commercially diverse decade, the one that climaxed with his first duet with Fitzgerald.

Armstrong was commercial in a way that fit the Decca model. He was a self-governing sovereign with few musical loyalties. A band-leader in name only, he readily transplanted himself from Luis Russell (his working band) to Jimmy Dorsey to Glen Gray to the Mills Bros. to Lyn Murray—yes, even to Andy Iona and his Islanders. (Just imagine Duke Ellington moonlighting with Glenn Miller at Victor or Count Basie with Ish Kabibble at Columbia.)

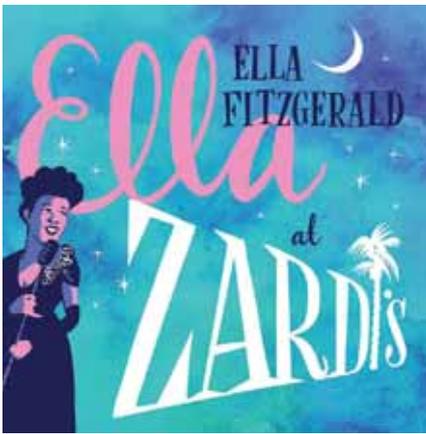
But Armstrong could breeze through any genre and always be Louis. This collection finds him covering all bases, from humdrum song selections to 18 well-polished re-creations of earlier classics (e.g., "West End Blues"). But this period also generated fresh Armstrong classics that now have permanent pedestals in the canon: "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," "Swing That Music," "Jubilee" and more, all of which catch the sound of his trumpet at its mature height.

If you'd prefer to wrap an actual box to put under the Christmas tree (rather than a digital

gift), the procession begins with the four-disc set *Ella Fitzgerald And Louis Armstrong—Cheek To Cheek: The Complete Duets* (Verve Records/UMe; us.udiscovermusic.com or Amazon). This is most comprehensive Ella-Louis scrapbook ever compiled. With the Decca and Verve catalogs now siblings under the extended Universal Music parent company, all things are possible.

Still, the old contrasts are striking. Decca was trolling for a hit single in the novelty market, while Verve couldn't have cared less. So the first Verve *Ella And Louis* album startled us with Armstrong's voice and horn presented in a way no one had ever heard before—close up and cozy. His rusty growl sounded exposed, almost naked without the camouflage of the All-Stars.

Verve executive Norman Granz amplified the intimacy by using only the Oscar Peterson trio with Buddy Rich and 11 leisurely ballads, most new to him. Granz told them to take their time, and they did. For Ella, it was home. For Louis, whose trumpet is laid-back and close to the texts, it was a breakthrough to the core of his artistry. A year later, *Ella And Louis Again* was recorded in three sessions. It captures the



same pillow-talk intimacy, but with a wider range of tempos. “Stompin’ At The Savoy” seems to combust spontaneously. All the tune sequences here follow the original LPs.

Five days later they began their magnum opus, the deluxe two-LP *Porgy And Bess*. If the first duets achieved warmth, this one aimed for grandeur. Russ Garcia’s orchestrations swell and shrink with a theatrical flamboyance. Armstrong’s horn, soft-spoken before, has as a concert-hall stateliness, though sometimes uncertain of the new terrain. Of the 17 songs only four are actually performed as duets. But among the many *Porgy and Bess* treatments, this one remains a unique achievement—a splendid rivalry between Gershwin’s operatic aspirations and the sui generis imprints of Ella and Louis at their best.

The surprises come on the fourth disc, which gives us a peak into both the fun and frustration of the creative process. Armstrong moves through eight takes on “Bess, Oh Where’s My Bess” without nailing it. The issued version ended up being an overdub Louis recorded several months later. There are also several trumpet rehearsals of a piece called “Red Headed Woman,” which is not listed in any Armstrong discography. It is actually the instrumental section interpolated into “There’s A Boat That’s Leavin’ Soon For New York.”

The crown jewel this season is the six-LP set *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The George And Ira Gershwin Song Books* (Verve/UMe). Michelangelo carved his monuments in stone. Granz used vinyl. And when he considered something of particular value, he draped it in a luxurious wardrobe of packaging, lest no one misunderstand its consequence.

The Fitzgerald-Gershwin project was perhaps Granz’s most enduring achievement. It was an authentic work of art. Uncluttered by commercial intent, the cover art announced itself without a syllable of copy, only a bold French Impressionist face and the imposing signature of Bernard Buffet. Universal

has now restored this masterpiece to its original vinyl magnificence and physical presence. Holding one of the shiny, 12-inch discs is like cradling a specimen of Dresden porcelain. Even those without a turntable may covet this limited edition for the sheer privilege of exhibiting an objet d’art. Those who do have one can experience the 53 original recordings with Nelson Riddle as Granz intended, plus a sixth LP of bonus items previously issued on *The Complete Ella Fitzgerald Song Books* in 1993.

With the Fitzgerald centennial winding down, Universal and others have been busy with smaller monuments as well. Two live discoveries are notable. *Ella At Zardi’s* (Verve/UMe) will likely create a similar buzz to the singer’s *Twelve Nights In Hollywood* set from 2009. It captures two sets from the night of Feb. 2, 1956, just after the formation of Verve and just before the Cole Porter songbook work began. Timing alone makes it a career landmark, and “Airmail Special,” “Bernie’s Tune” and a slow “My Heart Belongs To Daddy” add to the musical surprises. She sings “I’ve Got A Crush On You” to Riddle, who was in the audience.

