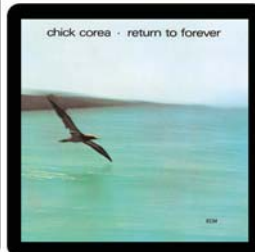


DAVE HOLLAND, ZAKIR HUSSAIN & CHRIS POTTER

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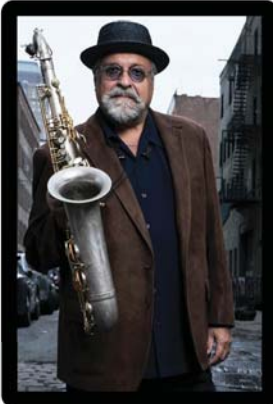
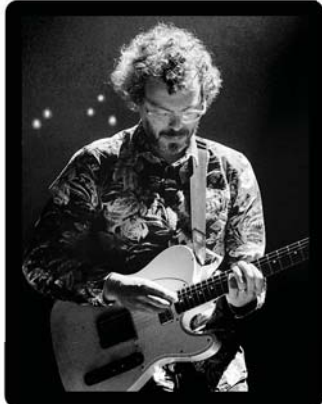
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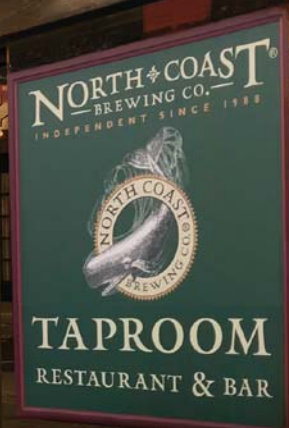
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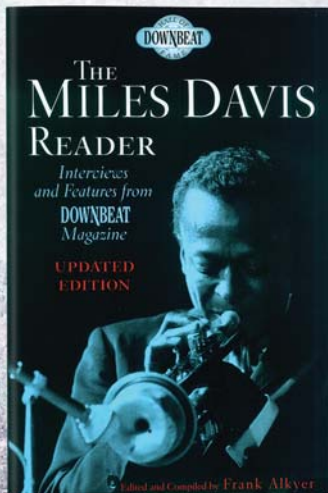
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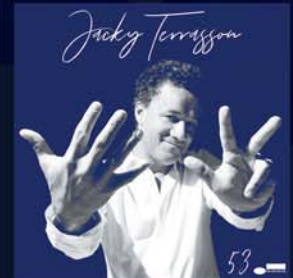
JAMES CARTER
JAMES CARTER ORGAN TRIO:
LIVE FROM NEWPORT JAZZ

Saxophone master **JAMES CARTER** makes his Blue Note debut—his first new release since 2011. A soulfully robust dispatch from America's most storied jazz festival, it's also a follow-up of sorts to his acclaimed 2000 album *Chasin' the Gypsy* that *The New Yorker* called "an alternately reverent and audacious tribute to the Belgian swing-guitar legend **DJANGO REINHARDT**. It may be the rambunctious saxophone player's recorded masterpiece."



JOEL ROSS
KINGMAKER

An impressive debut album from an incredible young artist who has been omnipresent on acclaimed recent albums by **MAKAYA MCCRAVEN** (*Universal Beings*), **WALTER SMITH III** (*In Common*), **MARQUIS HILL** (*Modern Flows, Vol. 2*), and **JAMES FRANCIES** (*Flight*). Now Joel carries the Blue Note vibraphone legacy into the future on an album that finds him exploring what made him the man he is, family.



JACKY TERRASSON
53

53 is an album unlike any other in pianist **JACKY TERRASSON'S** prolific career, a magnificent collection of 16 original pieces in the form of an intimate confession, brought to life by a varied cast of trio mates, and performed at a level of mastery that places the pianist among of the greatest artists in Jazz. Terrasson takes his listeners on a tour of his musical aesthetics: varying moods, styles, rhythms and references which create a kaleidoscopic universe of sounds.



GOGO PENGUIN
OCEAN IN A DROP

The Manchester trio present a new 5-track EP, stemming from the band's celebrated live soundtrack for **GODFREY REGGIO'S** 1982 cult documentary *Koyaanisqatsi*. Recorded live, the expansive project carries a sense of poetry; the title nods to a quote from 13th-century Sufi scholar Rumi: "You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop."



BILL FRISELL
HARMONY

Acclaimed guitarist **BILL FRISELL** has signed with Blue Note and will release his debut album for the label under his own name with **HARMONY**, a gorgeous and evocative journey across the landscape of American music of the last century. The album features vocalist **PETRA HADEN**, cellist & vocalist **HANK ROBERTS**, and guitarist, bassist & vocalist **LUKE BERGMAN**.



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In Search of the Sublime

BY JOSEF WOODARD

Established in 1969, ECM Records has become one of the most respected labels in jazz. In honor of the label's milestone anniversary, DownBeat travels to Munich to sit down with the head of the label, Manfred Eicher, for a discussion about his 50-year journey and his unique approach to recording. We also check in with numerous artists who have recorded for ECM over the decades.



BART BABINSKI

Vijay Iyer (left) and producer Manfred Eicher during the June 2014 recording sessions for the pianist's trio album *Break Stuff*

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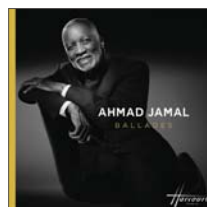
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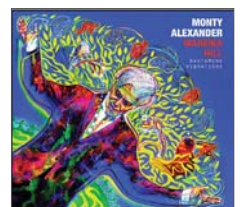
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Jack DeJohnette (left), Gary Peacock and Keith Jarrett

ECM's Golden Anniversary

THE PHRASE "VAST IN SCOPE" CERTAINLY applies to the ECM Records catalog. In celebration of the label's 50th anniversary, we take an in-depth look at a company that has released more than 1,600 albums. The huge ECM catalog includes jazz and classical music, as well as many works that defy easy categorization.

The Munich-based label Edition of Contemporary Music—widely known by its acronym, ECM—has a devout following around the world. As longtime readers know, ECM is a frequent winner in the Record Label category of the annual DownBeat Critics Poll, and the head of the label, Manfred Eicher, is a perennial winner of the Producer category in that poll.

Who, exactly, is Manfred Eicher? The prolific and enigmatic producer was profiled in the 2009 documentary *Sounds and Silence*, which gave many fans a glimpse of an artist whom they previously had known only as a name listed in the credits of hundreds of albums. DownBeat wanted to find out what drives Eicher. So, for our cover story, journalist Josef Woodard traveled thousands of miles and spent several months conducting interviews with Eicher and numerous artists who have recorded for ECM.

The network of musicians who currently record for ECM—or who have worked with the label in the past—is quite extensive, as evidenced by this issue of DownBeat. In our Drum School section, we talk gear with Peter Erskine (whose credits appear repeatedly in the ECM catalog), and we present a transcription of a Jack DeJohnette solo from one of the many brilliant ECM albums he has recorded in a trio with pianist Keith Jarrett and bassist Gary Peacock.

In The Beat section, there's a review of the Chicago Jazz Festival, which hosted a perfor-

mance by the Art Ensemble of Chicago, the groundbreaking collective that has a long history with ECM. Our Reviews section includes critiques of new albums on the label by trumpeter Enrico Rava with saxophonist Joe Lovano; pianist Ethan Iverson's quartet with trumpeter Tom Harrell; and a collaboration between trumpeter Avishai Cohen and pianist Yonathan Avishai.

We also have a feature on the Crosscurrents Trio, which has a terrific new album on Edition Records titled *Good Hope*. Each member of the group—bassist Dave Holland, tabla master Zakir Hussain and saxophonist Chris Potter—has recorded important works for ECM.

Our Fall/Winter Festival Guide has details on festivals around the world, including several that will feature tributes to ECM.

Play the game "Six Degrees of Separation from Manfred Eicher" and you'll wander into some intriguing pathways. For example, Eicher has worked with Paolo Fresu, who has recorded with Carla Bley, who frequently has collaborated with Steve Swallow, who has played duo concerts with Julian Lage, who has recorded with Nels Cline, who is a member of Wilco. (This parlor game could go on for hours.)

We hope our article on ECM provides you with a deeper understanding of Eicher's aesthetic, and perhaps a greater appreciation for the breadth of the label's cultural accomplishments.

And we hope you'll smile when you see the old-school ECM T-shirt that DeJohnette is sporting in the 1976 photo in our cover collage. (Details about this collage are on page 6.)

If you're anything like us, reading about ECM will inspire you to revisit a few of its landmark albums—and to check out some of the label's new releases. The journey continues. **DB**

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Dialogue of Disparity

To me, the value and the beauty of all art forms, including jazz, lie in the eye/ears of the beholder. To paraphrase a common expression: "One person's absolute joy is another's noise."

A great example can be found in The Hot Box reviews of Esperanza Spalding's *12 Little Spells* in the September issue of DownBeat. Giovanni Russonello gave it 5 stars, while John McDonough gave it 2 stars.

This disparity drove me straight to Spotify. I tried to experience Spalding's work from the viewpoint of each reviewer, and I found myself agreeing mostly with McDonough. But I was not quite so unmoved as he was.

I have not been a fan of Spalding's past work, but I certainly appreciate her technique. I would give this album 3 stars. Anyway, that's one man's opinion.

JOHN R. VICKARY
CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA



CARMEN DANESHMANDI

Esperanza Spalding

Shock to the System

As a longtime fan of the piano work and vocals of Eliane Elias, I was pleased—but shocked—that her new album, *Love Stories*, was given a 5-star review in your September issue. I was shocked because your magazine shortchanges mainstream stars like her.

Check out the Critics Poll results in your August issue and note that she did not receive enough votes to be listed in either the Piano or the Female Vocalist category.

DAVE DECKER
DAVEDECKER2@ME.COM

Editor's Note: DownBeat critics and readers sometimes have disparate opinions. Eliane Elias received 240 votes and therefore was ranked among the top 20 artists in the Piano category of the 2018 DownBeat Readers Poll, which was published in our December issue.

can't tell much of a difference (high-quality remastering aside).

WICK MOSES
YUWJAZNCATS@GMAIL.COM

Bring the Blues

Your magazine is first rate and it's my go-to source when looking for new jazz releases. Each month, I tear through the Reviews section and each of its columns, which are always bursting with good information.

In the First Take column of the August issue, you asked whether readers would be interested in an article that looks at today's younger blues musicians. This reader sends a resounding yes!

CINDY FEHMELE
ST. LOUIS

Long-Player Longevity

In 1973, I opened a stereo and record shop in Carbondale, Colorado. This also coincided with subscribing to DownBeat and beginning my love affair with jazz.

Thanks to DownBeat reviews and an exceptionally great record distributor in Denver, I stocked the store with 600 jazz titles. By the mid-'70s, my own LP collection had grown exponentially.

It warms my analog heart to see vinyl making such a remarkable resurgence. One point about records that no one seems to mention is their surprising durability—if they are properly stored and cared for.

When I listen to a record that I bought 40 years ago and then listen to a new one, I

AKA Lord Calvert

Many thanks to DownBeat and writer John McDonough for his amazing reflection on the career of the great Nat "King" Cole ("Transformative Power," September). As someone who is old enough to have clear memories of Cole, McDonough's article revealed even more about the musical giant's life and career.

Regarding the pseudonyms Cole used due to contract restrictions, I knew about the moniker "Shorty Nadine," which appears on the Jazz at the Philharmonic recordings, but "Aye Guy" is new to me.

BILL BENJAMIN
BILTMORE LAKE, NORTH CAROLINA

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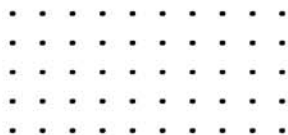
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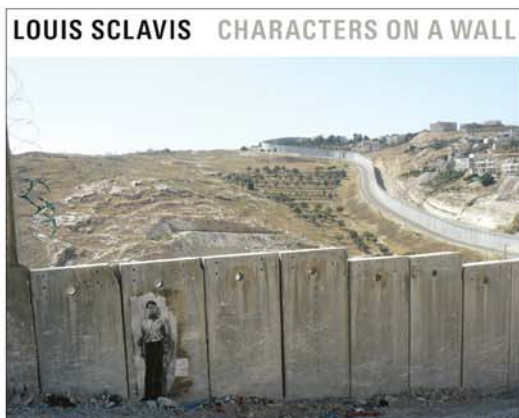
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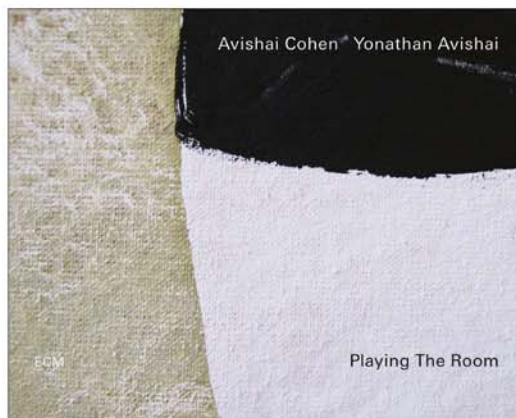
Louis Sclavis Quartet
Characters On A Wall

Louis Sclavis clarinet, bass clarinet
Benjamin Moussay piano
Sarah Murcia double bass
Christophe Lavergne drums



Avishai Cohen / Yonathan Avishai
Playing The Room

Avishai Cohen trumpet
Yonathan Avishai piano



Enrico Rava / Joe Lovano
Roma

Enrico Rava flugelhorn
Joe Lovano tenor saxophone, tarogato
Giovanni Guidi piano
Dezron Douglas double bass
Gerald Cleaver drums



Ethan Iverson Quartet w/ Tom Harrell
Common Practice

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Ethan Iverson piano
Ben Street double bass
Eric McPherson drums

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www.sfjazz.org

November 1 – 2 New York, NY
Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center
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The

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Beat

ELEW Interprets Rosenwinkel on 'Cubism'

In 2005, Eric Lewis dropped off the straight-ahead jazz scene to reinvent himself. Adopting the moniker ELEW and eschewing a piano bench for the more athletic approach of standing in front of his instrument, he began setting tunes by rock acts like Linkin Park and Coldplay with-in his abundant jazz and classical vocabularies.

He dubbed his music “rockjazz” and first documented the concept on 2010’s *ELEW Rockjazz Vol. 1*, which included instrumental covers of The Rolling Stones’ “Paint It Black” and Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit.”

On *Cubism*, a daring solo piano album released on guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel’s Heartcore Records, ELEW interprets the label head’s music with rather startling results.

“Kurt certainly knows his way around the keyboard, and his father played piano,” ELEW said about the guitarist, who also produced *Cubism*. “When we were in the studio, he was telling me how his father would take some sort of an idea and just go off in all these different types of directions with it. And Kurt would encourage me to do that, too, on some of his pieces.”

A great example is ELEW’s radical reimagining of “Synthetics,” a burner that originally appeared on Rosenwinkel’s 2000 *The Enemies Of Energy*. Taking the piece at a slow crawl, the pianist investigates the harmonic fabric of the chops-busting head while exploring the odd intervals and dissonant lines of the piece.

“Playing through the melody for the first time just took me back to my early 20s when I was researching Glenn Gould and came across his recording of Paul Hindemith’s ‘Prelude And Fugue in C,’” he explained. “So, I used that Hindemith-driven concept as the basis of my technical approach to it and my improvisation as well.”

While the pianist tackles Rosenwinkel’s technically demanding “Cubism”—a tune he intro-



Pianist ELEW and guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel worked together on the solo piano album *Cubism*.

ANNA YATSEVICH

duced on saxophonist Mark Turner’s 1995 *Yam Yam*—he also extrapolates freely on that heady number in a piece dubbed “Cubist Cubism.”

“I wanted to try a bitonal concept by merging Kurt’s tune with this device that I created to train my left hand, which consists of playing three different parts of time simultaneously,” he explained. “‘Cubism’ already has all different scales and chords piled upon one another, à la ‘Giant Steps’ times two. The idea of playing on top of that with the device in my left hand became an exciting challenge. And it was just so compelling that we decided to make two separate tracks of it.”

ELEW turns the bouncy waltz-time “Zhivago” into a mercurial conversation between left and right hands that has him emulating an offbeat rhythmic device that Art Tatum employed on his recording of “Get Happy.” ELEW added that his approach here also was profoundly influenced by Keith Jarrett’s “In Front” and “Starbright” from the 1972 album *Facing You*.

On “Use Of Light,” he employs unconventional dampening techniques for percussive effect. “On the first take, I used my left hand as a palm mute on the strings, while my right hand would be playing bass notes and melody,” he explained. “On the next take, Kurt came into the live room and put both of his hands on the strings, so we had three hands inside the piano. Eventually, we grabbed this huge *Star Wars* coffee table book from the waiting room, stuck it inside the piano along with some blankets and some weights that we found in the studio, to completely mute the bottom end of the piano.”

“The whole process was pretty wonderful,” ELEW said of his close collaboration with Rosenwinkel. “On each tune, Kurt and I would just sculpt different things and try things out. There’s all these riches and possibilities in his writing. It’s almost like opening a Pandora’s Box of uncorked music, and out comes something very different from what you might expect.”

—Bill Milkowski



Tyshawn Sorey

JOHN ROGERS

Sorey-Crispell Summit: Drummer Tyshawn Sorey and pianist Marilyn Crispell are set to release *The Adornment Of Time* on Sept. 27 through Pi Recordings. A single 64-minute track, recorded live at The Kitchen in New York, features intimate musical dialogue and comes not long after Crispell contributed to Joe Lovano's *Trio Tapestry* (ECM). Sorey's most recent leader date, 2018's *Pillars*, was followed this year by contributions to guitarist Lage Lund's *Terrible Animals* (Criss Cross Jazz).

pirecordings.com

Brecker Competition: Los Angeles-based Alex Hahn took top honors Aug. 26 at the inaugural Michael Brecker International Saxophone Competition, which was held at the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eliat, Israel. Named for the innovative saxophonist who died in 2007, the competition aims to manifest Brecker's "spirit and influence" in subsequent generations of jazz players while bolstering young, new talent, according to a press release. Hahn was awarded \$12,500; for second place, Miami-based Alex Weitz received \$7,500; and for third place, \$2,500 went to Boston-based Artem Badenko.

breckercompetition.org

Final Bar: Tenor and baritone saxophonist **Turk Mauro**, who performed alongside Buddy Rich, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims in addition to leading his own groups, died in August. He was 75. ... Bassist **Larry Taylor**, who played with blues and psych act Canned Heat, as well as John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers, died Aug. 19 in California. He was 77. Following his work with those high-profile ensembles during the '60s and '70s, the bassist went on to collaborate with Tom Waits. ... Outsider folk singer and visual artist **Daniel Johnston** died Sept. 10 after suffering a heart attack at the age of 58. The reclusive Texan released dozens of albums beginning in the '80s and in 2018 told *The Austin Chronicle* that a new album was on the way. It has yet to be released.

A Mixed Bag Offered at the Detroit Festival

THE 40TH ANNUAL DETROIT JAZZ FESTIVAL over Labor Day weekend was a smorgasbord of style, spanning Detroit blues, North Indian punk-jazz and straightahead fare. More than 60 acts performed, and jam sessions—formal and informal—stretched into the early morning.

The free festival, though, began strongly and ended on a less powerful note.

On Aug. 30, Danilo Pérez and his Global Big Band took instant command of the JPMorgan Chase Main Stage, one of four downtown venues reserved for musical immersion during the weekend. Set highlights included "The Expedition," which like most Pérez compositions, scrambled formats and cultures. Luciana Souza twined with violinist Layth Sidiq on the tune, while saxophonist Miguel Zenón and Pérez curled around each other to introduce "Children Of Light." The following afternoon, Pérez debuted a completely different set of tunes, blending European and Arabic strains with a set of musicians largely different than the group that performed with him the previous day.

Artist-in-Residence Stanley Clarke followed Pérez explosively that Friday night, revisiting his 1976 *School Days*. The highlight was a run during George Duke's "Brazilian Love Affair," featuring the glottal chanting of tabla player Salar Nader. At times, the duels between Nader and the pair of pianists on the bandstand veered off the rails, but power and virtuosity won out.

Pianist Cameron Graves, who performed with Clarke, starred in several shows during the weekend, including a set with the Detroit Jazz Fest Alumni Band on Aug. 31. That performance, again at JPMorgan Chase, kicked in with drummer Tariq Gardner's "Echoes," a dense tune featuring Allen Dennard's bright trumpet and a hide-and-seek between Graves and guitarist Ian Blunden. The quintet was expressive and physical; Gardner's witty "Diaspora" confirmed him as an impressive composer.

Saturday evening, Macy Gray offered a show as chaotic as it was charismatic at JPMorgan Chase. It peaked with a reggaefied update of "I Try," the single that put Gray on the map 20 years ago. Otherwise, she focused on—and at times floated through—later material, including several tunes from *Ruby*, her recent Mack Avenue album.

Paced by the wonderfully garish keyboardist/saxophonist Jonathan Jackson, Gray kept things loose, her raspy voice endearing. But Tamika Peoples, her backup singer, nearly outshone the bandleader. She was unearthly; her voice seemed to have no ceiling. And the exchanges between the two were the meat of this



Danilo Pérez helms a big band on Aug. 30 during the Detroit Jazz Festival.

C. ANDREW HOVAN

inexorably compelling set.

The Kenny Garrett Quintet blasted onto the Carhartt Amphitheater Stage on Sunday evening, diving into material from his 2016 *Do Your Dance!* Garrett's exchange with drummer Samuel Lavisio was the eye of the storm; the way the two challenged each other was absorbing and ultimately forced pianist Vernell Brown Jr. to assert himself and clear a path for solos.

That same evening, pianist Connie Han deployed originals and imaginative covers at the Wayne State University Pyramid Stage. Han's spidery treatment of Stephen Sondheim's "Pretty Women" was alluring and respectful; her "Grüvy" was a hip way to honor the Fender Rhodes; and her "Southern Rebellion," enriched by drummer Bill Wysaske's powerful solo, was muscular and thrilling.

It was two concerts that made Monday memorable—for different reasons.

The sounds of Side-Eye—guitarist Pat Metheny's new ensemble with keyboardist James Francies and drummer Marcus Gilmore—filled JPMorgan Chase. The group was transcendent, its tunes spanning modest country blues, bop, prog and psychedelia, and the trio meshed as if it was born for the venture. Metheny played three guitars, several with effects. But Francies was as riveting as the bandleader, threatening to tumble over himself, still always landing upright.

About four hours later, bassist Clarke and the Detroit Jazz Festival String Orchestra presented "Boyz n the Hood-The Live Original" at the Carhartt Amphitheater Stage, a mixed conclusion to the festival.

The bassist led the large ensemble through original music from John Singleton's 1991 film as long clips from the movie played on a screen overhead. But the images and live music distracted from each other, failing to merge into something unique.

—Carlo Wolff



CHARLES BAERWALD

Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah is among the artists who have performed at the "We Always Swing" Jazz Series.

Missouri Concert Series Marks 25th Anniversary

FOR 25 YEARS, JAZZ STARS HAVE BEEN stopping in Columbia, Missouri, to perform as part of the nonprofit "We Always Swing" Jazz Series. The silver anniversary season is set to run through May 31, and among the acts coming to Columbia venues are saxophonist Branford Marsalis' quartet (Oct. 17), as well as organist Joey DeFrancesco and trumpeter Etienne Charles' band, Creole Soul, for a double-bill (March 1).

According to Jon Poses, founder and executive director of "We Always Swing," the series

came very close to folding after its first concert in 1995. "I booked a project called 'Big Band Bird' that featured Slide Hampton and a great 13-piece band paying tribute to Charlie Parker on the 75th anniversary of Bird's birth," Poses recalled. "We held the concert in Jesse Hall, a 1,700-seat venue on the University of Missouri campus. ... I sold 78 tickets in advance, and a total of 242 people paid. It was a great concert, but it lost over \$11,000."

But during that inaugural season, larger audiences began showing up. Additional support

came from a season sponsor and contributions from area jazz fans as Poses focused on fortifying the series' bottom line.

This season, Poses devised a retrospective approach, booking musicians who have performed in previous years: Matt Wilson, Karrin Allyson, Catherine Russell, Christian McBride, Benny Green and Bobby Watson, who will be part of an Art Blakey centennial celebration featuring a band of Jazz Messengers alumni.

"Although we're bringing back musicians who have played before, we wanted to create unique collaborations," Poses said. "Matt Wilson is reuniting a version of his Arts & Crafts band. Anat Cohen, Bruce Barth and Steve Wilson have never performed together. It's been a very long time since Benny Green and Christian McBride have played as a duo. And having Bobby Watson and the other ex-Messengers reunite is special."


Watson, speaking from his Kansas City home, emphasized that the series' success is based on the quality and consistency of the programming, and Poses' enduring commitment: "The series always features the top cats on the scene," he said. "Jon loves the musicians and genuinely cares about them having a great experience. He's developed deep relationships, which in my case has become a friendship. And to think he's done all this in Columbia, Missouri, is amazing. He's made the series—and jazz—part of the fabric of the community."
—Terry Perkins

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Miles Davis Doc Depicts a Man of Contradictions

MILES DAVIS WAS A DIFFICULT MAN. EVEN those who are passingly familiar with his biography know that to be true.

He was an on-again, off-again drug addict for much of his life—heroin and cocaine being his primary lures. He had a temper. He was violent. He was paranoid. He was often in pain. If he didn't like you, you were a “motherfucker”—and if he did like you, then maybe you were a “motherfucker,” too.

Filmmaker Stanley Nelson's new documentary, *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, doesn't shy away from that side of Davis. It's a part of the trumpeter that's inseparable from his allure, his understated charisma. How could such a troubled man have produced such beautiful music? That's always been the question when considering Davis' work, and Nelson doesn't necessarily seek to answer it. He does, however, throw the question into relief, poking and prodding it, drawing out Davis' many contradictions.

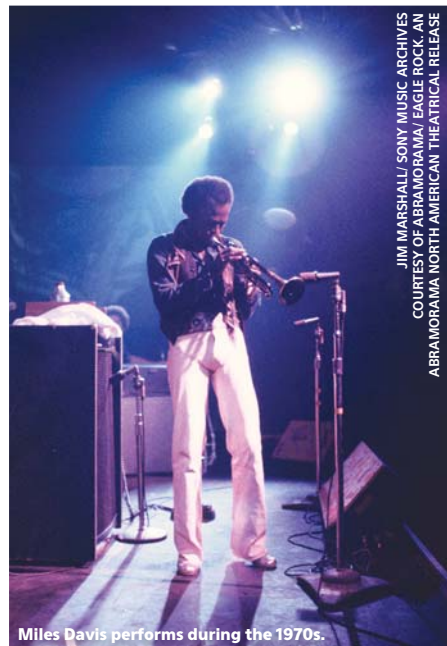
The film has a spare and quiet vibe; it embodies the loneliness, the sense of alienation that Davis seemed to have felt all his life.

“Not only is Miles' music incredible—it spans so many eras, and it's so influential. But Miles is also just a fascinating character and individual,” Nelson said, a few days before the movie's Aug. 23 premiere at Manhattan's Film Forum. Beginning in September, the film opens in select theaters nationwide.

Nelson, whose previous documentaries include *The Murder of Emmett Till* and *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple*, said that he always had wanted to make a documentary about a jazz musician—“and who's better than to make a film about than Miles?”

The movie follows, in chronological fashion, the peaks and troughs of the trumpeter's life, beginning with his upbringing in East St. Louis, Illinois. It's meant for initiates, but there still are some surprises for those who already are familiar with his work. We learn, for instance, that a young Davis liked to go into the woods and listen to the animals and play what he was hearing—a practice reminiscent of multi-reedist Eric Dolphy, who was known to imitate bird song and whom Davis once called a “sad motherfucker.”

Nelson lingers on Davis' vast musical oeuvre, but it never feels as if he is checking anything off a list. Perhaps that's because the movie is, in parts, narrated by an actor whose raspy voice serves as a stand-in for Davis. This gives the film an emotional weight that reinforces the narrative. Nelson also leaves ample room for the music itself, letting at least one song play in its entirety. Additionally, there is never-before-seen archival footage that



Miles Davis performs during the 1970s.

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helps to humanize the man whose music shaped the evolution of jazz itself, from the time he first moved to New York in 1944 until his death in 1991 at age 65.

Dancer Frances Taylor, Davis' first wife and occasional muse (who died in 2018 at age 89), is one of the movie's more lively and entertaining interview subjects. She's clearly enamored of the memory of their early relationship, even as the more painful details of their marriage come into focus. She describes, for instance, Davis' jealousy when she got a role in *West Side Story*. He told her to back out of the production, and she did. She describes being struck by him for the first time. She describes leaving him.

Pianist Herbie Hancock, guitarist Carlos Santana, saxophonist Joshua Redman, historian/journalist Ashley Kahn and poet/educator Quincy Troupe (co-author of *Miles: The Autobiography*) also are interviewed.

Following the Film Forum premiere, Nelson took the stage with Davis' son Erin Davis and his nephew Vince Wilburn Jr. to field questions from the audience. At one point, a man asked Nelson why he hadn't focused more on Davis' many wives and girlfriends, who in the film tend to flit in and out as one-dimensional figures. It was a reasonable question, but Nelson bristled when the man repeated it after the director had already given his answer: “I look forward to your film,” Nelson said curtly, ending the discussion.

It might have seemed a bit hostile and defensive of him—but it also was completely in the spirit of Miles Davis. —Matthew Kassel



Singer Staci Griesbach's debut is devoted to jazz arrangements of songs popularized by country star Patsy Cline (1932–63).

Griesbach Jazzes up Patsy Cline Songbook

STACI GRIESBACH'S STORY BEGINS IN THE RURAL MIDWEST. SHE grew up on a Wisconsin farm, where her parents raised heifers. Corn, soybeans and hay filled the family field, and four-track tapes of Conway Twitty and Ernest Tubbs filled the glove compartment. At rodeos and county fairs, she would watch wide-eyed as Alan Jackson or Faith Hill entertained.

Eventually, Griesbach developed her own singing style, infused with her phrasing on piano and saxophone, which she played in high school band. Still, country music was her base, and she pondered moving to Nashville to pursue stardom. Instead, after college, she moved to Los Angeles—just for a year, she promised herself—to check it out before heading to Music City. Once in L.A., Griesbach found herself drawn to the city's jazz circles, taking vocal lessons and picking up some gigs. When the time felt right to make an album, though, the vocalist began asking herself some serious questions.

"[O]ne day when I came home from yoga, I put Patsy Cline's *Greatest Hits* on the record player," she recalled. "The minute the needle went down, I was like, 'Hello? What was I thinking? Maybe *this* is my thing. My teachers could be different from someone else's teachers.' Is that a bad thing? Is that a good thing? Why can't it just be a different thing?"

Griesbach's debut, *My Patsy Cline Songbook*, was born of that revelation. Its 16 songs, each delivered in a jazz setting, are hallmarks in the late country star's repertoire. The program features the work of top-notch arrangers and players from the world of jazz (pianist Tamir Hendelman and guitarist Bruce Forman) and the world of country (pedal steel guitarist Rich Hinman). Griesbach achieves her aim of paying tribute not through imitation, but by exploring new possibilities through her own artistry.

"Walkin' After Midnight" is transformed into a spectral rumination, with mallets casting deep indigo shades, rather than rhythms, on cymbals and drums, with pianist Jeremy Siskind reforming the chord changes into moody and unresolving noir harmonies.

Every performance is an experiment whose payoff has everything to do with Griesbach's guidance. "Staci let me know that she wanted to find places where these two musics could meet," Hendelman said. "I thought that was a beautiful idea. For example, she brought in this song, 'Leavin' On Your Mind.' Something about its melody reminded me of 'Someone To Watch Over Me.' I thought that maybe we could play with that, hint at it but not really give it away until halfway through the solo."

"That was an 'aha' moment," Griesbach explained with a laugh. "We were at [Hendelman's] piano and as he played with the chord progression, it was like, 'Oh, yeah!' Then we thought about the juxtaposition of the lyric of 'If you've got leaving on your mind, tell me now.' The spiritual connotation in the background is, 'You're looking for someone to watch over you.' Isn't that beautiful?"

—Bob Doerschuk

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European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK

Maria Faust's Memories

Growing up in remote Kuressaare, a small island village in Communist Estonia, saxophonist and composer Maria Faust had no exposure to jazz.

"I heard mostly Soviet propaganda music, funeral marching bands, classical music, some folk music, choir music and, of course Estonian pop and rock," she said. "There's this famous propaganda poster that proclaims, 'Today you play jazz, tomorrow you betray your country.'"

She knew she was a musician from a very young age, despite growing up in a family of nonmusicians. "Not that I would become a musician, but that I already was," she said. "No one really knew what was up with the kiddo talking about composing and practicing and drawing piano keys on paper."

When Faust was 8, her single mother put herself into debt purchasing a piano for the precocious composer. And when she was 14, Faust picked up the saxophone, but put it aside when it didn't fit into her formal studies. She pursued classical music early on, but didn't discover jazz until she heard a concert by Charles Lloyd in Tallinn, the nation's capital, at the Jazzkaar Festival when she was 18.

"I was blown away."

She returned to the saxophone.

Faust's talent for writing, arranging and improvising within the jazz tradition have been made clear by the stunning recordings she's made since settling in Copenhagen, Denmark—where she earned her Ph.D. at the prestigious Rhythmic Music Conservatory. But what's more compelling and impressive is her refusal to hew to any single musical lineage.

Indeed, she's an inveterate explorer fueled by deep intellectual curiosity.

"I make music for myself, so as my interests change, my music changes," Faust, 40, said. "I want to try it all. I need music to dance to, scream to—and spiritual music. I'm a really emotional and instinctive person, so my choices in projects are not calculated well in advance. I find something, explore it, and run with it at full speed until there's a natural end point."

She's also staunchly true to herself and as much as she chafed against the rigidity of education early on, she also accepts and takes a certain pride in it. On her website she has insisted, "I am a child of communism! I did not swing. I marched!"

She's imaginatively and fruitfully pulled from her upbringing with a practice she calls "memory analysis," drawing upon collective memory, forgiveness, historical



KAUPO KIKKAS

Maria Faust

research and more innate recollections, such as the sound of water, which she has called "a natural and unpredictable force of oppressed feelings like anger and sorrow."

Last year's ravishing *Machina* (Stunt), a drummerless chamber-jazz recording, featured field recordings of lapping water, passing boats and the creaking of an old ship hull. This spring, she dropped a viscerally grinding trio recording with the New York rhythm section of drummer Weasel Walter and bassist Tim Dahl called *Farm Fresh* (Gotta Let It Out), with a focus on her fiery alto playing. She also performs in an experimental electronic trio called Shitney—with Danish singer Qarin Wikström and guitarist Katrine Amsler.

While Faust pours her heart into such projects with total commitment, her greatest work has been with mid-sized bands that deploy her "memory analysis," such as Jazz Catastrophe and Sacrum Facere, which released a gorgeous 2014 album inspired by Estonian folklore and runic singing. She later collaborated with the Danish pop singer Kira Skov for *In The Beginning* (Stunt), which "used repetition and prayer as compositional tools" to forge a stunning hybrid of Estonian folk and sacred music, jazz improvisation and sophisticated pop melodies, enhanced by a traditional choir. A new Sacrum Facere is due next year, featuring church organ, and Faust has also been commissioned to compose a Mass. For balance, a second Shitney album is also scheduled to drop.

DB

On Her Second Album, 'Fly Or Die II,' Jaimie Branch Lets the Music Breathe

JAIMIE BRANCH WANTS TO HEAR MUSIC THAT BREATHES. THE trumpeter-composer out of Chicago, and now based in New York, presents strong musical concepts primed for exploration and peer input.

With each release, Branch taps into unrestrained experimentation, preferring to conjure compositions, rather than write them down and count them off. The practice of letting music reveal itself relates to every facet of her work, from rhythmic ideas to composition.

"Everybody has their own personality when it comes to time," Branch said. "That's something I love about jazz. Instead of bars, I think in beats—of everything as in 1. [It's] like there's a really fast metapulse. It's always happening. Within that, you have these gigantic, slow beats."

Because Branch's approach to music encourages a multitude of interpretations from bandmates, she draws on myriad techniques for writing charts. "The way your compositions look is going to affect the way your band approaches them," she said. The first *Fly Or Die* sessions, which were released through Chicago's International Anthem in 2017, included what Branch considers traditional notation, graphic notation and illustrations. For her second full-length—*Fly Or Die II*, due out Oct. 2—she introduced color.

Similar to the way chewing gum while studying and subsequently taking an exam is said to help students recall information, Branch thinks the color-coded charts can help her bandmates recall sections of music. "I wanted to see what happened if the band is seeing yellow," she said. "When they're playing, they can kind of remember the next thing that's coming up as blue."

On the road, Branch and her ensemble have nurtured a strong musical connection, and in the studio, she values their collective ability to engage in dialogue. "Coming up on the Chicago scene," she said, "there's a shared vocabulary and knowledge of jazz. There's also a whole separate shared vocabulary of Chicago improvised music."

Beyond vocabulary, her collaborators appreciate the bandleader's depth of expression. "Jaimie is a visionary," said Chad Taylor, who played drums on both of Branch's releases and was a Chicago mainstay for years in a cohort of performers that included multidisciplinary artist Rob Mazurek. "I'm not talking about being pioneering or cutting-edge, but more about her process. She envisions what feelings she wants to evoke with her music and then shapes and writes music to accomplish these goals."

Fly Or Die II initially came together in London, where her central quartet spent one day in the studio reviewing charts and working out ideas, then two nights playing live. "We played the whole record twice," said Branch, who also flexes her singing voice on two tracks of the new album. Following the London sessions, the bandleader then enjoyed two additional days in the studio for recording and overdubs.

Something of a purist, Branch tends toward a limited production approach, but spent significant time producing the tracks "twenty-three n me, jupiter redux" and "nuevo roquero estéreo." Finding the former to be "slightly anemic" compared to others works on the album, she returned to Chicago to add synths, layered trumpets, "alien chatter" and a tambourine. "I wanted to take the tune and put it in a different environment," she said. "So, [now it's] a free-jazz band playing in an alien space bar."

Engaging demons—namely substance abuse—long has shadowed many an artist's creative process. And Branch has been open about her experience with addiction, despite misgivings of potentially glorifying heroin use. Throughout her recovery, she's experienced certain revelations. There's one in particular that she considers worth sharing with others.

"I think there's a fear when you put down heroin that, 'Now my music is going to be gone, too,'" she said. "But it became clear that the drugs were actually hindering the creative process. It's not like, you stop using drugs and all your problems go away. But the music didn't go anywhere. And I think I was really scared it would."

Jaimie Branch's approach to visual scores developed further while writing music for her latest album, *Fly Or Die II*.



With each new project, Branch remains true to her take on music, sound and expression—and her invitation to openness. "I don't have major concerns about people nailing things," she said. "That's just not that interesting to me. I'd rather hear what people can do when they can breathe with it."

—Stephanie Jones

mario pavone

the scope of the piano trio

trio arc



2008 paul bley matt wilson

arc trio



2013 craig taborn gerald cleaver

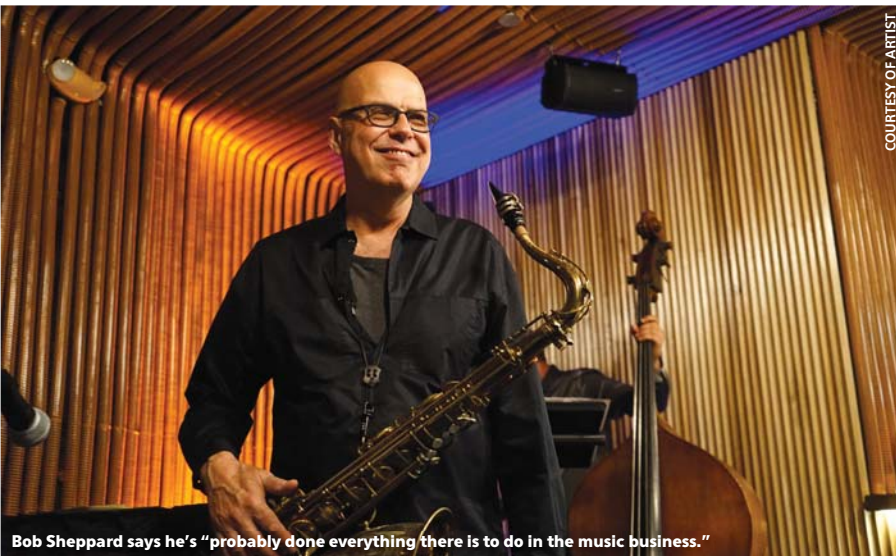
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Bob Sheppard says he's "probably done everything there is to do in the music business."

Sheppard Turns His Attention to Leading

AS ONE OF THE MOST IN-DEMAND HORN players in Hollywood, saxophonist Bob Sheppard has appeared on albums by Steely Dan, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and Michael Bubl . Sheppard's gun-for-hire skills have paid off well since he arrived in Los Angeles during the mid-1980s, but at the cost of getting his own name on the show calendar.

The New Jersey-born musician has released only four albums under his own name, but he's looking to make up for some of that lost ground. His most recent dispatch, *The Fine Line* (Challenge), features small-ensemble writing and strong solo work from Sheppard, who sur-

rounds himself with longtime friends and a few new faces.

"The creative culmination of writing and playing and getting the energy of people together to do it, it brought me alive," said Sheppard, surrounded by an army of mouthpieces and a travelogue of backstage passes in the small studio behind his house, a sanctuary located within shouting distance of nearly every major film and television studio in Los Angeles. "I've played with great people. I've probably done everything there is to do in the music business at this point, but the most important thing for me is to play jazz and get better."

Across 10 tracks, Sheppard traverses a lot of ground. He wrote half the compositions on *The Fine Line*; the rest of the album consists of contributions from his bandmates and a couple standards. The Sheppard-penned album opener, "Edge Of Trouble," features vibraphonist Simon Moullier, whom Sheppard met one night during a jam session at L.A.'s Blue Whale.

"He knocked me out," Sheppard said. "I hadn't recorded with vibes before, and it turned out to be a nice mix. He's a guy who plays his ass off and knows exactly what he wants."

He and Moullier fly about in sprightly unison, Sheppard comfortably exerting his soprano saxophone, which he returns to frequently, including on a swinging waltz through the Rodgers and Hart standard "I Didn't Know What Time It Was."

Sheppard compiled his rhythm section for the sessions by enlisting Dutch bassist Jasper Somsen, who appears on the album using Ray Brown's old bass on loan from John Clayton, and drummer Kendrick Scott, the young Houston-born powerhouse who started the year playing with saxophonist Charles Lloyd.

John Beasley, who first met Sheppard in the mid-'80s when the two were members of Freddie Hubbard's band, holds down the piano chair. Sheppard is a prominent soloist with Beasley's MONK'estra, a large-ensemble homage to Thelonious Monk.

"It's great to see him evolve as a writer," Beasley said of his bandmate. "People kind of sleep on his writing. But he's not so precious with his music. He allows guys to bend it and be expressive with it like all the greats do. He's a great tenor sax player, but he's a really good lead player, too. When it's on my gig, I can point to him at any time during the show and just say, 'Go!'"

Sheppard's reasons for neglecting his solo career are understandable. It often pays much better to work on an hourly basis on a soundstage than to spend time polishing one's own vision. And gigs playing with late-night TV orchestras and recording commercial jingles often have come looking for Sheppard.

"Left to my own devices, I sort of sit around and write on the piano and practice tunes and I go to gigs," Sheppard said. "Years go by doing that. When I was writing this record, I said to myself, 'This is what I should be doing now.' It's a different perspective writing music and then trying to record it."

