

DAN WILENSKY



Dan Wilensky plays tenor and soprano saxophones on his new self-released album, *Good Music*.

WILENSKY'S ONGOING DIY JOURNEY

To say that Dan Wilensky has had a diverse career is an understatement. The multi-instrumentalist has a resume that would stir up deep feelings of envy within even the most storied player.

In 1979, by the tender age of 18, Wilensky had landed a gig touring as the lead alto saxophonist in Ray Charles' big band, before briefly attending The Eastman School of Music in

Rochester, New York, and later playing tenor for "Brother" Jack McDuff. Having left his Berkeley, California, childhood behind, Wilensky spent the better part of the next three decades in New York City, grabbing whatever work came his way and slowly building his reputation as a versatile and reliable player.

As word spread of his talents, Wilensky amassed an impressive array of credits, includ-

ing tours with Joan Baez, David Bowie and Steve Winwood, as well as session work for Madonna, Melissa Manchester and Santana. Wilensky has contributed to more than 250 recordings and was featured on the PBS children's TV show *Between The Lions*.

Wilensky also is an author. His sense of humor is reflected in the subtitle of his 2013 book *Musician!*, which is sold on his website and

is tagged *A Practical Guide for Students, Music Lovers, Amateurs, Professionals, Superstars, Wannabees and Has-Beens*.

In addition to all the road work and studio sessions, Wilensky has spent thousands of hours nurturing musicians in one-on-one lessons and master classes around the country.

"I never wanted to do the same thing," Wilensky said, enjoying a rare moment of downtime in his home in a suburb outside of Portland, Oregon, where he has been based for the past seven years. "I love wearing different hats. That's the way I've been rolling since I was little."

Having survived in the industry as long as he has—and having been in the orbit of so many different artists at various levels of fame and fortune—Wilensky has gained a lot of wisdom. He has had a front-row seat for the rise and peak of the CD era and then commercial chaos that ensued with the rise of the MP3 and streaming.

These days, he is the embodiment of the DIY approach. His wide variety of experiences have made him particularly well prepared to follow his creative pursuits without the help of a record company, booking agent or even a manager. With few exceptions, Wilensky now is handling every aspect of his career himself.

"It's the way I've always done it," he said, "because I wanted that control."

To date, Wilensky has self-released six full-length albums as a bandleader, primarily play-

ing saxophones and flute. His new album is titled *Good Music*, a reference to a famous quote attributed to Duke Ellington, and a decent summation of his mindset when it comes to writing and performing.

"It's really about the musicians playing or servicing the song, whatever the song is," he said. "I know I'm not unique in that. The modern musician has a pretty egalitarian view of things, especially the young cats coming up. They draw from all different kinds of influences."

That attitude certainly is reflected by the track listing for *Good Music*, which was recently released on Wilensky's label, Polyglot Music. Along with five of his original compositions, such as the bubbly bop of "Country Mouse" and the gently funky "Jazz In The Park," Wilensky and his ensemble of Portland players—drummer Jason Palmer, bassist Dan Captein and, on a handful of tracks, guitarist Dan Balmer—interpret standards, such as "S Wonderful," "Sway" and The Beatles' "And I Love Her."

The band also interprets the oft-recorded 1960s tune "Get Together," which was a hit for The Youngbloods in 1969. Wilensky is promoting the album with a polished, mind-blowing music video of the track.

While he is paying someone to handle radio promotion for the album, Wilensky is in charge of keeping up with the album's distribution (through CD Baby). His expectations for the

album's success are realistic. He knows he has enough fans around the world that he can expect a baseline of album sales, and he trusts that most jazz fans are active ones, always on the hunt for new sounds and artists. Some of the fans who end up purchasing *Good Music* will be curious jazz consumers who find it on their own.

But the financial outcome of the *Good Music* project won't make or break Wilensky's career. And he's well aware of how fortunate he is to be in that type of position in 2018. Having wisely invested the money he's made from three decades of steady work, he is not forced to play undesirable live gigs just to make a mortgage payment. His family is set up comfortably. He performs regularly around Portland and teaches out of his home, and he has adapted to fitting his music around the responsibilities of being a husband and father.

As his children are growing up, he is looking ahead at the possibility of taking on bigger projects that might require him to leave town for an extended stretch.

"My wife has given me permission," Wilensky said, with a laugh. "You can go on a little tour." It really doesn't matter still want kind of music that is—although it would be nice to be playing my own stuff. So, I've got my eye on Europe. We'll see what happens. I dig really living day to day and seeing what the day brings."