More for the hardcore fan is *Ella Fitzgerald: Live At Chautauqua, Vol. 2* (Dot Time Records; dottimerecords.com), a previously unreleased concert recording made in 1968 at Chautauqua Institution Amphitheater in New York state. The 46-minute set concludes with a historically important tune, “He Had A Dream,” a moving tribute to Martin Luther King. (This album, part of Dot Time Records’ Legends Series, is a companion to *Live At Chautauqua, Vol. 1*, which was released in 2015.)

For those who prefer a one-stop overview of at least two-thirds of her career, the four-disc set *Ella Fitzgerald, 100 Songs For A Centennial* (Verve/UMe) provides a 50/50 mix from the Decca and Verve periods that highlights the contrasts between sales-driven Decca years and the high-art plateaus Fitzgerald reached on Verve—although the work she did with pianist Ellis Larkins in 1950 is as complete as anything she produced under Granz.

One of those pieces is part of *Someone To Watch Over Me* (Verve/UMe), in which several of her more small-scale combo works from the Decca and Verve years are augmented by newly recorded London Symphony Orchestra accompaniments. The original sparse backing leaves plenty of room for the orchestrations to breathe without tripping into any background bottlenecks. Thanks to the magic of digital recording technology, Gregory Porter joins Fitzgerald and Larkins on their 1954 rendition of “People Will Say We’re In Love.”

—John McDonough

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Remembering an Icon

The centennial celebrations for Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Ella Fitzgerald have taken away some of the spotlight from the incomparable Buddy Rich (1917–'87). But there are some new releases to remind us what a fantastic drummer he was. They come in packages that compile music that was included a 1985 three-LP set, *Mr. Drums, Buddy Rich Live On King Street*. Video footage of the performances has been issued in various formats over the years. Now, just before 2017 ends, the soundtrack comes to bat as a digital release in two batches. An LP incarnation is scheduled for January. These performances were chronicled on two separate DVDs issued by Lightyear in 2003 and 2005. At press time, remastered digital versions of the two films were scheduled for release in November.

Rich came of age in the 1930s, when drummers like Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, Sid Catlett, Jo Jones and Louie Bellson filled the spotlight with visual precision and breathtaking speed. They knew exactly what they were doing because to be in the spotlight was to be a star. For more than 50 years no one filled a spotlight like Rich, who bounded around a drum set like an acrobat radiating attitude like lasers.

Unlike most veteran musicians—whose work can be sorted easily into prime, middle and late periods—Rich never had a “late period.” None that was identifiable, at least. Yes, the music here was recorded in the twilight of his career—two years plus a day before his death on April 2, 1987, to be exact. But the machinery of

his technique and style never lost its precision tolerances or torrential force. In a way, technique was his style. When Catlett or Krupa soloed, their rhythms often nested in your memory. But Rich preferred to flood audiences in a hurricane of surging rolls and cross-over gymnastics that became stroboscopic streaks of sound. The rhythmic design and detail were there but unknowable, camouflaged in a storm of velocity.

Many of the charts he played were built around these qualities—fast, dense, punchy orchestrations that Rich could lean into and punch back at. The Rich band was action-packed, and we get a nice cross section of its history on *Channel One Set* and *The Lost Tapes* (Lightyear/Lobitos Creek; lightyear.com). Together they mix some of the early mid-'60s book with later work. Even a slow piece like “Sophisticated Lady” rolls forward like layers of harmonic lava, with Rich nudging quietly here and there. On fast numbers like “No Exit” he shoves ahead like an express snowplow. It’s all very dazzling. But Rich was a superb small-group drummer as well. And it’s often on the lighter charts, such as “One O’clock Jump” or even “Love For Sale,” that his playing is more supportive than exhorting. Among the other reprises are “Norwegian Wood,” “Mexicali Rose,” “Willowcrest” and “New Blues.”

Also reprised are Rich’s two most expansive showcases, “West Side Story Medley” and “Channel One Suite.” Each is a somewhat discursive concert piece with abrupt shifts in mood and tempo pasted together with flowery transi-

tions. But the former had the advantage of familiarity and became among his most requested showstoppers.

So who was Buddy Rich? And was he really the Grinch that a series of covertly taped and widely circulated tantrums from 1970 have portrayed him to be? “I wrote nearly a whole chapter about these famous ‘bus tapes’ because they have come to define him so much,” says Pelle Berglund, whose 500-page biography, *Buddy Rich: One of a Kind* (Sivart Publishing Co.; sivart.se), is planned for December publication. “But they’re not the full picture. I found he was warm, playful, and always defended his musicians in interviews. He demanded very much of them and of himself. But I don’t buy the picture that he was always rude and angry. I think this book is needed because others didn’t cover the whole picture. He did 250 concerts a year—this with three heart attacks, broken arms, and often great physical pain. Yet he kept on playing. He always wanted to do better than the night before. That’s what the book is about. What pushed him forward, sometimes even risking his life. I didn’t want to write a book about technique. I wanted to write about the man and how he could force himself so hard.”

Though only a couple of chapters were available for review at press time, a full 500 pages on Rich, whose career took him from Artie Shaw through Jazz at the Philharmonic to 20 years leading the last commercially successful big band in American music, could hardly be boring. —John McDonough

Fans Get Lucky

Tenor saxophonist **Lucky Thompson** (1924–2005) worked in some of the most famous jazz orchestras of the 1940s and early '50s, playing in big bands led by such swing icons as Billy Eckstine, Lionel Hampton and Count Basie. He was one of the first African Americans in Boyd Raeburn's legendary orchestra. Thompson often found himself on the bandstand situated in proximity to such future giants as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Charles Mingus, Leo Parker and many more. According to jazz critics of the time, Thompson was in the same league as these extraordinary gentlemen, garnering comparisons to modern jazz pioneers such as Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young in the pages of publications like *DownBeat* and *Esquire*.