Sheppard sometimes underplays his own accomplishments, passing off his incredible versatility and dependability as run-of-the-mill. But he seems ready to push harder for his own spot on the marquee: "The path that I took was the one of least resistance," he said. "Being a leader is the most difficult thing to achieve. It's all on you and it requires a single-mindedness about your desires. There is no one who respects that more than I do."

—Sean J. O'Connell

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Chicago Fest Propelled by Ambitious Performances

EPIC AND EPOCHAL PERFORMANCES defined the 41st annual Chicago Jazz Festival, which ran Aug. 29–Sept. 1 at Millennium Park.

About 500 musicians participated in 125 sets, according to the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, which organizes the extravaganza. The run included performances in outlying neighborhoods prior to the four-day culmination at the park. But during Labor Day weekend, most of the action was at two side stages—separated by about 100 yards in the middle of the park—and at the Pritzker Pavilion, where evening concerts took place.

But a wealth of talent, often presented simultaneously, made for difficult choices. Hear witty singer-pianist Ben Sidran or take in a set by Chicago polyglot Ben Lamar Gay? Guitarist Mike Alleman's After Dark sextet was opposite Dee Alexander's renditions of Billie Holiday tunes.

A 15-piece Art Ensemble of Chicago celebrated its 50th anniversary and was among several other major bookings that provided conceptual and sonic challenges. Though departing from the unforgettable small groups of its earliest peri-

od, the Art Ensemble orchestra retained its mission of embodying "Great Black Music, Ancient to the Future," and pushed boundaries with creativity front and center.

Original members Lester Bowie, Malachi Favors and Joseph Jarman have died, so surviving cofounder Roscoe Mitchell and longtime drummer Famoudou Don Moyé have tapped younger exemplars of their values—flutist Nicole Mitchell, cellist Tomeka Reid, bassists Jaribu Shahid, Sylvia Bolognesi and Junius Paul—for accompaniment. Multireedist/composer Roscoe Mitchell, 79, has reinforced the Art Ensemble's complexity and intensity, and in one central Aug. 30 episode, trumpeters Hugh Ragin and Fred Berry faced off against the bandleader, circular breathing ferociously on soprano. Meanwhile, flutist Mitchell (no relation) kept her stream of melody flowing throughout the troupe's shifts in density, dynamics, meter and propulsion, some of which necessitated the services of a conductor.

Members of the band, after they'd marched offstage, continued playing joyously in the wings.

But it was Latino-America Unida that



Roscoe Mitchell marks the Art Ensemble of Chicago's 50th anniversary at the Chicago Jazz Festival on Aug. 30.

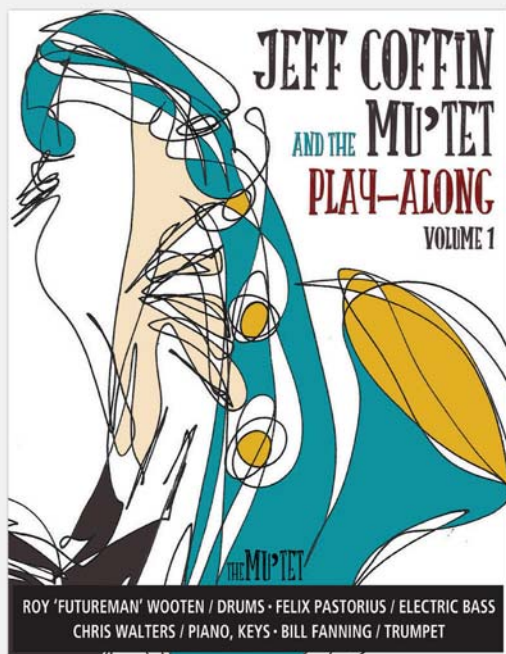
embodied the most highly charged collective. Representing a broader Pan-American legacy—its members hailing from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Chile and Mexico—the players each expressed themselves, bonding in the effort. Saxophonists Miguel Zenón and Melissa Aldana traded phrases and were fed by the rhythm section of drummer Antonio Sánchez, bassist Ricky Rodriguez and pianist David Virelles. The impressive premier clearly promised great things to come.

—Howard Mandel

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ADRIEN H. TILLMAN

Adam Rudolph conducts the Go: Organic Orchestra at New York's Rubin Museum of Art.

Percussionist Rudolph Crafts Tapestry of Sounds

BANDLEADER AND PERCUSSIONIST ADAM

Rudolph sees himself as an inventor, rather than a composer. Composers typically generate written music using a pencil or a music notation program, but he does more than that.

He creates new practices for making music.

“As an artist, I’ve always been interested in the creative process itself,” Rudolph said. “I believe that when you create a new process that the art you generate will be prototypical. Prototypical art means that the power of the individual voice actually takes the listener to a more universal experience.”

Rudolph has spent nearly five decades developing his individual voice. As a hand percussionist, he never fit neatly into the codified systems

of European-derived classical music, but he did move easily through many other traditions with roots in oral expression. He spent much of his career traveling the globe and performing alongside creative musicians as diverse as multi-instrumentalist Yusef Lateef, trumpeters Don Cherry and Wadada Leo Smith, saxophonist Pharoah Sanders, violinist L. Shankar, composer Philip Glass and pianist Omar Sosa. Along the way, Rudolph was working out his own ideas about what this “universal” listener experience might be—and how it might be achieved.

His latest recording, *Ragmala: A Garland Of Ragas (Meta)*, stands as a testament to his sui generis creative process. The two-disc set—a gorgeously complex tapestry of sounds, hues and

sensations—features Rudolph’s Go: Organic Orchestra, a 30-piece string-based improvisational ensemble, in a sublime pairing with the Brooklyn Raga Massive, a collective devoted to creative expressions of Indian classical music. On any of the album’s 20 tracks, one might hear a droning tanpura, a free-wailing trumpet, a string quartet, guttural throat singing, or a riffing rock guitar—all speaking to each other.

To understand why these inventive, culturally heterogeneous compositions work, it helps to dig into how Rudolph goes about creating them. His compositional approach stands on three pillars: his own intervallic matrices and cosmographs that he uses to establish the harmonic color of a piece; “ostinatos of circularity,” or poly-rhythmic combinations that drive the musical motion; and a self-created system of conductor’s signals that lead the improvisation.

“I conduct the orchestra in the moment ... so that the score is rendered spontaneously with the musicians,” Rudolph said. “How the score comes together is never going to be the same twice.”

The score, as such, is minimal, which is why he appreciated the skills that Raga Massive brought to his work. Having trained in an oral tradition, members of the group picked up Rudolph’s compositional process quickly. The cornerstone of Indian classical improvisation is the raga—an established melody, rhythmic phrase and mood all in one, Rudolph explained, and “a ragmala is where advanced players improvise on more than one raga in their performances.”

For Rudolph, who’s spent two decades studying Hindustani tabla (North Indian drumming), the collaboration with musicians who understood this kind of spontaneous composition “made a lot of sense.”

Jazz drummer Sameer Gupta, a tabla player with the collective, agreed. “Adam is definitely hip to Indian classical music,” he said. “He understands the beauty and expansiveness of those ancient melodies.”

Rudolph’s process also aligns with the collective’s mission of creating raga-inspired music, even if the edges that define Indian classical music get a little blurry.

“I think that Adam is stretching for something beyond the sphere of what we can even hope to hold some sort of standard to,” Gupta opined. “He’s bringing together so many different streams, everything from West African music to Indian classical music to contemporary improvisational music to orchestral music—it ceases to be any one thing.”

Not any one thing, perhaps, but no idle gambit, either. “When you listen to John Coltrane or Miles Davis or Yusef Lateef, you’re hearing very singular, very powerful, very individualistic voices,” Rudolph asserted. “Because their voices are so individualistic, they actually tap into a universal feeling that connects us. That’s the humanity of it.”

—Suzanne Lorge

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New York Voices Reminisces in Celebration of 30th Anniversary

THE TITLE TRACK OF NEW YORK VOICES' new album, *Reminiscing In Tempo* (Origin), was one of Duke Ellington's first long-form compositions in the 1930s. (Mel Tormé added the poignant lyrics in 1962.) It's an apt tune for a group now celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Founded at Ithaca College, New York Voices remains one of the world's foremost vocal jazz groups. The original quintet became a quartet with its current lineup in 1994: tenor vocalist and saxophonist Darmon Meader, the group's main arranger; baritone Peter Eldridge; and sopranos Lauren Kinhan and Kim Nazarian.

Over the decades, the group has toured and collaborated with some of the biggest names in jazz, including Bobby McFerrin, Paquito D'Rivera, Jim Hall and the Count Basie Orchestra. Its longevity is all the more remarkable considering that its four members maintain separate careers as artists and jazz educators, and live far apart: Nazarian in Ohio, Meader in upstate New York, Kinhan on Long Island and Eldridge in New Hampshire.

"We're really the Eastern Time Zone Voices now," Meader joked during a recent chat with DownBeat. "But that doesn't quite have a ring to it."

Nazarian, speaking from her farm near Oberlin University (where her husband, trombonist/producer Jay Ashby, teaches), said, "The key word in our lives is balance, juggling ... our personal and professional lives. Even though the Voices is not our primary money-maker, it's our priority job. No one wants to give up the legacy we've established as a group. We respect and love each other enough to make it work."

They all have active careers in music education, too. Meader is an Artist-in-Residence at Indiana University; Eldridge teaches full-time at Berklee College of Music; Kinhan teaches at New York University; and Nazarian teaches at Ithaca College, often conducting voice lessons over Skype. In addition, the group leads two weeklong vocal jazz camps, at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo and at the Bavarian Music Academy in Marktobendorf, Germany.

The group has become like an extended family over the years. "There have been more ups than downs," Nazarian recalled. "We've never canceled a show, despite illnesses. Once, in Indonesia, Peter was so ill for a concert that he sat on a stool, and Lauren and I held him up. Also, I delivered my son the day after a concert in Utica, New York."

Meader's favorite memories include having the chance to work with high-profile artists he



The members of New York Voices are Kim Nazarian (left), Peter Eldridge, Darmon Meader and Lauren Kinhan.

admires. "I once had something like an out-of-body experience going over our charts with Ray Brown. ... Just the other day [after an August all-star Brazilian concert at the Hollywood Bowl], Quincy Jones came backstage and asked us, 'Who does your arrangements?' And he gave me a fist bump. Moments like that!"

"The Voices takes up a smaller percentage of our time than in the past," Meader continued. "But our longevity means we have a big repertoire to choose from. And, when we get together, we're like dance partners who have worked together for years. There's a fair amount of practicing in hotel rooms. Sometimes, we fly into gig a day early just to have some time together."

The new album displays the group's restless eclecticism. Co-produced by Meader and Grammy-winning engineer and longtime friend Elliot Scheiner, it includes vocal arrangements of tunes by Chick Corea ("Open Your Eyes, You Can Fly"), Fred Hersch ("A Dance For Me"), The Beatles ("In My Life") and Ivan Lins ("Answered Prayers" [É De Deus]), as well as two interpretations of works by Cuban classi-

cal composer Ignacio Cervantes. The stunning opening track, "Round, Round, Round (Blue Rondo À La Turk)," is a version of the Dave Brubeck classic with lyrics by Al Jarreau, with additional vocalese lyrics by Kinhan.

"We like to pick more obscure things, or incredibly challenging things, like 'Blue Rondo,'" Nazarian said. "In 30 years, I think it is one of the hardest things we ever recorded. Memorizing those lyrics is mind-boggling—I don't know how Al Jarreau did it. After three decades, we're still challenging ourselves. We're not lowering keys, not slowing down tempos, not taking the easy road. ... We do what we teach. We try to set the bar and be the example of what we ask our students to do."

The essence of New York Voices, Nazarian added, is that "we can sing what we record. Our performances often are better than the recording. Our original goal, our career goal, is to bridge the gap between instrumental and vocal jazz. We are always referencing instrumental influences in our arrangements, in our performances and in our teaching." —Allen Morrison



MARI DOYLE

Pianist Fred Hersch and bassist John Hébert perform Aug. 25 during the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival in Manhattan.

A Bit of Bird's Freewheeling Spirit at Namesake Festival

IN THE EARLY 1950S, BEBOP PIONEER Charlie Parker lived in a townhouse on Manhattan's Avenue B, bordering Tompkins Square Park in Alphabet City. These days, that stretch of Avenue B is known as Charlie Parker Place, and the park hosts the annual Charlie Parker Jazz Festival.

Despite the recognition afforded Parker, the festival hasn't always been awash in explicit trib-

utes to him. And this year, based on its final day of performances on Aug. 25, the festival's 27th edition continued that pattern. But the program did offer moments that captured some aspects of Bird's freewheeling spirit, albeit with a mix of styles and sensibilities.

Pianist Fred Hersch, who followed alto saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin in the program's lineup, was backed by longtime trio members, bass-

ist John Hébert and drummer Eric McPherson. The bandleader preached the beauty of colloquy between himself and his bandmates, between his right hand and his (famously deft) left hand—heard to great effect on what he called his “side-ways” tribute to Parker, “Mrs. Parker Of K.C.” That ode to Parker's mother was written by Hersch's onetime teacher and colleague, pianist Jaki Byard, who recorded it with Eric Dolphy on the multi-reedist's 1962 album *Far Cry*.

Hersch's innate restraint represented a distinct turn from Benjamin's extroversion, and the impact of the pivot was palpable in the open-air setting.

Closing out the concert, Carl Allen's tribute to a Parker collaborator, Art Blakey, swung all the way, with few surprises outside the piquant pleasures in a masterful turn of musical phrase.

Joined by trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, tenor saxophonist JD Allen, pianist Eric Reed and bassist Peter Washington, the drummer kicked things along Blakey-style—with jolts aplenty and more than a modicum of joie de vivre—as the band dispatched tunes like Wayne Shorter's “Sweet And Sour,” Clare Fischer's “Pensativa” and the festival's final number, the popular hit “Moanin’.”

And by that time, a clutch of dancers had become immersed in an impromptu Lindy Hop at the edge of the stage. —Phillip Lutz



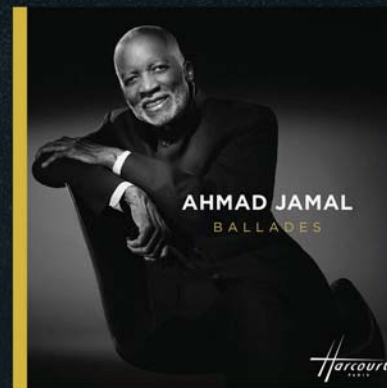
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In Search of THE SUBLIME

Led by Manfred Eicher, ECM Records celebrates 50 years of transcendent sonic quests

By Josef Woodard | Photo by Bart Babinski

A search for the heart of the ECM Records operation leads to a small, quiet space located on the second floor of a compound in an industrial section of Munich, Germany. Here, in visionary label head Manfred Eicher's peaceable central office—filled with audio equipment from different eras—the producer and curator of the ECM aesthetic plots his company's moves.

Nearby, the bustle of the Autobahn serves as a reminder of an extant urbanity. But, aptly, a sitting position in Eicher's office affords a deceptively bucolic view of a canopy of trees that surrounds the building, ECM's home base since the 1970s. Part of what makes the ECM story such an important one within jazz and classical circles is the label's magical blend of timeless introspection and contemporary sophistication.

On many ECM albums, one hears the calm of the trees alongside the thrush of the traffic.

Fifty years ago, Eicher co-founded Edition of Contemporary Music, better known as ECM. The label has issued more than 1,600 titles and earned a sterling reputation among fans, critics and concert presenters the world over. During a conversation with *DownBeat*, Eicher reflected on the past, present and future of the imprint, which topped the Record Label category in the 2019 *DownBeat* Critics Poll. Eicher also topped the poll's Producer category.

Stepping into the Eicher epicenter can evoke a sense of reverence for those familiar with the producer's work: The space feels like a temple of deep listening.

Despite the appeal of such a personalized space,

Eicher hardly is chained to his desk. Moving between studios and coordinating recording sessions around the globe has made him inherently itinerant. In Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer's 2009 documentary, *Sounds and Silence: Travels with Manfred Eicher*, the label head admits, "I like to travel. Music has no fixed abode."

At 50, the label thrives, releasing about 50 albums each year. And the catalog features a who's who from the world of creative music: pianists Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea and Vijay Iyer; guitarists Pat Metheny, John Abercrombie and Jakob Bro; bassists Charlie Haden, Dave Holland and Eberhard Weber; vibraphonist Gary Burton; vocalist/composer Meredith Monk; saxophonists Charles Lloyd and Jan Garbarek; trumpeters Enrico Rava and Tomasz Stańko; and bands, such as Oregon and the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

In 1984, Eicher—who started his career as a classically trained double bassist—launched the New Series, a dedicated classical line, spotlighting such names as Arvo Pärt, György Kurtág, Kim Kashkashian and Steve Reich. To date, Eicher has won three Grammy awards, all for his production work on classical recordings.

Eicher explained how he maintains a balance between jazz and classical music. "One line deals with music created primarily through improvisation," he said. "The other line starts from the carefully realized score. Both approaches are important to me—form and freedom. I benefited from one and the other."



Manfred Eicher (foreground) with Nana Vasconcelos (standing), Pat Metheny and Jan Erik Kongshaug.



©DEBORAH FEINGOLD/ECM RECORDS

In Munich, Eicher invited DownBeat to a savory Italian dinner at a humble restaurant close to his home near the Isar River. Also along was Steve Lake, an ECM mainstay since the late 1970s, who has had a variety of roles: writer, organizer, conceptualist and sometimes producer. The dinner discussion ranged from the label's history to Eicher's rural upbringing in the German town Lindau, on Lake Constance, near the Switzerland and Austria borders. That formative setting partly could account for his taste for music that is earthy, open and folkloric.

Describing his ECM experience, Eicher mused that, despite the international profile afforded by various high-profile distribution deals, he has enjoyed remarkable artistic freedom. "I've had great luck in being able to do what I want, without answering to anybody, with no corporate boss in the back," he said. "We've been able to keep it going all this time."

Lake added, "This is one of the great independent labels."

Whereas other record company headquarters might flaunt a sense of flashy style, ECM's Munich hub shuns extraneous frills. While leading a tour of the Munich offices, label publicist Christian Stolberg asserted that Eicher "loves things functional, and that's it. I think he wants to use the money for the productions and not for show."

In one large room, cabinets with massive

archives line the walls, and another area belongs to the design station for the label's legendarily subtle and refined album cover graphics, currently created by Sascha Kleis, in collaboration with Eicher. (Previous designers include Barbara Wojirsch and Dieter Rehm.)

In a rare touch of whimsy, the room also houses a female mannequin sporting an ornate cap once owned by drummer-bandleader Paul Motian (1931–2011), who recorded influential ECM albums in a trio with guitarist Bill Frisell and saxophonist Joe Lovano.

"Paul was a good friend," Eicher said, "and a great musician whom I'd admired since Bill Evans' Village Vanguard recordings [1961]. *Conception Vessel* [1973] marked Paul's debut as a composer and leader. I'm glad to have encouraged him on that path."

On the office's far end, ECM's founding (and funding) partner Karl Egger's health food and wine company LaSelva has a showroom combining its products with an ECM record store, with a small performance space attached. The night before DownBeat's visit, the ECM-aligned duo of cellist Anja Lechner and guitarist Pablo Márquez performed there.

Egger, who ran the Elektro-Egger record store, played a key role in the label's origin story, offering Eicher a seminal record-making opportunity. The result: pianist Mal Waldron's *Free At Last*, recorded on Nov. 24,

1969, at Tonstudio Bauer in Ludwigsburg, West Germany. It became the first ECM release, with early partner Manfred Scheffner (who died in September at the age of 79) listed as producer.

ECM's 50th anniversary has been celebrated at numerous festivals this year, including the Big Ears Festival in Knoxville, Tennessee, the Healdsburg Jazz Festival in California and the Montreal Jazz Festival.

More celebrations are forthcoming. One will be at the Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt in Germany on Oct. 23–27. SFJAZZ in San Francisco will salute the label Oct. 24–27, with performances by 10 acts; Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York will present an ECM tribute Nov. 1–2; The Skopje Jazz Festival will spotlight ECM Oct. 17–20 in Skopje, Macedonia; and Flagey will present the "ECM 50th Anniversary Weekend" Nov. 21–24 in Brussels, Belgium.

Despite the numerous tributes, Eicher admitted, "I'm not a celebration kind of guy. We will do a few things [to mark the anniversary], but I mostly want to do the work, and just let people [hear the music]. ... That's the most important thing."

In a 1975 Saturday Review article, writer Chris Albertson noted that Eicher's "sensible approach to jazz recording, perceptive ear, venturesome spirit, sensitivity, and stringent technical demands are widely appreciated now, but they will be even more appreciated in years to

come.” True enough.

Last January, the celebratory year commenced with a two-night, ECM mini-fest, part of Manhattan’s Winter Jazzfest, at (Le) Poisson Rouge. The roster included pianist Shai Maestro, trumpeter Ralph Alessi, drummer Billy Hart and the piano duo of Iyer and Craig Taborn.

Eicher, who tends to eschew public appearances, traveled to New York for the occasion, which was sandwiched between two other important matters: He visited the rural New Jersey home of longtime friend Jarrett, whose health issues have interrupted his music-making, and he produced a recording session by trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith.

Amid a busy Gotham weekend, Eicher sat down in the lobby of his Midtown hotel, over a pot of tea, and spoke about his adventures.

Regarding his perspective after 50 years, Eicher offered a pithy assessment of the ECM manifesto, as such. “It is all about curiosity,” he said. “It began that way and I am still pursuing that. I am always searching for new sounds.”

Soon after the 1969 Waldron recording, Eicher was drawn deeper into officially starting a label, though without any particular role models: “It was more a simple matter of following my musical interests. This gradually led to what was perceived as the label’s ‘identity.’ But there wasn’t a grand plan. I just wanted to make some recordings and had some ideas about sound in mind.”

Acoustics and the recording process have been central ECM concerns. Eicher’s aesthetic involves a sonic landscape of purity, the judicious use of silence and an insistence on live tracking rather than excessive takes, overdubbing or other production trickery.

Eicher’s studio techniques and his malleable “producer” role entail the critical art of “attentive listening,” paying close attention to details and the structure of the musical experience.

“I believe in going with a plan,” he said, “but also being open to whatever might happen unexpectedly in the studio, in the improvisational process. Sometimes, you have to stop and start again, if it’s not coming together or working.”

“Each project brings its own demands, such as whether to use a studio with isolation for the musicians or to put them all in the same room, or whether to use a studio at all—compared to, say, a church, as we have done many times with the New Series projects.”

Key sonic collaborators have included

such frequently called-upon engineers as Jan Erik Kongshaug in Oslo, Grammy winner James Farber in New York and others. “Together,” Eicher explained, “we worked on developing a sound, and an appreciation of space and silence. We were looking for a sound that was transparent, detailed and lucid.”

Further along in the creative process, Eicher emphasizes the importance of sequencing and shaping the final program. “It’s like film editing,” he said, “telling a story and giving a rhythm to a project.”

An avid cineaste who co-directed the 1992 film *Holozän* and has worked with iconoclastic director Jean-Luc Godard, Eicher has also cited his admiration for French filmmaker Robert Bresson.

Eicher’s reverence for storytelling helps explain why the album concept is still so important to him, regardless of the format. ECM finally joined the streaming revolution in November 2017, easing a once-firm disinclination to break up an album’s continuity. “Young people don’t understand the power of the *album*,” Eicher said ruefully, “which is too bad. An album is like a film or a play, presented in a certain way, with an overall sense of rhythm, dynamics and a story being told.”

Back in Munich, ECM’s export manager Heino Freiberg—part of the team for 30 years—was in his office, laying out the chronology of ECM’s technology and platform history, moving from vinyl to CDs, and then, eventually, to digital streaming on platforms like Spotify.

“ECM has been trend-setting in many fields,” Freiberg said, “but in this very special case [of streaming], we followed a little bit.”

The album format, Freiberg said, “remains important—the order of how you present the music, but also, from the very beginning, how to present it, graphically. [Eicher] wanted to have nice packaging and not any kind of short-minded artist photo or instrument. Manfred introduced typography, photography and painting, and this was a way to consider this as an artifact.”

One recent ECM “artifact” of note is the Iyer-Taborn duo’s *The Transitory Poems*. The pair sat down with DownBeat at ECM’s New York office the day after their high-profile Winter Jazzfest concert. They belong to a coterie of New York-based pianists, including Ethan Iverson and David Virelles, who have become part of the ECM roster in the 21st century.

These two, though, aren’t tethered to “a stylistic thing,” according to Taborn. “It’s just very personal approaches, and I



©CLAIRE STEFANI/ECM RECORDS
Producer Manfred Eicher (left) and classical violist Kim Kashkashian

Respecting the Score

For a jazz-centric record label to launch a classical series might seem like a stretch, but for ECM, the 1984 birth of the New Series imprint seemed nearly inevitable. Classical elements long had been a part of the ECM world: Its roster included gifted artists working in the realm of “new music,” and producer and label head Manfred Eicher is a classically trained bassist.

By the early 1980s, Eicher explained, “We had already recorded Steve Reich—such as *Music For 18 Musicians* and *Tehillim*—and Meredith Monk on ECM. But I wanted to make records of scored music, compared to the improvisational music of most of the ECM catalog. Very early, I discovered Arvo Pärt.” The Estonian-born composer’s *Tabula Rasa*, featuring pianist Keith Jarrett, became an immediate and lasting success for the New Series.

Among the loftiest artists involved with the label is classical pianist Sir András Schiff, who said, “My relationship with ECM and Manfred Eicher is deeply satisfying. It’s a very lucky collaboration, in these distracted times. I would not like to work with any of the ‘big’ record companies.”

Since 1985, violist Kim Kashkashian has been a key figure in the success of the New Series. Her extensive discography includes *Kurtág & Ligeti*, a 2002 album that earned her a Grammy.

According to Kashkashian, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the New Series is that it showcases both modern and historic repertoire. “Representing contemporary composition is an important part of any interpretive musician’s role in the world,” she said. “It’s a bit like ‘telling the news,’ instead of always living in a museum of older works.”

She expressed a deep respect for Eicher’s intense focus on quality: “This work is his entire life, and it takes most of his conscious thought, aesthetic and spiritual drive. The library of music reflects this utter commitment.” —Josef Woodard



Clockwise, from lower left: Gary Peacock, Jack DeJohnette, Eicher and Keith Jarrett



Don Cherry with Eicher



Adam Cruz (left), Eicher, David Virelles and Thomas Morgan during the 2016 recording sessions for Virelles' album *Gnosis*

think [Eicher] got excited by that.”

Iyer added, “It doesn’t feel like any one of us is a marginal outlier. Actually, we’re all outliers, a group of nonconformists.”

As sidemen, Iyer and Taborn made their ECM recording debuts with saxophonist and Art Ensemble of Chicago co-founder Roscoe Mitchell—Taborn on *Nine To Get Ready* (recorded in 1997) and both pianists on *Far Side* (recorded in 2007). Their debuts as ECM leaders arrived with Taborn’s 2011 solo album, *Avenging Angel*, and Iyer’s 2014 album *Mutations*. Both have since released ECM albums in varied contexts and idioms.

Iyer appreciates the label’s broad scope: “Given the fact that [trumpeter] Lester Bowie’s *Avant Pop*, [tabla player] Zakir Hussain’s album *Making Music*, and [pianist] Andrés Schiff playing Bach exist under one umbrella, there’s nothing wrong with anything that we propose here. We have to keep reminding ourselves that this is a vast spectrum of music.”

Iyer and Taborn’s connections to Mitchell reinforce ECM’s many links to the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Association for Advancement of Creative Musicians. Eicher noted, “We recorded musicians from the AACM from the early days of ECM onwards. Anthony Braxton plays on [saxophonist] Marion Brown’s *Afternoon Of A Georgia Faun* [1970], the fourth ECM album, and would soon reappear on Circle’s *Paris*

Concert [1972] and Dave Holland’s *Conference Of The Birds* [1973].

“As a bassist, I played in 1970 with Leo Smith and Marion Brown in their Creative Improvisation Ensemble [documented by Theo Kotulla in his film *See the Music*]. And I still work with Wadada: Next year we’ll put out a new album by him.”

On the ECM-dense January weekend in New York, trumpeter Mathias Eick, 40, spoke to *DownBeat* about his ECM path. Eick is one of the most popular of ECM’s more recent Norwegian contingent—a list that includes saxophonist Trygve Seim, trumpeter Arve Henriksen and keyboardist Christian Wallumrød.

After playing on guitarist Jacob Young’s 2004 ECM album, *Evening Falls*, Eicher invited the trumpeter to record his own work. Eick’s ECM debut, *The Door*, was released in 2008.

Working with Eicher was both exhilarating and a bit nerve-racking. “He’s one of my idols,” Eick said. “I was trying not to think of the history that he has had his hands on, and all that he has meant to me. It took me a couple of albums to really relax. Maybe after we had a few glasses of wine and went out and had dinner, and he came and met my family, he became human.

“That was the biggest challenge for me, personally, just to relax and to trust myself and my own opinions in the context of working with Manfred.” With a laugh, he added, “I would do

whatever he told me.”

ECM has done more to disseminate the “Norwegian jazz” sound to other countries—especially the United States—than any other label, beginning in the ’70s.

“My choice of Norwegian musicians was very selective,” Eicher said, citing saxophonist Jan Garbarek as a prime example. “The four players of [Garbarek’s 1970 album] *Afric Pepperbird*—Jan, [guitarist] Terje Rypdal, [bassist] Arild Andersen, [drummer] Jon Christensen—had a big influence on the music that followed. For a long time, Oslo seemed a good place to record and develop ideas, because it was so far from the center of the jazz scene. And the studio became my home—Talent Studio, and then the first Rainbow Studio, with Jan Erik Kongshaug.”

But if there is a flagship ECM artist, it is Jarrett, whose first ECM title was the 1972 studio solo album *Facing You*. A few years later, Jarrett recorded his most popular album—also ECM’s most celebrated title: *The Köln Concert*. The landmark solo piano improvisation opus was recorded on Jan. 24, 1975, at the Opera House in Cologne, Germany. Today, it has sold millions of copies and appeared on many “Best Jazz Albums of All Time” lists.

Jarrett’s ECM discography, upward of 70 titles, chronicles his so-called “American” quartet with Haden, Motian and saxophonist Dewey Redman; his “European” quartet with Garbarek,

Christensen and bassist Palle Danielsson; the Standards Trio with drummer Jack DeJohnette and bassist Gary Peacock, as well as numerous solo works. Among his classical releases are works by Bach, such as *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and *Six Sonatas For Violin And Piano*, a collaboration with Michelle Makarski.

"It's impossible to sum up in a few sentences what Keith and his music have meant to me personally and to ECM as a label over the decades," Eicher said. "We have been proud to present the full range of his music, which is, by any definition, a unique body of work from a master of spontaneous invention." He added, "We have a great trust in each other."

Early on, there were many bases of compatibility. "[Jarrett] was very much into classical music," Eicher said, "but also the music of Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan. Early on, I wrote a letter to Keith, before *Facing You*. I was proposing he make a record with Jack DeJohnette and Gary Peacock."

For 1976's *Hymns/Spheres*, Jarrett improvised on an organ at the Benedictine Abbey in Ottobeuren, Germany. Eicher worked the organ's many stops: "He was playing and telling me which stops to pull at which times."

In a 1995 interview (with this writer), Jarrett reflected on ECM's role in his career: "The ability to find somebody who heard what I was doing and let the format be determined by me, basically, was what I needed. So, if there wasn't anyone like Manfred—in my case, that's who there was—I don't know what would have happened otherwise."

"On the one hand, the story might have been different and I might not have been able to do what I've done. On the other hand, I know how early I felt that I was going to be doing something. I just wasn't sure when. I knew that my work would be of value. I don't know if I ever would have found the outlet, so in that case, there would have been a horrible difference between the beginning that I did have and the nonbeginning that I might have had."

One striking recent ECM release was veteran bassist Barre Phillips' solo project, *End To End*. (Interestingly, ECM also released Larry Grenadier's solo bass album *The Gleaners* on Feb. 15.)

Eicher noted, "I knew Barre already before ECM began and admired his playing. Hearing him together with Dave Holland inside an NDR Workshop project led to [1971's] *Music From Two Bases* and a working relationship that extended over half a century."

While at the FIMAV festival in Victoriaville, Quebec, this year, where he delivered a remarkable solo set, Phillips recounted the origins of *End To End*. A seasoned solo bass concert performer with a handful of solo bass albums—including his 1984 ECM album, *Call Me When You Get There*—Phillips approached Eicher about another solo venture.

"For me, it would be some kind of full circle," Phillips said. "I started so many things with Manfred in the '70s. I called him up and he said, 'Yeah, I want to do it tomorrow.' That surprised me very much, because he's such a busy man. We made the record. I made the music. He made the record. I have to be clear about that."

During July's Moldejazz Festival in Norway, Bill Frisell, 68, sat in his hotel's lobby, in plain view of the adjacent Romsdal Fjord, recounting his history with ECM. Early on, Frisell earned the sobriquet "ECM house guitarist," via sideman roles with Garbarek, Weber and others. He recorded three leader albums for ECM in the 1980s before becoming frustrated with creative control issues, later recording for Nonesuch, Savoy and OKeh, and recently signing with Blue Note.

Before a duo concert with bassist Thomas Morgan, Frisell recalled a fateful 1981 gig at Moldejazz with Arild Andersen, which virtually marked the launch of his initial ECM chapter. Three decades later, apart from appearances with Motian, Gavin Bryars, Lee Konitz and Kenny Wheeler, the ECM/Frisell drought ended in 2017, when he and Morgan teamed up for duo album *Small Town* and its 2019 follow-up, *Epistrophe*.

Frisell asserted that the catalyst for the recent ECM reunion was New York-based Sarah Humphries, head of the label's U.S. operations, who was wowed by the duo and determined to release it on the label. "She's like an angel," Frisell effused, "a true, incredible mediator, in this world of men trying to be the tough guy. She's the last person who would ever draw attention to herself."

Frisell, strongly influenced by '70s ECM albums, yearns to correct a misconception, explaining, "I have trouble when people say 'the ECM sound.' There is something about just being in a big room and there's space. To me, the ECM sound is also like Columbia records from the early '60s, or early Paul Bley records. ... Or when Miles played one note and then he waits for five minutes, then hits another one. Or Monk. It's about waiting for a second [rather than] running your mouth off. It's not 'the ECM sound.' It's a sensib-

JACK DEJOHNETTE IN MOVEMENT
RAVI COLTRANE MATTHEW GARRISON ECM



Distinct Visuals

The cover art for *In Movement*—the 2016 ECM album featuring dynamic interplay among drummer Jack DeJohnette, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane and bassist Matthew Garrison—is a photograph depicting brushed-on smudges of glue left by workers on a wall at an Edinburgh, Scotland, construction site. The image was shot on a whim in 2015 by Korean photographer Woong Chul An as he passed the site. Only later, he commented in a recent text message, did he realize what he had captured: a "free-spirited, unfettered, wild and totally improvised image."

But when Manfred Eicher, the producer and head of ECM, saw the image, he knew what he had: a shot that would reflect the improvisatory soul of *In Movement*, and he moved quickly to collect it. "The photo was just waiting in the archive, not too long, before it was used for Jack's cover, after we recorded the music in New York," Eicher wrote in a recent email. The recording took place in October 2015 and, the following May, the album was released, adorned by the photo; both are sublimely textured expressions of free-spiritedness.

An's photo so powerfully evokes the music while retaining an air of mystery—that one might think a lengthy analysis had preceded its choice. Not so, Eicher said. Nor is that the case generally regarding ECM's half-century of cover art: "There is no guiding principle, beyond trying to make covers that we like. Intuition is paramount." And where does intuition lead him? "The idea is never to illustrate (if possible), but to offer a layer that parallels or counter-points in some way."

In addition to the evocative covers, much care is devoted to the packaging of ECM albums—a prime example being *The Art Ensemble Of Chicago And Associated Ensembles*, a 2018 box set that houses 21 CDs and an elegant, 300-page booklet.

For ECM's visual elements, Eicher has maintained the unity of vision that helped earn him singular status among producers. Economic concerns are not much of a factor: "The costs have never held us back from what we wanted to do." —Phillip Lutz

© LUC JENNIEPIN/ECM RECORDS



Louis Slavis has a long history with ECM Records.

50 ECM Gems

The word "touchstone" dates back to the 15th century, denoting a special black quartz used to test the quality of gold alloys via the streaks left behind on its surface. While the term has retained its metaphorical use as a criterion by which the quality of something—in this case, music—is measured, it feels especially apt in the context of ECM Records.

In 2008, ECM released its first album in the Touchstones series. Numbering 40 in total, each album was a world unto itself. It only feels appropriate that ECM should revisit the idea this year in celebration of half a century of creative operation with a Touchstones series called "50 for the 50th."

Like its predecessor, this new set provides opportunities for avid listeners to revisit old friends and a platform for novices to discover new ones. Label stalwarts, such as pianist Keith Jarrett and bassist Arild Andersen, rest comfortably alongside such outliers as pianist Mike Nock.

One distinctive album in the set is David Darling's *Cello* (1992), which features the titular instrument in both its acoustic and custom 8-string electric forms. Floating blissfully between jazz and classical, *Cello* treats the border around either genre as permeable, as so many other artists under producer Manfred Eicher's purview have.

Among those gleefully blurring genres is reedist Louis Slavis, whose quintet effort *Rouge* is included in the new Touchstones series. Released in 1992, it was his first album for ECM.

"It was my doorway into this famous label," Slavis said, "and the beginning of a very long story. Over the years, it has become more and more important for Manfred and I to work together. It's vital for an artist to have a label that follows all your iterations. In addition to helping me and so many other artists find their musical paths, recording for ECM has the added advantage of placing your music into hands all around the world. [Eicher] fights to keep [titles in print], so something you recorded 30 years ago is still available. This means the world to me, as I consider every album I've done to be equally important on a personal level." —Tyran Grillo



Eicher with Arvo Pärt in Rouen, France

© JEAN-PIERRE LACHÈRE/ECM RECORDS

ity about space. Manfred is definitely sensitive to that.

"When you're on the same wavelength, it's so amazing to have [Eicher] in the studio, because it's like his life is on the line. When I'm playing, with every note, I feel like my life is on the line. That's where he's at. It's that intense. You can't say that about everybody. His commitment to it is really about the music."

Backstage at July's Montreal Jazz Festival, Swedish pianist Bobo Stenson, 75, took time before a dazzling, poetic solo concert to reflect on his long ECM connection, dating back to 1971.

Of Eicher, Stenson, who has released several trio albums on ECM, including 2018's *Contra La Indecisión*, said: "I would call him a *real* producer. He really wants to be a part of the process and what is happening. His main thing is to get the creative things out of the musicians. He might come running out into the studio saying, 'Yeah, keep that. Go on.' He is very much involved in every production.

"Normally," Stenson continued, "you record for two days and then you make the whole thing ready on the third day. Everything should be ready by then. On mixing day, [Eicher is] really busy with the sound and also the order [of tracks in the program]."

Another artist deeply connected to ECM and Eicher is influential keyboardist-composer Carla Bley. A stubbornly resourceful artist who launched her own label, WATT, along with a model DIY project, the New Music Distribution Service, Bley recently recalled her pre-DIY days. "I remember asking Manfred, 'Me and Mike [Mantler] just made this album. Would you like to put it out on your label?' He wrote back and said, 'No.' I remember that," she said with a chuckle.

According to Bley, in the mid-'70s,

NMDS "ended up having to distribute Manfred's records." She added, "In those days, I guess none of us had any money. Manfred would sleep on our couch when he was in New York. Everything was pretty relaxed."

Today, Bley's WATT releases are part of the ECM catalog. Lately, she has opted to focus on making music—away from the music *business* aspect—releasing trio albums on ECM, proper, with Eicher as producer. (Her trio bandmates are her life partner, bassist Steve Swallow, and saxophonist Andy Sheppard.) "We figure [Eicher has] got some kind of a magic formula," she said, "and if we just shut up, he'll do it for us. ... Manfred is absolutely sure of himself and sure of his reasoning. He knows how he feels about something and he makes sure that's what he does."

While ECM's massive, diverse catalog defies easy description, one recurring thread has been an inward, meditative and even spiritual quality. In some cases, the musical contexts have dealt directly with liturgical music, religious traditions and matters of spirituality, especially in the music of Pärt, Bach and various treatments of Norwegian hymns—and Armenian hymns on pianist/vocalist Areni Agbabian's latest album, *Bloom*.

Is ECM, in ways implicit or otherwise, an inherently more spiritually charged enterprise than other record labels of note? Eicher clarified, "It's 'spiritual' in that music addresses matters of the spirit—but it also addresses every other aspect of existence. The 'mission' is simply to release music that matters, or what I think matters. Music that has meaning for us and, we hope, for others."

A final, open-ended question: What's next?

"Tomorrow," Eicher said.

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The Crosscurrents Trio consists of Chris Potter (left), Zakir Hussain and Dave Holland.

CROSSCURRENTS TRIO

STYLISTIC CONVERGENCE

BY THOMAS STAUDTER | PHOTO BY PAUL JOSEPH

A particularly compelling moment during concerts by Crosscurrents, a seven-member ensemble that world-renowned tabla player Zakir Hussain organized in 2015, would occur when the percussionist winnowed down the group and was accompanied by just two other virtuosos on stage—bassist Dave Holland and saxophonist Chris Potter.

Situated close together in a triangle at stage left, their direct sight lines encouraging quick, nuanced interactions, the three would serve up a Potter composition titled “Good Hope,” written several years ago but presciently apropos for the band. The song is a reference to the Cape of Good Hope, a peninsula on South Africa’s coastline commonly thought to be where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet. It actually isn’t, but the song nonetheless serves as an apt symbol for the convergence of musical traditions and styles Hussain intended for his ensemble.

As a plan developed to create new music, rehearse and have opportunities to perform together, Hussain invited Holland and Potter to India, so the trio could play at Barsi, an annual Mumbai memorial concert held to honor Hussain’s late father, tabla master Alla Rakha. During January 2017, the trio rehearsed and played a warm-up show in Dubai with Indian drummer Gino Banks sitting in just before the ensemble’s triumphant appearance at Barsi the following month. As Holland, Hussain and Potter fulfilled touring and recording obligations that already were on their schedules, and as promoters became interested, the musicians remained in touch and spoke about refining the trio’s repertoire in terms of new compositions each would contribute to the project. Finally, a tour consisting of about two dozen dates that stretched from North America to Europe was booked for June and July of last year.

After a suitable pause for some late-summer relaxation, the trio met at Sear Sound in New York for two days in

September 2018 and recorded the eight-song album *Good Hope* (Edition). Following the album’s release this fall, the band known as the Crosscurrents Trio will launch a European tour on Oct. 23 at the Enjoy Jazz Festival in Heidelberg, Germany.

The significance of this gathering of three remarkable artists goes well beyond its “supergroup” status, which simply promotes the aesthetic enjoyments that could result when members’ singular musical personalities are brought together. While the Crosscurrents Trio’s *Good Hope* truly succeeds in creating a musical statement for the kind of appreciative audience that relishes being taken on a mesmerizing journey, there is something much larger at work here. The project stands as a meaningful continuation of the dialogue between Indian musicians and jazz players, which began more than a half-century ago.

