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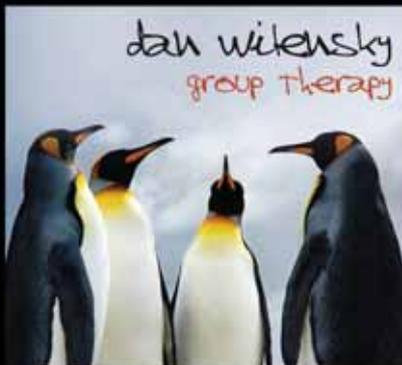
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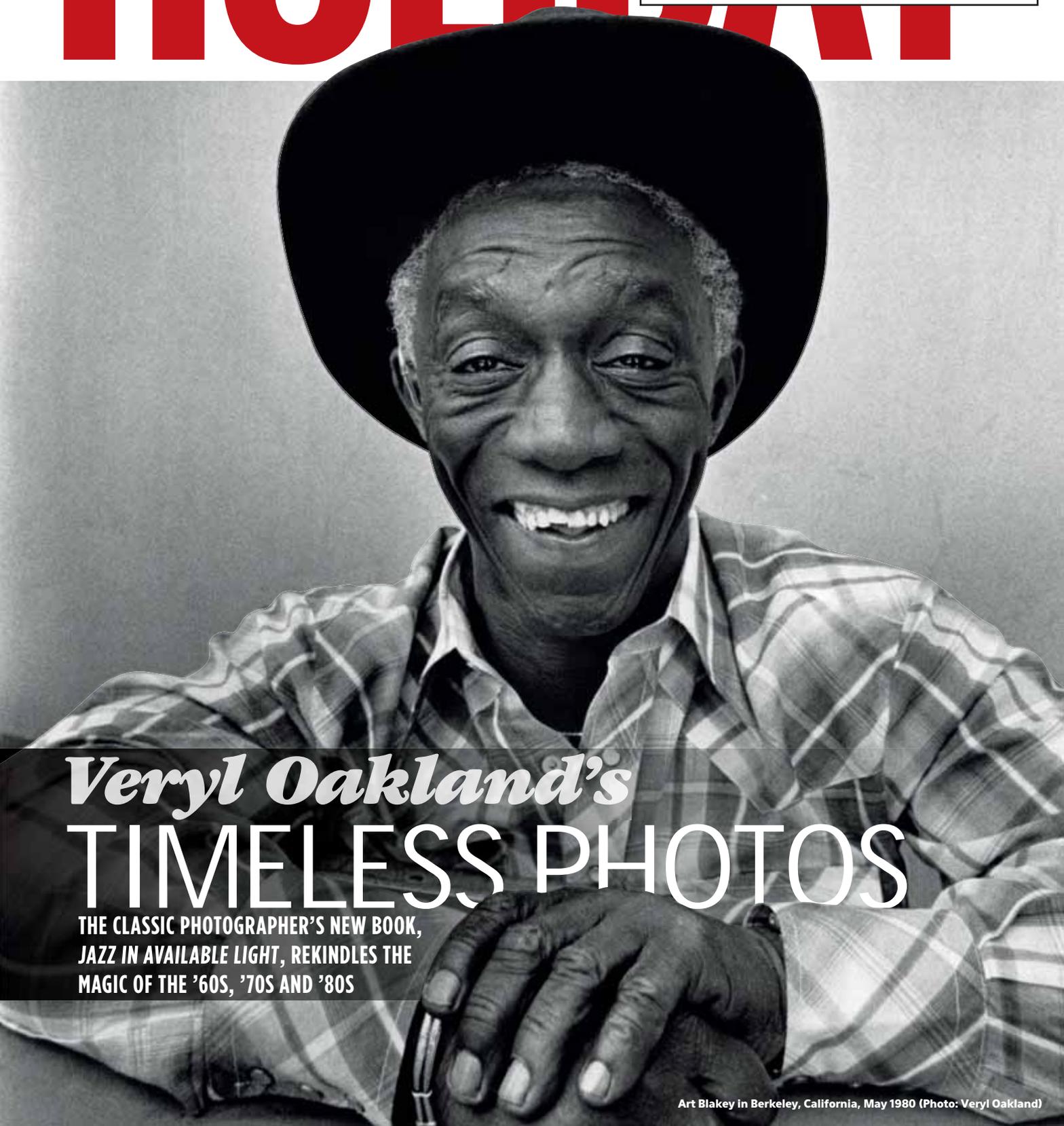
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TUNES FOR HOLIDAY REVELRY

Below is a bountiful bevy of new and reissued albums vying for listeners' attention during the 2018 holiday season.