But the intriguing thing about Thompson was that he clearly didn't suffer fools gladly. His quickness to call out club owners or music industry executives who did him wrong earned him a reputation for being difficult, costing him gigs both at clubs and in the studio.

Tired of petty politics, Thompson relocated to Paris in 1956, where he would spend the remainder of the decade honing his craft in the small-band format with some of the hottest players in French jazz. He frequently collaborated with pianist Martial Solal, and he worked with a rotating combo consisting of such young Parisian lions as guitarist Jean-Pierre Sasson, bassist Benoit Quersin and drummer Gérard "Dave" Pochonet. He also shared the bandstand with fellow American expats, like trumpeter Emmett Berry, drummer Kenny Clarke and pianist Sammy Price.

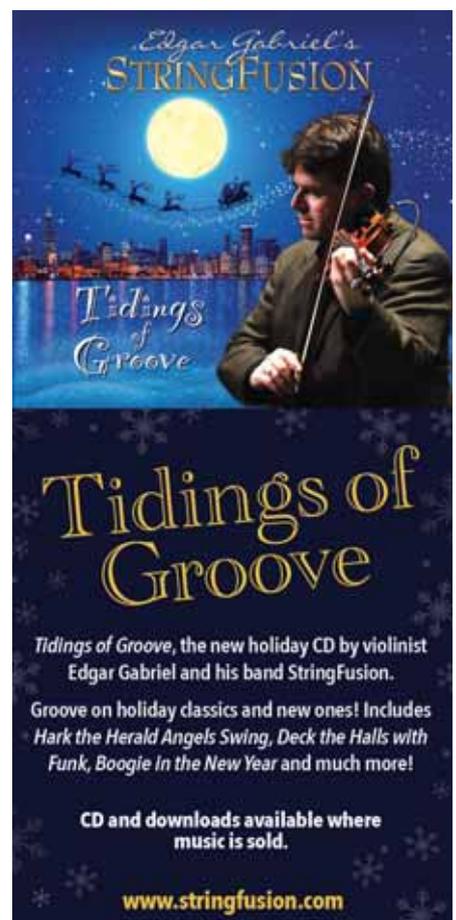
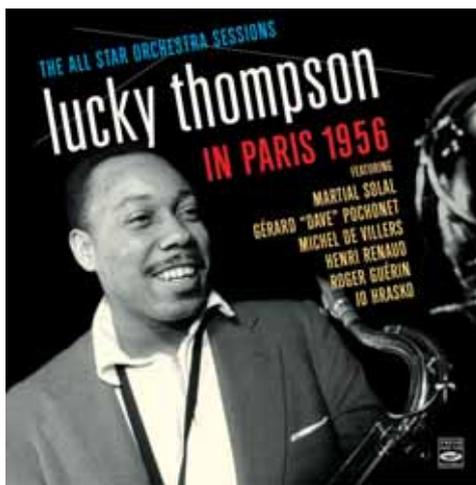
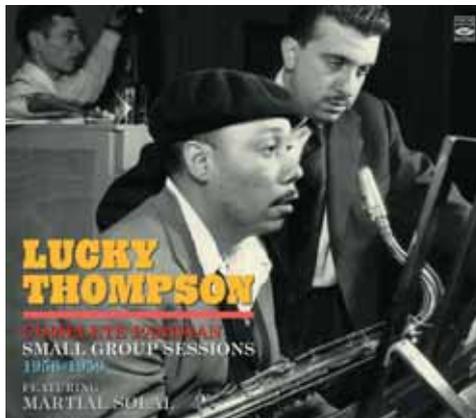
Recorded in mono, the four-disc set *Complete Parisian Small Group Sessions 1956–1959* (Fresh Sound Records; freshsoundsrecords.com) documents Thompson's transition from

a blacklisted freelance musician in the States to one of the most respected and in-demand leaders on the Parisian scene. His work in the quartet and quintet formats allowed him to explore the feather-light intimacies of melody, rhythm and texture, expressing himself in a way that would have been difficult, if not impossible, in a big band.

For fans who prefer to hear Thompson in the throes of a large ensemble, there's a companion disc, *Lucky Thompson In Paris 1956* (Fresh Sound Records), which shines a light on the saxophonist's All Star Orchestra Sessions. On the first of these sessions, Thompson joined the 10-piece Modern Jazz Group to play five compositions written by pianist Henri Renaud (including "Meet Quincy Jones") and arranged to highlight the newly arrived saxophonist. For the remaining three sessions, Thompson and Pochonet co-lead medium-sized all-star groups that played originals like Sasson's "Portrait Of Django" and Thompson's "Still Waters," as well as an arrangement of Count Basie and Neal Hefti's "Bluebeard Blues."

The pleasures of hearing this unsung tenor master overcome the dogma of his homeland and reinvent his legacy as a leader makes these reissues a revelation, especially if you are a fan of the embryonic stage of modern jazz.