—Robert Ham



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DEANNE MATLEY



PERSISTENT ENTREPRENEUR

Six years ago, as Deanne Matley was building her career as a jazz singer in Calgary, Alberta, fans kept approaching her after performances to ask if she had released any albums. So, Matley took the hint and decided to do it herself.

"As a full-time musician, I'm an entrepreneur, you know?" she said. "This is my business."

Raising capital to release an album, though, is a different proposition than, say, opening a hardware store. For her first album, *Stealin' Blue*, her approach was fairly simple: It documented Matley and pianist Bruce Petherick performing live at Café Koi in Calgary. "I decided that I was going to do my debut album live, because I figured that if I can't do this live, then I shouldn't be doing it."

Coming up with the cash for the album took some doing. Although Matley signed up with the self-funding website Kapipal, she also had fans

simply offering to contribute. "This was before crowdfunding became [such] a big thing," she recalled. "People knew I was recording an album, and would say, 'We want to help.'"

By August 2016, when Matley began work on her new album, *Because I Loved*, she had another duo album under her belt (*Can't Help Falling*, with guitarist Larry Koonse), as well as a two recordings with her band and a Christmas disc. Even so, this new project presented an entirely different set of challenges. Not only would Matley be working for the first time with a producer, drummer Jim Doxas, but the album would also feature a variety of ensembles in the studio.

"I'd done four albums before, but this one was like releasing my first album, in a way," she said. But as she began planning the album, she realized it would cost her almost \$15,000 to record

and manufacture, "which is a lot of money in my world," she said.

So, Matley decided to apply for a grant. "In Canada, there's the FACTOR grant, which is national, and there's also one in Alberta, called the Alberta Foundation for the Arts," she explains. (FACTOR—the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings—is a program founded by Canadian broadcasters, funded in part by broadcast license and renewal fees.) In addition to having to submit an outline of her project, including a budget, bios, marketing plan and the like, Matley was required to include a demo of some of the material she planned to record. "Now, you don't have to spend a lot of money on these, but obviously you want to put your best foot forward," she explained. So she flew to Montreal to record in a studio with Doxas.

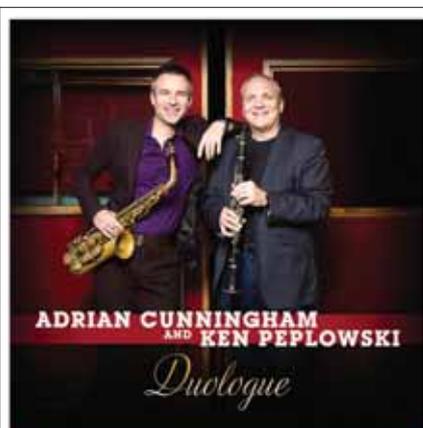
Initially, both grant proposals were rejected. "The first time I applied for a FACTOR grant, I [missed it] by .6," she said. "You had to get 83.7 overall, and I got 83.1." Matley was understandably crushed by the result: "When I received the 'no,' I instantly went into a place of 'I'm not good enough.' Then I realized that I was tying my worth to whether I got this grant or not. But I shifted that around and decided we'll just try again."

In the meantime, she decided to try crowdfunding again. "One of the hardest things for me is asking people for money, because I was brought up thinking if you can't afford to do it, then don't do it," she said. "I had to step into the uncomfortable to do this, but it was one of the best things I ever did. The album is all about relationships—being in relationships with your friends, family, and fans—and being open to receiving support is another big thing."

This time, her crowdfunding was through Indiegogo. "This got researched by my team," she explained. "There's Kickstarter and Indiegogo and a bunch of things, and they said this is the best one, because even if you don't reach your target, you still get to keep the money that you raise. With some of platforms, if you don't make your target, you get nothing."

"The Indiegogo campaign raised a lot of money, but I still kept applying for the grants," she said. "I kept applying for grants because at that point I felt, why not? What do I have to lose?" On her third try, she got an Alberta Foundation for the Arts grant for \$10,000, and on her fourth, a FACTOR grant for \$2,000.