Jake Ehrenreich is a classy jazz singer who projects pure tones and pleasantries on *A Treasury Of Jewish Christmas Songs* (Self-Released; 42:00 ★★★★★), his tribute to the Jewish tunesmiths responsible for "The Christmas Song" (Mel Tormé), "White Christmas" (Irving Berlin), "Winter Wonderland" (Felix Bernard) and 10 more. Ensuring that he doesn't drift into soft sentimentality are esteemed pianist Roger Kellaway and his trio.

Ordering info: jewishxmassongs.com

Nils Landgren has recorded six holiday albums during the past dozen years, but he hasn't yet overstayed his welcome at Santa's workshop. *Christmas With My Friends VI* (ACT 9872; 51:37 ★★★½) proves the Swede still has lots of vitality left as a trombone soloist of expressive intelligence, a skilled singer and a specialist in adaptations of fairly uncommon material, such as John Rutter's choral composition "Christmas Lullaby." Although Landgren dips into blues and funk on two tracks, he favors laid-back jazz moods, where cheer and gladness intersect. Beautiful singing from Jessica Pilnäs, Jeanette Köhn, Ida Sand and Sharon Dyllal is important to the allure of this glad-hearted music.

Ordering info: actmusic.com

With personnel drawn from all over the United States, **The King's Brass**—three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, keyboards and percussion, plus guests, including organist Samuel Metzger—brings stately poise to the jazz-classical-pop holiday spirit displayed on *Christmas Joy* (Summit 733; 65:13 ★★★★★). Trumpeter-bandleader Tim Zimmerman and company mine spirituality in age-old carols and fun in secular tunes. The band gives dramatic animation to pleasing arrangements of Bizet's "Farandole—The March Of The Kings" and Paul Dukas' "Fanfare," from his ballet *La Péri*.

Ordering info: summitrecords.com

Not long before Johnny Carson retired from

his talk show in 1992, the 19-piece house band recorded *Merry Christmas From Doc Severinsen & The Tonight Show Orchestra* (Amherst 94406; 54:37 ★★★★★). There's a marked nonchalance to the swinging jazz from trumpeter Severinsen and his merry men on 16 obvious tunes, like "Jingle Bells" and "Winter Wonderland," all expertly arranged by saxophonists Tommy Newsom or John Bambridge. Alas, the producers sometimes intrude on the ace studio musicians with icky strings, handbells and a children's chorus.

Ordering info: apple.com/itunes

Anyone interested in Yule-themed pop of the 1930s, '40s and '50s should seek out the reissued triple-disc set *The Merriest Christmas Album* (Dynamic 3527; 75:22/74:01/76:14 ★★★★★). Ella Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Kay Starr and Fats Waller sing with such genuine feeling and interpretive charm that triteness is held at bay. However, with 75 tracks by a platoon of artists, there are bound to be pockets of unctuous slop, so keep clear of tracks by Gracie Fields, Jimmy Boyd and Hugo Winterhalter.

Ordering info: mvdshop.com

Gospel superstar **CeCe Winans**, rejoicing with her first Christmas album, *Something's Happening!* (Pure Springs Gospel 002; 40:01 ★★★½), squares the sweeping beauty of her powerful voice with an earnest sense of conviction over the sacredness of her Lord's birth. Whether introducing songs written by her son, Alvin, or giving immediacy to a carol like "Silent Night," she wrests every shred of meaning from the lyrics—even as strings and production bombard clamors, rather than supports.

Ordering info: cecewinans.com

On *The Stylistics'* modestly enjoyable 1991 pop-r&b album *Christmas* (Amherst 4410; 48:37 ★★★½), the usual diet of Santa's songs, along with producer Jeff Tyzik's "When I've Got You, It's Christmas All Year Long," are inscribed with fresh feelings by the three vocalists. Russell Thompkins Jr.'s wonderful falsetto

even makes you believe all's well in the world, at least for the minute-and-a-half of "I'll Be Home For Christmas."