Moreover, Thompson's life story illustrates a vitally important lesson: If you are true to yourself and to your beliefs, despite the forces of oppression in your vicinity, you might find another place in this world where behavior once perceived as difficult is considered dynamic. —Ron Hart



JAZZ IMAGES
by JEAN-PIERRE LELOIR



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"I am so happy to see Leloir's work published, because behind each image is a story - one that needs to be told and appreciated." QUINCY JONES

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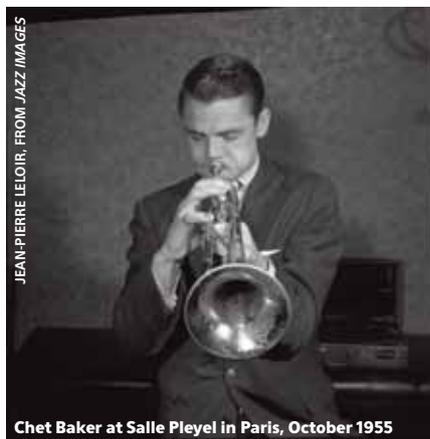


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JEAN-PIERRE LELOIR: FROM JAZZ IMAGES
Chet Baker at Salle Pleyel in Paris, October 1955



JEAN-PIERRE LELOIR: FROM JAZZ IMAGES
Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington during the filming of *Paris Blues* on Jan. 5, 1961

Leloir's Photos Convey Admiration

Photographer Jean-Pierre Leloir (1931–2010) got his first camera from a U.S. soldier the day that Paris was liberated from Nazi occupation. That act had profound consequences for the rest of Leloir's life. He would go on to make photography his profession, first publishing his work in *Jazz Hot* magazine in 1951. Some of Leloir's best-known images are of French singers, such as his celebrated portrait of Georges Brassens, Léo Ferré and Jacques Brel smoking and chatting around a table.

He also captured images of rock stars, but he held jazz musicians in high esteem throughout his life. In a moment of sweet irony, when the French government made him Chevalier de l'Ordre Des Arts et des Lettres in 2010, it similarly recognized bassist Ron Carter, one of his photographic subjects, in the same ceremony.

Two jazz enthusiasts in Spain have compiled *Jazz Images* (Elemental Music Records; available from Amazon), a 168-page coffee-table book of Leloir's color and black-and-white photos. Gerardo Cañellas runs jazz clubs in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, and Buenos Aires, Argentina; Jordi Soley has collected, sold and distributed jazz records since 1980. Cañellas and Soley's objective when choosing images for the book was to favor photographs of spontaneous moments that took place offstage. The result is a collection that nicely balances iconic images with intimate ones.

Among the artists depicted are Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Dexter Gordon, Herbie Hancock, Charles Lloyd, Nina Simon, Thelonious Monk and Sarah Vaughan. Most of the book is devoted to photos, but there is also a preface by Ashley Kahn and brief essays by three musicians whom Leloir photographed—Quincy Jones, Michel Legrand and Martial Solal.

Jones celebrates the power of photography to preserve and recall history. He writes, "We need to get back to our roots and remember where we came from. I am so happy to see Leloir's work published, because behind each image is a story—one that needs to be told and appreciated."

One photo of Count Basie sitting at a make-shift desk says volumes about the transience and hard work of a bandleader's life. A double image of Donald Byrd reading a newspaper on a bench with a neon-lit club behind him captures the tenuousness of a life spent creating after dark.

Solal articulates the mixture of competence and respect that enabled the photographer to gain his subjects' trust: "During that period, Leloir was one of the very few photographers interested in the musicians, and he was certainly the only one who knew us by name. His manners and behavior always seemed very professional, highly precise and meticulous, and it was apparent that he loved what he was doing and admired his chosen models."

This admiration is powerfully conveyed in Leloir's photos of John Coltrane. Some depict the smartly attired saxophonist gazing to one side, dignified and pondering. Another from the same session captures him looking intently at his horn's mouthpiece. Another sequence finds the notoriously workaholic Coltrane rehearsing in his hotel room. And in one rare image the saxophonist gives a wide-open grin, showing the teeth that never made it into official portraits. No matter how many Coltrane albums you own, you're bound to come away from that photo feeling like you've learned something new about him. Now that's art.

—Bill Meyer



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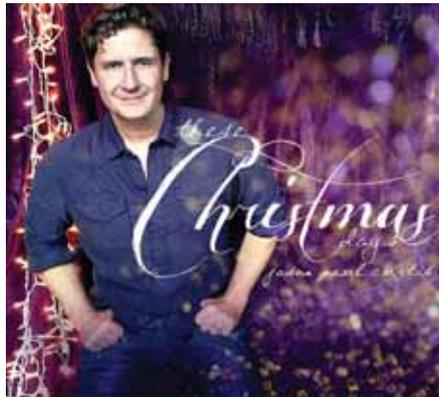
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Blues Greats Back in Spotlight

Now and then we get important reminders about the major figures in postwar blues. John Lee Hooker and Jimmy Reed are in the news, again recognized for their astonishing faculty for creating highly individualized blues of enduring distinction. Though there is debate on the exact year Hooker was born, his family points to 1917, and he's being feted with a centennial honors. The celebration includes, significantly, the largest box set anthology ever devoted to his pioneering work, along with a museum exhibit.

Reed (1925–'76) is also the subject of a new box set, the most comprehensive of several issued down the years. According to various sources, Reed wound up at Vivian Carter and Jimmy Bracken's Vee-Jay Records in Chicago because either the Chess label rejected him out of hand or he balked at the Chess brothers' demand that he record with Muddy Waters.