Despite the struggle, Matley is glad things worked out the way they did. "It was what I was supposed to do," she said. "Because if I had gotten the grants, I wouldn't have done the Indiegogo campaign, which wouldn't have helped create the awareness of who I am." —J.D. *Considine*



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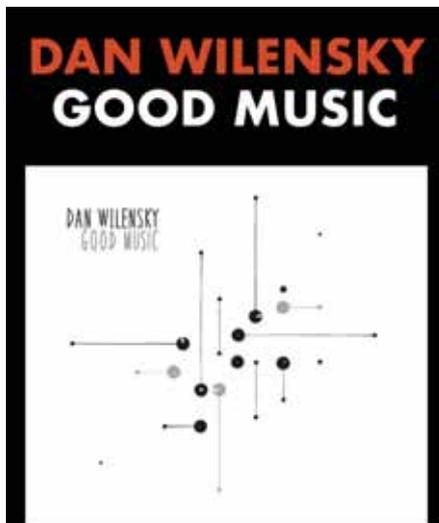
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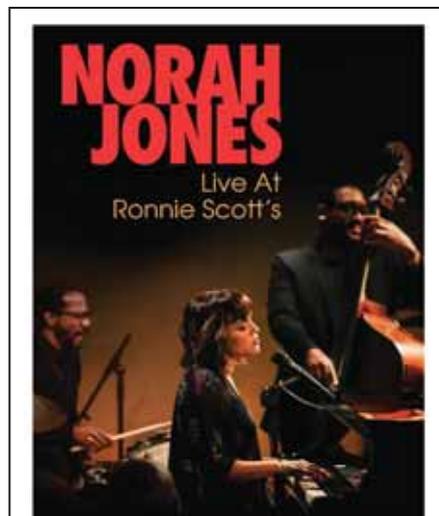
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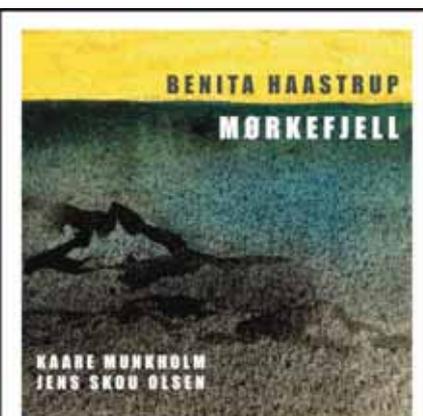
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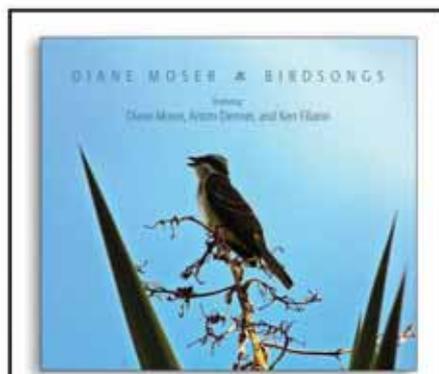


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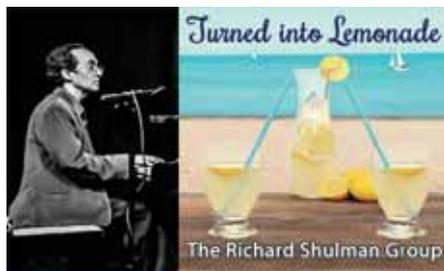
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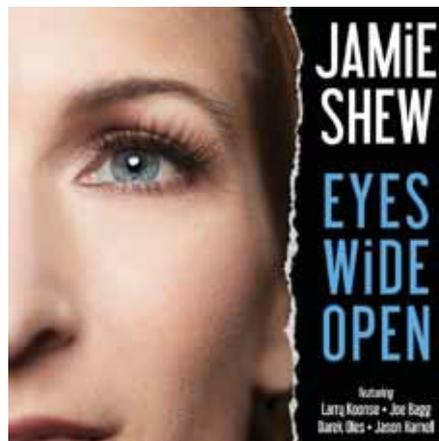
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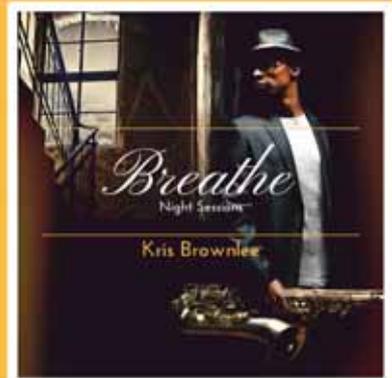