Ordering info: amazon.com

One of the don't-miss releases of 2018 is *Hey! Merry Christmas!* (Mono Mundo; 31:12 ★★★★★) by **The Mavericks**. Infectious Yuletide spirit informs the smooth, superb lead singing of Raul Malo and his eclectic Americana band. Malo has a gift for composing melodious, high-quality songs, none better than "Christmas Time Is (Coming 'Round Again)," a rush of sublime '60s-ish pop. Disparate elements animate the Mavericks' compelling sound: Tex-Mex, country twang, *Elvis' Christmas Album*, 1950s r&b, jazz, Roy Orbison's pop and *A Christmas Gift For You From Phil Spector*.

Ordering info: themavericksband.com

Swiss band **Dub Spencer & Trance Hill** buck Yuletide conventions by delivering dub syncretized with rock and electronic music. "Silent Night," "Jingle Bells" and the nine other tracks on *Christmas In Dub* (Echo Beach 131; 42:22 ★★★★★) offer plenty of spacey innovation. A melodica, in the spirit of Augustus Pablo, conspires with guitar, banjo and organ in bringing an organic presence to the stylized dub. Several famous melodies are obscured or unrecognizable till the listener teases them out.

Ordering info: forcedexposure.com

Thanks to bassist David "Solid" Gould's band, **The Temple Rockers**, there is stirring new Hanukkah music this year. The group cleverly fuses traditional Jewish melodies and rich reggae rhythms on the measuredly joyous *Festival Of Lights* (Fresh Roots 001; 40:31 ★★★★★). Gould, who has worked with the U.S. reggae band John Brown's Body, wisely recruited veteran Jamaican vocalists Linval Thompson, Wayne Jarrett and Ansel Meditation as guests. Listeners can light candles to the syncopated bounce of "Almighty Light," "Rock Of Ages" and other trance-like tracks.

Ordering info: davidssolidgould.com

—Frank-John Hadley



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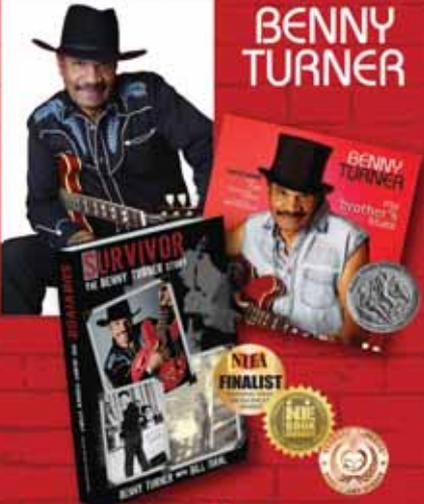

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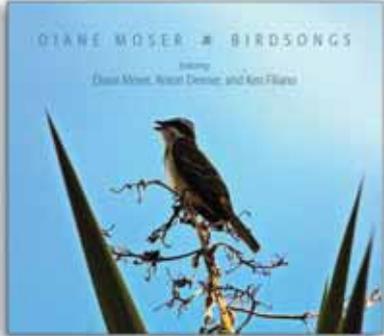
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THE QUEEN STILL REIGNS

When Aretha Franklin died Aug. 16, many journalists tried to quantify the impact of an artist who had won 18 Grammys, placed 100 songs on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, and whose estate perhaps is worth millions of dollars. But such figures represent an infinitesimal sliver of the artistic and entertainment value the "Queen of Soul" generously gave to rapt listeners over the decades.

Franklin made numerous productive visits to the recording studio during her long reign. Even when following a tame mainstream pop-jazz direction on Columbia Records in the early 1960s, she cut impressive jazz-oriented sides with the Ray Bryant Combo. She also made credible early soul music, especially "Soulville," on a Dinah Washington tribute album released in 1964. Flash forward to the mid-'80s: Franklin was enjoying a comeback with the hits "Freeway Of Love" and "Who's Zoomin' Who" (both in 1985) and "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)," a 1987 duet with George Michael that topped Billboard's pop singles chart. As recently as 2015, the singer extracted emotional gold with a rendition of Adele's "Rolling In The Deep."

The artistic zenith of Franklin's career came in the late '60s when Atlantic Records producer Jerry Wexler allowed her full creative license in Rick Hall's studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Her teaming with Southern soul musicians of considerable musical strength and rapport was a godsend. Moreover, backup singers engaged Franklin in call-and-response exchanges that evoked her testifying as a young singer in Detroit's New Bethel Baptist Church, where her father was minister. Some fans started calling her "Lady Soul" (the title of a 1968 album), and the nickname was perfect for the powerhouse vocalist and embodiment of African-American pride.