That this reinvigorated conversation transpires in a jazz trio like no other makes sense. And in an uncluttered soundscape you hear all: Hussain’s tabla playing and percussion (he also performs on South Asian hand drums called the kanjira, chanda and madal) provide a majestic tapestry of rhythms that unfurl in unrelenting waves of sound—notes, really—each touch and thump propelling the music forward. Hussain finds microrhythms within the tempos, many with unconventional time signatures, with such unerring inflection, and he responds so quickly to the musical ideas posited by his trio mates, it’s as if through precognition. Inside the grooves, Holland locks in, playing atop Hussain’s intricate beats, grounding the music or skipping ahead, similarly anticipating



the movements of his bandmates, all the while maintaining melodic structures or proposing harmonic affinities. Without a chordal instrument on board, Holland covers an immense area in the arrangements, and appropriately Hussain refers to the bassist as “the spine” of the trio.

Riding atop *Good Hope*’s churning waves of rhythm, Potter, mostly on tenor saxophone, fills the album with one inspired and commanding performance after another—no small feat. The band stretches out: All but one of the program’s songs clock in around seven or eight minutes; “Lucky Seven,” reprised from Holland’s 2006 quintet album, *Critical Mass*, runs almost 11 minutes. Aside from bass cadenzas and solos, or spots in the arrangements where Holland and Hussain percolate in tandem for a minute or so, Potter “just wails,” as Hussain put it.

The saxophonist’s agile, full-bore approach allows him to enunciate long melodic phrases on songs like Hussain’s “J Bhai,” a tribute to John McLaughlin (“bhai” is Hindi for brother), and “Ziandi,” the album’s celebratory opener, which Potter penned for his trio mates (nicknamed Z and D), then launch into extended improvisations, one after another, lifting the excitement even higher.

It’s hard to imagine another saxophonist with the mastery, energy and endurance to match up as well in this setting—and pull off the entire program.

“This project took off immediately when we started playing together,” Holland said during a recent phone call from upstate New York, where he was vacationing, not far from his longtime home in the Hudson Valley. “There is such a feeling of empathy and communication between us, and when you have that existing in the music it makes things quite easy because you’re feeding off

each other’s creativity, and it just spirals up and up.

“I think trio is almost the perfect combination in terms of intimacy, close dialogue and speed of communication. The lines are very direct in a trio. Obviously, that’s true in duo, too. But the dynamic of three, I think, is special, particularly in this situation. There is a certain transparency to the sound of music we’re making together. As a bass player, I found it very liberating to be playing in this context and have the kind of sonic space that a trio creates. It allowed me to address the bass in ways that are a little different than when I’m playing in a larger group or with a full set of drums and an intense kind of drum setting. Zakir is intense, but in a way that makes it easy for me to interact, have space for the sound of the instrument and also to listen.”

The simple stage setting, with Holland, Hussain and Potter just a few feet away from each other, was recreated in the recording studio, the songs tracked live without overdubs in three takes or fewer. And inside the triumvirate, the closeness supported a prodigious connectedness—as musical traditions, vocabularies and experiences stretched and were shared across those short spaces to create something both new and familiar. Since its inception, jazz steadily has grown more complex and interesting through the introduction of rhythms and musical languages from around the world, and the Crosscurrents Trio continues that important evolution.

The band represents not only a stylistic convergence, but also the meeting of disparate regions: Potter grew up in South Carolina, Hussain hails from Mumbai and Holland is a native of Wolverhampton, in the West Midlands of England. But much unites these three titans.

Potter, in a phone conversation while touring in France this summer, said the common pur-

pose and creative drive of any group of musicians come from “a knowledge of the history of jazz, an interest in different musical languages and rhythms, and a willingness to learn new systems of playing.

“That’s well within the aesthetics of this group and where our music is coming from,” he continued. “Ultimately, it’s about the ability to play, sound good and be able to navigate the music. But on a deeper level, music is about sharing an experience, the generosity of the musicians and the desire, through music, to make something that’s bigger than any single one of the participants. All of us in the trio approach music this way and feel like we’re making a musical statement that is coherent from all sides. It’s also an expression of the joy we share in the process.”

Along with musical cultures, a bridge between generations exists in the Crosscurrents Trio. At 48, Potter is the junior member of the trio, and acknowledged that working with elders like Holland, 72, and Hussain, 68, puts him in a unique position to gain artistically from their experience. “It would be very foolish of me not to pay attention to how they do things and learn from them,” the saxophonist said. “It’s a healthy situation. A big part of this music is how the masters teach the younger players, so being able to be part of that process means a lot to me.”

For Potter, a particular thrill in performing with the trio is that it basically grew from playing his previously unrecorded anthem, “Good Hope,” which he termed “a pretty simple tune” that nonetheless helped foster a special vibe among the threesome.

“All of the music we’re playing is great, and the different ways of approaching each song can really be heard within this small sonic environ-

ment—and I wouldn't call it limited, because the amount of sound that Zakir can get out of his tablas is like an orchestra," Potter said. "But there is a finite palette of sound with just three people and three instruments.

"The music in this trio is sparser, and because of that you can hear the details of all the instruments in [new] ways. Like, if Dave is playing with a drummer who is really hitting it hard, you might not notice some of the subtle things that he's doing, which really stand out in this context. So, in this case, you really get to hear how different sonically [*Good Hope*] is from a typical jazz record. As far as its aesthetic is concerned, though, it has that intimate feeling of whatever jazz is."

Hussain initiated the Crosscurrents project in 2015 during his first season as resident artistic director of SFJAZZ with the intention of spotlighting the effect jazz has had on Indian musicians in India. Being the son of tabla master Alla Rakha allowed Hussain to experience the cross-pollination of the genres early in life, and later on he participated in two of its most acclaimed modern manifestations, both released in 1976: saxophonist John Handy's *Karuna Supreme* and pioneering fusion guitarist John McLaughlin's *Shakti*.

"We always talk about Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan [the world-renowned sitar and sarod players, respectively] traveling around the world and influencing jazz greats like John Coltrane, Miles Davis and John McLaughlin, and rock stars like George Harrison, but those kind of crosscurrents actually started way before the 1960s," Hussain said during a phone call from his home in California's Marin County. "Hollywood musicals and big bands arrived in India during the 1930s and received a great deal of attention from audiences there. It wasn't long before a whole bunch of musicians in India basically devoted themselves to jazz, alongside the Indian music they were learning, and took all of this new musical information to the Bollywood film industry. So, this was something I really wanted to acknowledge, because I felt it had been overlooked. My idea was to bring some jazz maestros from India and combine them with jazz maestros from here and pay homage to the Indian music created from the influence of jazz musicians from this part of the world."

The first Crosscurrents band was a quintet that featured Hussain and Holland with keyboardist and multi-instrumentalist Louiz Banks, sometimes referred to as the "Godfather of Indian Jazz," plus guitarist Sanjay Divecha and Bollywood vocalist Shankar Mahadevan. The group soon grew to include a drummer—first Eric Harland and Vinnie Colaiuta alternating in the drum chair before Gino Banks, Louiz's son, took it over. After a string of initial concerts, Potter was then brought into the band on the recommendation of both Holland, in whose quintet he been working since 1998, and Harland, another frequent collaborator.

Asking Holland to play bass in Crosscurrents from the onset was an easy decision to make, Hussain said, because they'd played together in the early 2000s in a band that Herbie Hancock assembled. Hussain was more than aware of the bassist's long connection with, and in-depth knowledge of, Indian music.

"Dave is such an incredible rhythmist," Hussain said. "Playing with him, I never have to worry about the groove being just right—he knows exactly how the rhythm needs to be laid down."

As for Potter, Hussain called the saxophonist "a fabulous rhythm player who can learn any melody on the planet and then improvise on it." All in all, what makes the Crosscurrents Trio "click," the percussionist said, "was that we have enough confidence to take the music—tempo, solos, everything—anywhere we want."

An abiding, nearly lifelong interest in music from around the world characterizes the members of the trio and helps explain the rapport that exists among them. For Hussain, that meant devouring the jazz and rock records his father brought back from his tours with Ravi Shankar. The landmark album *Rakha* made with Buddy Rich in 1968 served as a template for Hussain's own work with Western musicians, first with Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart and later with Jan Garbarek, Yo-Yo Ma, Béla Fleck, Bill Laswell, the Kronos Quartet and a long list of others.

Holland became enthralled by international sounds once he moved to London in 1964, paying close attention to sitar and sarod players at concerts. "The improvisatory nature of Indian music, along with its highly developed scale forms, were particularly interesting," Holland recalled. "Of course, The Beatles and John Coltrane helped further expose me and others to Indian music and culture."

Potter, too, connected to Indian music early on. Recognizing its importance and the necessity to be adept in its rhythms soon after he moved to New York as a 19-year-old phenom, he regularly woodshedded to duo recordings that Hussain and Rakha made together. Being invited to perform at the memorial event Barsi was a defining moment in his career, the saxophonist said.

Edition Records released Potter's trio album *Circuits* (recorded with Harland and pianist James Francies) on Feb. 22. When the Crosscurrents Trio had finished recording *Good Hope* and was looking for a label, the indie operation based near London was the band's unanimous pick—much to the satisfaction of Edition founder Dave Stapleton. He noted the trio's collective emphasis on presenting a unified musical message during a time of growing xenophobia, and tremendous discord around immigration and border security, adds poignancy to the project.

Imagine a jazz trio with few precedents furthering peace and harmony while balancing magnificently on the high wire of improvisation.

"Music represents that neutral ground where we all come together, see who we are and what our differences and similarities are," Holland said. "It's one of the areas of hope that I cling to when I see some of the things that are going on. The effect that music has on people with this group or any other group that represents unity and coming together—when it touches people, you feel it. The music takes them away from the 'us and them,' the fear of the other ... You start to realize that we're all members of the same family, and we just have to figure out how to get along and help each other have better lives."

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Keb' Mo'

BLUES

PROGRESSION

By Bob Doerschuk | Photo by Jeremy Cowart

Downstairs in the beautiful home that Keb' Mo' and Robbie Brooks Moore, his wife, maintain in the hills southwest of Nashville, there sits a candy counter of classic keyboards: Hammond B-3 organ, Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos and a Nord Lead controller.

One might be forgiven for assuming that the acclaimed bluesman is a vintage instrument aficionado. After all, the music Keb' Mo' (born Kevin Moore) has championed, the foundation of his own creative explorations, is arguably the most fundamental of all American popular genres.

However, one would be wrong. "I like technology," Moore insists, relaxed in the worn black leather couch in his recording facility, which he calls Stu-Stu-Studio. "I'm not so into, 'It's gotta be vintage.' I like really clean, pristine records. I don't like clutter. I mean, I'm already playing the blues, which is older than dirt. People today are used to listening to fantastically recorded pop records. So, I don't want to go back. Some people do. For me, if something's old and it sounds good, I'll use it. But if it's just old ..."

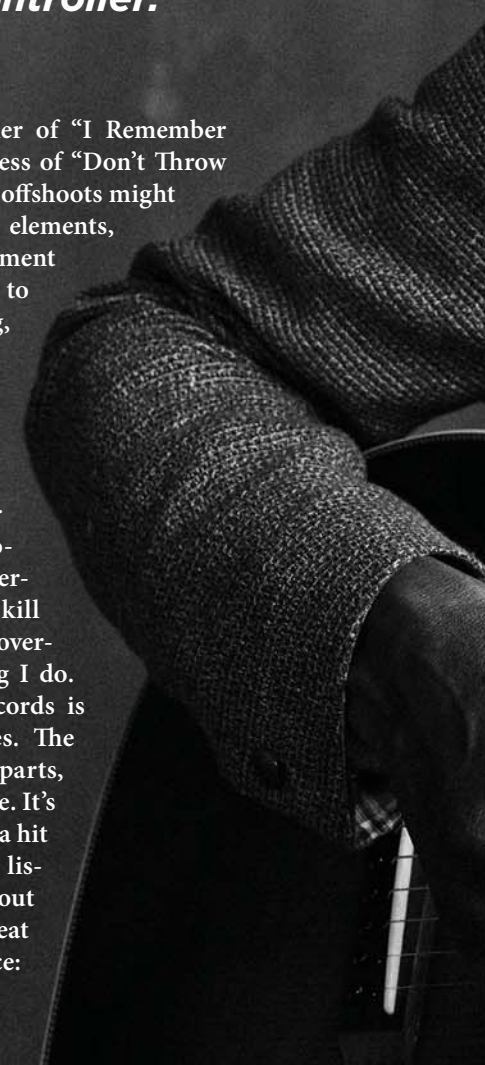
Moore leaves the sentence unfinished and flashes a knowing smile. It takes little imagination to understand what he's getting at.

On *Oklahoma* (Concord), his new album of original compositions, it's technology that helps every detail shine precisely where and when Moore wants it to: the bare-bones beat of "Ridin' On A Train"; the spaces illuminating each fingerpicked note and quarter-note kick on "This Is My Home"; the airy breathlessness of "Beautiful Music."

None of this diminishes the grit where grit is

essential, whether it's the slither of "I Remember You" or the raucous righteousness of "Don't Throw It Away." Simple as blues and its offshoots might seem, Moore adds progressive elements, especially in recording equipment and method, unobtrusively yet to powerful effect. That, if anything, is the essence of his artistry.

"I was always a detail-oriented guy," says Moore, who is set to release his first holiday-themed album, *Moonlight, Mistletoe & You* (Concord), later this year. "A lot of times people have said to me, 'Don't overthink what you're doing. You'll kill the vibe.' Well, I know that I overthink the shit out of everything I do. I mean, one of my favorite records is 'Stayin' Alive' by the Bee Gees. The horn arrangements, the guitar parts, the bass parts ... it's a masterpiece. It's the pinnacle of pop music. With a hit like that, you've got to be able to listen to every part of it and figure out how they did it right. It's like a great classical piece, a Beethoven piece:





Blues guitarist Keb' Mo' said he initially planned to get a job with the Roland company, instead of pursuing performance as a career.



During the early '90s, a mutual friend connected Keb' Mo' and Taj Mahal.

Those guys were constantly fixing the chart until it worked. When you have a great symphonic piece, there's not a hair out of place.

"I've always been that way," he continues. "Of course, that evolved a lot when I got into Pro Tools [audio production software]. But even back in the day, I was always like, 'Hey, man, do *that* note, but leave *this* note out.' I'd ask the guitar player to mute the bass string in the chord. Or I'd say, 'Could you not double the bass on the piano? Can you just play with your right hand, instead of both hands? Because you're clouthing my bottom.'"

He laughs and adds, "I pissed a lot of people off. When I was living in L.A., in those days, people didn't turn gigs down. But that would happen to me. I was like, 'Hey, you can get mad all you want. I'll call somebody else next time.' Because I didn't have anything else I could do. This was it. And if I had to move people's physical and emotional boundaries, for me, that wasn't work. That was all I had. If I wound up on the street with a cardboard box and my guitar, well, I'd learn to live with that."

The most interesting twist in this backstory might be that, for Moore, making country blues his home was not a decision he pursued. "I always tell people, music has been chasing me my whole life," he says. "I wanted to go out for a career. I was married. I had a kid. I went to electronics school and learned how to build circuit boards. My plan was to get a job with the Roland company in electronics and music. That was a perfect combination."

But it wasn't to be, despite the risks he knew he was taking by committing to music. "I was a recording-session guy. I'd played with orchestras and marching bands. I'd been out on the road. I'd been a staff songwriter at A&M

Records. All that time I was dodging the blues because, man, I was from L.A. People would say, 'You're gonna starve to death doing that stuff.' Well, in the end, I decided I didn't give a fuck. And it worked out."

In some ways, the chase began when he was a young man—then going by his birth name—in high school. One day, Taj Mahal visited the school to perform at an assembly. Mahal remembers that the youngster didn't immediately connect with his folk-meets-blues aesthetic: "Keb' was, like, 16. He was so deeply into B.B. King as blues, T-Bone Walker as blues, Freddie King as blues—that traditional electric blues vibe—that he didn't get it. But something kept sticking in his craw. Little by little, I kept coming back into his life one way or another."

Moore kept his feelings about that day filed away, among his impressions of all the genres he was checking out. Then, a couple years later, that seed sprouted. "This friend of mine, who I actually haven't seen for years now, came up to me and said, 'Man, I bought this four-track tape. I don't really like it. You can have it.' It was by Taj Mahal. I put that thing in my four-track and wore it out over the next two years."

Shortly after that, Moore was scuffling for a foothold in the music world. When not, in his words, "doing stupid stuff you do in your twenties," he managed to finagle a contract with the label Chocolate City (a subsidiary of Casablanca Records). When the labels shuttered unexpectedly, Moore found himself at, as has often been said in his line of work, a crossroads.

"Now, I'm 31 years old," he recalls. "Ain't nothing happening. I work during the day and at night I'm playing the blues ... learning how to play the blues. I was just playing electric then; I

didn't pick up an acoustic guitar until the late '80s. I'd start working the club scene with the Whodunit Band, one or two nights a week. I had Monk Higgins as my mentor. Everybody in L.A. would come out to hear us, from Big Joe Turner to Billy Preston. Merry Clayton would come in."

As work picked up, Moore decided that rural blues might be his commercially and spiritually correct path after all—as he puts it, his "yellow brick road." The further he followed it, the more it felt right. When he was hired in 1990 for the role of a Mississippi Delta blues player in a theatrical production titled *Rabbit Foot*, he headed over to McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica to take slide guitar lessons. From there the road pointed him toward his self-titled debut album in 1994. His follow-up two years later, *Just Like You*, won him his first Grammy. It also sent a message to his stylistic compadre Taj Mahal.

"In '93, when I was working on my album *Dancing The Blues*, all these people kept coming up to me and saying, in stage whispers, 'Have you heard Keb' Mo'?' Mahal says. "The first thing I thought was, 'He must be black.' And the second thing was, because he reminded them of me, maybe he was doing some of my material. Chic Street Man asked me the same question. I said, 'No, but I've been hearing about him from a lot of people.' He said, 'Look, he's a friend of mine. Whenever you come back in town, give me a call and we'll get together.'"

Not long after that, Mahal was in the studio when Chic Street Man (born Charles Streetman) showed up with Moore and a tape of his music. They popped it into a cassette player during a lunch break. That's all it took to spark the ongoing friendship between the two artists. "I'd been out there on my own for 25 years or more and really never saw anybody coming along, except for maybe Guy Davis," Mahal says. "So, I was glad to finally have some company out here in this desert."

Their association eventually led to a Grammy-winning project, the 2017 duo album, *TajMo* (Concord). This year, it extended further with *Oklahoma*, though almost by accident. Mahal happened to drop in as Moore was recording "Don't Throw It Away." Producer Colin Linden was on piccolo guitar. Moore was playing mandolin; he would also add a guitar track. And they invited Mahal, on the spot, to play the bass part. Together, they laid down the song's rockin' medium-tempo groove and added Mahal's responses to Moore's lead vocal.

Linden, another longtime Keb' Mo' associate, plays a vital role throughout *Oklahoma*. Though they frequently have worked together, often with Moore as producer, for this most recent effort they decided that Linden should take over production for the first time in their history. "Colin is my friend," Moore says. "He's

fun to hang out with. He's got great ears. He's a great guitar player. Also, he brings good energy. When you're recording, my feeling is that everything gets recorded. The mood in the room gets recorded."

It took about a week-and-a-half for them to settle into this new working relationship. "Colin wanted to direct me, even though I'm kind of undirectable. I could tell he was getting frustrated because he'd hear my ideas and go [Moore strokes his chin, suggesting a polite skepticism]. At the same time, the ideas he put forward made a huge difference."

For instance, most of "Beautiful Music" had been finished by the time Linden got to it, with the strings and the rhythm section already in place. After listening to the track, which features Moore and his wife in a vocal duet, Linden came up with the edit that brought it home. "There was a lot of synth stuff and rhythm stuff," Linden says. "So, I said to Kevin, 'Get rid of everything but the strings,'" he remembers. "The real feature wasn't Kevin's guitar or anything else, but the strings and their vocal."

Linden also finessed "The Way I" by asking Moore to take a little pause before singing the word "heaven" in the lyric and by adding a single sustained note on the "I," played on organ by DeMarco Johnson. "It was real simple, not anything magical," Linden says. "But it holds your heart without drawing attention to itself.

Of course, DeMarco was moving the drawbars around and doing a little bit of right-hand movement. But mostly he was just keeping a little bit of church in the feeling, so it wasn't just an outer-space atmosphere."

Embracing a methodology in the studio that blends control and feeling, Moore has cultivated some novel approaches to recording—including his preference for singing scratch vocals a cappella, over nothing but a click, as the first step into tracking a new song.

"I like to start with my vocal, because it gives me something I can wrap my guitar around as tight as I can when I accompany it," Moore says. "Like on 'This Is My Home': When I got that swing in the guitar on the scratch vocal, I can come back with a vocal that's right in the groove, maybe bring it more in tune or change a few words. After that, everything falls into place and I can start working on the details.

"I've never quantized parts, because I want everything to stay quirky," Moore continues. "It still needs to be people playing it. Sometimes you need things to be tied down and sometimes you just let it ... [Moore makes a whooshing noise, like a bird taking flight]."

The musical range of *Oklahoma* is mirrored by its lyrical breadth. Along with the romanticism of "Beautiful Music" and "The Way I," and the moody momentum that powers "Ridin' On A Train" and "I Should've," the

album delivers more topical messages, such as the #MeToo anthem "Put A Woman In Charge" (featuring vocals by Americana tunesmith Rosanne Cash) and an immigrant's lament on "This Is My Home" (with guest vocals by Christian/Latin pop star Jaci Velasquez).

The title cut, which features lap steel guitar from Robert Randolph, touches on parts of history that have been forgotten—or suppressed—to the detriment of our self-awareness. Written by Moore and Dara Tucker, the song's lyrics nod to the history of the Choctaw people, as well as the horrific 1921 race riots in Tulsa. Additionally, the incorporation of the phrase "When they go low, we go high" draws a connection to a famous Michelle Obama speech from 2016.

Moore has spoken out through music before; at age 67, this is familiar territory for him. Still, he wonders whether message songs hit with the same impact they used to have.

"I approach issues very carefully now—not because I'm scared to say anything, but because I want to be heard," he says. "The thing is, I do my records for real people, so I put myself in their place. If I didn't, I'd be hearing, 'Get out of politics! Just stick to music!' People don't want to be challenged socially. Really, my job as a musician, as someone who communicates in a public way, is to get people to listen and then get them to think."

DB

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GENEROUS COLLABORATOR

By John Murph | Photo by Steven Sussman

NUBYA GARCIA exhibits spectacular leader instincts, but she thrives in collaborative settings.

Making her New York debut at (Le) Poisson Rogue during 2018's Winter Jazzfest, the now 28-year-old tenor saxophonist was one of the event's breakout stars. Fronting a mighty quartet populated by kindred spirits from her London stomping grounds, Garcia delivered languid, incantatory melodies that intensified incrementally until splintering into rapid-fire riffs and scalding cries.

She channeled the spiritual-jazz energy ignited by the likes of John Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, Joe Henderson and Gary Bartz, and her phrasing was economical, almost prayer-like in its melodic pithiness. Still, there was a ferocious bite to her improvisations, especially when her rhythm section—drummer Femi Koleoso, bassist Daniel Casimir and keyboardist Joe Armon-Jones—spliced West Indian and Nigerian beats with dance idioms like grime and garage.

"I want to encapsulate dance-floor music's energy," Garcia told DownBeat the following day. "The stuff that I've been writing recently is focused on working more with electronics and imagining us playing in places that aren't jazz clubs. I love jazz clubs. But I don't want to only play in jazz clubs for the rest of my life."

Those comments aren't surprising, considering that Garcia has spent years in the orbit of Jazz re:refreshed, which functions both as the name of a London label and an incubator for some of the U.K. talent that's currently making waves at venues and jazz festivals around the globe. Through its Thursday night sessions at Mau Mau Bar in Notting Hill, as well as dates at South London's STEEZ, Jazz re:refreshed also is continuing to contribute to the proliferation of alternative spaces for young, black jazz musicians to hone their craft.



© EDDY WESTVEER

Nubya Garcia helms her own band and contributes to the collectives Nérija and Maisha.

Armon-Jones—who has played with Garcia in multiple contexts, including his own ensemble—applauds her willingness to accept individuals’ voices and offer musicians ample space when she’s leading a band. “She really likes using the most people can offer in her gigs,” he said. “She doesn’t hire people in her band and then constrict what they are able to do just because she hears the music a certain way. She writes the music, then lets you express yourself over that. A lot of times in recording sessions, [bandleaders] will have a very specific way of how they want you to play something. She’s not like that. She’s open to what you want to bring on the date as well.”

Garcia’s (Le) Poisson Rouge performance came on the heels of her acclaimed debut EP, *Nubya’s 5ive* (Jazz re:freshed), and ahead of her 2018 EP, *When We Are* (Nyasha). Just prior to

her New York gig, Nérija, another ensemble Garcia contributes to, had won the U.K.’s 2017 Parliamentary Jazz Award for “Newcomer of the Year.”

At the time, the saxophonist also was excited about the release of 2018’s *We Out Here* (Brownswood), a watershed compilation and documentary film that chronicled much of London’s underground jazz scene, and featured more than 30 other musicians, including reedist Shabaka Hutchings, drummer Moses Boyd and tuba player Theon Cross. The album featured Garcia’s snapping composition “Once,” which boogies to a skittering rhythm and alludes to West London’s broken-beat scene, while her piercing flute is showcased on the phantasmagorical “Inside The Acorn,” a tune by the London ensemble Maisha.

Now, with the release of Nérija’s dynamic

full-length debut, *Blume* (Domino), Garcia’s career pushes on to a new stage. But it would be misleading to cite Garcia as Nérija’s bandleader. The septet is a collective of musicians with their own solo careers, each member contributing to the ensemble’s songbook.

The band’s name is the French spelling of the Hebrew word “Nerijah,” which translates to “lamb of God.” Nérija’s alto saxophonist, Cassie Kinoshi, named the band, but drummer Lizy Exell pointed out, “The band’s music doesn’t have any religious relevance.”

Still, the music on *Blume* conveys an undeniably warm spirituality that reflects Nérija’s glowing rapport and collaborative ethos. The septet’s eponymous, self-released 2016 EP, which Domino recently reissued, featured five tunes written by individual members of the band. On *Blume*, they co-composed two of the songs: the reggae-influenced “Nascence,” which features rousing solos from Exell, trombonist Rosie Turton and trumpeter Sheila Maurice-Grey; and the florid, Brazil-meets-West Africa gem “Riverfest,” which becomes a vehicle for Shirley Tetteh to showcase her distinctive guitar skills.

Collectively, the writing on *Blume* boasts an ebullient, opulent sound that recalls at once Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, Carla Bley and many of the Euro-Caribbean and Afropean rhythmic gaits now prevalent on London’s black jazz scene.

Garcia penned the title track for *Blume*, a stately evocation featuring Maurice-Grey’s melancholy melodic lines. The song crests with emotional fervor and unfolds with the grace of a lazy summer Sunday.

“We were going through all of the tunes on the album, and we thought that title had the right energy about the group’s sound,” Garcia said. “The melody cycles around a lot, with each of us adding something new to each cycle.”

Other highlights on *Blume* include Kinoshi’s darkly sexy “EU (Emotionally Unavailable),” Tetteh’s sauntering “Partner Girlfriend Lover” and the Afro-Latin-tinged “Equanimous,” written by bassist Rio Kai. Garcia’s improvisational prowess takes the spotlight on a few other cuts: On Maurice-Grey’s percolating and cinematic “Last Straw,” the saxophonist spits serrated passages on tenor that coil and snap unexpectedly, while on Turton’s “Unbound,” she concocts oblique lines that belie her love of modern pop.

One element that distinguishes Nérija from other bands is that Kai is the only male member of the septet. (He replaced bassist Inga Eichler, who now leads the band Endeevior.)

The seed for the band’s formation was planted because of Tomorrow’s Warriors, a London organization that seeks to bolster the arts through educational programing for the city’s diverse residents and aims to foster the success of women working in the music industry. Bandmates now look at the group’s gender makeup as coinci-

dence. “We just enjoy playing together,” Exell said.

“One of the first bands that I was ever in was with Sheila and Nubya,” Kai added. “We just have a strong vibe together. I think it just happened that most of the members turned out to be women.”

While it’s obvious that Garcia has no reticence to perform with men and nonbinary musicians, she has, in previous interviews, praised the value of building relationships with other female musicians for the sake of community.

Born to Trinidadian and Guyanese parents, Garcia grew up surrounded by music. She began playing piano at age 5 and studied with pianist Nikki Yeoh. She later learned violin and viola, and played in the London School Symphony Orchestra. The saxophone came into Garcia’s life when she was 10, and from there she joined the Camden Jazz Band. As a teen, she participated in music programs hosted by the Royal Academy of Music and also took a five-week music course at Berklee College of Music in Boston. And like most members of Nérija, Garcia attended the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London. There, she earned a degree in jazz performance.

But it was through working with Tomorrow’s Warriors that her voice as a musician began to take shape. The organization’s weekend workshops instilled in Garcia a deeper regard for discipline and collaboration, and helped her to draw upon her family’s background for inspiration.

Today, Garcia said she feels that music has become an important vessel for her to discover more about herself and to make meaningful connections with other cultures.

“The way that music develops from one generation to the next—it’s incredible to delve into that journey,” she said. “I didn’t have the opportunity to grow up in Guyana or Trinidad. But those musical journeys just lead me to other avenues, like black American swing, which was the first music that I pursued. I think people in London’s black music scene are really searching for their cultures. And it’s coming out in various ways.”

Garcia has profound gratitude for Tomorrow’s Warriors and its founder, Gary Crosby, a jazz bassist and educator who was awarded the Queen’s Medal for Music by Queen Elizabeth II on July 10. “[Tomorrow’s Warriors] showed us how to collaborate with people whom you didn’t grow up with,” Garcia said. “It taught us to do things together, rather than trying to do it on your own. Gary saw the strong work ethic within us. When I didn’t get into Trinity College the first time, he really encouraged me to try again. Gary taught us the importance of helping and supporting one another. He just prepared me to actually do it. Instead of expecting things to happen, he taught me that I have to work really hard to make things happen. And he taught me that I have to give back to the community.”

Garcia already has made a splash on the international touring circuit, but an upcoming European excursion should reinforce the acclaim her work’s already garnered. She’s booked at Théâtre Astrée in Villeurbanne, France (Oct. 17), the club Gretchen in Berlin (Oct. 21) and the Teatro dell’Arte Bernocchi in Milan (Nov. 8).

In the near future, Garcia is set to continue working with Nérija and Maisha, a group that also counts guitarist Tetteh as a member and released the *There Is A Place* EP last winter. But the saxophonist also plans to expand her network of collaborators, a blossoming circle of performers that already includes Chicago-based drummer Makaya McCraven and London producer Swindle (aka Cameron Palmer). If that wasn’t enough, Garcia is an emerging DJ with a regular gig on NTS, an online radio station based in London’s Hackney borough.

She stays busy.

With so many intriguing enterprises, it seems as though the world is Garcia’s oyster. And since she hasn’t yet released a full-length recording under her own name, the jazz scene awaits the next artistic pearl from the globetrotting saxophonist.

DB

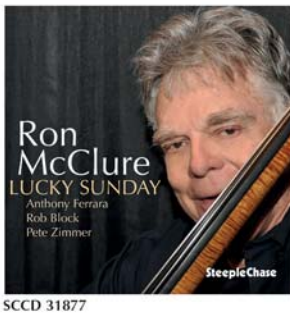


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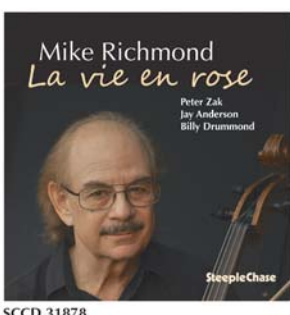
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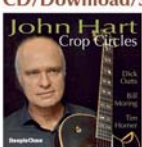
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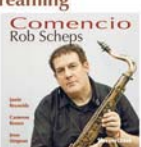
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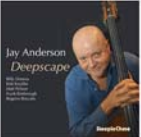
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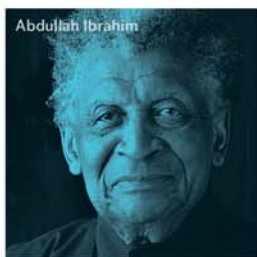


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DAN MUSE

Chick Corea's group with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade ranks among the pianist's finest trios.

Chick Corea *Trilogy 2* CONCORD JAZZ 00183 ★★★★★

If one word needed to encapsulate Chick Corea's illustrious 60-year career, "buoyancy" might work just fine.

Even when exploring blues forms, his playing has an infectious lift to it, while many of his signature compositions—such as "500 Miles High" and "La Fiesta," both of which are addressed on this live set pulled from a 2016 tour—exude joy within a contemporary jazz context.

Beyond single-word categorizations, what has characterized Corea during the past six decades is how the pianist finds his true expression in a trio setting. Despite far-ranging approaches, which have stretched from his ring-modulated Fender Rhodes freakouts in the employ of Miles Davis to oblique improvisations with Circle to electrified romps with Return To Forever, Corea has returned time and again to the trio format for his most satisfying recordings.

Among the mighty trioka of late 20th-century jazz pianists—if listeners, fans, historians and critics eventually remember Keith Jarrett for his wholly improvised solo recitals and Herbie Hancock for his soulful excursions with bandmates like Wayne Shorter—Corea will have his trios. And the combination of Corea, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade will stand among his finest. The pair are Corea's equal in both artistic breadth and technical facility, but most of all, they can match him on the buoyancy meter.

For proof, check out Blade as he digs into "500 Miles High," vocalizing as he executes a muscular tom-tom run. If you've seen Blade play, you can picture him levitating from his stool onstage. Or dig McBride's springy solo on Steve Swallow's "Eiderdown" and hear the way he navigates the changes so rapidly that it almost seems like he's playing two lines at once. All the while, the accents Corea and Blade add are so precise that they seem scripted.

At an age when many jazz masters begin to downshift or are forced by the aging process to find workarounds for what used to come easi-

ly, Corea hasn't backed away from projects like going head-to-head with his impossibly energized protégé Hiromi or showcasing 20 different bands to mark his 75th birthday a few years back. On *Trilogy 2*, those kinds of challenges are represented by Thelonious Monk's treacherous "Work"—a composition that stands alongside John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" as one of the most formidable mountains in the canon—and his own "Now He Sings, Now He Sobs," a mountain of its own. Corea bounds through both, showing his mastery of dynamics and emotional release.

One might wish for a bit more variety in the program, but it's hard to fault the inclusion of standards like "All Blues" when they become vehicles for Corea's sweeping statements or McBride's joyous interpretation of Paul Chambers' iconic bass line.

All blues? All buoyant. —James Hale

Trilogy 2: Disc One: How Deep Is The Ocean; 500 Miles High; Crepuscule With Nellie; Work; But Beautiful; La Fiesta. Disc Two: Eiderdown; All Blues; Pastime Paradise; Now He Sings, Now He Sobs; Serenity; Lotus Blossom. (51:38/65:21)

Personnel: Chick Corea, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

Ordering info: concord.com



Daymé Arocena *Sonocardiogram*

BROWNSWOOD 0203

★★★★

When Stan Kenton and Dizzy Gillespie began importing Afro-Cuban ideas into their music during the 1950s, they took care to balance Caribbean authenticity with Yankee expectations. In those days, it was easy, and for millions of Americans, Fulgencio Batista's island was a trouble-free vacation stop.

Today, after 60 years of political isolation, Cuba seems farther away. Many of the cultural imports we've enjoyed have come as smug-

gled contraband or refugee endowment, and for the most part, they've found their place in the American mainstream.

Daymé Arocena's *Sonocardiogram* might not have quite as easy a ride. The title, we're told, mimics the rhythms of the medical procedure—a stretch as long as it is irrelevant. More to the point, her music exudes an earthy authenticity, rich in Cuban spiritual life and local cultural references, few that Americans will be familiar with. And because it's nearly all in Spanish, some will listen from the outside as strangers; it's like watching a foreign film without subtitles. The program is structured as three separate suites, but any thematic linkages are written in invisible ink.

If you sense a language of religious ritual, your instincts are pretty good. Santería, a faith rooted in West African deities and developed in Catholic Cuba, is on the agenda. Arocena offers polish and sophistication, moving easily between stately choral formality and lightly seductive intimacy. Going full throttle, she projects a gospel power that's led to comparisons with Aretha Franklin. A bit premature, but I get it.

—John McDonough

Sonocardiogram: Nangareo; Oyá; Oshún; Yemayá; Interludio; Porque Tú No Estás; Para El Amor; Cantar!; As Feridas; Menuet Para Una Corazón; Not For Me; Plegaria A La Lupe; Homenaje. (40:50)

Personnel: Daymé Arocena, vocals; Jorge Luis Lagarza, keyboards, vocals; Rafael Aldama, bass; Marcos Morales Valdés, José Carlos Sánchez, drums.

Ordering info: brownswoodrecordings.com

Kris Davis *Diatom Ribbons*

PYROCLASTIC 006

★★★★★

The New York jazz scene today is woefully low on opportunities for steady, residency-based work, so it's naturally flush with rotating collaborations and one-off projects. Kris Davis, a breezily versatile and scrupulously distinctive pianist, has found a way to turn this landscape to her advantage.

Diatom Ribbons, her 12th album as a leader or coleader, collapses Davis' broad experience on the scene into a leadership strategy. At the same time, in varying formations drawn from a group of 10, many of whom don't typically play together, she doesn't compromise on her detail-driven, subtly expansive approach as a composer.

On the title track, a drilling rhythm built of subtle misalignments carried out by Davis' prepared piano and Terri Lyne Carrington's drums underpins snippets of Cecil Taylor's voice—arranged by Val Jeanty, handling electronics and turntables—talking about structural ideas in music and artistic power. (Carrington, Jeanty and Davis make up the album's core trio.) Eventually, JD Allen and Tony Malaby enter on saxophones, harmonizing on a wary,



teetering melody as the rhythm shifts again, opening up beneath them.

Davis has been “about to break out” for the past dozen years, but her style has proven too stubbornly iconoclastic to catch on broadly. Now, though, the word is out, and anyone closely concerned with contemporary jazz keeps an ear open for Davis' next move. So, listen up.

—Giovanni Russonello

Diatom Ribbons: Diatom Ribbons; The Very Thing; Rhizomes; Corn Crane; Stone's Throw; Symposial Sunflower; Certain Cells; Golgi Complex (The Sequel); Golgi Complex; Reflections. (56:39)

Personnel: Kris Davis, piano; Val Jeanty, turntable; Terri Lyne Carrington, drums; Esperanza Spalding (2, 7), vocals; JD Allen, Tony Malaby, tenor saxophone; Ches Smith, vibraphone; Nels Cline, Marc Ribot, guitar; Trevor Dunn, electric bass.

Ordering info: pyroclasticrecords.com



Kneebody *Chapters*

EDITION 1137

★★★★½

Kneebody always has been a difficult band to define. Traversing everything from grungy guitars to honking diaphragmatic horns, soulful vocals and intricate jazz-influenced melodies, it's the genre fluidity that makes the band such an engaging live act.

For *Chapters*, its follow-up to 2017's *Anti-Hero* and its first as a quartet following the departure of bassist Kaveh Rastegar, Kneebody shows no sign of changing its anything-goes formula. Opener “Spectra” charges in with polyrhythmic saxophone and piano lines, backed by a battering groove from drummer and bassist Nate Wood. The unexpected choral melody that soon wafts in is typical of Kneebody, too, upending expectations and challenging listeners as soon as they feel comfortable. Vocalist Michael Mayo takes the reins with his falsetto on the following number, “What's My Name,” although highlights come during incisive solos from keyboardist Adam Benjamin and saxophonist Ben Wendel.

There's little doubt that these four are musicians playing at the top of their game, interlocking with a telepathic connectivity that only comes to a band that's played together for almost two decades. Yet, for all the ensemble's virtuosity, *Chapters* is a fragmented and overly complicated listening experience. And while the movement among genres has come to characterize the group, on this record it seems as if the band's just trying to pack too much into a small space. Allowing for a bit of breathing room or silence around slower numbers—like “When It All Comes Down,” which features vocalist Gretchen Parlato—would properly showcase the acumen of all involved.

—Ammar Kalia

Chapters: Spectra; What's My Name; A Seaworthy Native; Wounds Let In The Light; Chapters; Hearts Won't Break; Ombré; The Trip; When It All Comes Down; The Non-Profit Prince Of Lexington. (50:57)

Personnel: Ben Wendel, saxophone; Shane Ensley, trumpet; Adam Benjamin, keyboards; Nate Wood, drums, bass; Michael Mayo (2), Josh Dion (6), Gretchen Parlato (9), vocals; Gerald Clayton (8), piano.

Ordering info: editionrecords.com

The Hot Box

	Critics	James Hale	Ammar Kalia	John McDonough	Giovanni Russonello
Chick Corea <i>Trilogy 2</i>		★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★
Daymé Arocena <i>Sonocardiogram</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★½
Kris Davis <i>Diatom Ribbons</i>		★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
Kneebody <i>Chapters</i>		★★★★	★★★★½	★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Chick Corea, *Trilogy 2*

A deeply satisfying return to Corea's hard-swinging trio of drummer Blade and bassist McBride. Highlights come on the fiendishly intricate version of Monk's "Work" and an extended "Pastime Paradise." —Ammar Kalia

Familiarity is the heart of the unexpected in jazz. When the two balance, as here, surprise becomes an art. The touches of rapport, wit and small epiphanies make this one a modestly sensational package. —John McDonough

A solid document of what must have been a magical tour. All you need to know is embedded in the Stevie Wonder cover, full of Corea's red-blooded flamenco rectitude and McBride's precision. This might not be the perfect setting for Blade, but he never disappoints. —Giovanni Russonello

Daymé Arocena, *Sonocardiogram*

Arocena's expressive voice sounds magnificent on its own and in call-and-response with a chorus. Its impact decreases when paired with mundane electric keys, cymbal washes and drum flourishes. —James Hale

A powerhouse performance from the Cuban vocalist, underpinned by impressionistic percussion from drummers Marcos Morales Valdés and José Carlos Sánchez, as well as an oneiric Santeria-inspired suite featuring the Yoruban *bata* drum. —Ammar Kalia

Big ambitions and low-key, earnest gestures continue to be the stock-in-trade of this young vocalist and her band. It's a friendly mix, especially when paired with her casually liberated songwriting approach, pulling from jazz balladry and Yoruba spirituals and *son*. —Giovanni Russonello

Kris Davis, *Diatom Ribbons*

Davis' artistic journey has been fascinating to watch, and this extraordinary, multilayered jewel box of a recording fulfills the potential she's always displayed. —James Hale

Combining electronics and jazz is no mean feat, but it is one that pianist Davis manages deftly with the help of producer Jeanty's guttural soundscapes and record scratching. A thrillingly deep listen. —Ammar Kalia

"Stone's Throw" is a lovely anchor of lucidity attesting to Davis' talents. But it's flanked by a procession of avant-gargoyles constructed from either gimmicky mixes or frenzied insurrections. The fog of freedom. —John McDonough

Kneebody, *Chapters*

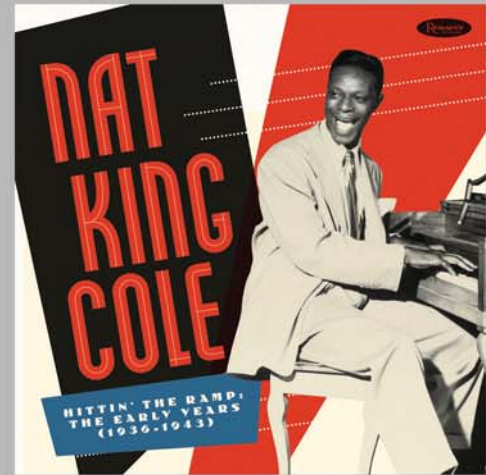
Newly remade as a quartet, the band continues to explore new avenues of expression. Appearances by vocalists Dion, Mayo and Parlato steer the band in a pop direction, without sacrificing any of its quirky charm. —James Hale

A tense corner of the fusion franchise powered by bulky ensembles, fastidious precision, fierce solo sprints and teeming rhythms that keep it churning like a Cuisinart. —John McDonough

A band can both downsize and double down. This is very much a Kneebody record. But particularly compelling moments come when the quartet engages with a guest vocalist, opening up space in the gridwork for a human voice. —Giovanni Russonello

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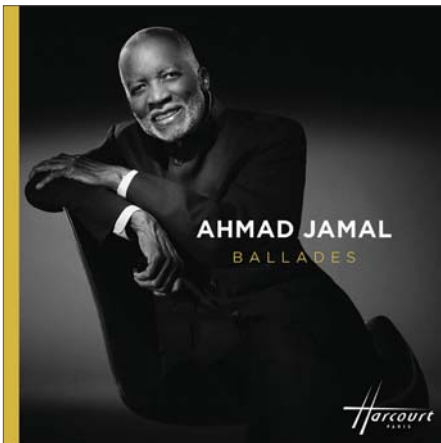
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Ahmad Jamal *Ballades*

JAZZ VILLAGE/[PIAS] 570140

★★★★½

Next year, Ahmad Jamal will celebrate his 90th birthday, one of just a handful of performers on this earth who belong to the great society of artists that ushered in the age of modern jazz. Genius ages well, and even at this late stage of his career, Jamal presents us with something new: *Ballades*, an album of mostly solo piano pieces that display his absolute command of the keyboard.