Whatever happened, Reed and Vee-Jay hit the jackpot: He became one of the most popular blues artists of the 1950s and '60. A significant influence on legions of blues and rock artists, Reed had a laconic vocal style and was a talented harmonica player, as evidenced by the three-CD, 88-track, Scott Billington-produced

Mr. Luck: The Complete Vee-Jay Singles (Craft Recordings; available from Amazon).

Solid-gold tracks like "Honest I Do," "Big Boss Man," "Bright Lights Big City" and "Baby What You Want Me to Do" are included in this fine presentation of Reed's consummate conviviality. Remastered mono richens the listening experience. Interestingly, 11 songs are preceded by snippets of interviews in which Reed discusses their origins.

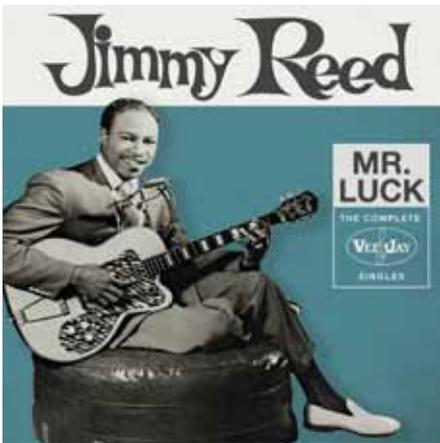
In a 38-page booklet, Billington correctly gives Reed's chief lieutenant Eddie Taylor shout-outs for his crucial boogie-guitar contributions to Reed's famous blues sound. (Fans who want to delve deeper should check out Will Romano's 2006 biography, *Boss Man*, published by Backbeat.)

Hooker is the subject of the lavish, five-CD set *King Of The Boogie* (Craft Recordings; johnleehooker.com/kingoftheboogie), which was compiled by Roger Armstrong and Mason Williams. It offers 21 essential Vee-Jay singles, including exemplars "Dimples" and "Boom Boom," as well as 79 other hypnotic songs from the vaults of Chameleon, Chess, Modern, Specialty and a few more companies that issued

his music between 1948 and '98. (Hooker usually treated his recording contracts like disposable tissues.) Disc 1 includes the immortal "Crawlin' King Snake"; Disc 2 includes three previously unreleased tracks, including "When I Lay My Burden Down"; and Disc 3 includes the blues staple "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer," which Hooker first recorded in 1966. Disc 4 compiles 15 concert selections, including four previously unreleased tracks.

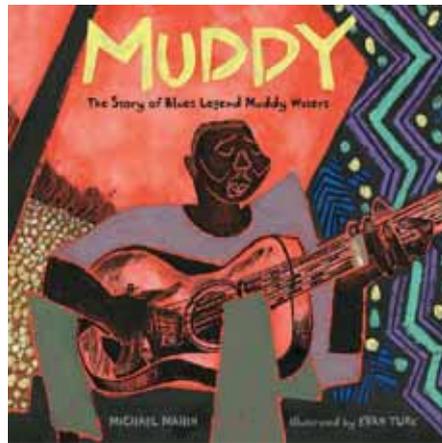
Disc 5, titled *Friends*, draws from sessions conducted with a diverse array of collaborators, including B.B. King ("You Shook Me"), Robert Cray ("Mr. Lucky"), Bonnie Raitt ("I'm In The Mood"), Warren Haynes ("Up And Down") and Carlos Santana ("The Healer"). It also features two duets with Van Morrison, including the Grammy-winning "Don't Look Back." The set concludes with the same song that opens Disc 1, "Boogie Chillen'," but on this later version the blues icon is joined by one of his more famous admirers: Eric Clapton.

The set's 56-page book has liner notes by music historian Jas Obrecht (author of *Rollin' and Tumblin': The Postwar Blues Guitarists*) and by Hooker's longtime manager and friend,



Mike Kappus. This box set is perfect for the fan who yearns for something more extensive than *Whiskey & Wimmen: John Lee Hooker's Finest* (Vee-Jay Records/Concord Bicycle Music; available from Amazon), a 16-track compilation issued earlier this year.

There's never been anyone quite like the idiosyncratic Hooker, a Mississippi native and son of a sharecropper. His sly, brooding, low voice—exalting sensual pleasures or evincing what Greil Marcus called “stoic, doomy rage”—together with wriggling fragments of guitar, forged a merger of intensity and relaxation.



Shortly before his exit in 2001, Hooker, close to tears, told this writer: “Music picks you up when you're feeling down. I have my guitar and my songs. It heals me.”

The Grammy Museum in Cleveland, Mississippi, is currently hosting the exhibit *John Lee Hooker: King Of The Boogie*, which features the bluesman's stage outfits, guitars, photos and awards. The exhibit will be on display through February 2018, and then it travels west to the Grammy Museum at L.A. Live in Los Angeles. (Info is posted at grammymuseumms.org.)

Another chief architect of the blues, Muddy

Waters (born McKinley Morganfield in 1913) is the subject of the 48-page children's book *Muddy* (Atheneum; simonandschuster.com/kids), written by Michael Mahin and illustrated by Evan Turk. The book traces his Mississippi-to-Chicago life voyage, up to the release of his first commercially successful record in 1948.

Aimed at kindergarten and early elementary school kids, the text conveys the importance of resilience, individuality and the blues' positive messages. Parents or teachers might need to explain to young readers the meaning of certain terms, such as “juke joints” and “city-smooth sophisti-cats.”