An American music treasure-trove if ever there were one, *The Atlantic Singles Collection, 1967-1970* (Atlantic/Rhino, available from Amazon) is offered in double-CD and double-LP formats. The program draws us into Franklin's world of complex emotional depth with 34 singles (compiled from six albums) that fully display her vocal authority. Franklin turned musical performances into high drama, digging into songs with grit, affirmation, ache, sensual pleasure, tearfulness and ferocity. And, oh, what songs they were.

Franklin transformed Otis Redding's 1965 crossover hit "Respect" into a shout-out for civil rights, gender equality and sexual expression,



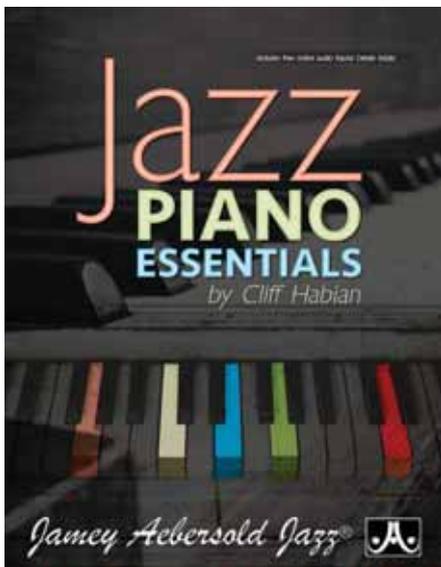
fiercely punctuated with her own gospel-infused piano chords. Backup singing by her sisters, Erma and Carolyn, had its roots in Sunday morning worship. But it was a Southern soul performance all the same, and the song, which topped the pop chart for two weeks in 1967, widely is regarded as one of the greatest singles in rock and soul history.

Also a standout among the 34 tracks is Don Covay's "Chain Of Fools." Franklin ramps up her displeasure over a suitor's unforgivable transgressions into a rage that's the stuff of a hell-fire sermon. Another of the richest gems, Gerry Goffin and Carole King's "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman," extols female sexuality, with the Queen's impassioned vocals reflecting joyous confidence while strings, horns and the rhythm section add to the sensual mood.

Still another song secure in the soul music pantheon is an original written by Franklin and her husband, Ted White: "(Sweet Sweet Baby) Since You've Been Gone." Her voice pleads for the return of her guy at a sky-high emotional peak that almost defies belief; Tommy Cogbill's bass line and the horn parts are marvelous. Franklin gave it her all, too, when emoting with poignancy and perfect execution on Chips Moman and Dan Penn's ballad "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man," released as the B-side to "I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Love You)," written by Ronnie Shannon.

Franklin sustained a high level of confident assertion on all the other chronologically ordered songs of this compilation, which features startling makeovers of The Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" and The Band's "The Weight," as well as songs popularized by Glen Campbell ("Gentle On My Mind") and Dionne Warwick ("I Say A Little Prayer"). As natural as breathing, Franklin conjured emotion from an unbelievable bounty of expressive means.

—Frank-John Hadley



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THE BIG NOTE
A GUIDE TO THE RECORDINGS OF FRANK ZAPPA

CHARLES ULRICH

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Wayne Shorter (left) and Jaco Pastorius

REDISCOVERED PHOTO TREASURES

From the 1960s through the '80s, Veryl Oakland wielded his camera the same way an improviser might his axe—snapping photos of jazz musicians in the moment, with only his wits, experience and the stimulation of his environment to guide him.

The photos, an invaluable contribution to the history of jazz, were stored in what seemed like a secure spot in Oakland's home in Sacramento, California. Then, in 1990, a flood engulfed the home, damaging priceless negatives and prints.

"I had pretty much written the whole thing off as a lost cause," Oakland said. "It took me 20 years to get out of the funk."

But that he did. In 2010, with the encouragement of his daughter, he began the painstaking work of sifting through what remained. In the process, he discovered a treasure trove of salvageable material that he has compiled in a beautiful, 9- by 12-inch coffee-table book titled *Jazz in Available Light* (Schiffer, schifferbooks.com).

The hefty tome, for which Quincy Jones wrote the foreword, contains 340 black-and-white photos, strikingly displayed with accompanying text by Oakland. All the photographs were shot using natural light, lending them an improvisatory quality that, given the art form that is the book's subject, strengthens their impact.

The artists are depicted engaging in a variety of activities—Joe Zawinul sawing limbs off a tree, Joe Henderson peering through a telescope—in or near their California homes. Even more revealing are the photos that document musicians in the act of creation. Among those shots, some of the earliest—when Oakland himself was new to the process and coming at it with a fresh eye—seem particularly illuminating. Among those early pictures, one each of Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Bill Evans stand out.