Absent a percussive time-keeper, and only accompanied on three tracks by a bassist, Jamal

freely explores classics like “I Should Care,” “Spring Is Here,” “Emily” and “What’s New.” He decorates those beautiful melodies with surprising textural and dynamic contrasts, always with impeccable harmonic sophistication; he sometimes interrupts himself with sparkling flourishes or an astonishing barrage of modulating block chords. Often, he moves out of the form with his trademark, bass-driven vamps, evoking the same hypnotic reverie that was a beloved feature of his erstwhile trio days.

In addition to the standard tunes, there are a number of original pieces that exhibit Jamal’s compositional acumen, including a reprise of the title track from his previous album, “Marseille.” It’s a gorgeous melody with a surprising bridge that easily could be included in the jazz canon.

Tucked into the middle of the album is a special treat, a solo rendition of Nat Simon’s “Poinciana,” immortalized by Jamal’s trio arrangement from the hallowed 1958 *At The Pershing: But Not For Me*. Here, it’s stripped down, dark with nostalgia, poignant and powerful.

Ballades places a gentle exclamation point on Jamal’s lengthy and brilliant career, a modern classic from a classic modernist.

—Gary Fukushima

Ballades: Marseille; Because I Love You; I Should Care; Poinciana; Land Of Dreams; What’s New; So Rare; Whisperings; Spring Is Here/Your Story; Emily. (41:47)

Personnel: Ahmad Jamal, piano; James Carmack, bass (1, 7, 9).

Ordering info: pias.com

Gaby Moreno & Van Dyke Parks *¡Spangled!*

NONESUCH 590958

★★★½

Oddly, for a tribute to music of the Americas, this project has its origins in Denmark, where in 2010 arranger Van Dyke Parks performed at the Roskilde Festival. His idea was to present songs that were Pan-American, utilizing the skills of singer Gaby Moreno, as well as an orchestra. *¡Spangled!* is the studio distillation of that concept.

It’s an amazing bit of studio craft. Instead of a live orchestra, Parks had a half-dozen players overdub themselves into string, brass and woodwind sections, just as Moreno is layered into a choir of angelic sopranos. Pulling it off required multiple engineers and a heroic mix, and the results can be aurally amazing, as on the remake of the Harry Nilsson oddity “I’ll Take a Tango.”

It’s a cartoon-crazy blend of old-school rock, Latin schlock and orchestral whimsy, a combination that looks questionable on paper, but sounds convincing through the speakers. Although the stylistic range of the material is striking—Venezuelan joropo on “Alma Llanera,” Tropicália for “Esperando Na Janela”—the settings tend to sound the same, with dense vocal harmonies slathered atop fussily ornate counterme-



odies. Occasionally, as on Dori Caymmi’s “O, Cantador,” the orchestration is held in check, so the expressive beauty of Moreno’s voice can shine. Elsewhere, though, the focus seems less on the power of the songs than on the cleverness of the arrangements.

—J.D. Considine

¡Spangled! Across The Borderline; Alma Llanera; The Immigrants; Historia De Un Amor; Nube Gris; I’ll Take A Tango; Esperando Na Janela; El Sombrerón (Revisited); O, Cantador; Espérame En El Cielo. (38:56)

Personnel: Gaby Moreno, Jackson Brown (1), vocals; Van Dyke Parks, piano; Ry Cooder (1), Ira Ingber (6), Anthony Wilson (9), guitar; Grant Geissman, guitars, mandolins; Celso Duarte, harp, vihuela, requinto; Jim Keltner, Sebastian Aymanns, drums, percussion; Matt Cook, Felipe Roseno, percussion; Yvette Holzwarth, violin; Linnea Powell, viola; Aniela Perry, cello; Leland Sklar, electric bass; David Stone, Marcus Buser, bass; Amy Shulman, harp.

Ordering info: nonesuch.com



Bill Frisell *Harmony*

BLUE NOTE B0030782

★★★★

While Bill Frisell’s name is prominent on the front cover, and much of the hype surrounding this release has to do with the fact that the 68-year-old musician is making his Blue Note debut, the celebrated guitarist takes on an almost supporting role for *Harmony*.

The emphasis is, instead, on the dynamics of the entire ensemble, a quartet named after this record that features longtime foils in vocalist Petra Haden and cellist Hank Roberts, but adds guitarist/bassist Luke Bergman. Frisell is omnipresent throughout with the warm, recognizable tone of his electric guitar shimmering through each track. But it never pulls focus from Haden’s crystalline vocals, maintaining a group consensus in the mode of the Carter Family or a great doo-wop troupe. Unlike those musical analogues, *Harmony*, the group, has no driving rhythm at its collective heart. The selection of original tunes and well-chosen folk and pop standards has the glow of a dying campfire. Nothing about these performances meanders, and no one here takes a solo. Every song unhurriedly ambles along, yet consistently reaches its destination—straight to the heart of the listener.

The material on *Harmony* and its overall tone feel reflective of our current era. Songs like Stephen Foster’s “Hard Times” and “Deep Dead Blue” (originally a Frisell collaboration with Elvis Costello) are performed bowing beneath the weight of an unceasing bad news cycle. But throughout, there are notes of resilience, and so much beauty and concord as to not let the bone-deep exhaustion keep them—or us—down for long.

—Robert Ham

Harmony: Everywhere; God’s Wing’d Horse; Fifty Years; Hard Times; Deep Dead Blue; There In A Dream; Lonesome; On The Street Where You Live; How Many Miles?; Lush Life; Honest Man; Red River Valley; Curiosity; Where Have All The Flowers Gone? (46:45)

Personnel: Bill Frisell, guitar; Petra Haden, vocals; Hank Roberts, cello, vocals; Luke Bergman, baritone guitar, acoustic guitar, bass, vocals.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



**Steve Lehman Trio
+ Craig Taborn**
The People I Love

PI 182

★★★★

Reid Anderson/Dave King/Craig Taborn
Golden Valley Is Now

INTAKT 325

★★★

What possibly could tie a project by two-thirds of The Bad Plus to the latest effort by alto saxophon-

ist and nonpareil conceptualist Steve Lehman? The keyboard genius of Craig Taborn.

Taborn is billed as an addition to Lehman's trio, and a glance at the ensemble's itinerary shows that they're touring in support of this album without him. But he's fully integrated into this music, contributing a rich harmonic wrapping around Matt Brewer and Damion Reid's trademarked rhythmic matrix on "Echoes" and anchoring the furious bustle of "Ih Calam & Ynnus." While Lehman has made records on which Senegalese hip-hop and French spectral composition were balanced with jazz, he chose the trio's 2012 *Dialect Fluorescent* as the place to establish his enduring commitment to jazz by performing compositions by Jackie McLean, John Coltrane and Duke Pearson. This time, he proposes new standards by Kurt Rosenwinkel, Kenny Kirkland and Autechre. The four-piece ensemble effectively adapts the latter's combination of watery melody and in-the-red beats to an acoustic environment, and slow down Kirkland's "Chance" in order to better savor its yearning melody. *The People I Love* is an entirely successful convergence of 20th- and 21st-century notions of melody, rhythm and group interaction.

Reid Anderson and Dave King know about transplanting recent popular music into jazz settings, but they write all the material for *Golden*

Valley Is Now. Their friendship with Taborn stretches back to the 1980s, when the three came of age playing jazz and checking out punk gigs together in Minneapolis. While Taborn doesn't write any tunes here, his electronic keyboards are essential to the trio's sound. Drawing heavily on synthesizer voices that were new around the time of Kraftwerk's peak popularity, the trio has fashioned 10 instrumentals that emphasize tune and texture of improvisational displays. Taborn subordinates his technique to the music's requirements, but one wishes that he, or anyone really, would shake things up a bit. King's drumming gets restless underneath the surface, but never enough to change performance's course. With its retro-futuristic sounds and steady grooves, *Golden Valley Is Now* sounds rather like Chicago post-rock ensemble Tortoise, if they were scoring a John Hughes movie.

—Bill Meyer

The People I Love: Prelude; Ih Calam & Ynnus; Curse Fraction; qPlay; Interlude; A Shifting Design; Beyond All Limits; Echoes/The Impaler; Chance; Postlude. (41:46)

Personnel: Steve Lehman, alto saxophone; Craig Taborn, piano; Matt Brewer, bass; Damion Reid, drums.

Golden Valley Is Now: City Diamond; Sparklers And Snakes; Song One; This Is Nothing; High Waist Drifter; Polar Heroes; You Might Live Here; Solar Barges; Hwy 1000; The End Of The World. (48:23)

Personnel: Reid Anderson, electric bass, electronics; Dave King, drums; Craig Taborn, synthesizers, piano, electric piano.

Ordering info: pirecordings.com; intaktrec.ch

**Enrico Rava/
Joe Lovano**
Roma

ECM 2654 774 2428

★★★★

Trumpeter/flugelhornist Enrico Rava and reedist Joe Lovano are well matched master instrumentalists. Their voices hold interest even when dispensing entirely with convention. If temperamentally compatible, they still present contrasts, each projecting their own cast of rangy, lyrical self-expression on this November 2018 concert recording. The first two pieces are Rava's, "Interiors" being an ornate line that he stretches to a lonely place, leaving climaxes unplayed and muffling notes before a heroic run. On "Secrets," he's punchier, going ultrahigh and way down low; Lovano picks up where he leaves off, sans theme. "Fort Worth" is, by comparison, celebratory, and has the best passages of the frontmen sparing: From an unfocused start, bassist Dezron Douglas sets a strong walk, drummer Gerald Cleaver kicks, pianist Giovanni Guidi comps and Lovano locks in so strongly that when Rava enters, he's as eager as Miles after Trane's turn—and just as capable. Guidi's solo jumbles ideas, but Lovano remains energized. He and Rava swap licks, overlap, urge each other on and end in accord. For the final track, Lovano blows his tarogato, a straight horn, in a freewheeling intro before segueing into Coltrane's "Spiritual." Rava riffs at his side, finally stepping out with burnished ease, snap and heft.

—Howard Mandel

Roma: Interiors; Secrets; Fort Worth; Divine Timing; Drum Song/Spiritual/Over The Rainbow. (64:02)

Personnel: Enrico Rava, trumpet; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone, tarogato; Giovanni Guidi, piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Rez Abbasi
A Throw Of Dice

WHIRLWIND 4741

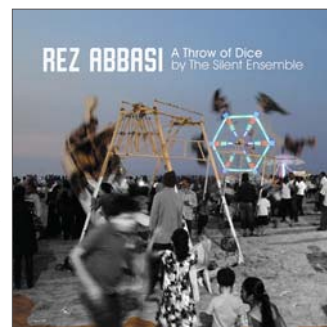
★★★★½

As a kid, guitarist Rez Abbasi was a rocker, learning Zeppelin and Van Halen riffs before discovering other sources of inspiration, like Jim Hall, Zakir Hussain and Beethoven. The explorations make him an ideal candidate to write the new score for a 1930s silent movie. German director Frank Osten filmed *A Throw of Dice (A Romance of India)* on location in India, replete with a cast of thousands. And while the epic nature of the film seemingly would call for a large-scale production, Abbasi manages to weave an intimate tapestry of sound into the black-and-white cinematography. His relatively compact Silent Ensemble produces vignettes of raga-inspired melodies, collective improv and even a piano motive evoking *Game of Thrones*. As on many of his recent projects, Abbasi displays a knack for reconciling diverse influences in a robust, holistic synthesis of delight. Throughout, his first love—rock 'n' roll—is omnipresent, with a variety of grooves and pulses of varying intensity ranging from light toe-tapping to mosh-pit jumping. Writing for film, by necessity, has restrictions, so hopefully Abbasi will have the opportunity to follow the music to its potential in later standalone performances. —Gary Fukushima

A Throw Of Dice: Mystery Rising; Hopeful Impressions; Love Prevails; Facing Truth; Amulet And Dagger; Blissful Moments; Seven Days Until News; Duplicity; Jugglers; Snake Bite; Moving Forward; Wedding Preparation; Morning Of The Wedding; Gambling Debt; Boy Changes Fate; Falsehood; Changing Worlds; Chase For Liberation; True Home. (58:28)

Personnel: Rez Abbasi, guitar, sitar-guitar; Pawan Benjamin, saxophone, flute; Jennifer Vincent, bass, cello; Rohan Krishnamurthy, percussion; Jake Goldbas, drums.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com



Bass Comes to the Fore

Jazz bassists serve a unique and often underappreciated role in the music; their playing often is most effective when it's out of the spotlight, laying down the groove for the rest of the band. The vagaries of recording and listening in the jazz idiom provide other barriers to foregrounding the deep sounds of a bassist's talent on record. Nonetheless, there's a long and proud tradition—from Jimmy Blanton and Ray Brown to Esperanza Spalding and Linda May Han Oh—of bassists overcoming these challenges to take center stage. As the trend becomes increasingly common, a bevy of new releases by bassist-bandleaders show how the low end is coming to the front of the mix.

Fabrizio Sciacca Quartet, *Getting It There* (Self Release; 44:12 ★★★) The debut recording from this Italian-born, Berklee-trained bassist shows him to be an impeccable technician with a powerful tone—evident from the outset in a virtuosic and soulfully melodic rendition of Sam Jones' "One For Amos." His approach is deeply indebted to Ron Carter, as evidenced by his tribute piece, "For Sir Ron," midway through the album. Joined by a quartet that includes tenor saxophonist Jed Levy, pianist Donald Vega and drummer Billy Drummond, the bandleader presents standard bebop fare and a mastery of the idiom. The group's at its best winding through standards like "Amos" and Elmo Hope's "One Second Please"; it gets bogged down a bit wading through slower grooves.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com

The Curtis Brothers, *Algorithm* (Truth Revolution 047; 60:08 ★★★)

Bassist Luques Curtis shares top billing with his older brother, pianist Zaccai Curtis, on this high-octane quintet outing with drummer Ralph Peterson, saxophonist Donald Harrison and trumpeter Brian Lynch. Unlike Sciacca's group, this quintet does less to feature his bass playing, though. Luques does shine on some solo passages, as on the jazz waltz "Torus," but is relatively low in the mix throughout. Powered by Peterson's unmistakably dynamic drumming, the quintet feels more like a collective effort: Neither brother dominates the group's interactivity, and all involved seem to feed off one another's energy organically. They're at their best when they really go for it: *Algorithm* is full of intensely exuberant moments of collective expression. Like Sciacca's quartet, though, the band's less convincing at slower tempos and softer volume.

Ordering info: truthrevolutionrecords.com

Michael Formanek Very Practical Trio, *Even Better* (Intakt 335; 56:19 ★★★½) A veteran of the jazz circuit since



Zaccai (left) and Luques Curtis

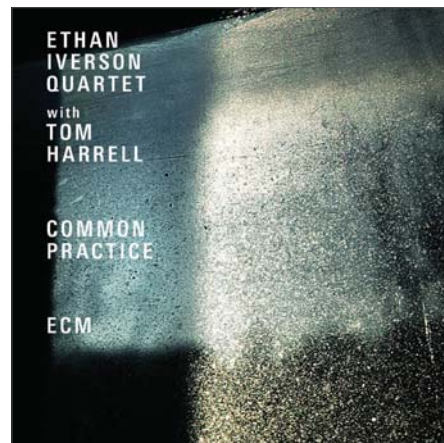
the 1970s, Formanek has mastered the transition from jazz sideman to composer-bandleader. Best known for his quartet with Tim Berne, Craig Taborn and Gerald Cleaver, Formanek's writing is relentlessly exploratory. And on this outing, Berne joins him in a smaller format alongside guitarist Mary Halvorson to work their way through the bassist's unique compositions. The group achieves an impressive degree of density and a big collective sound. At the same time, the pieces give the small format a sense of intimacy—the ebbs and flows of interaction exude focused attention and profound listening. The trio's facility as improvisers creates a constant state of wondering what will happen next, making for an especially adventuresome listen.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

Ben Wolfe, *Fatherhood* (Resident Arts 8448; 45:23 ★★★)

A first-call mainstay of New York's uptown jazz circles, Ben Wolfe took time off from his busy gigging life to mourn the passing of his father, Dan, last year. This project, born of the bassist's grieving process, is dedicated to his memory. It's clear that great care and attention went into every detail. The ensemble, which includes adept integration of a string quartet—they often float over the buoyant groove Wolfe holds with drummer Donald Edwards—exudes joy, no matter the tempo or style. "It's True" stands out as a heartfelt ballad midway through the album, drawing on the unique orchestration that blends strings with Joel Ross' vibraphone. Whether Wolfe is laying the foundation or basking in the spotlight—he takes numerous impressive solos—the music is uplifted by his grounded presence and sense of direction. **DB**

Ordering info: benwolfe.com



Ethan Iverson Quartet With Tom Harrell *Common Practice*

ECM 2643

★★★★

Recorded live at the Village Vanguard in January 2017, *Common Practice* showcases trumpeter Tom Harrell, whose warm, inviting tone and outstanding solos enliven this set of standards. With bassist Ben Street and drummer Eric McPherson setting the perfectly symbiotic tone on gentle ballads and all-out swingers, pianist Ethan Iverson's playfully subversive penchant for reharmonization, baroque extrapolation and other unpredictable twists and turns subtly impacts the proceedings.

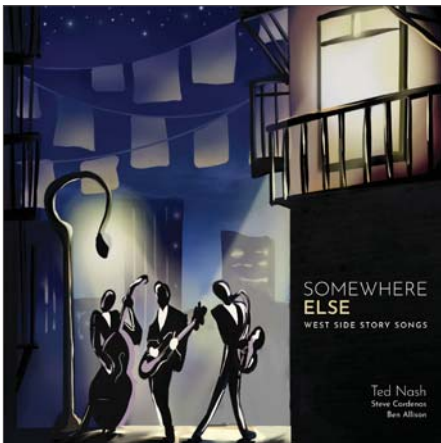
The pianist's ethereal solo intros to gentle ballads are wholly unique in their use of drama, space and dissonance, and there's an old-school charm to the relaxed groove on his slow blues "Philadelphia Creamer," which finds Harrell taking his time before unleashing a scattershot burst of notes. The ensemble's impressionistic version of "Sentimental Journey" injects a bit of humor with McPherson's odd percussive statements and Iverson's almost tongue-in-cheek comping and harmonic tweaking. Harrell nevertheless digs into this medium-tempo groover with bluesy abandon. Iverson's sparse, patient comping on "Polka Dots And Moonbeams" perfectly underscores Harrell's achingly beautiful playing here. The pianist's renegade take on "All The Things You Are" is almost defiantly unconventional, and his herky-jerky out-of-time solo on "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" is particularly audacious. Throughout the program, Iverson simultaneously offers a heartfelt love letter to standards while spray-painting his own tag all over them.

The star here is Harrell, and the man behind the curtain is Iverson. —Bill Milkowski

Common Practice: The Man I Love; Philadelphia Creamer; Wee; I Can't Get Started; Sentimental Journey; Out Of Nowhere; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; All The Things You Are; Jed From Teaneck; I'm Getting Sentimental Over You; I Remember You. (66:41)

Personnel: Ethan Iverson, piano; Tom Harrell, trumpet; Ben Street, bass; Eric McPherson, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Ted Nash
Somewhere Else: West Side Story Songs
 PLASTIC SAX 5
 ★★★★★

Dave Bass
No Boundaries
 WHALING CITY SOUND 116
 ★★★½

When Ron Carter was asked why he so often plays standards when so many musicians insist on writing their own tunes, he was typically suc-

cinct. “Artists are not necessarily the best writers, and the proof of that is that the only people who play their material is them. When the new guys write better tunes, then maybe I’ll play them.”

Jazz at Lincoln Center reedist Ted Nash, it should be noted, is a highly accomplished composer and arranger for ensembles both large and small. And his gorgeous 2016 *Presidential Suite: Eight Variations On Freedom* deservedly won him two Grammy Awards.

With no pressure to prove himself, Nash now takes on interpreting one of the 20th century’s greatest musical treasures, *West Side Story*. The songs that Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim wrote for it, steeped in the sounds of New York jazz and Latin music, have been played in jazz settings before, but the energy that Nash brings to the task is exceptional.

With just guitarist Steve Cardenas and bassist Ben Allison, and Nash alternating between tenor and clarinet, the trio deftly captures the expressive power of the Bernstein orchestrations with a few bold strokes, then riffs organically off them in constantly surprising ways. One has to believe the maestro, who loved the kind of jazz energy and imagination on display here, would have approved.

Nash also contributes mightily to Dave Bass’ *No Boundaries*, the third collection from the Sacramento pianist since he revived his music

career in 2005. Now retired from his post as deputy attorney general of California, Bass is again focusing on music, full-time.

A highly effective bebop player, who also has a way with Afro-Cuban rhythms, Bass proves his mettle in collaboration with Nash, who co-produced and has a field day, playing no less than seven woodwinds. The album’s bookended by Bass’ arrangements of Lennie Tristano and Bud Powell tunes, displaying wit, arranging chops and impressive pianism. Eight originals are well-played, but the solos tend to be more memorable than the tunes. The unusual mix of bebop and Afro-Cuban music—including delightful versions of classics “La Mulata Rumbera” and “Siboney”—are complemented by three expert Cuban percussionists, often making the album surprising and invigorating.

—Allen Morrison

Somewhere Else: West Side Story Songs: Jet Song; A Boy Like That; Maria; One Hand, One Heart; Tonight; America; I Have A Love; Something’s Coming; Cool; Somewhere; Somewhere (Reprise). (49:52)

Personnel: Ted Nash, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Steve Cardenas, guitar; Ben Allison, bass.

No Boundaries: Lennie’s Pennies; Spy Movie End Credits; Agentebite Of Inwit; If I Loved You; La Mulata Rumbera; Tango Adagio; Time Of My Life; Siboney; Neither Have I Wings; Danzon #1; Swing Theory; In The Rain; Hallucinations. (72:42)

Personnel: Dave Bass, piano; Ted Nash, soprano, alto and tenor saxophone, flute, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Jerome Jennings, drums; Karrin Allyson, vocals (4, 7); Carlos Caro, guiro, bongos, bell (2, 4, 5, 8, 10); Miguel Valdes, bata, conga (5, 8, 10); Mauricio Hernandez, timbales, maracas (5, 8, 10).

Ordering info: tednash.com; whalingcitysound.com

Nicole Johäntngen
Solo
 SELMABIRD
 ★★★

There must be something about the environment where saxophonist Nicole Johäntngen has lived that informs the airiness and sonic arrangement of her playing and compositions. Not only is there space, but there’s also color: pacific blue, coral pink and cloudy white.

Solo opens with “Sternenhimmel,” an extended sonic amalgamation of rich tones and meditative notes that Johäntngen appears to deliver seamlessly, summoning visions of water and whales, and the feel of the salt air on your arms. A guttural, industrial fog-horn sound follows on “Nebelkleid.” Highlighting Johäntngen’s ability to create the illusion of harmony in a solo setting, she moves from the upper to lower register with precise timing that tricks the ear into hearing two notes simultaneously. Although this second tune is even longer than the opener, clocking in at about 21 minutes, the array of sounds that the saxophonist coaxes out of her instrument invites the listener to hang in there.

Solo likely won’t satisfy every listener’s desires. But with her first unaccompanied outing Johäntngen steps into a tradition of performers who were intent on exploring the limits of the saxophone.

—Michele L. Simms-Burton



Solo: Sternenhimmel; Nebelkleid; Erwachen; Stille Ewigkeit; Lebenslust. (55:27)
Personnel: Nicole Johäntngen, alto saxophone.

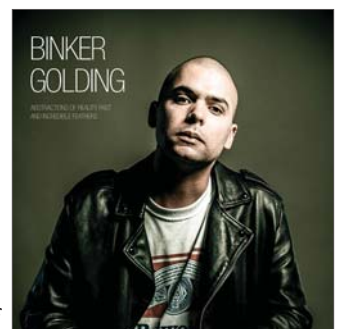
Ordering info: nicolejohaentngen.com

Binker Golding
Abstractions Of Reality Past And Incredible Feathers
 GEARBOX 1555
 ★★★½

London saxophonist Binker Golding has a way with a hook. And not just during his addictive, melody-driven solos or in his acoustic versions of broken-beat rhythm tracks, but when he writes the mischievous titles that describe his music. You might not understand what he means by *Abstractions Of Reality Past And Incredible Feathers*, but the music makes you want to find out.

Take “Exquisite She-Green,” with its intoxicating head, repeated against a bucking drum line. When Golding slips away into his sinuous solo, there’s no question that the melody will return, bigger and bolder than before. Likewise, on “Skinned Alive, Tasting Blood,” Golding lays out a motif—a scratchy, obdurate rhythm this time. Though only a few measures long, the insistent phrase grounds the tune in a recurring idea that the soloists push against. And just as you’re about to succumb to the hypnotic repetition of Golding’s blowing, an outside tone or a surprising movement will break the spell. These moments are important: To understand what Golding is saying, it helps to know what he’s leaving out.

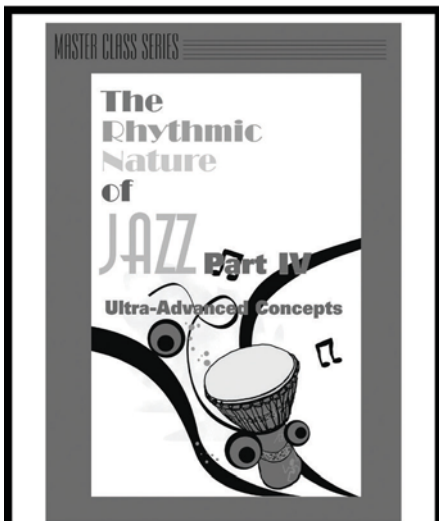
—Suzanne Lorge



Abstractions Of Reality Past And Incredible Feathers: I Forgot Santa Monica; Exquisite She-Green; Skinned Alive; Tasting Blood; ... And I Like Your Feathers; You, That Place, That Time; Strange-Beautiful Remembered; Fluorescent Black. (46:47)

Personnel: Binker Golding, tenor saxophone; Joe Armon-Jones, piano; Daniel Casimir, bass; Sam Jones, drums.

Ordering info: gearboxrecords.com



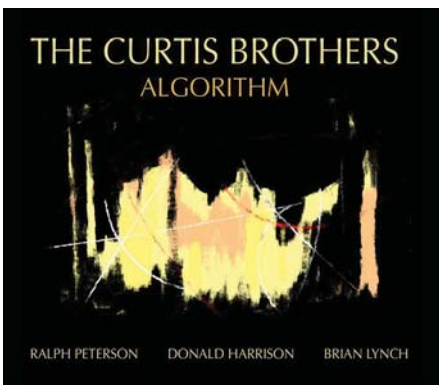
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Prototypes and Virtuosity

Various Artists, *Down Home Blues: Chicago 2—Sweet Home Chicago* (Wienerworld 5106; 76:46/75:03/76:26/77:39/77:40; ★★★★★½) One might suppose that historical Chicago blues has run its course in attraction to fans because of all the sets released through the years. But don't miss *Sweet Home Chicago*, Brit Peter Moody's new five-CD blockbuster of 135 tracks (58 previously unissued) drawn from his private stash of records and those of four colleagues. Remastered in sound, these mostly obscure tracks recorded between 1945 and 1962 testify to the communicative spirit of 46 performers. Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Big Bill Broonzy, Elmore James and several more musicians set the standard by which Windy City blues of the era is measured.

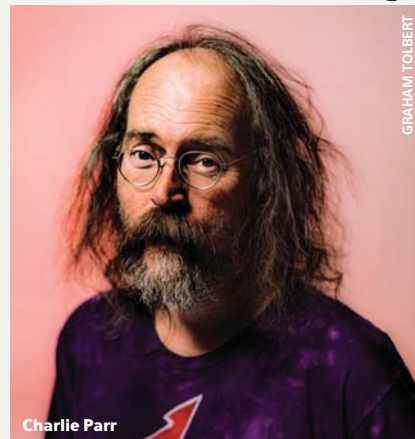
All of the others—foot soldiers like pianist Henry Gray and guitarist Johnny Temple whose names should be recognizable to serious blues aficionados along with forgotten souls, such as singers Dirty Red and Herby Joe—are in tune with the worries and yearnings of city life. Just the first half of disc five is bogged down with tiresome performances. The set also includes a lavish 91-page paperback book.

Ordering info: wienerworld.com

Charlie Parr, *Charlie Parr* (Red House 312; 43:18 ★★★★★) Parr, a Minnesota native, would have been in his element on the 1960s Minneapolis folk scene. A generation too young for that, he's made his mark as one of today's leading folk-blues troubadours. Recovered from a broken shoulder, Parr's latest has him bringing the depth, thoughtfulness and natural authority of his acoustic guitar playing and singing to renovations of originals that he'd recorded before—and to affecting new works and songs penned by Grant Hart, of Hüsker Dü, and folk-blues legend Spider John Koerner. Four low-profile musicians help his good cause.

Ordering info: redhouzerecords.com

Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters, *Beyond The Blue Door* (Stony Plain 1407; 73:14 ★★★★★) What makes Earl's guitar playing so compelling is that he possesses a searing single-note style that allows him to address the conflicted feelings within him: The blues is a slow and intense story of healing. And this new album throttles along with his eloquence spread across originals, as well as songs from Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Bob Dylan and soul singers Jerry Butler and Timmy Thomas. A couple minor issues, though. Kim Wilson and Dave Bromberg are just about useless as guest singers, and while broadcaster/vocalist Diane Blue shines on several tracks, she shouldn't have been required to handle "A Soul That's Been



Charlie Parr

GRAHAM TOLBERT

Abused," a tune immortalized by Mighty Sam McClain.

Ordering info: stonyplainrecords.com

Bruce Katz, *Solo Ride* (American Showplace 7766; 50:01 ★★★★★) Pianist Katz, who first earned his laurels as a bluesman in the early 1980s, has a broad musical intellect of a very high order, and that's never more perfectly revealed than on his first all-instrumental solo piano album. There's an exceptional flow to the ideas pushing his keyboard assertions and ruminations on 11 originals, as well as the reanimation of Tampa Red's "It Hurts Me Too." Katz, a true individualist, unleashes perfectly turned phrases that travel through blues, boogie-woogie, stride, spirituals, New Orleans r&b, Ramsey Lewis soul-jazz, Andrew Hill-ish post-bop and even country waltz.

Ordering info: americanshowplacemusic.com

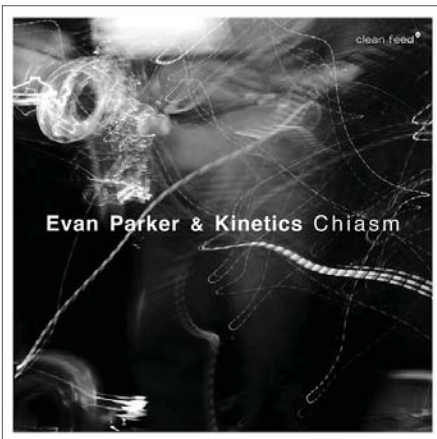
Screamin' Jay Hawkins, *The Bizarre Years* (Real Gone 0897; 21:50/23:11 ★★½) Hawkins knocked the world off its axis with 1956's wildly inebriated r&b single "I Put A Spell On You." This prototypic shock-rock entertainer also made three rare albums in the early 1990s for a label cofounded by Frank Zappa; they're chopped down to 10 tracks for this purple vinyl compilation. Hawkins' blues-soaked baritone and seriously bent sense of humor summon enjoyable weirdness on side one, which includes makeovers of two Tom Waits tunes. The flip side, however, is infected with misogyny and dumb salaciousness.

Ordering info: realgonemusic.com

Gracie Curran & Friends, *Come Undone* (VizzTone GC01; 32:06 ★★★) In Memphis for her second album, Bostonian Curran sings her own compositions entertainingly, but without evidencing that her voice is touched by the assurance of a top-tier singer. With spark, soloing guitarists Damon Fowler and Pat Harrington give good accountings of themselves.

Ordering info: vizztone.com

DB



Evan Parker & Kinetics *Chiasm*

CLEAN FEED 525

★★★★

Evan Parker and Matthew Wright, Trance Map+ *Crepuscule In Nickelsdorf*

INTAKT 329

★★★★½

Evan Parker has been a leading figure in the free-jazz world since summoning manifes-

to-like statements with fellow British improvisers in the late '60s. But considering the sweep of his work, if there's a Parker sound or agenda, it relies on an innately malleable manifesto, leading him into a broad variety of collaborations. An impressive pair of recent albums demonstrates the rangy nature of his thinking.

On *Chiasm*, Parker, now 75, brings along his tenor saxophone for engaging interactions with pianist Jakob Anderskov's trio, Kinetics, during a set of music heeding a veritically classic equation and textural credo: A quartet should blow freely, but with self-defined restraint and taste. Brevity and focus are becoming aspects of the recording, with its four relatively compact pieces clocking in at about 38 minutes, working against a certain tendency in free-improv to succumb to a more-is-more attitude.

Parker moves outside—in a sometimes more literal sense—on his latest release as part of the unique Trance Map+ project, partner Matthew Wright conjuring up atmospheric backdrops and sonic landscapes peppered with electronic textures and field recordings. Here and with Kinetics, Parker asserts his signature musical qualities—in different measures. Circular breathing allows for hypnotic washes of saxophonic sound, while the content, note choice and intensity balances his playing and

embodies a continually personal, post-Trane voice all his own.

On the live *Crepuscule In Nickelsdorf* with Wright, captured live at the 2017 Nickelsdorf, Austria, Konfrontationen festival, the ensemble (which also performed at the Big Ears Festival in Knoxville this year) includes electronics from Adam Linson, and Spring Hill Jack's John Coxon and Ashley Wales.

Conceptual manipulations and historical cross-referencing are at the root of this project: Wright reworked past Parker salvos into new templates for improvisation and development—not unlike Anthony Braxton's "Ghost Trance" project. But the end results here are as sensual as they are cerebral. Sampled sounds from nature sneak into the mix, which encourages the aviary evocations of Parker's soprano playing. Consider it muscular meditation music, with a venerable free hero in the spotlight.

—Josef Woodard

Chiasm: London Part 1; Copenhagen Part 1; Copenhagen Part 2; London Part 2. (38:15)

Personnel: Evan Parker, tenor saxophone; Jakob Anderskov, piano; Adam Pultz Melbye, bass; Anders Vestergaard, drummer.

Crepuscule In Nickelsdorf: Crepuscule In Nickelsdorf Parts 1–7. (58:47)

Personnel: Evan Parker, soprano saxophone; Matthew Wright, turntable, sampling; Adam Linson, bass, electronics; John Coxon, turntable, electronics; Ashley Wales, electronics.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com; intaktrec.ch

Oscar Hernandez & Alma Libre *Love The Moment*

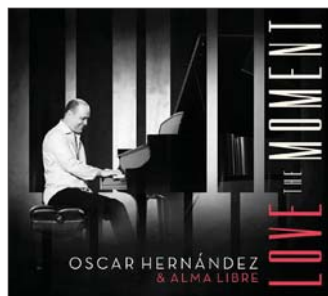
ORIGIN 82786

★★★★

One endearing thing about pianist Oscar Hernandez is his generosity. The bandleader grants a remarkable amount of space to members of Alma Libre on *Love The Moment*, and the ensemble enthusiastically welcomes the opportunities.

Justo Almarío's flute is a wondrous thing of beauty and warmth on the title track, its silvery tone shifting from the lower to higher reaches of the instrument. Almarío's fluency and mastery also prevails on "Mi Cancion Es Para Ti." Memorable, too, is his saxophone on "Otro Nivel," Almarío volleying spitfire notes with trumpeter Gilbert Castellanos' spikey sprints. On "Latino Jazz," percussionist Christian Moraga and drummer Jimmy Branly put the heat to the skins, and the only thing capable of matching their intense beat is Hernandez's two-fisted octave runs. While the bandleader is democratic about the allotment of time and space, he knows when to step in and apply an infectious dance-like tempo: "Mi Cancion Es Para Ti" is ample proof. Hernandez smartly has set aside specific tunes to feature individual performers and instruments, but the dynamic swing when they all come together on "Alternate Roots" epitomizes the album's ensemble genius.

—Herb Boyd



Natacha Atlas *Strange Days*

WHIRLWIND 4744

★★★★

Adding to a career that already includes 15 live and studio albums, and music in major film soundtracks, vocalist Natacha Atlas returns with *Strange Days*, a recording that wastes no time building a sophisticated atmosphere on "Out Of Time."

With complex piano chords opening the program, listeners might presume neoclassical is Atlas' genre of choice. However, the dry-toned snare roll and soft-edged trumpet that follow unveil a solid jazz aesthetic. The subsequent ascending half-steps and Atlas' vocal fluctuations—delivered as subtle melismas and loose pitch transitions—gradually reveal her intent to integrate Eastern tonality. The idea of combining the already flexible nature of improvisational jazz with melodies that contain flashes of harmonic minor and Phrygian dominant scales, initially seems like a recipe for tonal confusion. But *Strange Days* exercises its compositional boldness with moderation: The approachable melodic phrases of "Inherent Rhythm" stand out, the deft touch of violinists providing intriguing textures. With *Strange Days*, Atlas delivers a refined musical experience, one that encourages reveling in the most meditative parts of the human imagination. —Kira Grunenberg

Strange Days: Out Of Time; Maktoub; Min Baad; All The Madness; Sunshine Day; Lost Revolutions; Inherent Rhythm; Words Of A King; It's A Man's World; Moonchild. (58:13)

Personnel: Natacha Atlas, vocals, electronics; Samy Bishai, violin, viola, guitar, vocals, electronics; Hayden Powell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Robinson Khoury, trombone; Alcyona Mick, piano; Andy Hamill, bass; Asaf Sirkis, Laurie Lowe, drums; Joss Stone, Tanya Wells, Sofiane Saidi, vocals; Idris Rahman, tenor saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet, flute; Paulo Vinicius, acoustic guitar; Oli Savill, Vasilis Sarikis, percussion; Vincent Greene, Mandy Drummond, viola; Ivan Hussey, Chris Worsley, cello; Emma Smith, Jennymay Logan, Stephen Hussey, Gillon Cameron, Sally Jackson, violin.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com

Love The Moment: Otro Nivel; Love The Moment; Latino Jazz; Danzon For Lisa; Mi Cancion Es Para Ti; Silent Prayers; Alternate Roots; Sentimiento De Amor; Groove For Peace; Mindful Thoughts. (51:58)

Personnel: Oscar Hernandez, piano; Justo Almarío, saxophone, flute; Oskar Cartaya, bass; Jimmy Branly, drums; Christian Moraga, percussion; Gilbert Castellanos, trumpet; Dayren Santamaria, violin.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Intricate Musical Messages



The 1970s were a pivotal time in music, as rock and jazz became more electric, and r&b inexorably morphed into modern soul and funk. Gospel-influenced groups like the Staple Singers and the Mighty Clouds Of Joy gave birth to groups who were disciples of a new brand of '70s gospel-funk that likely wouldn't be allowed in some houses of worship. Yet, the bands carried a message of reconciliation and unity to the masses. Many of these groups have faded into history, but their music is being resurrected. DJ Greg Belson has compiled **The Time For Peace Is Now (Luaka Bop 0094; 49:52 ★★★½)**, a set that collects 14 tracks by various gospel-funk artists. The impassioned singing and playing allows listeners to get their church on with just the drop of a needle (or by grabbing a pair of earbuds).

Ordering info: luakabop.com

In 1974, **Ana Mazzotti**, a young, talented Brazilian musician, enlisted Azymuth keyboardist Roberto Bertrami for her debut recording. Two years later, she brought the master tapes back, rerecorded her vocals, added horns and improved the overall mix, declaring her upgraded album as her actual debut. Bertrami's brilliant solos and deft blending of electric piano, organ and synthesizers give this a decidedly '70s Brazilian-funk sound, complementing Mazzotti's articulate, supple voice. Both of her (not dissimilar) albums are featured here as the rereleased 1974 **Ninguem Vai Me Segurar (Far Out 212; 26:46 ★★★½)** and the 1977 "follow-up," **Ana Mazzotti (Far Out 213; 28:11 ★★★½)**, which casts a new spotlight on an exquisite musician and songwriter.

Ordering info: faroutrecordings.com

Growing up in Mali, Ibrahim Ag Alhabib learned to play guitar with other young Tuareg boys. Their people have been fighting for independence since the 19th century, yet Ag Alhabib and his band, **Tinariwen**, eventually swapped their struggle—at least for a time—for instruments, in the process becoming international rock stars. What makes **Amadjar (Anti- 87703; 54:25 ★★★½)** different from Tinariwen's other albums is that it

was recorded in the Sahara Desert, in order to document the group amid familiar surroundings. The rhythms are hypnotic, the guitar riffs well-crafted, the melodies expressive and memorable as they're gently massaged into one's mind with each repeated verse. Stop and think for a moment how American blues, which initially developed from African music, has become one of the main influences for this blues-inspired African band.

Ordering info: anti.com

In Ghana, guitarist and singer **Ebo Taylor** is a pioneer in the tradition of Highlife, a music similar to the better-known Nigerian Afrobeat. In 1980, Taylor was on tour in Nigeria when he recorded an album, which then was shelved for reasons that still remain unknown. The lost tapes, though, have resurfaced, and the resulting album, **Palaver (BBE 511; 29:57 ★★★)**, reveals a veteran at the high point of his career. Taylor's intricate guitar work is complemented by his world-class rhythm section, spinning tight grooves under an airtight horn section. The highlight of this Highlife recording is "Help Africa," an Afrobeat-inspired political song with what might rank as one of the funkier of bass lines ever set to tape.

Ordering info: bbemusic.com

We need to say "might" if we're to conclude with an album by one of the funkier bassists to ever live. Bootsy Collins commanded the low end for two of the greatest funk acts in history: James Brown and Parliament Funkadelic. Between the two gigs, Collins had his own band with his brother, guitarist Phelps "Catfish" Collins. Named **House Guests** after the type of accommodations they usually had on the road, this retrospective album, **My Mind Set Me Free (Shake It 1288; 39:39 ★★★)**, highlights nine selections from this fertile period in the early 1970s. Because the tracks are in chronological order, one can hear the evolution from James Brown horn lines to George Clinton keyboard-driven sounds. Through it all, however, the melodic creativity of Bootsy's rock-solid bass only reaffirms his place in history as one of the best of all time.