Turk's colorful ink and watercolor images border on abstraction, catching the eye while advancing the story. An “Author's Note” gives adults an overview of the Chicago blues story.

A blues Mount Rushmore onto himself, Robert Johnson is lionized by the hardback graphic novel *Love In Vain* (Faber & Faber; faber.co.uk). J.M. Dupont's text has the devil recounting the tale of one of his favorite disciples, an extraordinary musician whose mythicized roguery was a blessing to his art and craft. Dupont's collaborator here, the visual artist Mezzo, draws in black and white, cramming panels with all sorts of intriguing, shadowy details. —Frank-John Hadley & Bobby Reed

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The Rolling Stones lineup (circa 1967) included Mick Jagger (left), Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, Bill Wyman and Brian Jones.

Awesome Rock Artifacts

Following the hoopla surrounding the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love, fans of '60s rock are eyeing two new releases. Fairport Convention's seven-CD anthology *Come All Ye: The First Ten Years* (A&M/UMe; ume.lnk.to/comeallye7cd), boasts a whopping 121 tracks, many of them rare. The other box set is devoted to the Rolling Stones' album *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (ABKCO Music; available from Amazon), including two LPs, two Super Audio CDs, and both mono and stereo mixes, remastered by Bob Ludwig at Gateway Mastering.

Formed in 1967, England's Fairport Convention developed an engaging band sound out of an unusual mixture of American influences (Bob Dylan, The Byrds, Buddy Holly, Hank Williams) and a pinch of Celtic folk. The band—singer-guitarists Simon Nicol, Richard Thompson and Ian Matthews; bassist Ashley Hutchings; drummer Martin Lamble; and singer and multi-instrumentalist Judy Dyble—basically invented British folk-rock. Using a rock sensibility and a small arsenal of electric string instruments, the group exalted the folkloric music and verse of old Great Britain.

In 1968, the arrival of free-spirited singer Sandy Denny proved significant. Her clear and gorgeous voice, laced with a melancholic quality in all registers, contributed to the band's remarkable tension between modernity and traditionalism, as documented on Discs 1, 2 and 7 of this entertaining box set.

Fairport reached its fullest bloom in late 1969 with fiddler Dave Swarbrick and drummer Dave Mattacks in the lineup. Denny's emotional power is showcased on mysterious, balladic set pieces like "Tam Lin" (in a BBC performance) and "Matty Groves" (an alternate take). Inspiration stirred Thompson's electric guitar work and Swarbrick's amplified fiddling,

while Mattacks brought a leavening sense of swing to the rhythm section.

Denny left the band in late 1969, and by 1972 Thompson had also departed; they both forged sterling solo careers. With Swarbrick the constant presence, Fairport gamely kept at it before disbanding in 1979. Discs 3 to 7 chronicle the journey, highlighted by a Los Angeles concert reunion with Denny.

The Stones' *Majesties Request* was thrashed by the press when it appeared in late 1967. It was deemed pretentious, aimless and unworthy of the mighty blues-based Stones—thanks to experimental elements, such as sound effects and tape manipulations, as well unusual instrumentation, including harpsichord, Mellotron, theremin, glockenspiel and electric dulcimer. Swimming against the tide, DownBeat bravely praised the album in its May 30, 1968, issue: In his 5-star review, Mark Wolf called the album "a revolutionary event in modern pop music."

So just what is this curio, with its bizarre 3-D cover? Some dismiss it as an aberration that appeared between the *real* Stones records *Between The Buttons* and *Beggars Banquet*. Others view it as the Stones' response to The Beatles' mind-blowing *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* LP and the trippy track "Tomorrow Never Knows" on 1966's *Revolver*. *Majesties* may be a parody of pop-psychedelia, perhaps even a concept album about English circuses and music halls.

At any rate, three songs stand out on this fun yet sometimes dark album. "She's A Rainbow" only reached No. 25 on the Billboard pop charts, but it remains one of the loveliest entries in the unconventional Mick Jagger-Keith Richards songbook. "Citadel" hinges on a prototypical Richards guitar riff, and "2,000 Light Years From Home" is a timeless slab of spacey psychedelic rock. —Frank-John Hadley

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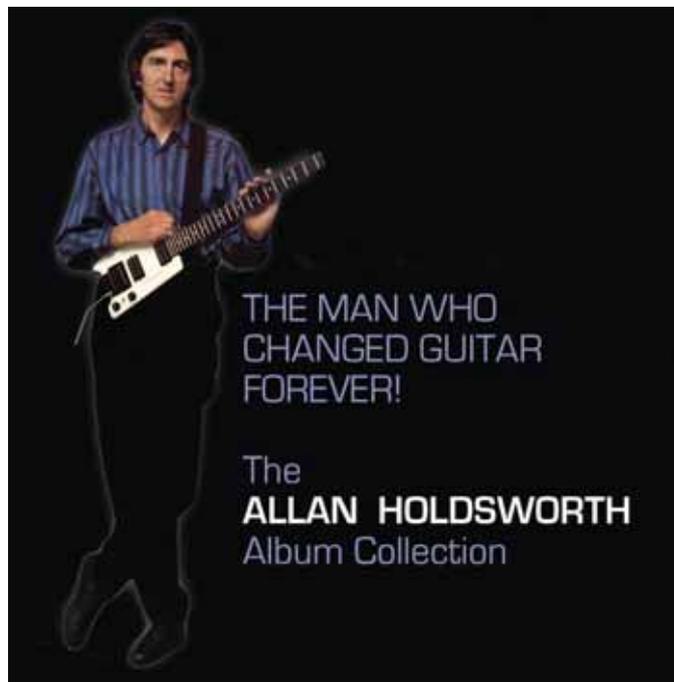
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Fans of jazz-rock have had plenty of reasons to weep this past year, as we've said goodbye to numerous heroes: guitarist Larry Coryell (1943–2017), drummer Alphonse Mouzon (1948–2016), Steely Dan guitarist/bassist Walter Becker (1950–2017) and fusion guitar wizard Allan Holdsworth (1946–2017).