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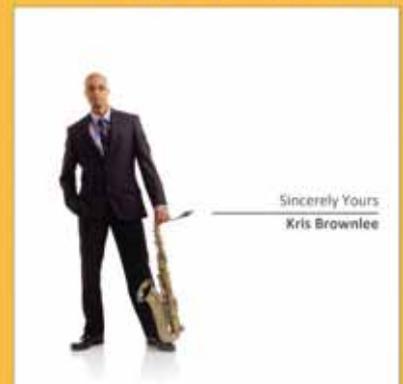
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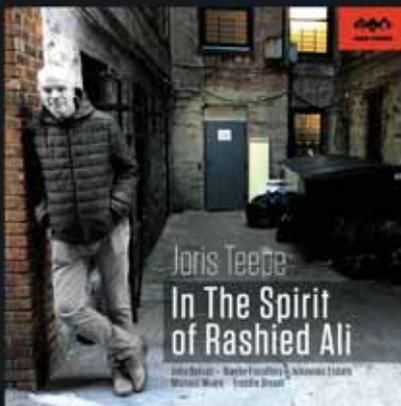


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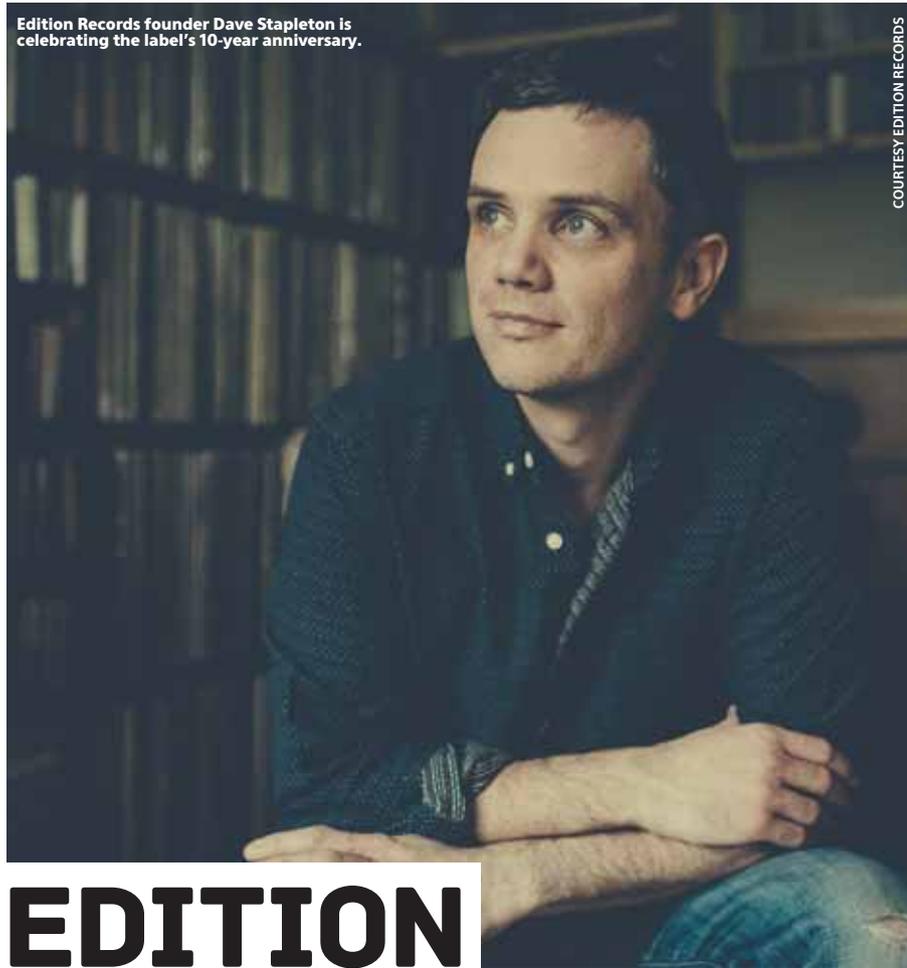


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EDITION RECORDS

Edition Records founder Dave Stapleton is celebrating the label's 10-year anniversary.

COURTESY EDITION RECORDS



EDITION FORGES GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

As Edition Records founder Dave Stapleton reflected on the label's 10-year milestone with his friend, bassist and composer Jasper Høiby, Stapleton came to a significant realization.

"The label is built on connections because, through you"—he motioned to Høiby, before reeling off a number of Edition signees—"I met Marius Neset, and through Marius I met Daniel Herskedal. Then through Daniel Herskedal I met Eyolf Dale, and then through Verner Pohjola and Olavi Louhivuori I met Aki Rissanen ... it just spreads."