DB

Ordering info: shakeitrecords.com



Michael Leonhart Orchestra Suite Extracts Vol. 1

SUNNYSIDE 1555

★★★★

To understand where *Suite Extracts Vol. 1* is coming from, it's important to note that bandleader Michael Leonhart has as many original compositions on the album as Wu-Tang Clan and Spinal Tap combined. To call the recording "eclectic" is an understatement, and thankfully the playfulness here goes beyond mere gimmickry.

Leonhart's orchestra is amplified by guest spots by the likes of saxophonist Chris Potter and guitarist Nels Cline. The 11-minute collision of Spinal Tap and Ornette Coleman, though, should turn a lot of heads on its own: An almost marching band-like movement states the theme to "Big Bottom," sly horns articulating over the heavy bass riff. Gradually, the size of the band seems to shrink, making way for a plaintive saxophone solo on what's become Coleman's "Lonely Woman." The horns move stealthily, wailing on the melody from the 60-year-old *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*. But for those more enamored of hip-hop, there's the radical reimagining of GZA's "Liquid Swords," where sinister strings only hint at the Willie Mitchel sample used on the original.

This is bold, energetic music with no fear of pulling from anywhere in the pop world, and it's a refreshing assessment of the modern standard, each track a puzzle of familiarity.

—Sean J. O'Connell

Suite Extracts Vol. 1: Alu Jon Jonki Jon; La Fuga Di Derek; Big Bottom/Lonely Woman; Dance Of The Maidens At Stonehenge; Built For Comfort; Jazz Odyssey/Lick My Love Pump; Liquid Swords; Da Mystery Of Chessboxin'; Liquid Chamber; Shimmy Shimmy Ya/ Glaciers Of Ice; The Ballad Of St. Hubbins; Quiet Man Is Dead Man Opposite People. (64:53)

Personnel: Michael Leonhart, trumpet, cello, mellophonium, drum machine, bass harmonica; Kevin Raczka, Eric Harland, drums; Elizabeth Pupo-Walker, Daniel Freedman, percussion; Joe Martin, Jay Leonhart, bass; Robbie Mangano, Nels Cline, guitar; Nathan Koci, accordion; Philip Dizack, Dave Guy, Jordan McLean, Carter Yasutake, Andy Bush, trumpet; Ray Mason, trombone; John Ellis, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, alto flute; Ian Hendrickson-Smith, tenor saxophone, alto flute; Chris Potter, Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; Jason Marshall, baritone saxophone; Sam Sadigursky, piccolo, alto flute; Daniel Srebnick, alto flute; Sara Schoenbeck, bassoon, contrabassoon; Pauline Kim, violin, viola; Erik Friedlander, Milo Leonhart, cello.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

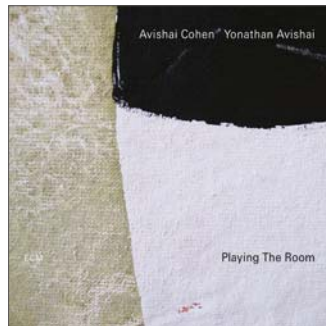
Avishai Cohen/ Yonathan Avishai *Playing The Room*

ECM 2641

★★★★

Friends and musical co-conspirators since middle school, trumpeter Avishai Cohen and pianist Yonathan Avishai document their nearly lifelong collaboration on *Playing The Room*. As the title implies, this duo record sometimes feels like a trio album—with the famously pristine, resonant studios in Lugano, Switzerland, playing the part of the group's third member.

Each performer contributes one original—Cohen's "The Opening" and Avishai's "Two Lines"—to set the album's tone. Both are wistfully modernistic, projecting a sense of the pair settling into the spacious studio atmosphere before launching into an introspective take on John Coltrane's "Crescent." The rest of the album delves into skillful interpretations of carefully selected classics by compositional masters: Ellington, Ibrahim, Wonder. By decentering themselves as composers, Cohen and Avishai highlight their brilliance as improvisers within the tradition. And while this album depicts a pair of Israelis in Switzerland, *Playing The Room* draws its strength from being steeped in the blues—whether in the playfully celebratory "Dee Dee" or the more directly soulful "Ralph's New Blues." This lively and tender exploration of the two musicians' friendship shows how their skills have deepened together through a mutual dedication to the music. —Alex W. Rodriguez



Playing The Room: The Opening; Two Lines; Crescent; Azalea; Kofifi Blue; Dee Dee; Ralph's New Blues; Sir Duke; Shir Eres (Lullaby). (45:46)

Personnel: Yonathan Avishai, piano; Avishai Cohen, trumpet.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Sumitra *Bittersweet*

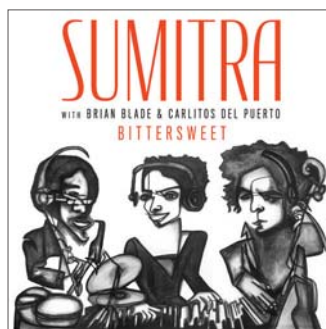
SELF RELEASE

★★½

Since 1995, when Sumitra Nanjundan released her first album, the pianist and vocalist has worked as a studio player in London and returned to Vienna where she spent time as a child. For the past 15 years, though, she's been based in Los Angeles.

Bittersweet, her fourth album as a leader, finds Sumitra's voice and piano joined by bassist Carlitos Del Puerto and drummer Brian Blade along with occasional fills from her husband, guitarist Alex Machacek. This isn't exactly a jazz album, and instead focuses on Sumitra the singer/songwriter in a style not too different from Joni Mitchell or Laura Nyro.

Sumitra's originals include a tribute to her late mother ("Bittersweet"), the story of her first marriage's dissolution ("Make Me Whole"), the tale of a close friend and other associates who have suffered from mental illness ("Take The Reins") and how the star culture of L.A. can affect one's musical relationships ("Recall"). In addition, there's a modernized, but pretty straight, version of "The Way You Look Tonight," an adaptation of a Bartok piece ("Funny") and a drum feature for Blade on "Another Day." Sumitra has a pleasant voice and her piano complements her music, but very little here distinguishes *Bittersweet* from countless others. —Scott Yanow



Bittersweet: Bittersweet; Make Me Whole; See You Again; Take The Reins; The Way You Look Tonight; Settle Down; Recall; Funny; Freedom; Another Day. (42:20)

Personnel: Sumitra, piano, vocals; Carlitos Del Puerto, bass; Brian Blade, drums; Alex Machacek, guitar.

Ordering info: sumitra-music.com

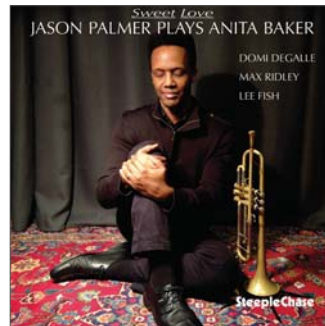
Jason Palmer *Sweet Love: Jason Palmer Plays Anita Baker*

STEEPLECHASE 31874

★★★★

Sweet Love: Jason Palmer Plays Anita Baker is the final installment in a trio of albums trumpeter Palmer has recorded during the past seven years on which he's paid tribute to great female soul and r&b singers. The first was a 2012 nod to Minnie Riperton, which was followed in 2015 by his bow to Janelle Monáe.

If you're a fan of the Baker songbook, then this record—which includes classics like "Sweet Love," "Giving You The Best That I Got" and "Body And Soul" (no, not the jazz standard)—will hit the right pleasure nodes. But even if you aren't too familiar with her oeuvre, the album still is worth seeking out. Palmer and his group are dutiful in the best sense of the word—they respect the source, but make each track their own. The trumpeter is also accompanied by an ace rhythm section: pianist Domi Degalle, bassist Max Ridley and dexterous young drummer Lee Fish, whose funky rhythms bring to mind a New Orleans snare player. For the most part, this is a joyful album that reminds you of something the late Roy Hargrove might have put out 10 years ago—*Earfood*, for example. But to paraphrase an Anita Baker tune, the album will bring you joy. —Matthew Kassel



Sweet Love: Jason Palmer Plays Anita Baker: Fairy Tales; Sweet Love; Same Ole Love (365 Days Of The Year); Body And Soul; Caught Up In The Rapture; Giving You The Best That I Got; No One In The World; Angel. (74:28)

Personnel: Jason Palmer, trumpet; Domi Degalle, piano; Max Ridley, bass; Lee Fish, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

George Coleman *The Quartet*

SMOKE SESSIONS 1906

★★★★

Everything about saxophonist George Coleman's *The Quartet* is perfect. You could give it five stars. You could give it one. It just is. Its execution, from the meticulous production to the soloists' considered choices made within familiar song structures, is flawless.

For most, Coleman is one of those names that elicits a confident nod of recognition that gently disguises the cognitive wheels spinning overtime to locate the details of his prolific oeuvre. He's always been one of his generation's most capable performers, confidently luxuriating in saccharine ballads or shredding through angular hard-bop changes. On *The Quartet*, he favors elegant, sparse phrases, rarely overrunning a bar or two; within those spaces, he manages to say a lot. And two minutes into "Prelude To A Kiss," he strings together a pair of high-pitched notes that tell the song's entire story, almost rendering the rest of the performance redundant were it not for the irresistible bounce of John Webber's bass and Harold Mabern's eminently tasteful piano solo. *The Quartet* just feels like being a kid in someone's well-furnished, nice, big house. You kind of want to play and run around, but you're afraid to break any of the really nice stuff. —Andrew Jones



The Quartet: Paul's Call; I Wish You Love; Prelude To A Kiss; Lollipops And Roses; East 9th Street Blues; When I Fall In Love; Along Came Betty; You've Changed; Triste. (73:25)

Personnel: George Coleman, tenor saxophone; Harold Mabern, piano; John Webber, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums.

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com

Armstrong Again Ascendant

Even the greatest of legends fall on hard times, **Louis Armstrong**, too. **Louis Armstrong: Live In Europe (Dot Time 8015; 71:33 ★★★★★)** catches the maestro at a career crossroad. After 12 years fronting a big band, by 1947 he was on an increasingly bumpy road bending toward oblivion. In the 1946 DownBeat poll, Armstrong had sunk to 28th among favorite soloists, and his orchestra didn't even appear in the rankings. In July 1947, the big band quietly was euthanized.

During the next six months, Armstrong found salvation in his storied past. A new and contemporary Hot Five developed around him that ignited the spirit of his New Orleans and Chicago origins. With trombonist Jack Teagarden, drummer Sid Catlett and clarinetist Barney Bigard aboard, it was billed, without exaggeration, as the All-Stars. Audiences came back and so did the press. Suddenly, Armstrong was interesting again, a rising Phoenix from the ashes of midcareer neglect. He soon was flanked by Maynard Ferguson and Miles Davis in a narrow race for the top trumpet position in the 1950 DownBeat poll.

In February 1948, the All-Stars jelled into a working band with the addition of a great costar, pianist Earl Hines, and then flew off to play the first jazz festival in Nice, France. The concerts, which reunited Armstrong and Hines for the first time since 1928, were both historic and nostalgic and occupy the first half of this CD. The newly minted crew plays with freshness, verve and bounce. Catlett is a wonder, his suspension floating the music on a surging foam of liquid motion. When he punctuates a pause with a muted bass bomb or spears a random phrase with a couple of midair rimshots, you know he's hearing every note.

Then there's Teagarden, whose luxurious, unforced insouciance conceals an authority that pours like a rippling medley of understated commandments. His attack has a rubbery, even-tempered spring that shuns arrogance and glides across a chorus like a night wind. Behind the modesty lies an inscrutable virtuosity that, like Catlett's, was his alone and negotiable anywhere. His playing remains a revelation.

The bandleader's in prime form, though his horn tells us nothing new. But what it does say speaks with convincing passion. Hines solos on just two numbers, perhaps preferring to get his feet wet first in this jeweled ensemble. There were six concerts in all in Nice and Paris, all recorded and most previously issued. This recording, which focuses on the Nice engagements and also is available on LP, would be more of an occasion had it expanded to give us the complete tour.



Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden

COURTESY THE LOUIS ARMSTRONG HOUSE MUSEUM

It was Armstrong's intent that the All-Stars play shows, not jam sessions. Thus, arrangements and solo routines soon solidified in the name of quality control, so that no audience would get less of a show than another. Critics grew impatient with all the guardrails, but the fans were content with the illusion. Louis became a global attraction—again.

Four years later he played his first gig behind the Iron Curtain, an event of ambassadorial import at the Titania Palast, the only theater to survive the Berlin bombings of World War II. The final seven tracks cover that showing, giving us a very different and less elite All-Stars. The programs had become sufficiently institutionalized by that point, though the crowds seem hardly to notice. In place of Teagarden's nuanced coolness, there's now the bellicose strutting of Trummy Young. Drummer Cozy Cole swings handsomely, but clarinetist Bob McCracken and pianist Marty Napoleon bring a reduced stature to the All-Star name.

We get three previously unissued items, two of which feature singer Velma Middleton. But "A Kiss To Build A Dream On" shows Louis' gift for alchemy as a nice pop song becomes an imperial trumpet aria.

Armstrong no longer was influential by this point. But the All-Stars cemented and sustained his place as the most admired artifact of jazz's antiquity. By the end of 1952, when DownBeat readers voted the charter recipient of its new Hall of Fame, it was—who else? Louis Armstrong.

Ordering info: dottimerecords.com



Da Fonseca/Alves/Adnet Samba Jazz & Tom Jobim

SUNNYSIDE 1563

★★★★½

In the late 1950s, Brazilian guitarist João Gilberto and pianist/composer Antônio Carlos Jobim—or Tom—revolutionized American music with the introduction of bossa nova and samba into the jazz lexicon. And America's love affair with these lyrical rhythms never has abated. In fact, we continue to discover more about these innovators and their influence through albums like *Samba Jazz & Tom Jobim*.

Three Gilberto/Jobim devotees—drummer Duduka Da Fonseca, pianist Helio Alves and singer Maucha Adnet—form the creative team behind this release, which draws from the trio's show of the same name, presented annually since 2007 at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. An even mix of vocal and instrumental tracks, the album showcases Adnet on all of the Jobim titles and two powerhouse trumpeters on two of the non-Jobim pieces: Claudio Roditi on his own high-velocity samba, "Gemini Man," and Wynton Marsalis with a more straightforward take on Raul de Souza's "A Vontade Mesmo."

Adnet, who sang with Jobim's ensemble Banda Nova, upholds the bandleader's legacy on a smattering of his well- and lesser-known bossas, among them the lusciously arranged "Dindi" and a lilting, flute-accented "Pato Preto." Da Fonseca and Alves contribute their own originals: Alves' dynamic "Untitled" and frenetic "Helium," and Da Fonseca's intriguingly outré "Alana." These three modern tunes serve as a reminder that not all Brazilian jazz today is predicated on bossa and samba, and that what Gilberto and Jobim started still is unfolding all these years later.

—Suzanne Lorge

Samba Jazz & Tom Jobim: Gemini Man; Alana; Untitled; Pato Preto; Dindi; A Correnteza; Pedra Bonita Da Gavea; Helium; Você Vai Ver; Polo Pony; A Vontade Mesmo; I Loves You Porgy. (65:15)

Personnel: Billy Drewes, saxophone, flute; Romero Lubambo, guitar; Hans Glawischning, bass; Maucha Adnet, vocals; Helio Alves, piano; Rhodes; Duduka Da Fonseca, drums; Claudio Roditi (1), Wynton Marsalis (11), trumpet.

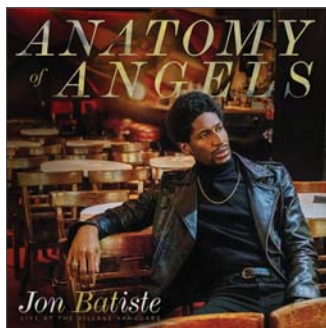
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Jon Batiste
Anatomy Of Angels: Live At The Village Vanguard

VERVE B0030571

★★★★★

On “Creative,” the first track off *Anatomy Of Angels: Live At The Village Vanguard*, Jon Batiste packs what seems like eight minutes of music into four. The composition opens with a melodious swing section that leads into a playful honky-tonk jam; a modern, whip-fast riff then takes over, yielding to a soothing ballad section. Each of the pianist’s three originals here are similar: mercurial and improvisatory in feel, erudite and complex in execution. On the second, “Dusk Train To Doha,” he applies blues and gospel languages, encouraging shouts from the audience. And on the title track, Batiste tips his hat to big-band structures with clusters of layered horns, before breaking into an exultant, full-throttle jazz concerto. Recorded at the Village Vanguard, the album captured only a fraction of Batiste’s residency last fall. But two standards made the cut, including “Round Midnight.” It starts as a stealthy reveal of angular hidden corners and morphs into a heavy swing, before slipping into a subtle rumba. A lone trumpet propels the tune—a musical allusion, perhaps, to Gabriel, the archangel, announcing the approach of divinity. —Suzanne Lorge



Anatomy Of Angels: Live At The Village Vanguard: Creative; Dusk Train To Doha; The Very Thought Of You; Round Midnight; Anatomy Of Angels. (35:55)

Personnel: Jon Batiste, piano, vocals; Rachael Price, vocals; Tivon Pennicott, tenor saxophone; Patrick Bartley, alto saxophone; Giveton Gelin, Jon Lampley, trumpet; Phil Kuehn, bass; Louis Cato, percussion, guitar; Négah Santos, percussion; Joe Saylor, drums.

Ordering info: vervelabelgroup.com

Maria Chiara Argirò
Hidden Seas

CAVALO 01

★★★★½

The magnetic pull of the sea long has lured great artists, poets and composers. Maria Chiara Argirò, a London-based pianist, answers its call on *Hidden Seas*, an impassioned suite of soundscapes that cements her stature as a significant new voice in creative music.



Inspired by Edward MacDowell’s 1898 *Sea Pieces* for piano, Argirò composed all the music on her second full-length album. To move beyond *The Fall Dance*, her more traditional debut, she recruited the brilliant French singer Leïla Martial and several outside lyricists, expanding her orchestral palette with song concepts, as well as her own swirling synths and electronics. Martial, propelled by lyrics she co-wrote with Argirò, dives “Beneath The Surface” in the opener and ponders “what it means to leap across the waves.” “Wandering Iceberg” invokes climate-change distress with screeching horns and Martial’s mantra of “give it back,” before the chaos subsides and laps gently back to shore. Then it’s all hands on deck for the gorgeous closer, “Ocean,” a boffo finish as deep and wide as the ocean itself. Compelling throughout, *Hidden Seas* reveals more sunken treasures with every listen and sets a high bar for Argirò albums yet to come. —Cree McRee

Hidden Seas: Beneath The Surface; Nautilus; Sea Song; From One Land To Another; The Water Oath; To The Sea; Watery Universe; Starlight; Wandering Iceberg; Ocean. (45:27)

Personnel: Maria Chiara Argirò, piano, keyboards; Sam Rapley, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Tal Janes, guitar; Andrea Di Biase, bass; Gaspar Sena, drums, percussion; Leïla Martial, vocals.

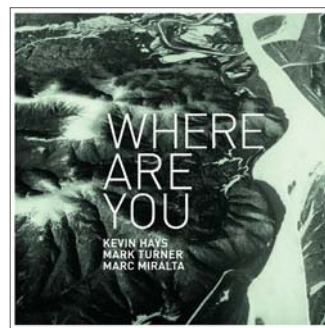
Ordering info: cavalorecords.com

Kevin Hays/ Mark Turner/ Marc Miralta
Where Are You

FRESH SOUND 5103

★★★★★

Perhaps because it’s a new group, members of this bassless trio come to the session more or less as equals. Pianist Kevin Hays and drummer Marc Miralta bring three compositions each, while saxophonist Mark Turner offers two. It’s a testament to the strength of each man’s abilities that the absence of a bassist is barely noticeable throughout. A track like Hays’ “Please Remember Me”—which charges forward with a bouncing, muscular swing reminiscent of Keith Jarrett’s 1970s American Quartet—doesn’t need any additional elements to hold together. The group’s take on Turner’s “Nigeria” is another high-energy workout, the saxophonist and Hays taking the complicated melody line in fleet unison as Miralta sets up a pounding shuffle beat, before brief solo statements. The trio then turns to Ornette Coleman’s “Law Years,” moving at a mellow pace. Hays introduces it with a gentle solo passage before Turner dances through the melody, largely avoiding the bent pitches and sharp wails of the original; he wants every note to stand on its own. *Where Are You* finds a band with much in common, one that likely would yield strong results were it to become a regular endeavor. —Philip Freeman



Where Are You: Year Of The Snake; Pedra D’Aigua; Donna Lee; Elena; Please Remember Me; Nigeria; Where Are You?; Addaia; Law Years; Waltz For Wollesen. (61:56)

Personnel: Kevin Hays, piano; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Marc Miralta, drums.

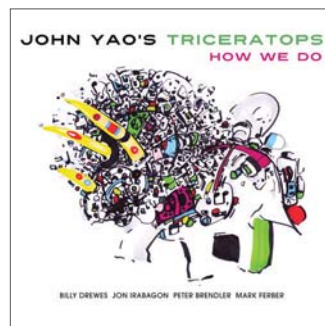
Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

John Yao’s Triceratops
How We Do

SEE TAO 003

★★★★½

First, “triceratops” is an incredible name for a band, though it can conjure images of something large, unwieldy and awkward. But New York-based trombonist John Yao steers his new quintet, Triceratops, away from such stereotypes on its debut, *How We Do*.



Yao’s compositions hold the kind of steady, swinging cadence of classic Blue Note bop, but with a definite post-bop edge in their spikey harmonies. There’s a certain prickliness that comes from Jon Irabagon and Billy Drewes’ saxophones; their soloing often moves into freer territory, setting up a rewarding contrast with Yao’s more tempered statements. The group plainly sets up this divergence during the first minutes of opening number “Three Parts As One,” where the horns break off into separate bristling lines after a unified attack on the melody.

Triceratops can drag, though, notably during the solos on “Triceratops Blues,” where the long improvisations fail to capture the ear without the harmonic tension present on other compositions. But when the members hit those moments of contrast, Triceratops is at full force.

—Jackson Sinnenberg

How We Do: Three Parts As One; Triceratops Blues; How We Do; The Golden Hour; Doin’ The Thing; Circular Path; Two Sides; Tea For T. (48:29)

Personnel: John Yao, trombone; Billy Drewes, soprano and alto saxophones; Jon Irabagon, tenor saxophone; Peter Brendler, bass; Mark Ferber, drums.

Ordering info: johnyao.com

Diving Deep into Chicago Soul

Music lovers all over the world know at least a bit about Chicago's urban blues—Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon and Buddy Guy, to mention just a few immortals. And the city's jazz history has been chronicled by any number of writers, its reputation given international prominence by groups like the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians.

But rarely has the history of the town's soul music received the deep-dive treatment, except in extensive profiles, biographies or memoirs of such notables as Curtis Mayfield, Jerry Butler and Gene Chandler. All three soul masters are prominent voices, their stories vital in **Aaron Cohen's *Move on Up: Chicago Soul Music and Black Cultural Power* (University of Chicago Press)**.

In fact, Cohen (a former DownBeat staffer and current contributor) doesn't finish his opening paragraph without referencing Mayfield and Butler. The two giants are pivotal in Chicago's soul music history, and Cohen is wise to lean on them—not that there's much choice. He's a nimble storyteller with a smooth way of delivering the goods, which isn't easy, considering the often convoluted trajectory of the genre.

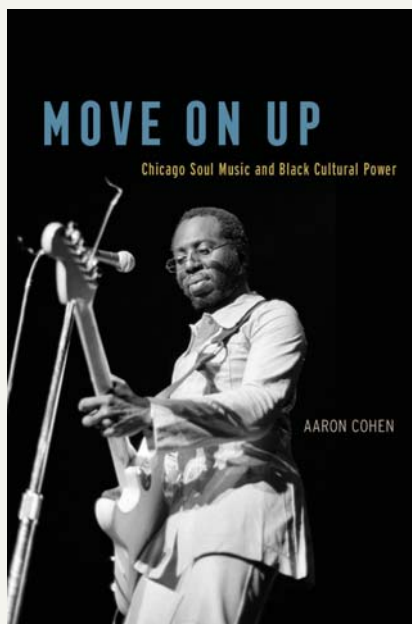
"Sometime in early 1958," Cohen begins, "five singers and their manager navigated a stretch of Chicago's South Michigan Avenue known as Record Row. Confident, persistent, and with nothing to lose they hoped that one of the equally undaunted companies lining the street would change their fortunes."

Mayfield and Butler were among the teenagers trekking from the North Side's Cabrini-Green housing project and were led by Eddie Thomas, a resourceful visionary who knew they were the real deal the moment he heard the singers harmonizing.

Well, they were on the right street, at the right time—and with a hit song, "For Your Precious Love." Soon, they'd be called The Impressions. Along with citing the song's climb up the charts, Cohen also notes its impact on Vee-Jay Records—a black-owned company—and how it became a significant force on Record Row. (An informative tangent to the company's rise here is DJ Al Benson's instrumental role in popularizing the group's work.)

As the book's subtitle indicates, soul music's journey in Chicago is inseparable from other socioeconomic and political developments. Cohen writes that the "music and the politics kind of walk hand and hand down Michigan Avenue."

The author uses his journalistic skills and training to track the soul trail, which inevitably takes him beyond Record Row to Chicago's South Side and other parts of the town: beyond Evanston and Patti Drew and into the



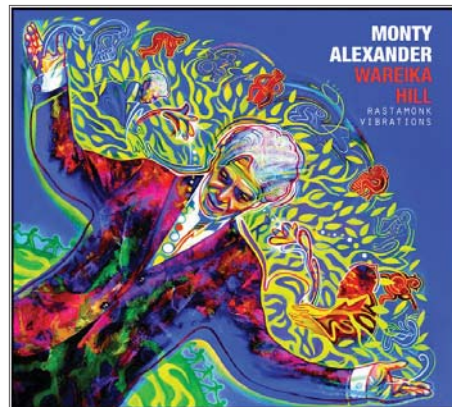
realm of the Chi-Lites, The Independents, Minnie Riperton and Baby Huey. It's intriguing to learn how and why Eugene Drake Dixon became Gene Chandler, and the circumstances in which he wrote the classic "Duke Of Earl." These factoids and several others are just a few of the gems Cohen drops along the way.

No discussion of Vee-Jay is complete, though, without mentioning Ewart Abner, who was an indispensable facilitator for label owners Vivian Carter and James Bracken. Later, Abner would take on a similar role at Motown Records, and, in many respects, he personifies the almost parallel histories of the two imprints. Chicago and Detroit always have had a symbiotic relationship when it comes to culture, and Cohen is more than aware of this, even if he tends to let it go without comment. When Butler ditches The Impressions, it's reminiscent of Diana Ross leaving the Supremes.

What's clearly evident throughout *Move on Up* is Cohen's intimacy with soul's history and Chicago's complex cultural matrix, though he admits he's by no means an insider. But he's close enough to the details to give them resonance, both in terms of business and in a social context. The perspective's very much like the one his father, historian Sheldon Cohen, used in his study of early colonial American education, insisting the system must be seen in a broader social and cultural environment. Once again, the fruit doesn't fall too far from the tree.

But one of Mayfield's tunes is a fitting conclusion to the discussion here: "I'm A-Tellin' You," this is a good book. **DB**

Ordering info: press.uchicago.edu



Monty Alexander *Wareika Hill (Rastamonk Vibrations)*

MACD RECORDS

★★★★★

Monty Alexander has been known to adapt Bob Marley tunes, and to use island rhythms in his otherwise swing-to-bop based music. At 75, he's still in sparkling form on *Wareika Hill (Rastamonk Vibrations)*, his left hand rhythmically springy, alternating bluebeat phrases with reggae and blues meters. But Alexander has shown interest in Thelonious Monk for years, often including sly references to the better known lines in his solos. Temperamentally, though, the two men seem light-years apart: Monk all inwardness and anguish, and Alexander all affability and sun. But there are deeper connections.

A young Alexander used to watch rastas climb Wareika Hill in Kingston, heading off to worship and moving to the sound of a drum. Later, Alexander makes the churchy connection complete with an astonishingly simple version of "Abide With Me," accompanied by a somber drumbeat. The theoretical underpinning to these *Rastamonk Vibrations* is that Monk worked and lived in a community replete with artists of Caribbean descent—not that *Wareika Hill* needs the scaffolding. The guests here aren't just for show and name-droppers, either. Joe Lovano's spot on "Green Chimneys" is crackerjack. But it's Wayne Escoffery who wins over ears with his gloriously full-bodied sound and fearless phrasing. And Leon Duncan's electric bass has just enough of Aston "Family Man" Barrett to keep Wailers fan happy. Great stuff from Alexander and maybe a career high: "Brilliant Corners" is, anyway.

—Brian Morton

Wareika Hill (Rastamonk Vibrations): Wareika; Misterioso; Nutty; Bye-Ya; San Francisco Holiday; Rhythm-A-Ning; Brilliant Corners; Well You Needn't; Bemsha Swing; Green Chimneys; Monk's Dream; Abide With Me; Well You Needn't (Live); Wareika Goodbye. (70:59)

Personnel: Monty Alexander, piano; Wayne Escoffery, Ron Blake (4, 5), Joe Lovano (10), tenor saxophone; Andrae Murchison, trombone; Earl Appleton, keyboards; Andy Bassford, John Scofield (4, 7), guitar; J.J. Shakur, bass; Leon Duncan, Courtney Pantone (10), electric bass; Jason Brown, Obed Calvaire, drums; Karl Wright, drums, percussion; Junior Wedderburn, Abashani Wedderburn, Bongo Billy, Nyabinghi drums.

Ordering info: montyalexander.com

Dream Shanti

Music In Our Dreams

EAR UP O427

★★★★

On *Music In Our Dreams*, the collective Dream Shanti takes listeners on an expansive journey rooted in tradition. The project—helmed by saxophonist/composer Jeff Coffin, tabla player Subrata Bhattacharya and sitar player Indrajit Banerjee—fluidly pushes forward, combining American and subcontinental modes.

“Joy” joins tabla and sitar with Western shadings, particularly Chris Walters’ piano and Coffin’s saxophone. “Live In 5” lets Banerjee shine on his instrument, while keeping a solid, percussive groove. “Miles Meets The Mahatma” conjures an image with its title, as well as with its sound, evoking Miles Davis and the East/West fusion of Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, perhaps in homage to *In A Silent Way*. And while “Take It To The Bridge” is an atypical funk workout, the album otherwise reads like a thematic piece of transworld musical exchange: *Music In Our Dreams* demonstrates that combining cultures and styles has the dream-like possibility of not only penetrating borders and boundaries, but also might lead to new futures in sound.

—Denise Sullivan

Music In Our Dreams: Joy; Music In Our Dreams; Live In 5; Miles Meets The Mahatma; Sandhya Deep; Take It To The Bridge; Dancing With The Moon. (50:18)

Personnel: Jeff Coffin, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, bass flute, alto flute, C flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Subrata Bhattacharya, tabla; Indrajit Banerjee, sitar, zitar; Carter Beauford, drums; Stefan Lessard, bass; Roy “Futureman” Wooten, Jordan Perlson, percussion; Chris Walters, keyboards; Ryoko Suzuki, harmonium.

Ordering info: earuprecords.com



Deb Bowman

Fast Heart

MAMA BAMA

★★★★

The Atlanta jazz scene endures primarily on a steady diet of restaurant and hotel gigs. Vocalist Deb Bowman, a New York transplant who has carved out a career down South, fits perfectly here. But for *Fast Heart*, Bowman’s second disc as a leader, the versatile vocalist journeyed back to New York to record with a stellar supporting cast. Kenyatta Beasley’s muted trumpet solos stand out, and Eric Lewis is an encouraging accompanist on both keyboards and piano.

The disc features four originals—Bowman’s first recording of her own compositions—and her connections to these personal tunes is visceral and immediate. She’s also able to address topics close to her heart without moving into overwrought or maudlin territory; the lyrics are made meaningful by her honest delivery. Bowman’s history with off-Broadway performance has influenced her approach to these small-band songs, and she takes on a chameleon-like delivery, changing her vocal approach and grain as the songs ebb and flow. She belts it out on slow, introspective ballads; her vocals skips along on uptempo tunes. Gospel is in Bowman’s musical DNA, too, and “Shelter Me From The Storm” is a stunning closer. Replete with a choir and wailing Hammond B-3, Bowman is nearly perfect at this speed. —Jon Ross

Fast Heart: Willow In The Wind; Pannonica; Butterfly; Where Can We Go; La Vie En Rose; Moody’s Mood For Love; Georgia On My Mind; Crazy He Calls Me; Fast Heart; Shelter Me From The Storm. (56:33)

Personnel: Deb Bowman, vocals; Eric Lewis, piano; Rhodes; Steven Wolf, percussion; Greg Lewis, Hammond B-3; Matthew Garrison, bass; Kenyatta Beasley, trumpet; Marla Feeney violin, viola.

Ordering info: debbowman.com



EABS

Slavic Spirits

ASTIGMATIC 009

★★★★★

As promised in the liner notes, EABS avoids “imitating the Western sound” on *Slavic Spirits*. The thing is, though, they don’t sound especially Slavic, either. No, the Poland-based ensemble steers toward something more like ambient jazz, with touches of old-school fusion thrown in for good measure. It’s a mess, and it’s scintillating.

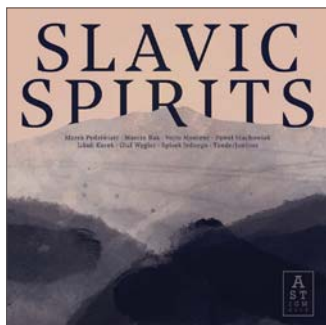
The use of ambient concepts is all but an in-joke, each track beginning with bird and animal calls. On “Leszy,” the birds quickly are subsumed by tense drama from pianist Marek Pedziwiatr, bassist Paweł Stachowiak and drummer Marcin Rak, who themselves are quickly overwhelmed by horns that play a melody both lazy and taut. The following “Południca” gets EABS to its most stereotypically Slavic, with what sounds like an accordion (it’s actually a medieval harmonium, courtesy of Pedziwiatr) before fiery trumpeter Jakub Kurek and hazy guitarist Wojto Monteur assume domination. The miasmal hum of “Przywitanie Słońca (Rytuś)” maintains an inky feeling, with “Przywitanie Słońca” adding watercolor layers of piano ostinato and joyful trumpet, trombone and tenor and soprano saxophone release over the top. It dispatches tension that one didn’t even know was building; it’s as if the music itself audibly unclenches.

—Michael J. West

Slavic Spirits: Ciemnos; Leszy; Południca; Szeza (Mgla); Szeza; Przywitanie Słońca (Rytuś); Przywitanie Słońca. (43:45)

Personnel: Marek Pedziwiatr, piano, keyboards; Wojto Monteur, guitar; Paweł Stachowiak, bass; Olaf Wegier, tenor saxophone; Jakub Kurek, trumpet; Tenderlonious, flute, soprano saxophone; Spisek Jednego, percussion, sound effects; Marcin Rak, drums.

Ordering info: astigmaticrecords.com



Vera/Menares/Lecaros

Nómada

ACONCAGUA

★★½

Thelonious Monk is an important touchstone for guitarist Nicolás Vera, bassist Pablo Menares and drummer Félix Lecaros. The trio has both recorded Monks’ works and performed them live, occasionally linking up with saxophonist Melissa Aldana to do so.

The trio’s cover of the 1954 classic “Work,” included on the ensemble’s *Nómada*, then should come as no surprise. While beautifully recorded and played—Vera’s guitar line delicately carrying the melody—this latest incarnation of “Work” is so controlled that it might strike some listeners as a bit anemic. Even when Menares’ bass solo starts, it’s so quiet, creeping in unobtrusively, that it offers no obvious shift in dynamics. It’s refined, academic, and most of *Nómada* runs in that vein.

That’s why pieces allowing for a sharper flavor—the guitar-centric “Origen” and the spooling Latin mood of “Cinematía”—impress most. “Arlequín/La Sombra Misteriosa” with its boppy precision and unexpected neo-Romantic outro, meanwhile, recalls the best alt-commercial jazz currently dominating sundry local scenes.

—Madeleine Byrne

Nómada: Nómada; Origen; El Faro; Flatland; Work; Sueño Intraducible; Cinematía; La Casa Vieja; Arlequín/La Sombra Misteriosa. (46:32)

Personnel: Nicolás Vera, guitar; Pablo Menares, bass; Félix Lecaros, drums.

Ordering info: nicolasvera.bandcamp.com



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DRUM SCHOOL

DRUM SETS OF THE STARS

Matt Wilson

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MASTER CLASS

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TRANSCRIPTION

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TOOLSHEP

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By Bill Milkowski

Photo by John Abbott

DRUM SCHOOL

ACUTE SOUND AWARENESS

A self-described “gear nerd,” drummer-composer-bandleader Matt Wilson can talk for hours about the tools of his trade.

His acute awareness of the sounds produced by endless combinations of cymbals and drums is as comprehensive as his exuberance for the subject is boundless. A historian at heart, he can expound on the comparative choices of cymbals and snares, sticks and brushes and assorted toms made by all of his drum heroes, from Buddy Rich and Max Roach to Mel Lewis, Louie Bellson, Billy Higgins, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones and Jo Jones.

Attention to detail of sound has been a hallmark of Wilson's approach since he began studying with Ed Soph in the summer of 1984, just shy of his 20th birthday. But his visual reference for the drum kit goes back much further than that. “For me, it was probably seeing Buddy Rich on *The Lucy Show* in the early '70s [the episode in question, ‘Lucy and the Drum Contest,’ originally aired on Oct. 5, 1970]. I think I was in second grade. The episode was basically that Desi Arnaz Jr. was going to be in this drum contest and somehow Lucy had this idea to go see Buddy Rich to ask him if he'd give lessons to Desi Jr. And after meeting with him, she accidentally grabs his cymbal bag, which looks like her purse. They get home and find Buddy Rich's cymbals, so

he has to come over the house to get his cymbals back. So, there's Desi Jr.'s set there at home and Buddy sits down and plays. That was my first imagery of seeing the drum set, other than maybe on *The Lawrence Welk Show*.”

Shortly after that TV encounter with Rich, Wilson began emulating drumming movements on pillows by using two cardboard cylinders that come on pants hangers from the dry cleaners. He later got his first pair of Ludwig 9A sticks before graduating to a pair of Roy Haynes model Ludwig drum sticks. “It's funny, because Roy lives right near me now,” laughed Wilson. “That's kind of like using a Mickey Mantle glove in Little League and ending up being his friend and neighbor.”

By the time he started third grade, Wilson's family moved from his birthplace in Knoxville, Illinois, out to the country. It was around this time that he got his first snare drum, which he bought used from a childhood friend. “It's still here,” he proudly said of that snare, now a just a part of his burgeoning collection of drums and cymbals that occupies his basement music room and spills out to his adjoining garage. “Orange sparkle, some Japanese model, maybe a Kent.”





JOHN ABBOTT

Wilson with his custom-designed Craviotto snare drum

GETTING SNARED

When Matt Wilson works with drum students, he stresses the importance of knowing their sound.

"I ask them, 'What is your sound?' Tell me five snare drum sounds that you like," he said.

Wilson then proceeded to list and describe several of the snare drum sounds he favors:

"I love Roy Haynes' snare drum sound on *Out Of The Afternoon* [Impulse, 1962]. I love Charlie Watts' snare drum sound on [the Rolling Stones'] 'Beast Of Burden.' I love Dennis Davis' snare drum sound on David Bowie's 'Fame.' I love Sonny Payne's snare drum sound on *Sinatra-Basie: An Historic Musical First* [Reprise, 1962]. I love Art Blakey's cross-sticking on Hank Mobley's *Soul Station* [Blue Note, 1960], Bob Moses' snare drum sound on Pat Metheny's *Bright Size Life* [ECM, 1976] ... there's nothing like it. Roy Haynes' flat ride sound that he got with Chick Corea on *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* [Solid State, 1968] was a big influence on me. I love Max Roach's snare drum sound on *Drums Unlimited* [Atlantic, 1966]. And I love Jo Jones' sound on anything. To me, he's it as far as sound, artistry, attitude, showmanship. He's the greatest of all time. Max Roach said, 'For every four beats a drummer plays, three of them are because of Jo Jones.' And he's right."

"Then there's Bernard Purdie's snare sound, Steve Gadd's snare drum sound on certain Steely Dan songs, Rick Marotta's sound, Jim Keltner's sound, Ringo's sound—especially from that certain era where he has the muffled tom stuff. We could go on all day. So many players are identifiable like that because their personality is coming through the instrument."—*Bill Milkowski*

With Matt on snare and older brother Mark on saxophone, the Wilson boys began playing duets at home on Saturday nights and eventually honed an act at 4H and PTA meetings. Matt also began hanging out at a drum shop in Galesburg, Illinois, where he started learning about equipment. "I had the Ludwig, Slingerland and Rogers catalogs, and I also had all the books on the Zildjian cymbals setups of various people. Max Roach signed one of those books for me. So did Buddy Rich."

By 7th grade, Wilson got his first full-fledged drum set, a used green sparkle Slingerland set his father bought him for \$200. "It was a double-bass-drum set and had two 20-inch cymbals. I never used the two; I could barely play the one," he recalled. "It had 12-, 13- and 16-inch toms. I used that for a long time before I got a CB 700 set, which my dad put different tom mounts on."

Missing from Wilson's collection is his first Zildjian cymbal, a used 18-inch he bought from a kid in high school. "Though I do still have the first *new* Zildjian that I ever bought, which is a 16-inch," he said.

The acclaimed drummer has been playing Zildjian cymbals for 26 years. His current setup includes 13-inch K Constantinople hi-hats (he prefers two tops that are slightly mismatched in weight, with the heavier one—about 200 grams more—on the bottom), a 20-inch K Constantinople Hi-Bell Low Ride (on his left), a 20-inch K Dry Complex 2 prototype ride with three rivets (on his right) and a 22-inch A Swish Knocker with six rivets (on his far right).

Wilson strictly has played Craviotto drums since 2007. His current kit includes an 8- by 12-inch tom, 14- by 14-inch floor tom, 14- by 18-inch bass drum and a 6.5- by 14-inch snare with eight lugs and custom wood-burned design by company founder Johnny Craviotto. He prefers Remo heads (clear Emperors on the bass drum, Ambassadors on snare and toms) and also uses Zildjian John Riley model sticks, preferring the in-between weight and its hickory makeup as opposed to maple.

"I also like the teardrop-shaped bead, because when it hits the cymbal surface it opens that point which starts the sound up, as opposed to a rounder bead," he said. "The stick hitting that surface starts the sound, and then the spread that coming off that is like the rock hitting the pond and the water rippling out from there. So, you have to know that spread. And there's a third element, which is space. I try to hear the space after the spread dies down and before the point starts again. I talk to my students about the importance of 'Point-Spread-Space.' Point starts the sound, spread is the resulting sound, like the rock hitting the lake, and then you've got the space in-between before you start the point again."

He uses Regal Tip wire brushes and Regal

Tip Fat Cat nylon brushes. "I'm one of the few people who like both wire and plastic brushes," he said. "That came from seeing Billy Higgins, Paul Motian, Al Foster and Joey Baron, who all play plastic. Motian's plastic brush with his trio is an iconic sound to my ear. It's part of my sound. But I've been experimenting lately with Jeff Hamilton Regal Tip thick-gauge wire brushes, just to try different things. I also like Zildjian brushes."

Wilson augments his kit with assorted instruments, including a Brazilian tamborim, pan flute, wooden flutes and harmonica. "I'm also using cowbell again," he said. "I used to use two, a high and a low, which is something I got from seeing Al Foster live. And I occasionally will play a wood block, too, which is going all the way back to Baby Dodds. I'll go through periods where I use that stuff again, and then I don't."