But fans also have reasons to smile. New releases can add to a musician's legacy, and help ensure that they will live forever in the minds of their devoted followers.

Coryell and Mouzon were charter members of pioneering fusion band The Eleventh House, which was founded in 1973. Coryell and Mouzon recorded together in late 2016, and the resulting album, *Seven Secrets* (Savoy Jazz; available at Amazon), was released on June 2, after they had both passed.

Holdsworth lived just long enough to see the release of two important compilations: the 12-CD box set *The Man Who Changed Guitar Forever!* (Manifesto Records; manifesto.com) and the two-CD set *Eidolon* (Manifesto).

The box set includes his albums *I.O.U.* (1982), *Road Games* (1983), *Metal Fatigue* (1985), *Atavachron* (1986), *Sand* (1987), *Secrets* (1989), *Wardencllyffe Tower* (1992), *Hard Hat Area* (1993), *None Too Soon* (1996), *The Sixteen Men Of Tain* (2000), *Flat Tire* (2001) and *Then!* (2003).

Eidolon contains 28 tracks, all handpicked by Holdsworth, including "City Nights," "Sphere Of Innocence," "Funnels" and "Mental Fatigue," as well as a previously unreleased Jack Bruce vocal version of "Road Games."

Bill Bruford collaborated with Holdsworth in the drummer's eponymous band, which is

documented in the eight-disc set *Bruford 1977–1980: Seems Like A Lifetime Ago* (Winterfold; burningshed.com).

Looking back on those days, Bruford said: "The band was over-caffeinated—short on subtlety but long on the sort of majestic state-ly themes with antecedents in progressive rock that set it apart from contemporaneous American outfits. We were a rock group with a jazz sensibility, rather than a jazz group with rock leanings."

Bruford produced the box set and dedicated it to Holdsworth. It contains previously unreleased material, remixed and remastered tracks, a booklet, photos and a numbered certificate signed by Bruford.

Fans seeking context and analysis regarding some of the other bands that Bruford was in and worked with—such as Yes, King Crimson, Genesis and U.K.—will want to check out David Weigel's book *The Show That Never Ends: The Rise and Fall of Prog Rock* (W.W. Norton & Company; norton.com). In addition to examining the origins of the genre, the author delves into the contributions of producers, impresarios and technicians, such as Ahmet Ertegun, Richard Branson and Robert Moog.

Weigel's descriptions of titanic prog-rock trio Emerson, Lake & Palmer are particularly poignant now, in the wake of the deaths of keyboardist Keith Emerson (1944–2016) and bassist/guitarist/vocalist Greg Lake (1947–2016).

In addition to Bruford, another prog-rock giant who's still with us is Yes guitarist Steve Howe, whose career is surveyed on the three-CD set *Anthology 2: Groups & Collaborations*

(Rhino; rhino.com). Along with classics such as "Roundabout"—which Howe recorded with Bruford in Yes—the set also documents bands the guitarist was in early in his career, including The Syndicats, The In Crowd and Tomorrow.

The set's sonic diversity is noteworthy, as it chronicles the guitarist's glossy work with the bands Asia and GTR, collaborations with vocalist Annie Haslam, and even a version of the Kenny Burrell tune "Kenny's Song," recorded by a jazz trio featuring the leader's son, Dylan Howe (drums), and Ross Stanley (organ).

Guitarists (and those who worship six-string titans) will enjoy Jas Obrecht's book *Talking Guitar: Conversations with Musicians Who Shaped Twentieth-Century American Music* (University of North Carolina Press; uncpress.org).

The book includes interviews with 19 artists, including Gregg Allman, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Ry Cooder, Ben Harper, Eric Johnson, Carole Kaye, Jerry Garcia, Roebuck "Pops" Staples and Johnny Winter.

The tome is accompanied by a CD containing excerpts of Obrecht's interviews. Listeners can be a "fly on the wall" as Barney Kessel discusses the enormous impact Charlie Christian had on jazz guitar. Stevie Ray Vaughan reflects on his youthful obsession with Jimi Hendrix. Tom Petty praises Slim Harpo.

When discussing obstacles to what he calls "pure creativity," Carlos Santana says, "Ego, to me, is like a dog or a horse: Make them work for you; don't you work for them. They're supposed to work for you." —Bobby Reed



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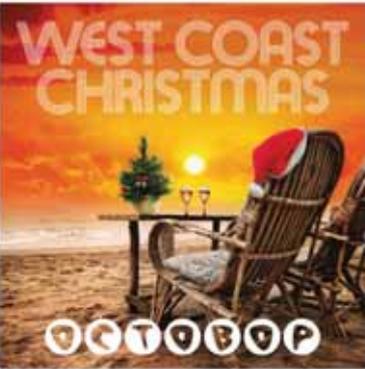