Edition—which was founded in Cardiff, Wales, and now is based near Reading, England—has a global outlook, with an emphasis on Europe. In addition to British artists Slowly Rolling Camera and Tim Garland, the

label also nurtures Oddarrang (Finland), Eyolf Dale (Norway) and Phronesis, featuring Høiby (Denmark), pianist Ivo Neame (U.K.) and drummer Anton Eger (Sweden).

It was American drummer Mark Guiliana who formally introduced Stapleton and Høiby. "I remember Jasper talking to me about Phronesis and his ideas for a live concert," Stapleton recalled. "It was just a no-brainer." The conversation that Stapleton recounted turned out to be a fruitful one; *Alive*, the critically acclaimed live recording released in 2010, was Phronesis' third album—and first with Edition. (It also featured a different lineup, with Guiliana on drums.)

It's clear that Stapleton and Høiby, who began working with each other a year after Edition was founded, share a bond that is fused by both professional admiration and friendship.

"I remember I told you to sign the trio because I would sell more albums than anyone else on your label," Høiby said with dry humor.

Edition has had a busy 10 years, thanks to Stapleton's broad aesthetic, which honors the jazz tradition but also is expansive enough to include cinematic soundscapes, Scandinavian elegance and, in the recent case of Dinosaur's *Wonder Trail*, indie jazz-rock.

Although Edition's reputation has strengthened over the decade, Stapleton humbly admitted that there have been "more failures than successes." He explained: "Of course we only talk about the good things that happen. The rewards aren't the big moments that you expect. It's looking back on the breadth of everything that we've achieved, and how we've adapted, what we've learned, and navigating the way through the difficulties in building a business in music. If someone had said to me in 2008 what would happen in order to get to this point, I'm not sure I would have gone with it: Why start a jazz label in a recession year? On paper it doesn't make sense at all."

None of this phased Høiby, though. "I thought that Dave was better in the business than anyone else around," he said. "I'm proud of many of the things I've done on the label. As an artist you tend to measure things in the shorter term because you spend a lot of time living in the moment. You keep chasing little achievements. It's really good to have someone in your corner who can go, 'It's good, I trust you, here's what you should do.'"

Stapleton then offered an analogy: "If you sit in a boat on the Atlantic, you're always looking at the horizon. That's always gonna move with you. You forget about what's going on in that boat there and then. You miss the detail of what's going on in the wind of the sails, for example. I've learned to enjoy the process, enjoy the day-to-day. It's making those the successes, rather than what's perceived to be the obvious successes—like getting a gig or a new signing."

This fall, Edition will release the eighth album from Phronesis, *We Are All*. The trio continues to explore angular melodies and evocative soundscapes. And as an ensemble, they sound tighter and more confident than ever.

"It's still the start of where we can go," Stapleton said. "Having that collaboration and trust between us, it's quite rare. That's the sort of thing that makes me really proud and happy to be doing this thing. It's been a great journey so far, and look at where we could be in another 10 years—that part is the most fun for me."

—Tina Edwards

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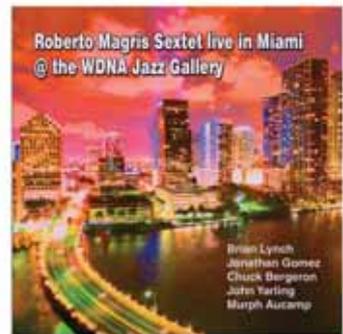
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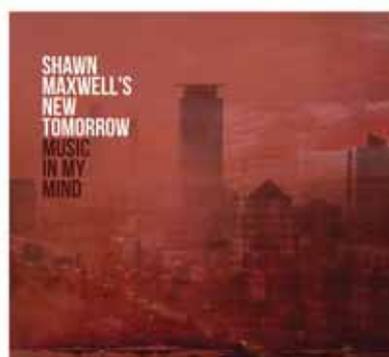


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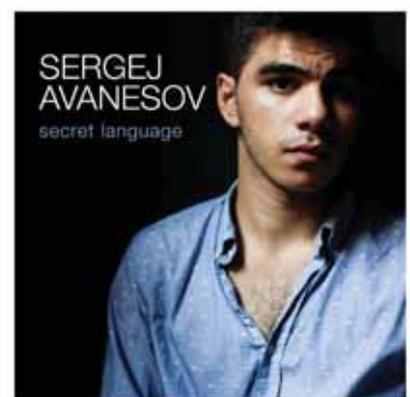
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