With uncanny acuteness, Wilson is able to pinpoint precise sounds coming from cymbals and drums. "I think I was really conscious of sound right from the get-go," he said while demonstrating the different characteristics of a variety of Zildjian K cymbals spread out on his living room floor. "I always really cared about the sound. My attitude was never, 'Oh yeah, I'll just play it.' For instance, I could never figure out why my fellow students weren't tuning their drums. It's like they didn't care, you know? But I would get new heads and on Thursday night I'd start tuning them for a weekend gig, because I cared. So, I try to impress upon my students today that they have to develop a relationship with their sound. Everybody has a sonic story to tell."

Wilson's ear-training began in his bedroom, listening to and trying to emulate what he heard on *Rich Vs. Roach* and various other jazz records he grew up with. But seeing drummers perform live was a real revelation to him. "When I heard Mr. Bellson as a kid, that sound of that snare drum made such a big impression on me," he recalled. "And I remember seeing Rusty Jones, a left-handed drummer who played with George Shearing and Marian McPartland. He came in for a workshop, and it was the first time I had ever seen anyone playing an 18-inch bass drum. It was also the first time that I saw a flat ride cymbal, and he also used a cowbell in a really cool way. Funnily enough, I was playing in Chicago with Denny Zeitlin about 10 to 12 years ago, and Rusty Jones came to the gig. After the set, he came up to the side of the stage and introduced himself, and I say, 'Sir, I definitely know who you are. You see that flat ride? The reason I have a flat ride is because of you! See that cowbell I have mounted there? That's because of you!' He was really the one who dressed up beats for me—playing a bossa nova beat with a brush in one hand or playing the cowbell with a marimba

mallet. He was a real influence, sonically.”

The summer of 1984, between semesters at Wichita State University (where he graduated as a percussion major in 1986), was a significant turning point for Wilson. He attended a life-altering seminar in Boston with drummer Bob Moses, studied with Ed Soph on a NEA jazz apprenticeship grant at his home in New Haven, Connecticut, and had an eye-opening experience seeing Philly Joe Jones and Elvin Jones on the same night in New York City. That same enriching summer he also saw Billy Higgins perform for the first time at The Willow jazz club in Boston. “He was playing with James Williams and John Lockwood, and I was sitting 10 feet away, checking him out. He had a Paiste 602 medium ride with six rivets in it. The next day, I went out and got a cymbal with rivets in it. I didn’t really associate that sound he got with rivets until I saw him and thought, ‘Oh, so that’s how he does it!’ And he had that great sounding set with this 8-inch snare drum. So I got one of those, too, after that gig.”

As far as a ride cymbal sound, he was more enamored by what he heard from Philly Joe Jones on a string of classic Miles Davis albums—*Cookin’, Relaxin’, Workin’* and *Steamin’*. He started playing Zildjian A cymbals before his teacher, the legendary Dr. J.C. Combs, gifted him with a Zildjian K upon his retirement, thus

beginning Wilson’s career-long infatuation with that lower-pitched, warmer-sounding cymbal. As Wilson explained, “Tony Williams played K’s, so did Elvin Jones, Art Blakey and a lot of drummers from that classic era. So, you get drawn to it by legacy. And this cymbal is part of my own story now.”

He added, “I love Jeff Hamilton’s cymbal sound (Sabian Crescent Hammertone cymbals). I love Jack DeJohnette’s Sound Creation cymbals from his ECM years, particularly what he played on *Album Album*. I love Paul Motian’s Paiste cymbal sound with his trio with Joe Lovano and Bill Frisell. But the Zildjian sound is it for me.”

As far as his overall drum sound, Wilson said he’s adapted somewhat as he’s gotten older. “I’ve started lowering things a little bit more, pitch-wise. I used to have stuff kind of cranked up. And I still like that sound for certain things, but overall I like them to be a little looser.”

Wilson has taken note over the years of certain drummers’ seemingly magical ability to pull their signature sound out of any drums they played. “I saw Ed Blackwell once with Dewey Redman and Mark Helias in January of 1988 playing maybe one of the worst provided drum sets of all time. But he just made them sound great. When I was a kid, Louie Bellson sat in on another kid’s drums at one of those

music camps and they were muffled up and everything, but he really got them to speak. It was about the stroke ... the ways that you can play to get the sound. So, I realized then that sound production was part of it, too.”

Wilson lately has been enjoying the challenge of playing provided drums on the gig, especially overseas. “I just did a trio gig in Italy with [pianist] Rita Marcotulli and [bassist] Martin Wind where I just brought three drum sticks and a pair of brushes, and I put them in a plastic laundry bag from the hotel room, brought that and played the concert. The cymbals that the promoter provided were really great—a Custom Zildjian ride with six rivets. Maybe because it’s a new band and we don’t really have a group sound established yet that I’m willing to just play what’s there. But I’m doing more of that lately.”

In recent gigs with pianists Denny Zeitlin, Ethan Iverson, Frank Kimbrough and Art Lande, Wilson has experimented with using a flat ride cymbal and an old Zildjian Constantinople 20-inch cymbal that he used to play with the Charlie Haden Liberation Orchestra. “I’m always searching for sounds, but I’m pretty settled,” he said. “Really, I’m more interested in the songs than the cymbals at this point. I have a quote: ‘I don’t think you should love your instrument more than the music.’”

DB

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Peter Erskine

DRUM SCHOOL

MAKING THE

By Gary Fukushima

DRUM SET 'SING'

Peter Erskine described his preferred remedy for the strained wrist he suffered during some recent tours of Europe, various dates with the likes of Dave Liebman and Kenny Werner.

“A cortisone shot, some physical therapy, and we hope for the best,” he said. He was hurt not from playing, but from hauling his cymbal bag from city to city.

“I was hand-carrying my cymbals because of the tight connections,” he explained. The injury was serious enough to consider surgery, but Erskine ruled that out. Thankfully, even one day after his doctor’s diagnosis, he was able to hold a drum stick and gingerly demonstrate the sounds of his drums and cymbals. By all appearances, he wouldn’t be out of commission for too long.

The incident underscores an inconvenient truth about playing the drums: They can be big, unwieldy and heavy. Yet, for many drummers, part of the fun of the instrument is finding gear that makes their job simultaneously less strenuous and better sounding.

“I’ll always be a bit of a gearhead,” Erskine said. “I love clever ideas in design, plus excellence in manufacturing execution. I don’t have much time or use these days for anything that’s too complicated, inelegant or bulky.”

It’s not a stretch to say Erskine has spent more time than most thinking about the finer sonic subtleties of his instruments—and how much they should weigh. “Put your finger under there and lift up,” he said, pointing to the locking screw on the telescoping mechanism of a cymbal stand, set up in the middle of a tidy rehearsal and recording studio in Erskine’s Santa Monica, California, home. The stand complies willingly with the motion, rising off the ground as if tied to a hot-air balloon. The hardware is designed by Tama, based on the old Ludwig flush-base models, on the initiation and approval of Erskine. It’s very light, yet still incredibly stable. But does it make the cymbal sound better?

“I think so,” Erskine remarked thoughtfully, going on to describe how the cymbal rides or “floats” on the stand. “There’s play in the cymbal, so you’re actually playing the cymbal. It’s not just a static thing that’s held in position. It’s moving, and anything that can replicate the way and manner the drummers were playing the drums, the drummers whose playing we aspire to ... that helps.”

He loves that stand so much, he brings one with him in

his suitcase on the road. “I love being able to get my ride cymbal right next to the bass drum, and there’s not too much mass—the stand’s not bulky or heavy.” He lamented the trend toward heavy-duty hardware. “It was driving me nuts. Just to lean over and reposition one stand two inches, you risk giving yourself a hernia.”

The fact that Tama agreed to design these stands for Erskine was a major factor in his ultimate endorsement of them. “Their drums remind me of the best that Rogers and Slingerland drums brought to the market in the ’60s,” he said. (Erskine has both of those vintage kits in his studio in addition to the Tama kit.)

Erskine’s go-to kit these days is the Tama Star. “For bebop, I use a 14- by 18-inch bass drum with 8- by 12-inch and 14- by 14-inch toms. For big band and general jazz playing, I’ll normally choose a 14- by 20-inch bass drum with the same tom configuration, plus a 16- by 16-inch floor tom, for two floors. Studio stuff, I’ll go with a 14- by 22-inch kick most of the time,” he said, noting his calls for general film work or “anything that hints of pop or funk.” He stays away from bass drums deeper than 14 inches.

For heads, he goes with a Remo Fiberskyn Diplomat Batter head on top, and either a matching head or Clear Ambassador head on the bottom/resonant side.

“I also play the signature Mezzo snare drum that Tama designed and built for me,” Erskine added. “It’s a 6- by 10-inch ash wood stave-constructed snare drum. I’ll admit, the price tag on that thing is more than I had expected it to be, but it is one excellent drum.”

He has, of course, collected many cymbals throughout his career, but uses Zildjian cymbals. “Zildjian technically owns every cymbal they have sent to me over the years,” Erskine said. “I’ve kept a few oldies/goodies: one from the Steps Ahead days [a 20-inch Zildjian K ride], a pair of 14-inch New Beat hi-hats from the Weather Report days. To be honest, the new [Zildjian] Avedis and Kerope cymbals play and feel just like the best cymbals did from the old days. One of the reasons I depend so much on Zildjian is that the cymbals not only sound great while playing them, but they project and sound great to the audience. Most of



the 'boutique' cymbals I see drummers playing might sound good from where the drummer is sitting, but a lot of these cymbals do not project well."

Erskine recently sold many of his older cymbals to create a scholarship fund in the memory of one of his students, Victor McElhaney, who lost his life in a shooting close to the USC campus earlier this year. "I had to channel my energies into something positive, because the anger and sorrow would have otherwise eaten into my soul," he lamented. "It was a solemn joy to see the incredible instruments go out into the world to be played and appreciated by other drummers."

Erskine also has a stick endorsement with Vic Firth. "I prefer a stick with a tip that is not too big," he said. "I like to hear more of the cymbal than the wood. I also like a stick with a good 'throw' to it."

He has three signature sticks with company, the "Ride Stick" and the "Big Band Stick" being his current favorites for almost every situation. He also had the company design a wooden-shaft bass drum beater, the VKB5.

"I got the inspiration for this while touring the Vic Firth factory and seeing concert bass drum mallets being born, and I thought, 'Why do we connect our bass drum mallet to the pedal by means of a metal rod?'" he said. "We'd never choose [that] for playing a concert bass drum. So, I hear and see the jazz bass drum as a concert instrument, not just something that goes 'boom' or 'thud' or 'boom-thud.'"

Erskine's main setup can be heard on the latest release from his Fuzzy Music label. The album, *3 Nights In L.A.*, documents a multi-

night run at L.A.'s Sam First jazz room. The live recording features Erskine's long-standing association with bassist Derek Oles and pianist Alan Pasqua, both of whom are colleagues of his at University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. Joining the band was guest tenor saxophonist George Garzone.

The drums were recorded using a pair of Sony C-100 overhead mics, with a Shure SM7B mic on the bass drum. The clarity of the drums is striking, in perfect balance with the other instruments, not such an easy feat when playing in a small room. "I didn't want to mic the snare or toms," Erskine said. "The engineer, Aaron Walk, was saying, 'Well, it might be good for mixing.' I said, 'Not interested. Just want overheads. What I hear is what the mics will hear, and that's how I'm going to play.'"

Erskine is one to view the larger context of recording drums, having done numerous sessions with the entire band all in one room. He's not a fan of close-mics on the toms or the cymbals, noting that they never were meant to be heard from that distance.

"The instrument needs to sing, to project," he said. "That's just basic physics. The miking of a drum very close to the head, and getting all that ring, and you start muffling it... it's cool, it has a sound. But when you listen to most of the drums sounds from the '70s, the drums don't sing. Tone is the most important thing, and I like my instruments to sing."

All that said, even for his own recording sessions Erskine will sometimes close-mic for balance. "For certain recordings I will put them on, and that's the Shure SM98s. I love the SM7 for bass drum. The Shure Beta 52 is also

great, if it's a bass drum with an open port or hole, especially for low-end funk."

For overhead mics, Erskine has a pair of Sony C-100s and a vintage pair of Sony C-35 FET condensers. "For bass drum and overheads, I like a bit of coloring, and the Sonys have this silky kind of coloring sound," he said. "I really like it, and the Beta 52 has a little bit of a bump, so I like it [for the bass drum]."

Beyond the standard drum set, Erskine's go-to device when doing percussion work is a Meinl "Slap-Top" cajon. He also has Luis Conte signature shakers, also by Meinl, in his arsenal. For woodblock, tambourine, triangle and other orchestral percussion, he plays instruments by Grover Percussion.

Erskine held up a black device with two mics sticking out of one end, right-angled into an X/Y configuration. "This is pretty much an indispensable piece of gear, the Zoom H4n [audio recorder]," he said, noting that he also relies heavily upon the Zoom Q2n, a video recorder, for rehearsals and teaching. "If you're recording, and nothing you do sounds good, then it's pretty discouraging. So, the Zoom is the perfect balance of [being] accurate, yet somehow, it sounds good." He likens it to the quality and ease-of-use of an iPhone camera.

Erskine's gear universe extends outward even further to include things like the Samson Expedition family of Bluetooth-equipped speakers ("terrific for play-alongs, auditions and juries," he said), what he calls "a great musical instrument cart" by GruvGear, HARDCASE drum boxes, Protection Racket bags, Roland V-Drums (used in the drum lab at the Thornton School of Music at USC) and the many digital sample libraries he has made for Oberheim, ddrum, Yamaha, Sampleheads and the "Virtually Erskine" library.

Regarding digital/electronic gear, Erskine confessed, "I have to be honest and say that I'm not really drawn to that stuff so much anymore. Samples can be useful when putting music together within the confines of a computer environment, but I'm so bored by how I'm hearing this stuff being used."

In his studio, Erskine runs his mics into a Rupert 5211 Neve-design two-channel microphone preamp plus 12 channels of API 3124 mic preamps by way of two Apollo interfaces from Universal Audio, going out from the computer to a "very accurate" pair of JBL 305P MkII powered studio monitors, explicitly without a subwoofer.

"I think the subwoofer is one of the worst developments to come along in sound reinforcement, because it's just too tempting to overuse," he said with disdain. "It's like hot sauce that you pour all over your food, and you think it's great because it burns your ass. But you really can't taste the food, you're just getting off on the fact that it burns your ass." **DB**

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DRUM SCHOOL

INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE

By Phillip Lutz | Photo by Adam McCollough

On a sultry afternoon in August, Kendrick Scott was displaying the looseness of limb and sharpness of thought that have made him one of the most sought-after drummers—and thinkers—on the scene.

The occasion, an interview and photo shoot focusing on his drum set, gave Scott license to free-associate—off and on the drums—to a largely empty Jazz Gallery, the funky fifth-floor venue in Midtown Manhattan. And that is what he did, offering comments that, like his playing, were both wide ranging and grounded in the essentials—in the first instance, his sticks.

“My main concept—of everything in my life, actually—I have on my drum sticks,” he said, pointing to the inscription, drawn from the Prayer of St. Francis, that adorns each of his 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch Vater Manhattan 7A drum sticks (measuring .550 inches in diameter). It read: “Instrument Of Peace.”

“Everything that I want to get to or play on the drums—everything I want to be able to activate in my body, all the way from my toes through my hands—I’m trying to transfer through this weird little thing we call a drum stick, a piece of wood, and out into the audience,” he said. “And if you think about it, that’s a long way to travel.”

Travel is second nature for Scott. In his 39 years, he has migrated from his native Houston (where his musical development began in church and continued at a performing arts high school) to Boston (where he earned a scholarship to the Berklee College of Music) and, finally, to New York (where he has been a first-call drummer since he arrived in 2003).

Through it all, he has kept the faith musically—not least in his choice of sticks. Since he was 8 years old, he has used the Vater Manhattan 7As, the only change being the replacement of wood tips with more resilient nylon ones.

“These sticks feel weighted in a way where jazz players can still have some bulk to them,” he said, “whereas some lighter jazz sticks, when you want to dig in, they just don’t feel right. These are just on the edge of feeling where you can get a lot of sound without being overbearing or going toward the 5A or 2B or really big sticks. So, for me, these are like the happy medium where my touch can be light or heavy as needed.”

By his own admission, Scott is “obsessive compulsive” about making sure each pair of 7As is created equal. Before committing to a pair of sticks, he makes sure they are uniform.

“A lot of companies say their sticks are matched, and I do believe they’re matched by pitch,” he said, “but there’s also being matched by density.” With a couple of taps on a cymbal, he demonstrated the difference in tone quality between similarly labeled sticks from different pairs.

If Scott is obsessed by pitch and density, he is at the very least attentive to texture, as evidenced by a pair of Johnny Rabb RhythmSaws he also carried. The sticks have ribbed teeth built into their middle. Scraping them together, he demonstrated how he adds just the right bit of grit to the sonic mix when the urge strikes.

When he is in a “meditative” mood, he said, he turns to Vater Poly Flex brushes: “These allow me to play lighter passages that I would play with [other] brushes but with more weight. The plastic has more weight, but it still has the lightness and spread of brushes instead of a hot-rod [stick] or something that would be, to me, overkill.” Should he feel the need to strike something, he is able to flip the brush and execute a rim shot with its nonretractable wood handle. He also uses retractable wire brushes from Vater.

Scott takes cues from his two favorite brushwork practitioners: the late Jo Jones and Kenny Washington. Jones, he said, “had a brush sound that is wide open; he wasn’t pushing down on it as much.” Washington, by contrast, “has the perfect closed brush sound, where you push into the head and it’s totally sweeping and beautiful.”

As for mallets, he likes the Vater T7 Generals—particularly their heads’ fluffiness, which allows access to many pitches. “When I go to mallets, I want to think of the drum as a timpani or as a taiko drum,” he said.

Though he possesses neither a timpani nor a taiko drum—



A view of Scott's setup from behind the kit

the former is a future possibility, he said, citing as precedent Duke Ellington drummer Sonny Greer's ownership of one and his own desire to build the left side of his set (more on that later)—the drums he does own are mostly Yamaha Phoenix models. His setup at the Jazz Gallery included toms of 12 by 8 inches and, on the floor, 14 by 14 inches; an 18- by 14-inch bass drum; and a 14- by 5-inch custom hybrid maple snare, a favored alternate.

"They're a hybrid of a lot of different woods," he said. "They have a great clarity, nice low tones and a range that I like in my tuning. I usually tune my drums to the same pitches. Those really resonate with me. They make me feel at home on my own drum set."

Scott's arsenal includes up to a dozen snares. But the snare he is most likely to haul to sessions is a crisp, yet resonant, 14- by 6.5-inch, titanium-shell custom Lang Gladstone/Dunnett.

Perhaps the most dramatic change in Scott's kit has been the addition of a 14- by 10-inch custom Craviotto mahogany floor snare. Tuned low—it is, he said, meant to function as something of a cross between a snare and bass drum—the instrument represents what he hopes is the opening stage of a personal project to build up the left side of his set.

"I've started thinking about the whole left side of the drum set in a different way," he said. "Most drummers play to the right of themselves. But for me, the left side is underutilized, especially the left foot. I can use it as a voice, not just a timekeeper."

He began experimenting privately with the floor snare a long time ago, and, with some trepidation, has introduced it publicly in the past three years.

"I was wondering what everybody was going to say: 'This looks weird—a snare drum with your foot,'" Scott said. But he thought about other innovations that once seemed

strange—Jo Jones' elevation of the hi-hat, Kenny Clarke's elevation of the ride cymbal—and relaxed a bit.

"The thing is," Scott said, "I love Billy Cobham as much as I love Jimmy Cobb. If I want to have 30 drums, that's fine, if I know how to use them in a musical way. I've always seen the drums as an orchestra, but I'm trying to open myself up to seeing them as an orchestra that expands to the left.

"For me, it serves a musical purpose, to break the divide between the drummer that plays more backbeat style and the jazz drummer: 'What if Buddy Miles but also Art Blakey were playing at the same time?' So, I'll play the hi-hat with [the front of] my foot and then I'll play the 2 and 4 with the heel of my foot. My hands are totally free to improvise, and my bass drum can play anything it wants."

Liberated though his bass drum might be, it is the only drum that has not benefited from one of Scott's sonic "secrets"—the attachment of faux leather and suede cutouts to the Remo Coated Ambassador X heads he favors. Attaching the cutouts—he was clued in to them while working on Terence Blanchard's soundtrack for the 2008 film *The Miracle of St. Anna*—immediately yielded the pitch and dryness of taiko drums. That augurs well for their application to the bass drum, for which he is developing a proper mount.

Scott's cymbals long ago established their place in his setup. Case in point: the 21-inch Spizzichino ride situated to his left.

"This cymbal has been on my side forever," he said, offering as proof the signatures of mentors and colleagues on the cymbal's underside—among them Quincy Jones and a multigenerational list of drummers from Roy Haynes to Karriem Riggins.

But when he thinks of the cymbal, a drummer whose name is not on it—Tony Williams—comes to mind.

"It's the brash, *Nefertiti*-type cymbal," he

said. "With this cymbal, if you play the chord E7#9 and you crash the cymbal, it's like, 'Oh, I get it.' Or you play a major-minor chord and you hit the shank of the cymbal, it's 'OK, I see what this cymbal sound is.'

"Most of my favorite drummers have a specific clarity—Papa Jo Jones, Shadow Wilson. But for me, the dryness of Tony's cymbal—the ones that were picked by Max Roach and given to him—had a certain clarity where he could carry a whole band. Tony didn't play many riveted cymbals. That's why this cymbal is unriveted. When I want the music to have air and I want it to float, I'll go to this side. When I want it to be more grounded and sizzling, when I think about Art Blakey and somebody like that, then I'm going to go to my riveted ride and dig in."

That riveted side is occupied by the 22-inch Zildjian bounce ride on his right. "I think of it as my Billy Drummond left-side ride. He was very influential to me when I was developing what my cymbal sound would be. His left-side ride has such a darkness and a dryness to it, but it has a very shimmering, riveted sound."

Scott's hi-hats—15- and 17-inch Zildjian K Customs on the left and right sides, respectively—have rivets, too, and are thus imbued with the same properties as the larger ride.

"As you can see, I'm very obsessive about how I want my drums to be and their layering. And I'm taking those things and trying to see what kind of emotions I can create to make you see something and make you feel what I remember when I first heard music: that the hairs on my body raised up when somebody was singing. I want to make that happen to somebody by just playing drums. That's like my life's goal, to create that experience for others as they listen."

One way to deepen the listener experience is to think cinematically, a concept Scott picked up from his film work with Blanchard. To that end, he has begun to employ electronics like Sunhouse's Sensory Percussion, software that translates drumming into electronic sound. While Scott noted that he wasn't rushing into the world of electronics, he was upbeat about its prospects for enhancing his storytelling. "I can put 10 different samples on each of my drums, create all types of effects and sonic things," he said.

When asked what material best represents his drumming, Scott points to "Pendulum," the first tune on his 2013 album *Conviction* (Concord Jazz). Propelled by the subtle swirl of Scott's sticks, the track sways between rock and swing-inflected rhythms, even as it sustains a steady through-line prefigured by the tune's opening—his spoken-word rendition of the prayer alluded to on the sticks:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. ..."

DB



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Eddie Codrington of Western Michigan University was a co-winner in the Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist category (Graduate College Division) in the 2019 DownBeat Student Music Awards.



JAVIER ROMERO

Henry Cole

Honest Expression

I love to practice. I love practicing so much that it goes beyond the usual reasons we musicians spend thousands of hours on our instruments—to get better, to stay in shape, to learn new music, to play fast, etc. For me, practice is my meditation, my door to a perfect world.

When I practice, I breathe. I feel, stretch and decompress. I'm free, I'm specific and I'm transported to different cultures in different periods of history. I'm a jazzer, a bombero, a rumbero, a rapper and a rocker. I'm Glenn Gould, Bob Marley, Cannonball Adderley, Fela Kuti and Bad Bunny.

When I practice, I think of people I should call to say "hello." It forces me to eat better, to stay fit and to keep good posture. I become a better person, and my days "groove" much better when I spend a few hours on my instrument, in meditation.

The best and craziest part of all this practice is that every day, I feel driven to do more. There is so much to accomplish, to discover. There are layers to peel, layers to add, cultures and feels to explore, music to learn for my sideman gigs and my own work as a bandleader. It's a way of life, and because I'm so amazed at the things I find, I can do it all the time. My curiosity is endless.

This need to practice is the backbone of my career as a musician. It informs all the things I do, including my compositions, which most of the time are the result of some of my meditative "travels" during practice.

When I teach, my drum lessons are usually the same exercises I'm currently working on. Many times, a new exercise comes to mind during a workshop, and I'll put myself on the spot to try to play it without the students knowing it's my first time trying it. Therefore,

teaching is fun all the time. And it's a great way to keep discovering new ideas.

Recently, while teaching at the Siena Jazz Workshop in Italy, a student asked me why I was practicing all the drum exercises and variations that I had written on the board—some of them very challenging and unrelated to any one particular genre. I paused for a moment, and my answer was: "To train our bodies to react to different musical situations using our instrument." Afterward, I continued to reflect on the student's question. As I mentioned earlier, there are dozens of reasons I practice, but what was the main reason, the musical reason?

A few days later—while practicing at my drum studio in Puerto Rico, trying to play phrases and express myself using the drum set—I realized the main reason that I practice all these exercises: I want to be able to talk through the drums with the same ease and meaning as I have in conversation with people.

I want to express myself through the drums fully. Just as the great martial artist and philosopher Bruce Lee once said, "Honestly expressing yourself ... is very difficult to do." Perhaps this is why Lee is one of my main influences. All he did and said, I could translate to being a musician and to the drums.

If you want to have interesting conversations with other people, the more things you can talk about, the better. The more knowledge of different topics you know, the better.

The more languages you understand, the more people you can talk to from different cultures. This is exactly how I see myself as a musician. You have to train every part of your body—I'm quoting Bruce Lee again—so you can hear, adapt and execute effortlessly, without thinking, and express yourself freely and honestly through your instrument.

The following exercise is an example of my approach to practicing the drums and rhythm in general. If there is one "trick" to this exercise, it's to tell the various parts of your body to work together as a single unit. Unity is the key—everything is coordinated. To watch an online demonstration video, go to: youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHMMXaEInoVf2k3o7MZzs-ZmvIzqDUrJf.

I first created this exercise/drill during a morning band workshop in Cologne, Germany. While trombonist Ryan Keberle was talking to the audience, I wanted to warm up my hands and feet to be ready when it came time to perform. I started with a rudiment, then added the hi-hat, and then some figures with the bass drum. It felt great. Later, during a drum workshop when I saw how the stu-

dents reacted to the exercise, I decided to write it down and expanded on it.

The Rudiment

The rudiment shown in Example 1 is called a “flam tap.” It’s a mixture of double strokes with flams over 16th notes.

The Feel

As a rule, when I play any phrase over 16th notes, I also play it over triplets. And when I play a phrase over triplets, I also play it over 16ths. So, I started playing flam taps over triplets and added the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. (See Example 2.) You get a nice swing feel, coordination and rudimental work.

The Bass Drum Melodies

For the bass drum, I started playing on each partial of the triplet. This is a method I learned from studying the four-volume *Patterns* series of method books by drummer Gary Chaffee. I started playing the first six melodies, then wrote a few more variations I thought were important. (See Example 3.)

The Groove

The next step was to convert the exercise to music. By moving the right hand to the ride cymbal, I got a kind of broken-time swing feel, à la Elvin Jones. (See Example 4.) I started to play the groove over slow-tempo swing tunes until it became transparent and part of the music itself. The piece that felt most comfortable to start with was John Coltrane’s “Blues To Bechet” (from the album *Coltrane Plays The Blues*), which has a great tempo and amazing feel. I use this same piece when teaching this exercise to students. As you increase the speed, you can try to play the same thing over Coltrane’s “Crescent” (from his album *Crescent*). As you get comfortable with the groove, add any of the bass drum melodies while playing along to the music.

The Score

After you can play the groove to the music with a nice feel, you can start to hear the melodies of all the individual voices. Then, your playing becomes harmonic. One day, I noticed that all the individual voices were part of the basic melodies. This means that we can combine them as we want, create our new groove and work our coordination by playing each of The Bass Drum Melodies (see Example 5).

Using this approach to practice can be a powerful tool. It’s a complete workout that will benefit your muscles, coordination, sound, feel and sensitivity to dynamics. **DB**

Grammy-winning drummer and arranger Henry Cole teaches private lessons, workshops and master classes around the world. He is an associate professor at Manhattan School of Music, The New School, Sienna Jazz Academia Nazionale del Jazz and Englishholm Jazz Camp in Denmark. Cole is also a clinician for DWD Drums. Visit him online at henrycolemusic.com.

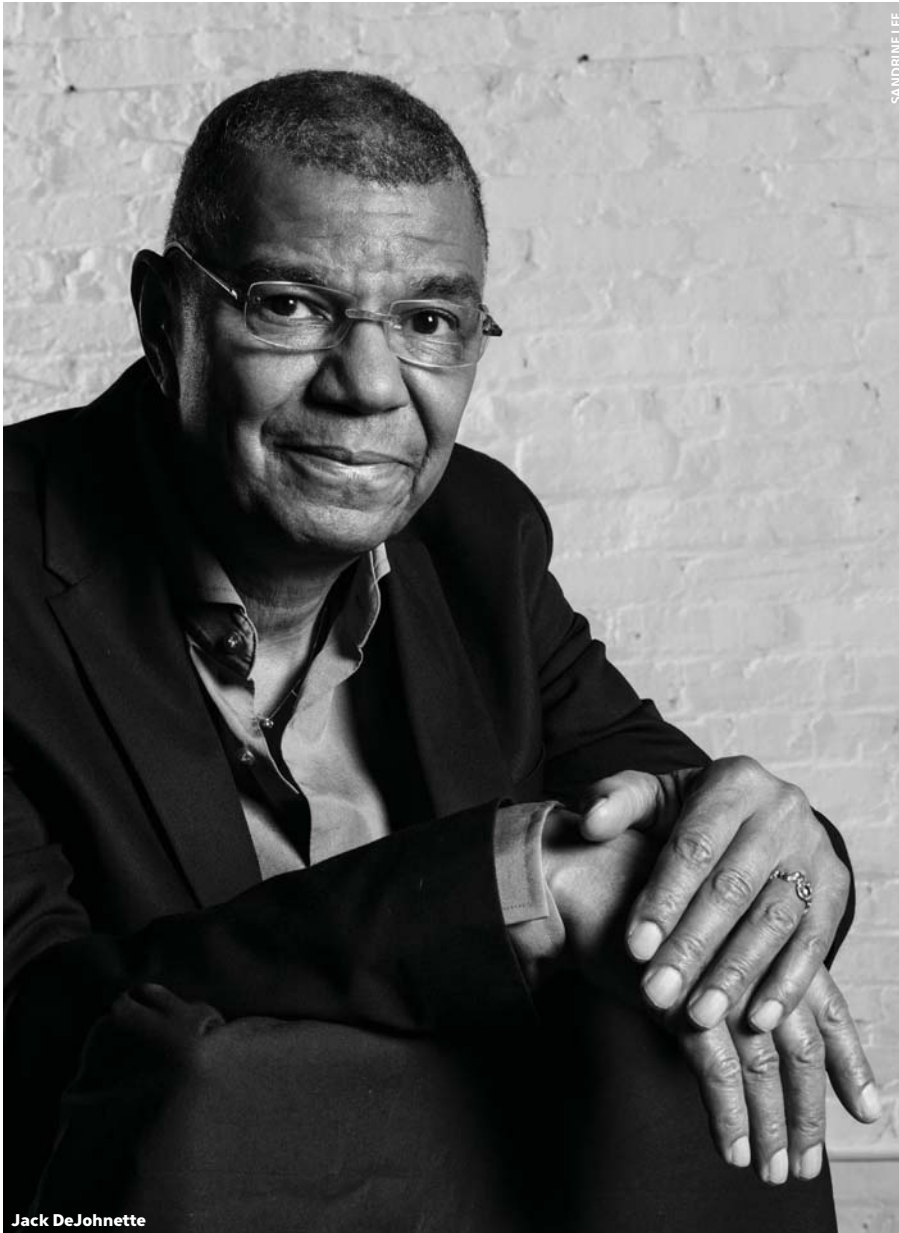
Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

Example 4

Example 5



SANDRINE LEE

Jack DeJohnette

Jack DeJohnette's Drum Solo on 'Scrapple From The Apple'

Now six decades deep into his storied career, 77-year-old jazz drumming legend Jack DeJohnette is a living testament to the rewards of musical integrity and elasticity. The Miles Davis albums *Bitches Brew*, *Live-Evil* and *On The Corner* are among the legendary performances upon which

DeJohnette built his career, but his most consistent collaboration over the years has been with pianist Keith Jarrett's Standards Trio. Having released more than 21 albums in 25 years together, Jarrett, DeJohnette and bassist Gary Peacock have deeply explored the canon of American jazz. It has been said that the true

masters of their craft can take complex concepts and make them appear simple—and that is exactly what each of these artists brings to the table in the Standards Trio.

A perfect example of such seamless collaboration can be found in the trading of eights between Jarrett and DeJohnette on Charlie Parker's "Scrapple From The Apple" from the Standards Trio's live album *Yesterdays* (ECM), recorded in 2001 and released in 2009.

Technique never is used for the sake of technique with DeJohnette. If an idea doesn't support the musical moment, he is not one to throw in filler material. A trained pianist from childhood, DeJohnette is bent on making musical choices that serve the overall arc of each performance, and in this case, complementing the playing of the previous soloist's ideas. The nature of the trading between Jarrett and DeJohnette is playful, and it builds in complexity as they trade twice over the song's full 32-bar form.

Following Peacock's bass solo, Jarrett launches into the first eight bars of the exchange, setting up DeJohnette, who remains close to the ride cymbal as he explores independence between snare, bass drum and hi-hat (see solo excerpt #1). Bars 1 and 2 repeat themselves, with a heavy emphasis on beat 1 of each measure, giving the feeling of a lop-sided rock groove. Measure 3, the response, utilizes upbeats on the snare drum before returning to a heavy downbeat in the fourth measure to end the sequence. In measure 5, DeJohnette intentionally leaves the first beat empty and flips the emphasis to beat 4 of each measure for the remainder of the trading.

A special aspect of DeJohnette's playing is his unique approach to the ride cymbal. Unlike other drummers who came before him and Tony Williams, DeJohnette very rarely plays the standard jazz ride cymbal pattern. Instead, DeJohnette continually varies his ride cymbal throughout each measure, adding density and shape to the music. If you look at the first two trades in this solo, for example, you will see there is quite a variety of rhythmic context in the ride cymbal, but at no time does it upset the flow of time.

The second trade in this series builds upon the first by adding texture through use of the high tom and giving the hi-hat a more singular voice (see solo excerpt #2). Much of DeJohnette's playing is linear by nature, which also plays into how he approaches the ride cymbal as a singular voice. At any given moment, an idea can start in one limb, only to move to second, third and fourth limb to complete the idea. Where some drummers

might play a series of rhythms on just the snare, DeJohnette spreads an idea across the entirety of the kit. There are several examples of this throughout his solo, but observe the third and fourth measures of the second trade in particular. If you look at the movement of the bass drum, snare and hi-hat, and see the shape of the line they are creating, you will understand that DeJohnette is shaping phrases purposefully, and even dynamically, to add tension. From a drummer's perspective, playing in a linear fashion poses the risk of rushing or dragging a phrase based upon the technical ability of each limb. DeJohnette, however, is finely tuned and conveys a sense of groove and time that makes even the most complex ideas flow easily.

Going into the third trade, Jarrett moves into a double-time feel as he burns new ideas across the piano. DeJohnette, in turn, responds with a rhythmic shift straightening out the eighth notes into a rudimental display of single and double strokes while using

the ride cymbal to break up the ideas (see solo excerpt #3). However, where he places those cymbals, and later floor tom, is unpredictable and jagged, adding to the illusion that the phrase is quickly going off the rails only to snap back together at the end.

DeJohnette's fourth trade is the bookend of the solo that returns the group to a heavy sense of swing (see solo excerpt #4). Like many of the great jazz drummers, phrasing is everything with DeJohnette, as he accents the upbeats across a series of triplets in the final eight bars. You will also notice in the final trade that he uses hi-hat sparingly, subtracting from the rhythmic density to lead into the melody. Sometimes it's what you take away that can add the most.

DeJohnette is a treasured legend who has influenced countless numbers of musicians throughout his career. Equal parts technique, musicality and soul, he is a conduit of masterful ideas and intention. **DB**

Jeffrey Lien is a professional drummer, writer and clinician based in Nashville.

1.

mf

2.


mf


3. (straight 8th through trade)

f

4.


mf

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Photograph by Melanie Futorian



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Rogers Dyna-Sonic Snare

Resurrection of a Great American Drum Company

The Rogers Drum Company is making a major comeback. The company recently started production of its celebrated Dyna-Sonic snare, which had one of the most ingenious and innovative designs in the history of drum manufacturing. The unique feature of this snare is a pretensioned, floating snare frame that allows the bottom head to breathe, letting the drum respond exactly the same at any volume you play it. The most intricate, delicate playing is effortless, with beautiful snare response, and it's equally capable of handling *fff* rolls and heavy backbeats. My test snare was a 6.5- by 14-inch model in gloss black lacquer. The shell is five-ply maple, and the inside of the shell is finished in a classic fruitwood stain. The Dyna-Sonic also is available in a 5-inch depth.

Rogers was widely considered the “Cadillac” of drums during its 1960s golden era. The drums were manufactured to a higher degree of precision and care than most other companies, and were very expensive. Well-known endorsers included Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Cozy Cole, Dave Clark and Buddy Miles. Around 1960, Joe Thompson invented the Dyna-Sonic’s unique floating snare frame. This virtually eliminated the constricting effect of snare wires being pulled across the bottom head with a traditional throw-off. Early on, other manufactures tackled this issue with a parallel wire setup. The design was somewhat successful, but required a lot of delicate and complicated parts. Ultimately, this produces a very dry and articulate sound only suitable for certain situations.

The Dyna-Sonic’s simple and elegant solution incorporates a steel frame to which the snare wires attach. Using a single adjustment knob, you dial in the tension of the snare wires on the frame. The frame itself is mounted to the snare at both ends of the drum, like traditional wires. When you engage the throw-off, the frame lightly touches, or “floats,” against the bottom head, allowing it to move and breathe unconstricted. As a result, you get unmatched snare response and focused sound no matter the volume.

I had a chance to play the Dyna-Sonic in a number of live situations. In an acoustic piano jazz trio, it handled nuanced, light comping figures and wide dynamic ranges with ease. It spoke with an undistorted, clear sound and remarkable snare response—no matter where I played on the surface of the head. Brush sensitivity and response also were outstand-

ing compared to typical snares on the market.

Next, I used the drum on a show in a large theater. The snare had a definite center of sound that always cut and was consistently clear. Cross-stick work was a breeze, and I loved the slightly sweet, yet thicker, sound of the rims. In another situation, I used the snare in a very live room with extremely muddy acoustics. The only drum in my kit that spoke with any clarity was the Dyna-Sonic. It sounded clear, crisp and focused in every situation I introduced it to.

There aren’t many snares that I would recommend as a “go-to” snare; this is one of them. Sure, today’s major drum manufacturers all make great snares. The Dyna-Sonic, though, has a unique look, design and sound that separates it from the sea of other snare drums out there. It’s on the pricy side, at around \$800–\$900, but it truly will be one of the only snares you ever need. The Rogers Dyna-Sonic is available in a variety of different finishes, and you can choose the “bread and butter” or “beavertail” lug design.

—Ryan Bennett

bigbangdist.com



BeatSeat Cajon

All-in-1 Percussion Instrument

The BeatSeat is a unique cajon design that provides a variety of sound and timbre options. It is made to be used not only by percussionists, but also guitarists and instrumentalists of all kinds. It’s hand-made in Connecticut, and comes in a variety of materials and finishes. From an aesthetic standpoint, the BeatSeat is easily recognizable by the slanted playing surface in the front. My test instrument was the Blonde Beauty, constructed entirely of birch.

Inventor Mark Pires had more than the percussionist in mind when he thought up this design. He is a guitarist/vocalist who designed the BeatSeat to also be used as a self-accompanying percussion instrument. The first thing you’ll notice when sitting on the BeatSeat is how it has a much higher seating position than a standard cajon. This is ultimately more comfortable

on the back and legs after sitting for a while. The main feature is the slanted “snare” playing area. Having the surface slanted and facing up means you can sit more comfortably upright on the instrument without having to reach over to the front for those sounds. The bass tones are produced by using your feet on the either side of the drum, or by using a cajon pedal, which is basically a modified bass drum pedal that can be played with your foot or heel.

There are different areas on the BeatSeat that produce different sounds, giving the player a nice variety of tones and colors to have at their fingertips. Pires says one of his goals was to design a cajon that could be more of an all-in-one percussion instrument. The slanted surface has snare wires mounted directly underneath, so it’s very easy to produce snappy snare

effects with lots of pop. The sides around the snare surface also are available for different tones and sounds.

Another neat feature about the BeatSeat is the dual bass tone options. One side of the box has snare wires mounted under the playing surface, and the other side does not. You can switch back and forth between your left and right foot to produce bass tones with or without a snare sound.

When playing the BeatSeat in a live setting, the snare surface provides a nice, cutting snap in acoustic situations. It's great to have access to a variety of different sounds—almost like a drum set. Finding those sounds might take some getting used to and a bit of experimentation, but there are many more available tones than your standard box cajon offers. Everywhere you hit the BeatSeat, it sounds different. And it's especially handy to have the option of switching back and forth with the bass tones simply by switching feet.

While very comfortable to sit on and play, the BeatSeat is on the large side—it's about twice as deep as a standard box cajon. Currently, the BeatSeat does not have an available carrying case, but one is in the works, according to Pires, along with a seat cushion. Meanwhile, musicians can easily position the BeatSeat and carry it from place to place using its convenient internal grab-and-go bar.

The BeatSeat is a very well thought-out and high-quality custom cajon that works in a variety of musical situations, and it's a great option for solo instrumentalists looking to explore new rhythmic possibilities. It is also being marketed as a beneficial and effective teaching/learning tool in the music therapy field and as a sensory therapy drum for people with special needs.

The BeatSeat is available in smaller children's sizes, and you can request special custom finishes, including mixing wood types and even paints. Prices of the professional models range from \$300 to \$450. —Ryan Bennett
beatseat.rocks



WFLIII Drums Jazz Series

Historic Design, Highly Musical Maple Shells

Founded in 2014 by William F. Ludwig III, WFLIII Drums is restoring the legacy of America's first family of drum building with the introduction of its Jazz Series kits featuring Generations maple shells.

WFLIII Drums' first product introduction was the 1782N series of snares, made using a time-tested combination of American hard maple and North American poplar. The classic poplar/maple/poplar layering method was slightly altered to allow for a thinner ply and, subsequently, a more resonant drum. Last year, WFLIII Drums began shipping full drum sets, and currently the company offers a complete range of drum-set products on its website. Customers now can choose a preconfigured drum set or customize their own.

I play-tested the Combo 4 Piece Shell Pack, in a beautiful white pearl finish. (There are more than a dozen finishes available from WFLIII Drums, including various stains, flat colors and sparkles.) The shells included a 9- by 13-inch rack tom, a 16- by 16-inch floor tom, an 18- by 22-inch bass drum and a 5.5- by 14-inch snare. All shells consist of the three-ply maple/poplar/maple layering with a steam-bent support ring, just like the original William F. Ludwig made his drums more than 60 years ago. They feature hand-finished 45-degree bearing edges for maximum head-to-shell contact, custom springless lugs, Remo Ambassador heads and 2.3mm triple-flanged hoops for a full-bodied attack.