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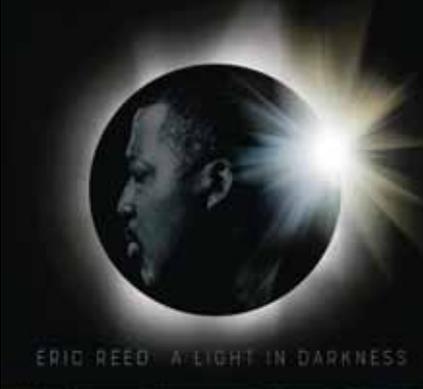
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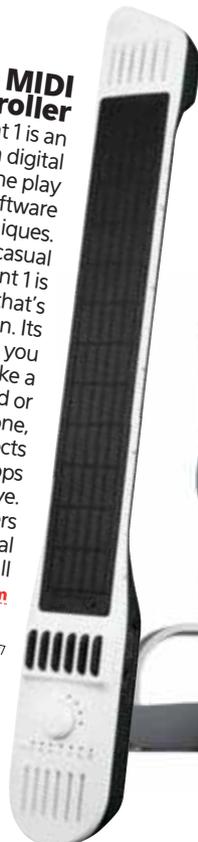
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Fostex's TE04 series are inner-ear, monitor-type earphones with specially tuned 8mm dynamic drivers and closed housing designed to deliver low and high frequencies in balance. The stereo earphones are available in four colors with an in-line omnidirectional electret condenser microphone and music controller for smartphones. Each pair comes with four sets of replaceable ear tips, a protective carrying pouch and a replacement cable with stopper ring for applications that don't require the microphone and controller. fostex.com/usa



Versatile MIDI Controller

The Artiphon Instrument 1 is an expressive, next-generation digital instrument that lets anyone play their favorite music software using familiar techniques. Designed for pros and casual players alike, the Instrument 1 is a versatile MIDI controller that's portable, affordable and fun. Its multi-instrument design lets you strum like a guitar, bow like a violin and tap like a keyboard or drum pad. It plugs into iPhone, iPad, Mac or PC and connects with hundreds of music apps from GarageBand to Ableton Live. For pros, the Instrument 1 offers powerful capabilities. For casual players, the Instrument 1 is all about accessibility. artiphon.com



Mobile Recording

Blue Microphones' Raspberry Studio combines the company's Raspberry mobile USB microphone with custom recording software from PreSonus and advanced mastering software from iZotope. Featuring premium sound quality and professional production tools, Raspberry Studio makes it easy to produce professional quality projects anywhere. bluedesigns.com





Strummable Drums

DigiTech's SDRUM "Strummable Drums" pedal is an intelligent drum machine for guitar players and bassists. By scratching across your guitar strings, you teach the SDRUM a kick-and-snare pattern that forms the foundation of a groove. Based on this pattern, the SDRUM supplies a professional-sounding drum beat with different embellishments and variations. The SDRUM stores up to 36 different songs. Beats are played from a choice of five different kits.

digitech.com



Compact Percussion Pads

Roland's SPD::One series of compact electronic percussion pads can be played with drumsticks, hands or feet. Offering features like built-in sounds, user sample import, USB-MIDI and battery or AC power, the SPD::One series enables musicians to enhance their performances and expand their creativity with

Roland's digital percussion technology. The series includes the SPD::One Electro, SPD::One Percussion, SPD::One Kick and SPD::One WAV Pad. roland.com



Durable Reeds

Plasticover reeds by D'Addario feature a new and improved synthetic coating formula that enhances durability and increases lifespan and consistency. Featuring a bright, projecting tone, the hybrid cane-synthetic reeds remain stable in varying weather conditions, making them especially suitable for outdoor settings.

daddario.com



Casual Wind Instrument

The Venova from Yamaha is an innovative, casual wind instrument that's compact, lightweight and fun. Featuring recorder-style fingering, the Venova has a branched-pipe structure that gives it a bright and rich timbre with plenty of volume. Like a saxophone or clarinet, the Venova is a single-reed instrument that produces different sound nuances depending on how you blow it.

usa.yamaha.com



Tuner/Metronome Combo

The Denis Wick DWA9007 combines metronome, tuner and tone generator in a single compact and easy-to-use piece of equipment. The tuner works at pitches from A=430 up to A=450 and provides accurate and clear readings of any pitch detected on its large-format screen. The metronome will give a simple, clear beat and can also provide more complex rhythms. The tuner is a useful aid in intonation training, and will always give an accurate reading of your pitch. dansr.com



Guitar Essentials

The Godin Guitar Accessory Kit is a rugged Swiss Gear compact carrying bag packed with essential accessories. It includes a 4-ounce bottle of Godin Luthier Grade Guitar Polish, a micro-fiber polishing cloth, a black padded leather-and-suede strap, a 12-pack of Godin-branded Duralin medium-heavy (0.99mm) guitar picks and two sets of Godin High-Definition electric guitars strings: Godin E-9 Nickel Super Tops—Regular bottoms (.009, .011, .016, .026, .036, .046) and Godin E-10 Nickel Regular Lights (.010, .013, .017, .026, .036, .046). godinguitars.com

Single-Source Multi-Tracks

Record music performances in a groundbreaking new way with the Zylia ZM-1 microphone, which has the amazing ability to intelligently extract multi-source recordings into individual audio tracks. Featuring 19 high-end microphone capsules at 48kHz/24-bit resolution, the ZM-1 works in combination with dedicated Zylia Studio software to record in both traditional stereo and 3-D/360 degrees. Connect it to your laptop via USB and you're ready to go. zylia.co