Out of the box, these drums sounded fantastic with their classy, warm tones and full-bodied resonance. The expertly matched shells provided a nice balance of tone and projection with a melodic sustain and mellow decay. They had a very consistent sound in live settings, and in the recording studio the tuning was a breeze to dial in. I found them to be not only solidly constructed, but also highly musical and playable in general.

One thing I didn't notice right away was the larger vent on these drums, as the WFLIII logo conceals it in a very clever way. The large roman numeral III is actually cut through the logo, so the air of the vent hole goes in and out through the openings. At first glance, the drum logo looks like a solid piece of metal, but on closer inspection you can see that the company used this clever design to introduce some added functionality. The enlarged vent holes give the bottom head a slightly quicker response to the snares. The result is a more natural, open sound, as the drum can "breathe" better.

There is something to be said about having an actual Ludwig family member making drums again after so many years, and the WFLIII Drums Generations Shell Packs seem like a perfect choice to carry on the tradition.

—Matt Kern

wfliiidrums.com

DRUM SCHOOL Toolshed > GEAR BOX

1. Getting in Position

Gibraltar has released the GSSVR Stealth Side V Rack and the SC-78ASE/SC-1ASE Accessory Shaft Extender to offer drummers more freedom in their setups. Equipped with a 33-inch V-shape bar and 14.5-inch vertical legs, the GSSVR Stealth Side V Rack can be used as a companion to the GSVMS-KIT or as a right- and left-side side rack. The V-shaped side rack presents the audience with an artistic esthetic while keeping your setup low to the ground and multifunctional. The SC-78ASE/SC-1ASE Accessory Shaft Extender is designed to lengthen accessory mounting on racks. It is perfect for positioning cymbals, tom arms or electronics at the desired playing height, while keeping the clean effect of a low-profile rack.

More info: gibraltarhardware.com

2. Hybrid Power

Roland's TM-1 Trigger Module offers a simple solution for first-time hybrid set users, letting them add more sounds to their acoustic drum kit. The TM-1 provides instant access to onboard kick, snare, tom, cymbal and percussion samples, and the free editor app for Mac/Windows and iOS/Android gives you access to more than 150 additional sounds (including synth loops) and lets you import your own samples and loops. Connect any compatible Roland trigger pad to the TM-1 and directly play the sounds you need, or mount an RT-series trigger to one of your acoustic drums and play with your preferred sample layered atop in perfect sync, with no lag.

More info: roland.com

3. Low-Volume Heads

SoundOff Drumheads from Evans feature a low-volume design for acoustic drums. Suitable for quiet practice or electronic setups, the drumheads are made from a single ply of black mesh material that dramatically reduces the volume of everyday drumming. They are available for tom, snare and bass drum applications in sizes ranging from 8 inches to 24 inches.

More info: evansdrumheads.com

4. Ascend the Throne

The MDT2 Drum Throne from On-Stage features an internal nylon sleeve around the height-adjustable shaft and a spider-shaped insert at the base that holds the two shafts securely in place, eliminating any wiggling of the seat and offering players a sturdy solution. Furthering the throne's stability are its solid-steel double-braced legs and nonslip rubber feet. The height of the throne can be adjusted from 19.5 to 24.4 inches with five locking-pin locations. The MDT2 features a larger and thicker seat diameter stuffed with a high-density foam to provide maximum comfortability and support.

More info: on-stage.com

5. Swing Methods & Techniques

Classic Swing Drumming is the culmination of author Gregory Caputo's 45 years spent occupying the drum throne for such swing legends as Benny Goodman, Harry James, Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Count Basie, Duke Ellington and numerous others. The publication's dual purpose is to serve as a method book for implementing swing grooves and to educate players on the importance of swing drumming to jazz and American culture. Insightful comments from Caputo's music-business colleagues are integrated throughout the book.

More info: gregorycaputo.com

6. Right Tool

CruzTools has introduced a second generation of its GrooveTech Drum Multi-Tool, which provides 14 tools in a compact fold-up unit. Included are hex wrenches, slotted screwdrivers, Phillips screwdrivers, a stainless ruler and a drum key. One improvement in the new version is a single-piece body that allows easy rotation and storage of each component. All components of the GrooveTech Drum Multi-Tool are manufactured to precision tolerances using a heat-treated S2 alloy.

More info: cruztools.com



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Jazzmeia Horn is shown performing at the 2018 Earshot Jazz Festival in Seattle. (Photo: Daniel Sheehan)



Multi-instrumentalist Matthias Schriefel makes a big impression during a collaboration with the hr-Bigband at the 2018 Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt in Germany.

FRANKFURT CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF FRUITFUL COLLABORATIONS

The history of jazz in Germany includes one of the darkest chapters in human history: The Nazi regime of the 1930s was a bulwark against the spreading popularity of the genre, labeling it a degenerate art. After 1937, American musicians couldn't get into the country and the government eventually outlawed jazz. But a developing ardor for the music finally blossomed when World War II ended, particularly in regions where U.S. forces were stationed. In cities such as Frankfurt, jazz LPs were available and jazz musicians had opportunities to perform. Indeed, jazz flourished there, even producing important homegrown talent, such as legendary trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff and his saxophone-playing brother Emil.

In the early '50s, a loose consortium of musicians, club promoters and radio journalists formed the German Jazz Federation to share resources and information, and by 1953, that organization had pooled its resources to produce one of the first major jazz festivals in the world: the Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt.

Though the inaugural edition of the festival featured U.S. blues singer Big Bill Broonzy, the lineup was largely comprised of German musicians, celebrating the achievements and burgeoning talent from a nation that was already a European stronghold for jazz. "It was inspiring for the people living here, and there were very

good musicians like the Mangelsdorff brothers, so they decided to do this," explained Olaf Stötzler, who's been the festival's artistic director since 2016.

The festival will present its 50th anniversary edition Oct. 23–27 with programming that reflects how its curatorial approach has expanded well beyond its native focus to capture a kaleidoscopic, global view of jazz. After its first seven years, the festival switched to a biennial schedule in 1960, and it remained on that path until 1990, when it resumed mounting the event annually. In 1964, Jazzfest Berlin was launched, and over the years the country has hosted a growing number of festivals. Facing fierce competition from its neighbors, Frankfurt was forced to sharpen its programming and reach beyond the local scene.

The festival has hosted a parade of U.S. titans, including Don Cherry, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, Chet Baker, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Jaki Byard, the Brecker Brothers, Joe Henderson, John Zorn and Charles Lloyd, who first performed at the event in 1966 and returns this year with his quartet.

At the same time, the festival has provided an important platform for some of Europe's most important figures, such as Stéphane Grappelli, Irène Schweizer, Peter Brötzmann, Jan Garbarek and John Surman. As jazz gained popularity and festivals flourished, Deutsches Jazzfestival

Frankfurt widened its scope and began initiating unique collaborations, generating significant, resonant partnerships between German musicians and visiting U.S. players. In 1978, Charles Mingus associate George Adams performed with fellow saxophonist Heinz Sauer—a sideman with Albert Mangelsdorff from the early Frankfurt days—while in 1980, David Murray collaborated with Alfred 23 Harth, a key figure in German avant-garde jazz. Subsequent pairings included saxophonist Pharoah Sanders working with bassist Eberhard Weber, as well as brothers Joachim Kühn (piano) and Rolf Kühn (saxophone/clarinet) collaborating with bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade.

"The basis to make the festival unique is to do as many premieres as possible, to give a 'wild card' to a musician," Stötzler said. "You're an interesting musician—let us know who you want to play with, and we'll give you the opportunity to form a band and premiere it at the festival. We can't do it with every act on the bill, but this has always been [an important part of] the history of the festival."

One German musician who's benefited greatly from such opportunities is saxophonist Christof Lauer, who first performed at the festival in 1978, when he was only 25, in trumpeter Uli Beckerhoff's band Riot. He said as a late-comer to jazz, hearing artists perform at the event was important to his education. "The

festival helped me a lot to be better known in Germany," he said. "And compared to other festivals I played at this time, Frankfurt was a real highlight for me."

In 1984, Lauer returned, playing with trumpeter Kenny Wheeler and pianist John Taylor, and in 1988 he joined forces with Joachim Kühn and drummer Roy Haynes. For the 2019 edition of the festival, he'll collaborate with the Turkish ney flutist Kudsi Ergüner, reflecting another frequent thread in the festival's programming: pairing jazz practitioners with varied masters of traditional music styles from around the globe.

In 1984, the artistic direction for the festival passed from original organizers Horst Lippmann and Fritz Rau to the public broadcasting corporation Hessischer Rundfunk. Apart from broadcasting most of the festival live on the radio and programming the lineup, it also sponsors one of the strongest jazz orchestras in the country, the hr-Bigband (aka the Frankfurt Radio Big Band). The large ensemble has maintained a steady presence at the festival and frequently pushes beyond jazz's traditional boundaries. In 2006, the orchestra performed with Cream bassist Jack Bruce, playing his original tunes, while in 2016, the group performed with British keyboardist Django Bates to create a fascinating interpretation of The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*—a collaboration captured on Bates' 2017 *Saluting Sgt. Pepper* (Edition).

One of the most anticipated acts of this year's festival will be a fascinating project featuring Joachim Kühn, one of the few pianists to maintain a working relationship with saxophonist Ornette Coleman. During their partnership, Coleman left the pianist with numerous unpublished and unrecorded compositions, and earlier this year, Kühn recorded solo renditions of those pieces for *Melodic Ornette Coleman: Piano Works XIII* (ACT). But in Frankfurt, he and the hr-Bigband will debut new arrangements by himself and Jim McNeely, with special guests that include drummer Joey Baron, clarinetist Michel Portal and bassist François Moutin.

For decades, the festival has shown a commitment to up-and-coming talent, and this year it revisits a concept mounted at the festival's inaugural edition: the German All Stars. This performance will showcase an impressive sextet, assembled by Stötzler, featuring some of the most important young players based in Germany: saxophonist Angelika Niescier, trombonist Johannes Lauer, guitarist Ronny Graupe, pianist Julia Kadel, bassist Eva Kruse and drummer Eva Klesse. Each group member will contribute a composition to the sextet's repertoire.

Kadel, who's released two albums of contemplative, lyric post-Bill Evans trio music for the German division of Blue Note, said, "We all play in different projects and offer a certain

musical portfolio, open to be melded with the other's musical languages. I am currently writing a new composition for that sextet, and it will be my first piece about climate change and Earth's destruction. I am excited to see how it will sound with the others. To meet through improvised music is a precious chance to communicate ... I desire these chances for open spaces, for different people to meet each other and share good things that can spread out to the world."

Among this year's other anticipated highlights is the opening evening, which celebrates

the 50th anniversary of ECM Records with sets by guitarist Jakob Bro, bassist Michael Formanek's Ensemble Kolossus performing with the hr-Bigband, and Albanian singer Elina Duni. Also slated to perform at the fest will be Enemy (the bracing trio led by British keyboardist Kit Downes), the Crosscurrents Trio (bassist Dave Holland, saxophonist Chris Potter and percussionist Zakir Hussain), saxophonist Nubya Garcia, Polish pianist Marcin Wasilewski and the taut quartet Boulez Materialism, led by Berlin-based drummer Christian Lillinger.

—Peter Margasak

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8:00 PM

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conducted by John Clayton*

Early in 1983, Peterson completed and recorded his *Africa Suite*. Two songs from that suite, "Nigerian Marketplace" (containing echoes of gospel and salsa) and "Peace" (the blues-inspired conclusion) became part of his concert repertoire. The entire suite has never been performed live in front of an audience, until now. Join Benny Green (piano), Christian McBride (bass), Lewis Nash (drums), and John Clayton leading a big band in his arrangement of the suite, complete with Peterson's own piano on the Koerner Hall stage.

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EMPA ISEK

Saxophonist Roxy Coss leads her quintet during the 2019 Winter Jazzfest in New York City.

Frost Music Live!

Coral Gables, Florida

September 2019–April 2020

Renowned guest artists will collaborate with faculty, alumni and students during this series of more than 100 events at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music.

LINEUP: Arturo Sandoval, José Feliciano, Raul Midón, Sheila Jordan, Miho Hazama, Emmet Cohen, Maria Schneider, Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra, Egberto Gismonti, Boston Brass, Stamps Brass Quintet, Horacio Gutiérrez. frostmusiclive.com

Angel City Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

Oct. 2-13

This festival offers an eclectic program of innovative, cutting-edge performances by established and rising stars from the world of improvised music.

LINEUP: Artifacts Trio (Nicole Mitchell, Tomeka Reid & Mike Reed), Anna Webber Simple Trio, Jenny Scheinman & Allison Miller's Parlour Game, Kris Davis' Diatom Ribbons, Dan Rosenboom A.I.T.A., James Brandon Lewis Quintet, Aaron Parks' Little Big, Ego Mondo, Kokayi, Darius Jones & Joshua White, Dwight Tribble, Terry & Gyan Riley, David Binney's Future Philosophy, Makaya McCraven. angelcityjazz.com

CU Jazz Festival

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

Oct. 3-6

This festival features a parade, poetry, Jazz IN School, the VandoJam session, a Sunday Jazz Brunch and nightly concerts.

LINEUP: Shawn Maxwell's New Tomorrow, Sara McDonald, NYChillharmonic, JVR3, Afro Caribbean Jazz Collective. cujazzfest.wixsite.com/cujazzfest

Myrtle Beach Jazz Festival

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Oct. 4-6

This annual free event features regional artists in a celebration of jazz and culture.

LINEUP: Last year's lineup included Daniel D, Don Colton, Leroy Harper. myrtlebeachjazzfest.com

Oregon Coast Jazz Party

Newport, Oregon

Oct. 4-6

Fans at the 16th edition of this festival can expect multiple sets from renowned jazz stars, nightcap performances and educational events.

LINEUP: Terell Stafford, Houston Person, Roxy Coss, Dena DeRose, Veronica Swift, Matt Wilson, Martin Wind, Holly Hofmann, Ken Peplowski, Larry Koonse, Lewis Nash, Nicki Parrott, Randy Porter, Mike Wofford, Dave Captein, Gary Hobbs. coastarts.org/oregon-coast-jazz-party

Earshot Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

Oct. 4–Nov. 6

Respected for adventurous programming and a deep commitment to its home community, this festival will present 50 events in venues all around the city.

LINEUP: Cécile McLorin Salvant, Chucho Valdés, Jamaaladeen Tacuma Trio featur-

ing Gary Bartz, Kris Davis' Diatom Ribbons, Egberto Gismonti, Brian Blade's Life Cycles, Jenny Scheinman & Allison Miller's Parlour Game, Joel Ross' Good Vibes, Bria Skonberg, Gerald Clayton, The Westerlies, Fay Victor & Myra Melford, Shai Maestro, Youn Sun Nah, Kassa Overall & Sullivan Fortner, Knife Knights, Sounds of Zamar, Makaya McCraven. earshot.org

Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Fernandina Beach, Florida

Oct. 6-13

This festival presents world-class jazz in many styles, including swing, bebop, big band, Latin and contemporary.

LINEUP: Delfeayo Marsalis, Jamil Sharif, Trio Caliente, the Dynamic Les DeMerle Jazz Quartet featuring Bonnie Eisele, the UNF Jazz Ensemble 2. ameliaislandjazzfestival.com

Pittsfield City Jazz Festival

Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Oct. 11-20

The 15th edition of this festival will include a jazz crawl featuring local artists, a prodigy concert presenting a young artist, two headline events, jazz brunches and more.

LINEUP: Dayramir Gonzalez, Veronica Swift with Stephanie Nakasian. berkshiresjazz.org

Duck Jazz Festival

Duck, North Carolina

Oct. 12-13

Featuring outdoor concerts on two stages, this festival is a free, nonticketed event.

LINEUP: Benny Green Trio, Caroline Davis, Andrew Sanchez & His Hip Six, Triangle Youth Jazz Ensemble, Sidecar Social Club, Leroy Jones. duckjazz.com

Edgefest

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Oct. 16-19

Programming for the 23rd edition of this showcase of experimental music will explore the historical contributions of West Coast artists in the development of avant-garde jazz and new music. There will be free and ticketed concerts, along with educational activities.

LINEUP: Myra Melford, ROVA Saxophone Quartet, Lucian Ban & Alex Harding, Michael Marcus Quartet, Oluyemi Thomas' Positive Knowledge, Ken Filiano/James Ilgenfritz/Piotr Michalowski/Sara Schoenbeck, William Hooker, Wayne Horvitz, Bobby Bradford, Vinny Golia, Lisa Mizzacappa, Cooper-Moore, Andrew Bishop's New and Used, Cycle of Restoration. kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest

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ROB DUVAL

Sara Gazarek (second from right), the artistic director of DeMiero Jazz Festival in Edmonds, Washington, performs at the event.

Sun Valley Jazz & Music Festival

Sun Valley, Idaho

Oct. 16-20

Fans can choose from among 200 shows on 10 stages at this festival, which features a variety of genres.

LINEUP: Black Market Trust, Blue Street, Carolyn Martin, Cocuzzi Courtet, Cornet Chop Suey, Bob Draga, Yve Evans, Holland & Coots, Jeff Barnhart, Katie Cavera, Side Street Strutters, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, U.S. Coast Guard Dixie Band, Young Bucs.
sunvalleyjazz.com

Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Clearwater, Florida

Oct. 17-20

Jazz, funk, pop and other styles will be featured in the 40th anniversary edition of this event. Beautiful beaches make for a scenic setting, and a fireworks display will add to the memories.

LINEUP: Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Chicago, Boyz II Men, Alison Krauss, Dafnis Prieto, Soul Rebels, Marcia Ball, Robert Randolph & The Family Band, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Yonder Mountain String Band, Ashley Smith & The Random Occurrence.
clearwaterjazz.com

Rehoboth Beach Jazz Festival

Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Oct. 17-20

Now in its 30th year, this festival will present shows in multiple venues.

LINEUP: Boney James, Gerald Albright, The Four Freshmen, Will Downing, Peter White, Norman Brown, Brian Culbertson, Matt Marshak.
rehobothjazz.com

South Carolina Jazz Festival

Cheraw, South Carolina

Oct. 18-20

Held in Dizzy Gillespie's hometown, this event will feature more than 20 regional musical artists performing in an eclectic array of venues.

LINEUP: Emmet Cohen Trio, Bruce Harris, Sammy Miller & The Congregation, Martina DaSilva,

Noel Freidline Quartet with Maria Howell, Sidecar Social Club, Empire Strikes Brass, Charles Peterson & Against All Odds Band.
scjazzfestival.com

Texas Jazz Festival

Corpus Christi, Texas

Oct. 18-20

This festival is a free, all-ages event with four stages of live jazz, plus food, market vendors and a Salsa Jazz dancing experience hosted inside the Solomon Ortiz Center.

LINEUP: San Gabriel Seven, Tiburon, Jeff Lofton, Glen Garcia, Dirty River Brass Band.
texasjazz-fest.org

Mempho Music Festival

Memphis, Tennessee

Oct. 19-20

Fans at this outdoor event can experience good times and great music in one of the largest urban parks in the United States.

LINEUP: Wu-Tang Clan, The Raconteurs, Brandi Carlile, PJ Morton, The Revivalists, Lovelytheband, Margo Price, Valerie June, Missio, Will Sexton, John Paul Keith, Summer Avenue.
memphofest.com

Ragas Live Festival

Brooklyn, New York

Oct. 19-20

Now in its eighth year, this 24-hour festival, inspired by Indian classical music, will feature more than 70 musicians.

LINEUP: Adam Rudolph's Moving Pictures, Saraswathi Ranganathan, Namami Karmakar, Samarth Nagarkar, Arun Ramamurthy Trio, Dan Weiss & Miles Okazaki, Reggie Workman's Cerebral Caverns, Brooklyn Raga Massive.
ragaslive.org

Brubeck Festival

Stockton, California

Oct. 21-26

Presented by the Brubeck Institute at University of the Pacific, this festival celebrates and explores the musical and philosophical ideas of Dave Brubeck and his influence

around the world. Venues include the Faye Spanos Concert Hall and the Take 5 Jazz Club. On Oct. 22 and Oct. 24, there will be jazz jams with former Brubeck Fellows.

LINEUP: Lucas Pino & No Net Nonet, Joel Ross & Good Vibes, Brubeck Fellows All-Star Big Band, Pacific Jazz Ambassadors.
brubeckinstitute.org

Jazz For All Ages Festival

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Oct. 30-31

Held at The Jazz Corner and Sonesta Oceanfront Resort, this festival raises money for the Junior Jazz Foundation.

LINEUP: Deas Guyz Orchestra featuring Reggie Deas, Jane Monheit & Clint Holmes with Dominick Farinacci.
jazzforallages.com

TD James Moody Jazz Festival

Newark, New Jersey

Nov. 9-24

Bassist and bandleader Christian McBride serves as the Jazz Advisor for this event, which will include concerts at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and host special performances that combine music and dance. The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition (Sassy Awards) will take place on Nov. 24.

LINEUP: Houston Person, Steve Turre, Bobby Sanabria, The Roots, A Christian McBride Situation, Christian Sands/Helen Sung/Tadataka Unno, Clint Holmes/Catherine Russell/Billy Stritch, Steps Ahead, Michael Franks, Spyro Gyra, Lee Ritenour, Dave Grusin, Maurice Hines with DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Nimbus Dance with members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Buddy Guy, Mavis Staples, Chaka Khan.
njpac.org

Otis Taylor's Trance Blues Festival

Boulder, Colorado

Nov. 9

This event will include an evening performance after a day of public workshops and jams for musicians and fans of all levels and ages.

LINEUP: Otis Taylor, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Mato Nanji, Guy Davis, Cassie Taylor, Byron "Kidd" Cage, Nick Amodeo, Jon Paul Johnson, Beth Rosbach, Brian Juan.
trancebluesfestival.com

Frank Morgan Taos Jazz Festival

Taos, New Mexico

Nov. 20-23

The premier fall jazz festival in Northern New Mexico, this event features five concerts honoring saxophonist Frank Morgan (1933–2007), who called Taos home. Saxophonist Grace Kelly, an early protégé of Morgan, returns for her fifth appearance.

LINEUP: Grace Kelly Quartet, George Cables 25th Anniversary Quartet (with Doug Lawrence, John Webber & Louis Hayes), Julian Pollack

Trio, Christine Fawson, Pete Amahl Quartet.
taosjazz.org

Manchester Jazz Festival

Manchester, Connecticut
Dec. 7

The fourth edition of this festival will bring an exciting mix of regional and international musicians to central Connecticut.

LINEUP: John Patitucci, Yotam Silberstein, Greg Abate, Avery Sharpe, Vitor Gonçalves, The Hot Club of New England (Jason Anick, Atla De-Champlain, Max O'Rourke & Greg Loughman).
myshul.org/jazzfest2019

Winter Jazzfest

New York City
Jan. 9-18, 2020

The 16th anniversary edition of this acclaimed festival will present multiple one-night concerts in Manhattan and Brooklyn, plus its signature Friday-Saturday marathon presenting over 100 acts performing throughout Lower Manhattan. Once again, the event will participate in Keychange, an international effort to achieve a gender balance on festival stages; and again will emphasize the intersection of music social justice.

LINEUP: Meshell Ndegeocello, Alfredo Rodriguez, Pedrito Martinez, Allison Miller, Alina Engibaryan, Amina Claudine Myers, Amir ElSaffar, Amirtha Kidambi, Arturo O'Farrill, The Bad Plus, Ben Lamar Gay, Ben Wendel, Bigyuki, Bilal, Billy Hart, Bria Skonberg, Butcher Brown, Camille Bertault, Chris Dave, Christian McBride, Domi & JD Beck, Edmar Castañeda, Dave Liebman, Ezra Collective, Gary Bartz, Gilad Hekselman, Gilles Peterson, Helen Sung, David Virelles, Keyon Harrold, JD Allen, Ingrid Jensen, Jamie Saft, Jenny Scheinman, Joel Ross, Jon Irabagon, Justin Brown, Kandace Springs, Kassa Overall, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Leyla McCalla, Louis Cole, Marc Ribot, Marcus Strickland, Mark de Clive-Lowe, Mark Guilliana, Makaya McCraven, Mary Halvorson, Medeski, Martin & Wood, Melissa Aldana, Nubya Garcia, Richard Bona, Roxy Coss, Shai Maestro, Terence Blanchard, Terri Lyne Carrington, Theo Bleckmann, The Westerlies, Tia Fuller, Vijay Iyer, Toshi Reagon.
winterjazzfest.com

Tucson Jazz Festival

Tucson, Arizona
Jan. 10-20, 2020

The HSL Properties Tucson Jazz Festival has become a destination for jazz fans from across the country. The warm weather and world-class acts bring new winter visitors to town for shows at a variety of venues. Presenting partners this year are UA Presents and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra.

LINEUP: Christian McBride & Inside Straight, Maceo Parker & His Big Band, David Sanborn, Mavis Staples, Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom, Grace Kelly, Aubrey Logan, David Hazeltine, Eric Alexander, Veronica Swift (with the University of Arizona Studio Jazz

Ensemble), Afro-Cuban All Stars, Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band (directed by John Black), "Aretha, A Tribute" (featuring the Tucson Symphony, Capathia Jenkins & Ryan Shaw), The Yolo County Line.
tucsonjazzfestival.org

JazzFest at Sea

Cruise leaving from Miami, Florida
Jan. 17-28, 2020

This cruise features traditional jazz, particularly styles from the first half of the 20th century. Fans will have their choice of performances each evening, as well as

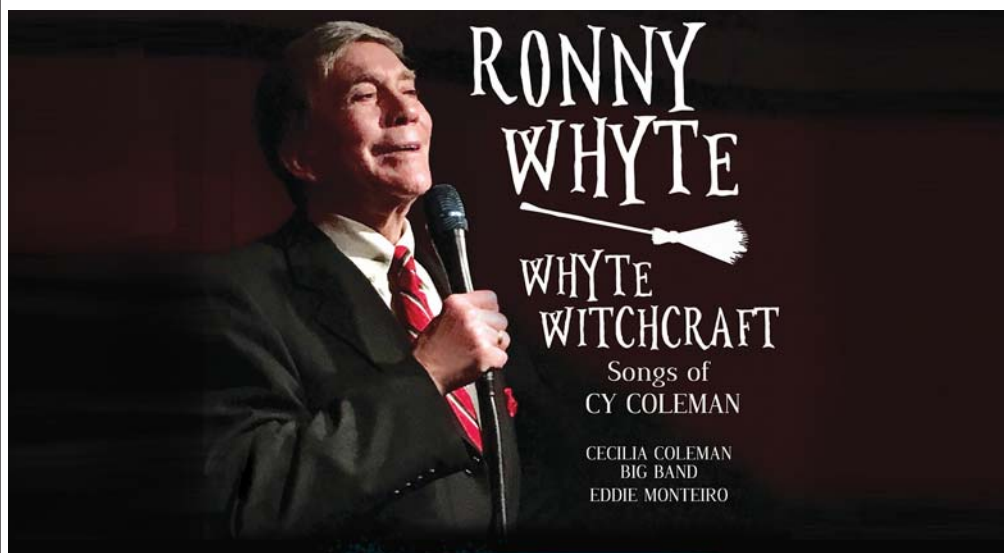
during afternoon sessions while at sea. The cruise is limited to 250 guests.

LINEUP: Jeff Hamilton, Dave Bennett, Allan Vaché, Warren Vaché, Bill Allred, Harry Allen, Andrea Motis, Banu Gibson, Mark Shane, Tardo Hammer, Gordon Au, Yve Evans, Danny Coots, Charlie Silva, Chris Rottmayer, James Chirillo, Richard Simon.
jazzfestatsea.com

North Carolina Jazz Festival

Wilmington, North Carolina
Jan. 23-25, 2020

The 40th annual edition of this festival will



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-John S. Wilson, *New York Times*

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-Richard Sudhalter, *New York Post*

ronnywhyte.com



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feature a diverse group of internationally known musicians. The festival's jazz education program brings musicians to three area schools for concerts and workshops, plus there will be eight master classes for young musicians (all at no charge to participants). The Jan. 25 brunch will allow patron/musicians to play with the All-Stars.

LINEUP: Houston Person, Veronica Swift, Emmet Cohen Trio, Adrian Cunningham, Chuck Redd, Nicki Parrott, Champian Fulton, Nate Najar, Bruce Harris, Jon Hill Trio, Herman Burney, Chris Gelb, Ben Polcer, Dion Tucker, Jonathan Russell, Rossano Sportiello.
ncjazzfestival.org

Charleston Jazz Festival

Charleston, South Carolina
Jan. 23-26, 2020

The sixth annual edition of this festival will present a wide range of styles, including swing, salsa, blues, Brazilian, the Great American Songbook and more. In addition to internationally renowned headliners, local bands and student groups will participate.

LINEUP: Regina Carter, Jane Monheit, Freddy Cole, Charleston Jazz Orchestra, Monty Alexander Trio.
charlestonjazz.com

Blue Note at Sea

Cruise departing from Miami, Florida
Jan. 25-Feb. 1, 2020

Produced by Entertainment Cruise Productions in partnership with Blue Note Records and Blue Note Jazz Clubs, this cruise will be hosted by Marcus Miller, Robert Glasper and Don Was. It will feature performances by more than 75 top-flight musicians. Fans can enjoy onstage interviews, meet-and-greet opportunities and other special events with the artists, such as a pick-up basketball game organized by Glasper.

LINEUP: Gregory Porter, Christian McBride, Melody Gardot, Robert Glasper, Marcus Miller, Kamasi Washington, David Sanborn, Don Was,

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bluenoteatsea.com

The Jazz Cruise

Cruise departing from Miami, Florida
Feb. 1-8, 2020

Now celebrating its 20th Anniversary, the Jazz Cruise features more than 100 jazz musicians performing more than 250 hours of music. The cruise includes onstage interviews, meet-and-greet opportunities and other special events with the artists, such as a wine tasting, martini hour, beer blast and cigars under the stars.

LINEUP: Dianne Reeves, Christian McBride, Arturo Sandoval, Kurt Elling, Artemis (Renee Rosnes, Anat Cohen, Ingrid Jensen, Melissa Aldana, Noriko Ueda, Allison Miller), René Marie, Brubeck Brothers Quartet, Steve Tyrell, Joey DeFrancesco, Houston Person, Benny Green, Catherine Russell, Veronica Swift, Charles McPherson, John Pizzarelli, Byron Stripling, John Clayton, Jeff Clayton, Gerald Clayton, Jeff Hamilton, Randy Brecker, Lewis Nash, Jimmy Greene, Wycliffe Gordon, Shelly Berg, Emmet Cohen, Sullivan Fortner, Niki Haris, Matt Wilson, Ken Peplowski, James Morrison, Brian Lynch, Nicki Parrott, Terrell Stafford, Gary Smulyan, John Fedchock, Jennifer Wharton, Sean Jones, Dick Oatts, Antonio Hart, Romero Lubambo, Johnathan Blake.
thejazzcruise.com

Newport Beach Jazz Party

Newport Beach, California
Feb. 13-16, 2020

Fans at the 20th edition of this festival can expect the unexpected as their favorite artists often collaborate in surprise jam sessions.

LINEUP: Wycliffe Gordon, Houston Person, Veronica Swift, James Morrison, Emmet Cohen Trio, Jeff Hamilton Trio, Ken Peplowski, Scott Hamilton, Graham Dechter, Tony Monaco, Chuck Redd, Diego Figueredo, Tom Scott, Nicki Parrott, Lewis Nash, Katie Thiroux, Shelly Berg.
newportbeachjazzparty.com

GroundUP Music Festival

Miami Beach, Florida
Feb. 14-16, 2020

Snarky Puppy, which topped the Jazz Group category in the 2018 DownBeat Readers Poll, helps organize this festival. The band will play on all three nights of the 2020 festival, with a different lineup each night.

LINEUP: Last year's lineup included Snarky Puppy, Chris Potter, Lalah Hathaway, David Crosby, Andrew Bird, Susan Baca.
festival.groundupmusic.net

San Jose Jazz Winter Fest

San Jose, California
Feb. 14-29, 2020

The "cool" counterpart to Summer Fest, this winter event presents jazz, blues, Latin music and other genres in intimate venues in downtown San Jose.

LINEUP: Last year's lineup included Catherine Russell, Charles McPherson, Tiffany Austin, Aaron Diehl.
sanjosejazz.org

Elmhurst College Jazz Festival

Elmhurst, Illinois
Feb. 20-23, 2020

Every year for more than half a century, many of the best collegiate groups in the country have converged on the Elmhurst College campus for performances and educational sessions. At the 53rd annual edition of this event, student musicians will be surrounded by some of the most accomplished professional jazz musicians in the world to create an unparalleled learning environment and a series of high-profile concerts.

LINEUP: Count Basie Orchestra directed by Scotty Barnhart, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Bobby Floyd, Dennis Mackrel, Bobby Shew, Gary Smulyan.
elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival

PDX Jazz Festival

Portland, Oregon
Feb. 20–March 1, 2020

This festival will feature main stage performances by some of the most important jazz artists of today, as well as numerous free events throughout the city. In addition to concerts, there will be education events, jazz conversations and lectures.

LINEUP: Last year's lineup included Pharoah Sanders, Charles McPherson, Stanley Clarke, Terence Blanchard, The Bad Plus.
pdxjazz.com

Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival

Moscow, Idaho
Feb. 28–29, 2020

This event is the largest educational jazz festival in the nation. Students from more than 100 schools will attend more than 90 workshops.

LINEUP: Joshua Redman, Vertical Voices, Steve Kovalcheck, Erik Applegate, Lionel Hampton Big Band.
uidaho.edu/jazzfest

DeMiero Jazz Festival

Edmonds, Washington
March 5–7, 2020

At this event, jazz students will have the opportunity to experiment in a noncompetitive, nurturing environment. Vocalist Sara Gazarek is the artistic director.

LINEUP: Sara Gazarek, Soundsation Jazz Choir, Greta Matassa, Johnaye Kendrick.
demierojazzfest.org

UM Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival

Missoula, Montana
March 12–13, 2020

This festival will celebrate 40 years in 2020 and host more than 1,200 student musicians. Evening concerts will be held in the Dennison Theater.

LINEUP: Allison Miller, Brad Leali, Nate Kimball, Laura Caviani, Jim Sisko, Chris Finet.
umt.edu/music

Big Ears Festival

Knoxville, Tennessee
March 26–29, 2020

Big Ears explores the connections between music genres and other artistic disciplines. The festival presents more than 100 events, featuring concerts, films and visual art.

LINEUP: Last year's lineup included the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Richard Thompson, Carla Bley, Béla Fleck, Rhiannon Giddens, Bill Frisell.
bigearsfestival.org

Miami Downtown Jazz Festival

Miami, Florida
April 2020 (Dates TBD)

The festival is focused on free performances

by some of Miami's top bands.

LINEUP: Past performers include Dr. Lonnie Smith, Arturo Sandoval, Regina Carter.
miamidowntownjazzfestival.org

Next Generation Jazz Festival Presented by Monterey Jazz Festival

Monterey, California
April 3–5, 2020

More than 1,300 student musicians will participate in the 50th annual edition of this event, which welcomes middle, high school and collegiate students.

LINEUP: Past performers have included ensembles from throughout the United States.
montereyjazzfestival.org

Knox-Rootabaga Jazz Festival

Galesburg, Illinois
April 16–18, 2020

This festival brings together Knox College, the Galesburg community, area musicians, music lovers and arts supporters.

LINEUP: Matt Wilson, Knox Alumni Big Band, Knox College faculty members.
knox.edu

French Quarter Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana
April 16–19, 2020

This event will feature more than 1,700 musicians on 23 stages, plus 60 food vendors and numerous special events scattered throughout the French Quarter. This festival is

considered the largest showcase of Louisiana food, music, and culture in the world.

LINEUP: Irma Thomas, Chubby Carrier & The Bayou Swamp Band, Ellis Marsalis, Charmaine Neville, The Dixie Cups, Rockin' Dopsie, Sweet Crude, Robin Barnes, Erica Falls, Lost Bayou Ramblers, Tim Laughlin, James Andrews, Jeremy Davenport, Little Freddie King.
frenchquarterfest.org

Eau Claire Jazz Festival

Eau Claire, Wisconsin
April 24–25, 2020

Founded in 1967, this event is presented in partnership with the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire.

LINEUP: Cyrus Chestnut, James Morrison, Diane Schuur.
eauclairejazz.com

New York City Jazz Festival

New York City
April 24–25, 2020

Held at Symphony Space, this festival gives instrumental and vocal jazz ensembles the opportunity to perform as part of a ticketed daytime performance, receive comments from a panel of experts, have a private clinic with one of them and attend an evening performance of select professional and amateur musicians.

LINEUP: Past professional collaborators have included Kurt Elling, Bob Mintzer, John Fedchock, Paquito D'Rivera.
mcp.us/nyc-jazz-festival

Elmhurst College

THE **53**rd ANNUAL
ELMHURST COLLEGE

JAZZ FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 20–23, 2020

The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra
Directed by Scotty Barnhart

Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra
Bobby Floyd
Dennis Mackrel
Bobby Shew
Gary Smulyan

Tickets on sale December 1
elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival



Trumpeter/vocalist Bria Skonberg is among the international artists who have performed at the North Carolina Jazz Festival in Wilmington.

STORIED N.C. FESTIVAL OFFERS VIBRANT JAZZ JAMS

Saxophonist Houston Person and drummer/vibraphonist Chuck Redd—two of the headliners at the upcoming 40th annual North Carolina Jazz Festival in Wilmington—recently compared the fest to a jazz cruise. The NCJF will take place Jan. 23–25 at the Hotel Ballast, firmly planted on the bank of the Cape Fear River. All the musicians and most festgoers will stay at the hotel, which becomes as self-contained as any cruise ship.

“It’s akin to a jazz cruise, where everyone’s together,” Redd explained. “The musicians run into the patrons in the lobby or in the restaurant, and you develop a connection. ... It has become a destination festival, especially for people on the East Coast.”

“On a jazz cruise,” Person noted, “the ship is like a hotel, so it’s the same thing. It gives the fans more contact with the musicians. It allows

the fans to get to know the musicians, and the musicians to sell themselves to the fans. It’s great.”

Like many jazz cruises, the sets are a combination of working bands doing their usual show and jam sessions where players are mixed and matched with peers they might not have played with previously—just to see what sparks could fly. Each jam session has a leader to choose repertoire and tempos, but one session’s leader might be the next session’s sideman.

“It’s a nice format because you get to play with a lot of different guys,” Person said. “It’s a way of keeping abreast of what your peers are doing. When everything’s not so rehearsed, there’s more improvisation. It leads to a lot of work, because you meet guys you click with. You leave your ego at home and have a lot of fun.”

The first night of the 2020 festival will be

devoted to working bands. The show will open with Wilmington-based drummer Jon Hill’s band, followed by internationally renowned pianist Emmet Cohen leading his namesake trio. Following that set, the trio will back singer Veronica Swift, and the evening will culminate with Professor Cunningham’s Traditional Jazz Jam. The following two evenings will offer jam sessions, featuring 15 artists who will combine in different lineups. Among the participants will be Person, Redd, bassist/vocalist Nicki Parrott, pianist/vocalist Champion Fulton, trombonist Dion Tucker and bassist Herman Burney.

Unlike jazz cruises, however, the NCJF has a strong educational outreach program. On the morning of Jan. 24, the master musicians will fan out into three Wilmington schools to hold jazz workshops with students. That afternoon, a select number of students will be invited to the hotel to get small group lessons from nine different professionals.

“Back at the hotel, I’ll have six or seven students on drums and vibes,” Redd said. “I’ll assess their abilities, and I’ll find a drummer who can maintain a rhythm and someone who can play mallets. I’ll give them a riff, maybe a blues or something, and we’ll develop it into a tune. We can play something for the parents, and the kids feel like they’ve done something meaningful.”

The NCJF was founded by Harry Van Velsor, a dermatologist and pianist who led a local trad-jazz band. In the late ’70s, he found himself in a Chicago bar with a piano, and after asking the bartender if it was OK, Van Velsor commenced to play. Before long a stranger sat down on the bench beside him and began to pound out some dazzling boogie-woogie. It was Art Hodes, who had collaborated with Sidney Bechet and recorded leader dates for Blue Note. The two became friends, and Van Velsor showcased Hodes as the star of the inaugural NCJF in 1980.

In 2006, Van Velsor handed the leadership role to Sandy Evans, who serves as president of the festival. Evans set out to diversify and expand what primarily had been a trad-jazz affair. She added the working-band sets and the educational activities in schools. And for the jam sessions, she insisted on booking players from a broader array of styles to reflect more of the jazz spectrum.

“It’s all different kinds of jazz,” Evans said of the jam sessions. “I always tell the musicians, ‘Please stretch—do what you want to do when you’re the leader.’ One year, we did a tribute to *Charlie Parker With Strings*. Someone called me up and said, ‘Sandy, have you lost your mind? Harry will be turning over in his grave.’ The morning after the show, the same person called back and said, ‘All is quiet in the graveyard.’”

—Geoffrey Himes

24° FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL de Jazz de PUNTA DEL ESTE

3 AL 6 DE ENERO 2020



FINCA EL SOSIEGO

Punta Ballena, PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

VIERNES 3 DE ENERO	SÁBADO 4 DE ENERO	DOMINGO 5 DE ENERO	LUNES 6 DE ENERO
Amigos del Sosiego: Celebrando los 100 Años de Art Blakey David Feldman, piano. Pipi Piazzolla, batería. Popo Romano, bajo. Nicolás Mora, guitarra. Diego Urcola, trompeta.	Joy y Lucy, Presentan: Homenaje a Ella Fitzgerald y Billie Holiday David Feldman, piano. Nate Pence, bass. Jason Brown, drums. Joy Brown, voice. Lucy Yeghiazaryan, voice.	Terell Stafford, Quintet Bruce Barth, piano. Nate Pence, bass. Chris Beck, drums. Tim Warfield, sax. Terell Stafford, trumpet.	Nat Reeves, Band: Tribute to Miles Davis and J. J. Johnson Nat Reeves, bass. Eric Mc Pherson, drums. Rick Germanson, piano. Steve Davis, trombone. Eddie Henderson, trumpet.
Joe Magnarelli, Quintet Anthony Wonsley, piano. Ugonna Okegwo, bass. Jason Brown, drums. Grant Stewart, saxo. Joe Magnarelli, trumpet.	Nat Reeves, Band Nat Reeves, bass. Eric Mc Pherson, drums. Rick Germanson, piano. Steve Davis, trombone. Eddie Henderson, trumpet.	Joy y Lucy, Presentan: Homenaje a Ella Fitzgerald y Billie Holiday David Feldman, piano. Nate Pence, bass. Jason Brown, drums. Joy Brown, voice. Lucy Yeghiazaryan, voice.	Kenny Barron, Trio Johnathan Blake, drums. Kiyoshi Kitagawa, bass. Kenny Barron, piano.
Terell Stafford, Quintet Bruce Barth, piano. Nate Pence, bass. Chris Beck, drums. Tim Warfield, sax. Terell Stafford, trumpet.	Kenny Barron, Trio Johnathan Blake, drums. Kiyoshi Kitagawa, bass. Kenny Barron, piano.	Joe Magnarelli, Quintet: Tribute to Thad Jones Anthony Wonsley, piano. Ugonna Okegwo, bass. Jason Brown, drums. Grant Stewart, saxo. Joe Magnarelli, trumpet.	Paquito D'Rivera Quintet presenta: Paquito D'Rivera, su vida, su música Alex Brown, piano. Eric Doob, batería. Zachary Brown, bajo. Diego Urcola, trompeta. Paquito D'Rivera, saxo alto.



DOWNBEAT
Jazz, Blues & Beyond Since 1934

Director Musical:
PAQUITO D'RIVERA

Creador, Productor y Director General:
FRANCISCO YOBINO

franyo@festival.com.uy
festival.com.uy



Barcelona Voll-Damm Jazz Festival

Hong Kong International Jazz Festival

Hong Kong, China

Sept. 22, Sept. 25-27

The 15th edition of the festival will include established and upcoming performers representing a wide range of genres.

LINEUP: Mathias Eick Quintet, Shaolin Fez, SJZ Collective, Morten Schantz Godspeed, Greg Osby, Anne Evenou Quartet, Maria Baptist & Jan von Klewitz Duo, Ron Ng Trio.
hkjif.com

Jeonju International Sori Festival

Jeonju, South Korea

Oct. 2-6

Founded in 2001, this fest showcases music from around the world, including traditional Korean styles.

LINEUP: Tres Bobon, The Tune, Akdangwangchil, Ogamdo, Tanemotion, Sori Frontier with KB Bank, Tamikrest, Imperial Kikirstan, Sinoy.
sorifestival.com

Enjoy Jazz

Heidelberg, Mannheim, Ludwigshafen & Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Oct. 2-Nov. 16

Programming for this fest includes a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of ECM Records. Jan Bang is the Artist-in-Residence this year.

LINEUP: Jan Bang, Rolf Kühn, Archie Shepp, Joachim Kühn, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Richard Bona, Alfredo Rodriguez, Theon Cross, Trondheim Voices, Tord Gustavsen, Kevin Hays, Lionel Loueke, Mark Guiliana, Kokoroko, Marie Kruttli Trio, Cory Wong, Yazz Ahmed, Yonathan Avishai Trio, Apparat, Ryan Porter & The West Coast Get Down, Marie Kruttli Trio, Emma-Jean Thackray.
enjoyjazz.de

Angra Jazz Festival

Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal

Oct. 3-5

For the past 20 years, many of the most important international jazz artists have played this festival.

LINEUP: Miguel Zenón, Orquestra Angrajazz with Carlos Azevedo, Emile Parisien Quintet Sfumato with Martial Solal, João Mortágua's Axes, Frank Kimbrough, Allan Harris Band.
angrajazz.com

Jarasum Jazz Festival

Gapyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-Do, South Korea

Oct. 4-6

The festival, set for its 16th edition, is a special place where fans can relax in picturesque surroundings.

LINEUP: Terence Blanchard's E-Collective, Jon Cleary & The Absolute Monster Gentlemen, The Danish Radio Big Band & Marilyn Mazur, 4 Wheel Drive, Matthew Whitaker Quartet, Makiko Hirabayashi Trio, Morten Schantz Godspeed, Maureen Choi Quartet, Soojin Suh Band, Dima Jazz Orchestra.
jarasumjazz.com

Stockholm Jazz Festival

Stockholm, Sweden

Oct. 11-20

Spread across 60 venues around Stockholm, the festival is one of Sweden's oldest and largest events with 200 concerts.

LINEUP: Carla Bley Trio, Lucky Chops, China Moses, Ayanna Witter Johnson, Oum, James Brandon Lewis, Lisa Ullén, Jojo Mayer/Nerve, Richard Bona & Alfredo Rodriguez, Jonah Nilsson, Sarah McKenzie, Oz Noy Trio, Osunlade, Art Ensemble Of Chicago, Leszek Mozdzer & Lars Danielsson, Oddjob, Joel

Lyssarides, Isabella, Lundgren, Viktoria Tolstoy.
stockholmjazz.se

Baloise Session

Basel, Switzerland

Oct. 12-31

For the past 34 years, major stars have been coming to this popular boutique festival to play jazz, soul, funk and blues.

LINEUP: Past performers include John Legend, Buddy Guy, Beth Hart, Lauryn Hill.
baloisesession.ch

DølaJazz Lillehammer Jazz Festival

Lillehammer, Norway

Oct. 17-20

Founded in 1978, this event has become one of the most acclaimed jazz festivals in Norway. Venues include the Lillehammer Art Museum and the historic Kulturhuset Banken.

LINEUP: The Real Thing, Urban Gardening & Jacob Young, Jonah Nilsson, Carsten Dahl Trinity, The Necks, Olga Konkova.
dolajazz.no

Skopje Jazz Festival

Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Oct. 17-20

This year, the festival focuses on ECM Records' 50th anniversary, with performances by musicians connected to ECM. The work of Slovenian photographer Ziga Koritnik will be showcased in an exhibit.

LINEUP: David Torn, Fred Frith Trio, Sokratis Sinopoulos Quartet, Anouar Brahem Quartet, Jon Balke Batagraf, Art Ensemble Of Chicago, Joëlle Léandre, Tord Gustavsen Trio, James Brandon Lewis Unruly Quintet.
skopjefest.com.mk

Jazzmandu

Kathmandu, Nepal

Oct. 17-23

The festival, now in its 17th year, gathers world-class musicians and enthusiastic fans in one of the most unique cities on the planet.

LINEUP: Faby Medina, RSxT, Paul Tynan & Jake Hanlon, Palouse Forro Experience, Tropic Green.
jazzmandu.com

Akbank Jazz Festival

Istanbul, Turkey

Oct. 17-27

This festival was launched in 1991, and it has grown steadily over the decades. Akbank has hosted the most prominent artists in jazz while also expanding its scope by including classical, electronic and world-music projects.

LINEUP: James Carter Organ Trio, Vaudou

Game, Alfa Mis, Mats Eilertsen Trio, Jakob Bro Trio (featuring Joey Baron & Thomas Morgan), Charles Lloyd Sky Trio (featuring Gerald Clayton & Marvin Sewell), Sarah McCoy, Bugge Wesseltoft & Erkan Ogur & Friends, Maisha.

akbanksanat.com

Canterbury Festival

Canterbury, United Kingdom

Oct. 19–Nov. 2

Canterbury Festival offers more than 200 events—from jazz and classical music to contemporary dance, comedy, theater and visual arts. Venues include Canterbury Cathedral and Kent College’s Great Hall.

LINEUP: Los Pacaminos featuring Paul Young, FB Pocket Orchestra, Laura Mvula, Juan de Marcos’ Afro-Cuban All Stars, Classico Latino with Omar Puente, Orphan Colours, Invicta Jazz, The 360 Band featuring Hamish Stuart.
canterburyfestival.co.uk

Barcelona Voll-Damm Jazz Festival

Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain

Oct. 19–Dec. 21

Founded in 1966, this festival is a two-month marathon with music from every corner of the jazz world—and beyond, including a mini flamenco festival.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Ron Carter, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Lizz Wright, Maria Gadú, Juan de Marcos & The Afro-Cuban All Stars, Joe Lovano, Dave Douglas & Uri Caine, Jon Cleary & John Scofield, Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain & Chris Potter), Alfredo Rodríguez & Richard Bona, Kyle Eastwood, Makaya McCraven, Bilal, Mark Guiliana, Peter Bernstein, Yonathan Avishai Trio, Andrea Motis, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Manu Dibango, Angélique Kidjo, Martín Leiton Big Band, Rafael Riqueni, Chicuelo-Marco Mezquida, Las Migas, Tomatito-José Mercé.
jazz.barcelona

Belgrade Jazz Festival

Belgrade, Serbia

Oct. 22–27

For 35 years, this festival has been devoted to showcasing new talent and prominent voices from all over the world. Nearly 30 concerts will be presented, and there will be a special showcase for young talent on the Serbian jazz scene. Panel discussion topics include Serbia’s history and its place on the contemporary global jazz scene.

LINEUP: Charles Lloyd, Mingus Big Band, Dianne Reeves, Stanley Clarke, Michael Wollny, Maciej Obara, Théo Ceccaldi, Steve Coleman, Jazzmeia Horn, Gilad Hekselman, Flat Earth Society, Henry Texier, Nikolov-Ivanovic Undectet with Magic Malik, Francesco Diodati Yellow Squeeds, Henry Spencer & Juncture, Axes, Dimitry Ilugdin Trio featuring Tanya Balakyrka, Laila Biali, Shake Stew, Max Andrzejewski’s

HÜTTE, Dragon’s Fuel, Rastko Obradovic Quartet, Milan Stanislavjevic Quintet.

bjf.rs

Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Oct. 23–27

The festival will present its 50th edition, and the programming includes a tribute to ECM Records in honor of the label’s 50th anniversary. Also, in a nod to the inaugural edition of the festival, organizers will revisit the concept of a German All Stars band and present a group with Angelika Niescier, Johannes Lauer, Ronnie

Graupe, Julia Kadel, Eva Kruse and Eva Klesse.

LINEUP: Jakob Bro Quartet, Michael Formanek’s Ensemble Kolossus with hr-Bigband, Elna Duni, Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain & Chris Potter), Charles Lloyd Quintet, Dinosaur, Enemy, Marcin Wasilewski Trio, Joachim Kühn/Michel Portal/Jim McNeely/hr-Bigband, Nubya Garcia, Alfa Mist, Uwe Oberg & Silke Eberhard, Christof Lauer & Kudsi Erguner, The German All Stars, Boulez Materialism (Christopher Dell, Johannes Brecht, Christian Lillinger & Jonas Westergaard).

hr2.de/musik/jazz/jazz-festival/index.html

TUCSON JAZZ FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-20, 2020

For More Info and the Full Lineup, visit:
TucsonJazzFestival.org

Enjoy live jazz every day!

Maceo Parker & His Big Band
JAN 10th
Centennial Hall

David Sanborn
JAN 11th
Fox Tucson Theatre

Veronica Swift with the UA Studio Jazz Ensemble
JAN 14th
Leo Rich Theater

Allison Miller's Boom Tic Boom
JAN 15th
Fox Tucson Theatre

Christian McBride and Inside Straight
JAN 18th
Fox Tucson Theatre

Mavis Staples
JAN 19th
Fox Tucson Theatre

John Scofield at the 2018 Padova Jazz Festival in Italy



Umeå Jazz Festival

Umeå, Sweden
Oct. 23-27

Since 1968, this festival has served as a vibrant and vital international playground for artistic development. The programming emphasizes the core values of tradition, creativity, curiosity and accessibility. On Oct. 25, there will be a special performance by the Danish Radio Big Band and guitarist John Scofield.

LINEUP: Theo Croker, Trondheim Jazz Orchestra & Alf Hulbaekmo, Bobo Stenson, Danish Radio Big Band & John Scofield, Ralph Peterson, Jennie Abrahamson, Sisters Of Invention, Rymden, Lalitha & Nandini, Sten Sandell, Lisen Rylander Löve: Oceans, Shirley Davis & The Silverbacks, Scott Henderson Trio, Lisa Ullén, Roosevelt Collier, Kammarkören Sangkraft & Carl Bagge Trio.
umeajazzfestival.se

Agharta Prague Jazz Festival

Prague, Czech Republic
Oct. 23-Nov. 23

Lucerne Music Bar and the Agharta Jazz Centrum host this festival, presenting a mix of U.S. and European artists. Agharta takes its name from Miles' Davis 1975 live album.

LINEUP: JFK/PRG Dream Band featuring Karel Ruzicka, Jamison Ross, Karel Ruzicka Jr. Quartet, Mike Stern & Jeff Lorber Fusion Project featuring Dennis Chambers & Jimmy Haslip.
agharta.cz

Guinness Cork Jazz Festival

Cork, Ireland
Oct. 24-28

Aside from a stellar international lineup, this festival offers numerous free events and activities, including outdoor shows, a Jazz Bus, a jazz parade and a food fair.

LINEUP: Kurt Elling, Aslan, Booka Brass Band, Mica Paris, Big Brass Band Explosion, Jenny Greene, John Surman & Vagleik Storaas, Spyro Gyra, Elina Duni & Rob Luft, Arlid Andersen, Fred Hersch Trio, Martha Reeves.
guinnessjazzfestival.com

Dominican Republic Jazz Festival

Santiago, Puerto Plata, Playa Alicia & Cabarete Beach, Dominican Republic
Oct. 25-26, Nov. 1-3

The 23rd annual edition of this festi-

val will present free events that celebrate music, culture and the arts.

LINEUP: Chucho Valdés, Miguel Zenón, Jane Bunnett & Maqueque, Berklee Global Jazz Institute (with Walter Smith III), Jose Alberto El Canario, Joshy Y Su 4 Jazz, Trio Cubano, Arturo O'Farrill Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, Josean Jacobo, Nando Michelin, Justin Kauflin Trio.
drjazzfestival.com

Padova Jazz Festival

Padova, Italy
Oct. 25-Nov. 23

The 22nd edition of this festival will focus on pianists, with performances from young and promising talents, rising stars and masters of the keyboard.

LINEUP: Kenny Barron, Aaron Diehl Trio, Vijay Iyer, Monty Alexander Trio, Benny Green, Steve Gadd, Vanessa Tagliabue Yorke, James Brandon Lewis Unruly Quintet, Yotam Silberstein Quartet, Maria Grand Trio.
padovajazz.com

Bologna Jazz Festival

Bologna, Italy
Oct. 25-Nov. 26

This month long festival will present international guests and offer special workshops examining the intersection of jazz and other art forms.

LINEUP: Fred Hersch Trio, Pat Metheny Trio, Dena DeRose & The E.R.J. Orchestra, David Helbock, Dianne Reeves, Barry Harris Trio, Dave Douglas & Uri Caine, Simone Graziano, Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain & Chris Potter), Ralph Alessi Quintet, Cory Wong, Hermeto Pascoal & Grupo, Bobby Watson-Andrea Pozza Duo, Aaron Parks Little Big, Jazz In'it Orchestra, David Torn.
bolognajazzfestival.com

Jazznojazz Festival

Zurich, Switzerland
Oct. 30-Nov. 2

The 21st edition of this festival will offer an exciting mix of jazz, soul, funk and fusion.

LINEUP: Charles Lloyd, John McLaughlin, The Comet Is Coming, Rymden, Chucho Valdés & Stefano Bollani, Rickie Lee Jones, Tony Allen, Morcheeba, Azymuth, Level 42, The Brand New Heavies.
jazznojazz.ch

Jazzfest Berlin

Berlin, Germany
Oct. 31-Nov. 3

The 56th edition of the festival will launch with Anthony Braxton's "Sonic Genome," which will feature 60 musicians drawing from up to 450 of the composer's works for a six-hour performance.

LINEUP: Anthony Braxton's "Sonic Genome," Ambrose Akinmusire's Origami Harvest, Angel Bat Dawid & The Brothhood, Australian Art Orchestra, Brian Marsella, Christian Lillinger, Marc Ribot, Elliot Galvin, Eve Risser, hr-Bigband, James Brandon Lewis Unruly Quintet, KIM Collective, Leila Martial's BAA Box, Miles Okazaki, Sinikka Langeland's Sauna Cathedral, Australian Art Orchestra, Trickster Orchestra, Gropius Bau, Kaos Puls, Mopcut, Moskus, São Paulo Underground, COCO.
berlinerfestspiele.de/de/jazzfest-berlin/start.html

Tampere Jazz Happening

Tampere, Finland
Oct. 31-Nov. 3

Every year since 1982, this festival has gathered the top names in jazz, pioneers of the future and high-profile Finnish musicians for performances on concert stages and in intimate clubs.

LINEUP: Ambrose Akinmusire's Origami Harvest, Joëlle Léandre Tentet, Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain & Chris Potter), The Skatalites, Das Kapital, Théo Ceccaldi Freaks, Aki Takase Japanic, Omar Sosa & Ylilan Cañizares, Rodrigo Amado, Fred Frith Trio & Susana Santos Silva, Laura Perrudin Doksha.
tamperemusicfestivals.fi

Riviera Maya Jazz Festival

Playa del Carmen, Mexico
November (Dates TBD)

This event is held close to 5th Avenue, right next to a gorgeous beach. The festival is free to enter with a small fee for the area closest to the stage.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chick Corea, Wallace Roney, Norah Jones, Bobby McFerrin.
rivieramayajazzfestival.com

JazzMi

Milan, Italy
Nov. 1-10

With 150 events and hundreds of participating artists, JazzMi is a hub of synergy and collaboration dedicated to the development of jazz. Concerts, interviews and exhibitions will take place in the center of the city.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Kenny Barron, Hiromi, John McLaughlin, Archie Shepp, Enrico Rava, Nubya Garcia, Stefano Bollani & Chucho Valdés, The Wooten Brothers, Mingus Big Band, John Scofield & Jon Cleary, Afro-Cuban All Stars, Ambrose Akinmusire, Spyro Gyra, Giovanni Guidi & Fabrizio Bosso, Kokoroko, Gianluigi Trovesi & Gianni Coscia, Marcin Wasilewski, Rymden, Judith Hill, Melanie De Biasio, Kassa Overall, Nik Bärtsch's Ronin.
jazzmi.it

Roma Jazz Festival

Rome, Italy

Nov. 1-Dec. 1

Founded in 1976, this festival is one of the oldest in Europe and in the past has presented many legendary artists, including Miles Davis and Sarah Vaughan.

LINEUP: Abdullah Ibrahim, Dianne Reeves, Archie Shepp, Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain & Chris Potter), Antonio Sánchez, Linda May Han Oh, Tigran Hamasyan, Donny McCaslin, Elina Duni, Ralph Towner, Carmen Souza, Richard Galliano, Paolo Fresu.

romajazzfestival.it

PalmJazz Festival

Tarnowskie Góry, Poland

Nov. 5-Dec. 6

This 10-year-old festival, initially launched by Krzysztof Kobylinski, previously has been held in select Polish cities and in London.

LINEUP: John Scofield, Nils Petter Molvaer Quartet, Avishai Cohen Trio, Mikael Godee & Leszek Kułakowski, Roby Lakatos, Jean-Luc Ponty & Clara Ponty Quartet, Jennifer Kamikazi, Marcin Wasilewski Trio, Jazzlab Orchestra, Blue Brass Band featuring David Murray.

palmjazz.pl

Leverkusener Jazztage

Leverkusener, Germany

Nov. 7-17

With more than 20,000 visitors as well as local attendees, Jazztage is one of the biggest jazz events in the German-speaking world.

LINEUP: WDR Big Band featuring Yellowjackets, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Billy Cobham, Bill Evans & The Spy Killers with Wolfgang Haffner, Simon Phillips, Das Paradies, Mare Nostrum, Götz Alsmann, Tina Dico, Jenniffer Kae.

leverkusener-jazztage.de

POA Jazz Festival

Porto Alegre, Brazil

Nov. 8-10

This festival, which draws fans from outside Brazil, features concerts, master classes and other events.

LINEUP: Jasper Bloom, Raiz de Pedra, Christian Sperandir, Rafuagi Jazz Combo, Amaro Freitas.

poajazz.com.br

Jazzdor Festival

Strasbourg, France

Nov. 8-23

The 34th edition of the festival is set to offer 36 concerts at venues across Strasbourg.

LINEUP: James Brandon Lewis, Olivier Lété, Francois Merville, Musina Ebobissé, Aki Takase/Daniel Erdmann, Miles Okazaki, Maria Grand Trio, Orchestre National de Jazz, Ikui Doki/Sofia Jernberg/Jaimie Branch, Amir Elsaffar's Two Rivers Ensemble, Alexander Hawkins, Michael

Wollny/Émile Parisien, Omar Sosa, Jacques Schwarz-Bart, Lucian Ban, Mat Maneri.

jazzdor.com

Era Jazzu/Poznan Jazz Festival

Poznan, Poland

Nov. 9, 2019; April 3-5, 2020

A nationwide series of performances hosting contemporary jazz stars culminates in a multiday festival at prestigious venues.

LINEUP: Stanley Jordan, Andrea Motis, Espen Eriksen, Czas Komedy Gala.

jazz.pl

Vilnius Mama Jazz Festival

Vilnius, Lithuania

Nov. 13-17

Founded in 2002, this festival hosts more than 100 performers each year. The program provides an in-depth look at Lithuania's jazz scene.

LINEUP: The Comet Is Coming, Oded Tzur Quartet, GoGo Penguin, The Bad Plus, Django Bates, Flat Earth Society, Brave Noises, Cinamono, Leonardas Pilkauskas, Trio Trys.

vilniusmamajazz.lt/en

EFG London Jazz Festival

London, United Kingdom

Nov. 15-24

The programming at this ambitious festival features talent from around the world, including legendary jazz masters, cutting-edge young bands, emerging British stars and outstanding collaborations. Venues include concert halls, as well as clubs.

LINEUP: Cécile McLorin Salvant & Sullivan Fortner, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Madison McFerrin, Terri Lyne Carrington, Trevor Watts Quartet, Marcin Wasilewski Trio, Ralph Peterson, Ingrid & Christine Jensen with the Whirlwind Recordings Jazz Orchestra, Chrissie Hynde, Nik Bärtsch & Sophie Clements, Barry

Guy, Angel Bat Dawid, Gary Bartz & Maisha with Dwight Tribble, Faraj Suleiman Quintet, Cleveland Watkiss, Elliot Galvin Trio, Laura Jurd Trio, Jean Toussaint, Omar Puente.

efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

ECM 50th Anniversary Weekend

Brussels, Belgium

Nov. 21-24

Flagey celebrates the 50th anniversary of the trailblazing label ECM Records, the independent record label founded in Munich in 1969. Several ECM artists are scheduled to attend, as is label head Manfred Eicher.

LINEUP: Anouar Brahem & Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie, Anna Gourari & Reto Bieri, Enrico Rava Special Edition, Elina Duni, Avishai Cohen Big Vicious, Larry Grenadier, Avishai Cohen & Yonathan Avishai, Julia Hülsmann Quartet, Marcin Wasilewski Trio, Anja Lechner & François Couturier, Nik Bärtsch's Ronin, Louis Sclavis Quartet.

flagey.be

Christmas Jazz

Tallinn, Estonia

Nov. 29-Dec. 12

This festival presents concerts and programs at churches, clubs and concert halls.

LINEUP: Kurt Elling, Accent, Maria Faust, Pascal Schumacher.

jazzkaar.ee

We Jazz Festival

Helsinki, Finland, and Tallinn, Estonia

Dec. 1-8

The seventh annual edition of this festival will take place at various venues in Helsinki and Tallinn. Organized by the creative collective and record label of the same name, We Jazz offers an exploration of the many shades of jazz. Many of the festi-

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val's venues change from year to year.

LINEUP: Past performers include Logan Richardson, Phronesis, Timo Lassy.
wejazz.fi

Gold Coast Jazz Fest

Flamingo, Guanacaste, Costa Rica
Dec. 6-8

Fans who visit the Gold Coast of Costa Rica can enjoy 18 performances during two days of music on two stages.

LINEUP: Richard Bona & Alfredo Rodriguez, Jim Markway Quartet, Sammy DeLeon Septet, Kenny Anderson, Jackie Warren Trio, Hubbs Groove, Cece Teneal, Joe Hrbek & Sambossa.
goldcoastjazzfest.com

Umbria Jazz Winter

Orvieto, Italy
Dec. 28, 2019-Jan. 1, 2020

This festival is aimed at avid jazz fans, as well as those who are just discovering the genre. Concerts take place at the Teatro Mancinelli, the Palazzo del Popolo and the Palazzo dei Sette. There also will be music at the Ristorante San Francesco, an ideal place for music on New Year's Eve.

LINEUP: John Scofield, Gil Goldstein, Sullivan Fortner/Joe Sanders/Greg Hutchinson, Isaia Thompson Trio, Joel Ross, Warren Wolf, Joe Locke, Paolo Fresu, Danilo Rea.
umbriajazz.com

 **Festival Internacional de Jazz de Punta del Este**
Finca El Sosiego, Punta Ballena, Punta del Este, Uruguay
Jan. 3-6, 2020

This outdoor festival, which was founded in 1996, takes place in green pastures among horses and cows. Throughout the festival's history, its programming has remained faithful to jazz. This year's edition includes tributes to Art Blakey, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis and J.J. Johnson.

LINEUP: Paquito D'Rivera, Kenny Barron, Diego Urcola, Terrell Stafford, Grant Stewart, Joe Magnarelli, Jason Brown, Ugonna Okegwo, Anthony Wonsey, Alex Brown, Eric Doob, Zachary Brown, Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Johnathan Blake, Nat Reeves, Eric McPherson, Rick Germanson, Steve Davis, Eddie Henderson, Joy Brown, Lucy Yeghiazaryan, Nate Pence, Tim Warfield, Chris Beck, Bruce Barth, David Felman, Pipi Piazolla, Popo Romano, Nicolás Mora.
festival.com.uy

Brussels Jazz Festival

Brussels, Belgium
Jan. 9-18, 2020

This event's concerts are held at Flagey, a 1930's art deco concert hall with high-tech acoustics. Also, a series of films, workshops for children and late-night sets are planned.

LINEUP: Makaya McCraven, Joshua Redman,

Portico Quartet, Alfa Mist, Jaimie Branch Fly or Die II, Antoine Pierre, Eric Legnini, Commander Spoon, Brussels Jazz Orchestra, Anton Eger.
flagey.be

Havana International Jazz Festival

Havana, Cuba
Jan. 12-20, 2020

The 35th edition of the festival is set to be its biggest yet. Last year, 142 musicians from dozens of nations performed.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chucho Valdés, Arturo O'Farrill, Adam O'Farrill, Roberto Fonseca, Bobby Carcassés.
jazzcuba.com

Panama Jazz Festival

Panama City, Panama
Jan. 13-18, 2020

The 17th edition of this festival will shine a spotlight on Panamanian alto saxophonist Reggie Johnson. The fest typically presents more than 30 concerts, 70 master classes and a music therapy symposium. The festival's artistic director is pianist Danilo Pérez.

LINEUP: Danilo Pérez, Dianne Reeves, Isaac Delgado, Ravi Coltrane, John Patitucci, Terri Lyne Carrington, Cyrus Chesnut, David Sánchez, Patricia Zarate Pérez, Adam Cruz, Lucia Pulido, Detroit Jazz Festival All-Star Band, Ben Street.
panamajazzfestival.com

Port-au-Prince International Jazz Festival

Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Jan. 18-25, 2020

This festival offers dozens of concerts in different venues around the capital.

LINEUP: Past performers include Christine Jensen, Kenny Garrett, Henri Texier.
papjazzhaiti.org

Dubai Jazz Festival

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
February 2020 (Dates TBD)

Over the years, this festival has presented more than 450 shows. Program details for the 18th annual edition will be announced in late 2019.

LINEUP: Past performers include Keb' Mo', John Legend, Alicia Keys, Snow Patrol, Jamiroquai.
dubaijazzfest.com

Winter Jazz

Copenhagen, Denmark
February 2020 (Dates TBD)

Held every February since 2009, this festival showcases the top artists in Scandinavia.

LINEUP: Past performers include Jean-Michel Pilc, Gilad Hekselman, Benjamin Koppel, Scott Colley.
winterjazz.dk

Flagey Piano Days

Brussels, Belgium
Feb. 7-16, 2020

This festival is set to mark the 250th birth

year of Ludwig Von Beethoven. In addition to concerts, there is a film program, as well as an exposition dedicated to the piano.

LINEUP: Nelson Goerner, Herbert Schuch & Gülrü Ensari, Bram De Looze, Walter Hus, Frank Braley & Gautier Capuçon, Tamara Stefanovich.
flagey.be

 **Oscar Peterson International Jazz Festival**
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Feb. 12, 2020

OPIJF's third season presents the world premiere of Oscar Peterson's suite titled *Africa*, arranged by John Clayton. Presented in partnership with The Royal Conservatory, at Toronto's magnificent Koerner Hall, the suite will be performed by an all-star multinational band. The evening also will include the presentation of the Canadian Jazz Master Awards. The festival's artistic director is Renee Rosnes.

LINEUP: John Clayton, Benny Green, Christian McBride, Mike Murley, Reg Schwaiger, Lewis Nash and many others.
opjazzfest.org

Fiesta Del Tambor

Havana, Cuba
March 2020 (Dates TBD)

This annual festival of rhythm and dance includes an immersive percussion and drum workshop presented by festival sponsor/collaborator KoSA Cuba.

LINEUP: Past performers include Mark Guiliana, Aldo Mazza, José Eladio Amat, Dafnis Prieto, Delvis Ponca, Eduardo Sandoval.
fiestadeltambor.cult.cu

Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival

Jakarta, Indonesia
March 2020 (Dates TBA)

This event was launched in 2005 with about 150 shows, and it is now one of the largest jazz festivals in the world.

LINEUP: Past performers include Chick Corea, Arturo Sandoval, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Dewa Budjana, Dira Sugandi.
javajazzfestival.com

Cape Town International Jazz Festival

Cape Town, South Africa
March 27-28, 2020

Affectionately referred to as "Africa's Grandest Gathering," this festival will present its 21st annual edition in 2020. The programming includes South African artists, as well as performers from around the globe.

LINEUP: Past performers include Abdullah Ibrahim, John Scofield, Jonathan Butler, Don Vito, Nicole Mitchell, Eliane Elias, Sho Madjozi, Keyon Harrold, Shekinah, The Soweto Gospel Choir.
capetownjazzfest.com



Terence Blanchard performs at the Belgrade Jazz Festival in 2009.

DIVERSE CURATION SUSTAINS BELGRADE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Vojislav Pantić, the artistic director of the Belgrade Jazz Festival, can recount all sorts of stories about the jazz greats who have played the event, which will present its 35th edition this fall.

There was the time in 1971, the festival's inaugural year, when trumpeter Miles Davis wouldn't go on until he was sure that his pianist, a very late Keith Jarrett, had arrived at the concert hall, straight from the tarmac. Another time, in 1980, saxophonist Sonny Rollins continued playing on a dark stage without amplification well past the government curfew that mandated lights out at midnight. In 2009, saxophonist Joe Lovano insisted on playing with his arm in a cast, having suffered a fracture on tour the day before. And trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, like Davis, first played the Belgrade festival in 1971—returning to perform four additional times, more often than any other artist—before political upheaval in Serbia shuttered the event for 15 years.

Pantić, who's been with the festival in various capacities since 1988, took over as artistic director in 2005, at the end of the 15-year hiatus. In a nod to the festival's anniversary and its improbable longevity, this year the event will run for six days instead of five, from Oct. 22 to 27, and will be billed as a "Jazz Celebration."

"If there hadn't been that break, we would be nearing our 50th anniversary—but we're happy that it survived," said Pantić from Belgrade during a phone interview. He noted that 85 percent of seats for this year's spate of shows already

had been sold.

The festival's draw can be attributed to Pantić's careful curation. As usual, this year's lineup reflects the talent mix he prefers: roughly one-third U.S. musicians, one-third European musicians and one-third local Serbian musicians, many of whom studied abroad at notable U.S. and European schools.

"The names in the first concerts were so big, we have a responsibility to carry on that tradition," he explained. "But we don't want to just look to the past, at jazz 50 years ago. We want to look at jazz now."

This year's edition includes a glittering constellation of headliners at all levels of celebrity, representing sundry approaches to the language of jazz. All told, about 30 acts will share the festival's three concert stages over the course of six days. Among the U.S. artists are vocalists Dianne Reeves and Jazzmeia Horn, bassist Stanley Clarke and saxophonist Charles Lloyd. The European contingent includes pianist Michael Wollny, guitarist Francesco Diodati's band Yellow Squeeds, violinist Théo Ceccaldi, trumpeter Henry Spencer and saxophonist Maciej Obara. Serbian acts on the bill include the ensemble Nikolov-Ivanović Undectet, saxophonist Rastko Obradović and pianist Milan Stanisavljević.

Of all the visiting musicians, only one has played the festival before—saxophonist Lloyd, who returns for his third appearance. "I first performed in Belgrade in 2011 with [my ensemble]

the New Quartet," he wrote in an email from Taipei, Taiwan, where he was on tour. "We had a wild and wonderful concert in the festival theater, a rather depressing, concrete building. Many of the concert halls in the former Communist countries have this same feeling. We tried to blast through the cold, gray walls and bring in some light—we [heard] the cries for freedom that are embedded in the walls and [tried] to release them through sound."

For Lloyd, whose heavy touring schedule has him jetting from one international capital to the next for much of the year, the Belgrade date stands out for its diverse, jazz-savvy audience and the skilled management of the BJJF team. "[Pantić and Program Manager Dragan Ambrozic] run the festival extremely well, with an openness to new experiences and expansion of ideas," he noted.

On Oct. 27, Lloyd and his newest ensemble, Kindred Spirits, are set to play Kombank Hall—formerly known as Dom Sindikata, a Soviet-era trade union building that underwent a modernizing facelift in 2017-'18. This time, Lloyd's view from stage will be different: Kombank Hall is now a chic performance space that gleams with possibility and optimism.

Venues aside, though, some things about the Belgrade Jazz Festival remain unchanged. Pantić and his team continue in their seemingly indefatigable efforts to honor their city's proud jazz traditions—and to fill its walls with great new voices.

—Suzanne Lorge



JAS Academy Partners with Frost

“WHAT JAZZ INSTITUTIONS HAVE CREATED with these summer programs is what I would call a minor league farm system,” explained bassist and baseball fan Christian McBride over breakfast at the Gant Condominium Campus, where 23 students were attending the Jazz Aspen Snowmass Academy in Aspen, Colorado, Aug. 4–18. “You get to hear these incredible musicians before they reach the major leagues.”

McBride, who started teaching in Aspen in 2000, has mentored a steady stream of youngsters there who have entered the limelight, including pianist Christian Sands, vocalist Gretchen Parlato, drummer Johnathan Blake and vibraphonist Warren Wolf. The big news this year, however, was the JAS Academy’s new partnership with the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music, which has allowed the program to deepen its faculty, expand from one to two weeks and, thanks to philanthropists Ed and Sasha Bass, offer the lavish two-week program to students for five years, entirely free.

JAS, which has produced a June jazz festival since 1991, launched the academy in 1996. After a hiatus from 2011 to 2017, the camp re-emerged last year. With Frost, the 2019 academy took on an unusual flavor and structure. Slots were open to both individuals and pre-existing bands. Out of 155 applications, two quintets were accepted—one from Frost and one from Michigan State University in East Lansing. Of the other 13 individuals who got in, two were added to the existing groups, which left 11 players to form an eclectic, Snarky Puppy-style ensemble. During

the first week, each of the three combos was required to write, arrange, rehearse, perform and record its own compositions.

The second week was devoted to big band work, with McBride at the helm. Frost faculty participating included pianist Shelly Berg, the dean of the music school; bassist and academy program director Chuck Bergeron; and guitarist and associate professor Reynaldo Sanchez.

The Frost curriculum emphasizes career pathways, as well as musical excellence: how to network, write a business letter, speak in public, use social media, stay visible and be prepared when opportunity knocks.

“What we’re looking for here,” Bergeron said, “are students that can play but who are starting to ask the big question: ‘What do I do with my career?’ So, the vision of Jazz Aspen is to mentor them into successful careers.”

If the showcases in the lobby of the Limelight Hotel were any indication, the academy soon will produce another batch of successful musicians. Jazz fans should keep an eye out for Florida State University senior Mikailo Kasha, who plays electric and acoustic bass. He broke up the audience as he introduced his compelling composition “Words Don’t Do You Justice” by saying he didn’t know who it was for yet, but that he was taking applications.

“In higher education in jazz, they teach you how to play, but they don’t teach you what to do to get to a place to play,” Kasha noted. “[The academy is] really opening up my understanding of how it works.” —Paul de Barros



Gift of History: Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., was recently presented with a bass guitar made from wood removed from the school’s historic building during a recent renovation. StoryWood Music partnered with bassist Ben Williams, an alumnus of the school, to create the instrument. The body of the bass was built from reclaimed heart pine beams from the original school building, while the neck was made from 100-year-old maple reclaimed from Creighton University’s old gymnasium and rock walnut that spent a century underwater in Panama. StoryWood Music, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, builds guitars and basses made exclusively from reclaimed or salvaged wood that has an interesting story behind it. ellingtonschool.org

Guitar Competition: The 2019 Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz International Guitar Competition will be presented Dec. 2–3 in Washington, D.C. The first-place winner will receive \$30,000 and Concord Music Group recording contract. Second-place and third-place winners will receive prizes of \$15,000 and \$10,000, respectively. Fifty percent of each prize will be paid directly toward the winner’s future musical studies. The remaining funds may be applied toward music education expenses or career promotion. hancockinstitute.org

Princeton Performances: Jazz at Princeton University, helmed by saxophonist/composer Rudresh Mahanthappa, has announced the schedule for its 2019–2020 season, which runs Oct. 12–May 9. Highlights include performances by student groups joined by guest artists, including Portuguese vocalist/composer Sara Serpa with her Intimate Strangers project, Chilean vocalist Claudia Acuña and Cuban drummer Dafnis Prieto. music.princeton.edu

Production Major: Beginning in fall 2020, Interlochen Arts Academy students will be able to major in Music and Sound Production. Independent engineer, producer, arranger and vocalist Marc Lacuesta will lead the new program. interlochen.org



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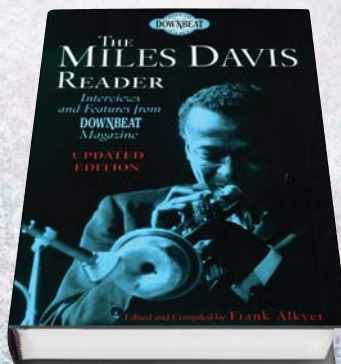
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John Pizzarelli

Guitarist, singer, raconteur and radio host John Pizzarelli knows how to entertain a crowd. With wicked guitar chops, a voice made for the classics and stage presence to spare, he can hold an audience in the proverbial palm of his hand. He was literally born to play guitar. As the son of 93-year-old guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, John took to the instrument as a kid and began his career playing alongside with his father.

During the 40th edition of the Detroit Jazz Festival, the 59-year-old Pizzarelli entertained with material from his latest album, *For Centennial Reasons: 100 Year Salute To Nat King Cole* (Ghostlight Deluxe). Earlier in the day, Pizzarelli braved a few rain sprinkles to take the Blindfold Test in front of a hardcore Detroit audience. This is Pizzarelli's second time being Blindfolded. The first was in October 2000.

The King Cole Trio

"Honeysuckle Rose" (*The King Cole Trio, Volume 3*, Capitol, 1950) Nat Cole, piano; Oscar Moore, guitar; Johnny Miller, bass.

That's the Nat Cole Trio. "Honesuckle Rose." That's what's known as The Holy Grail. That's our family national anthem. If you wanted to learn how to talk with Bucky Pizzarelli, you had to learn how to speak guitar, which began with learning "Honeysuckle Rose." If you learned "Honeysuckle Rose," that was the same thing as saying ... "Hello!"

My father pointed me in the direction of the Nat Cole Trio. They had all the elements, the things that I liked about pop music. They had a sense of humor. They had great sense of jazz. They had fun, but they had this amazing swing. And the guitar player got to do everything: He got to play rhythm. He got to play lead. He got to play in the group, but then really got to be a driving force in the group. And for a 20-year-old, those songs were great. "Paper Moon," "Route 66," "Frim-Fram Sauce," all those songs were great for me. I couldn't be singing "Lush Life" at 20. I hadn't even had a beer.

Wes Montgomery

"I'm Just A Lucky So-And-So" (*So Much Guitar!*, Original Jazz Classics, 1961) Montgomery, guitar; Hank Jones, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Ray Barretto, congas; Lex Humphries, drums.

That's Wes Montgomery. If I got Wes Montgomery wrong, Pat Metheny would come up here and take away my union card. [*Metheny and Ron Carter were due to play on the stage later.*] I got lucky enough to hear some Wes Montgomery records in my house because my father was on *California Dreaming* and there were a couple of those things lying around. It's so hard to play guitar after hearing something like that. The note selection is just so ... it's sensational. He made it so much harder for the rest of us. That kind of guitar playing is the foundation. It's the base.

Kenny Burrell

"Don't Cry Baby" (*Kenny Burrell*, Prestige, 1957) Kenny Burrell, guitar; Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Doug Watkins, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

Kenny Burrell. I figured you were going to play Kenny Burrell somewhere along the line. So, it was an educated guess. I love it. I love the sound. I love his whole approach.

Gregory Porter

"Work Song" (*Be Good*, Motéma, 2012) Porter, vocals; Yosuke Sato, saxophones; Chip Crawford, piano; Aaron James, bass.

Gregory Porter. Everybody got that. The first time I got to see him was on a jazz cruise, and what impressed me was his presentation of a lot of original things. It was really great. What a presence on stage. What a great



sound. He's something else.

[Referring to Porter's 2017 album, Nat "King" Cole & Me] I liked it. Vince Mendoza did a lot of the arrangements. [Porter] chose a lot of different material, like "Mona Lisa" was on there. It was almost a completely different list of songs than the one I had. That's the beauty of Nat Cole, too. There's a lot of material to go around.

Chet Atkins/Les Paul

"It Had To Be You" (*Chester & Lester*, RCA Victor, 1976) Atkins, guitar; Paul, guitar.

It must be some crazy Les Paul duets record or something like that. Somebody's playing acoustic rhythm guitar. I keep thinking Frank Vignola. [*An audience member guesses correctly.*] Oh, it's Chet Atkins? Very good. That is *Chester & Lester*. I have the record. I should have known that. They talk a lot on there. Chet was playing a lot like [Les]. It sounded almost like they were overdubbing.

My father says Les Paul invented electricity. The sound of all those records is one of the most joyful sounds I have ever heard.

Marc Ribot y Los Cubanitos

"Esclavo Triste" (*The Prosthetic Cubans*, Atlantic, 1998) Ribot, guitar; Brad Jones, bass; E.J. Rodriguez, percussion; Roberto Rodriguez, claves, percussion.

I have two wrong guesses: Julian Lage or Jim Campalongo. Nashville? No? OK. [*Clue: the artist is known for playing in the downtown avant-garde scene*] Which I'm a big part of! [*laughs*] I don't know. Let's go to the crowd. Marc Ribot—I'll have to check that out. You sold me a record!

Bucky Pizzarelli

"Last Night When We Were Young" (*Bucky Pizzarelli And Strings: So Hard To Forget*, Arbors, 2009) Pizzarelli, guitar.

You made me cry. "Last Night When We Were Young." If you like guitar playing, that's not a bad place to start. He's 93. He's doing all right. He doesn't play guitar anymore. His eyesight got bad, and he doesn't really play. So, he listens to a lot of music. It was great to hear him play guitar.

[*What were the best lessons his father taught him?*] On life, it's get to the airport early. He's been getting to the airport two hours early since the '70s. So we'd get to the airport and go right to the gate ... and sit there!

The thing about being a guitar player is that there are so many things to learn. Being part of the group—as opposed to just being a soloist in the group—was always important to him. Being a rhythm guitar player and being part of an ensemble was just as important as playing a solo. You couldn't go wrong sitting next to him for 10 years. My first 10 years as a musician were spent sitting next to Bucky Pizzarelli.

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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chaka khan

nov 14

Lee Ritenour with Dave Grusin & Friends
Thu, Nov 21 @ 7:30PM

Christian Sands presents The Erroll Garner 3 Piano Summit
featuring Helen Sung and Tadataka Unno
Fri, Nov 22 @ 7:30PM



Mike Mainieri of Steps Ahead with Bill Evans, Baron Browne, Steve Smith and Adam Rogers.

steps ahead michael franks & spyro gyra

nov 15



Maurice Hines Tappin' Thru Life featuring The DIVA Jazz Orchestra
Sat, Nov 23 @ 3 & 7PM



Dorthaan's Place Jazz Brunch
Houston Person
Sun, Nov 24 @ 11AM & 1PM

Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition
Sun, Nov 24 @ 3PM

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