At a Sunday matinee in April 1967, Oakland caught the charismatic Kirk at San Francisco's Jazz Workshop. As usual, Kirk was playing multiple horns—often simultaneously—and creating a spectacle that the camera loved, though on that afternoon, the light at the North Beach club was unpredictable. Oakland recalled that he did not have the highest expectations for the photos.

But when he saw them, he was moved—so much so that, on a whim, he sent several rolls of film to *DownBeat*, which used a shot for the cover of its May 18, 1967, issue. The sale to *DownBeat* yielded Oakland's first paycheck for his photography. The magazine cover—depicting Kirk blowing into three mouthpieces—is reproduced in the book.

Two years later, in April 1969, Oakland had another pivotal experience, this time with Evans at Bear's Lair, an intimate basement room at the University of California, Berkeley. By the late '60s, jazz fans were accustomed to seeing Evans hunched over the keys and profile shots of the pianist in such a position were legion.

What happened next produced a shot that will be far less familiar. In the confines of the small room, Oakland said, the creative tension attendant to Evans' pianistic restraint had become intense. Armed with a telephoto lens, Oakland moved to the rear of the space and, facing Evans' back, began snapping just as the pianist's head disappeared from view. One remarkable shot—an illusory image of a headless torso playing a piano—suggests a man literally being absorbed by his instrument.

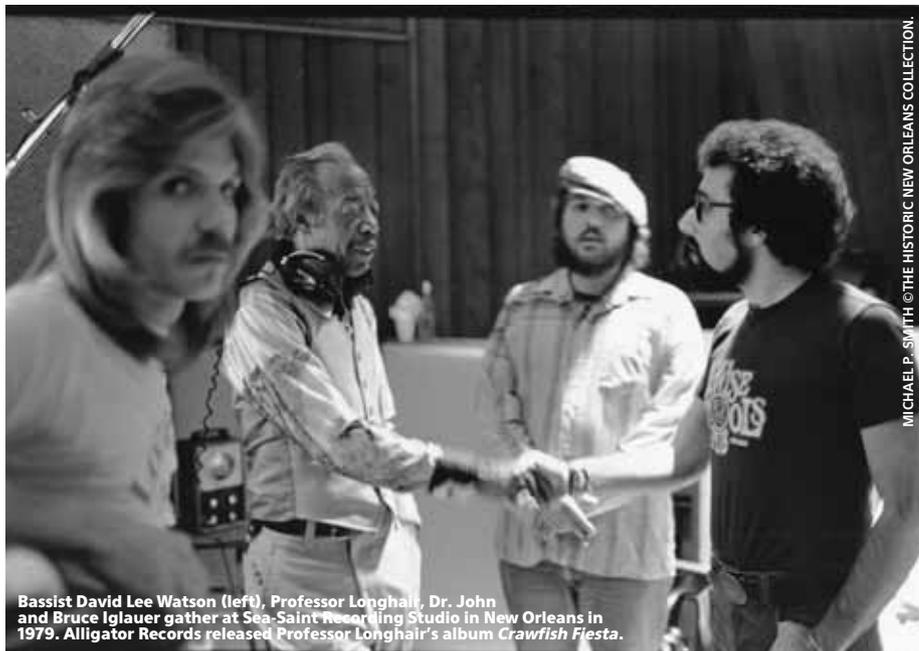
"It gave me the shivers," Oakland said.

His ability to find the telling moment in disparate subjects indicates a capacity for genuine empathy. That capacity is nowhere more evident than in the book's epilogue. In it, Oakland discusses Phineas Newborn Jr., a prodigious pianist who suffered from mental illness and died penniless. In a 1975 shot taken at Los Angeles' Shrine Auditorium, Newborn, with a joyless gaze, stares straight into Oakland's lens. To Newborn's left is organist Jimmy Smith in an ebullient mood, hoisting a can of beer above his head.

The image will haunt many readers, but could draw new attention to Newborn's work. "It gives me an opportunity to reinvigorate his standing with a lot of people," Oakland said.

This book, it's fair to say, might do the same for Oakland.

—Phillip Lutz



Bassist David Lee Watson (left), Professor Longhair, Dr. John and Bruce Iglauer gather at Sea-Saint Recording Studio in New Orleans in 1979. Alligator Records released Professor Longhair's album *Crawfish Fiesta*.

MICHAEL P. SMITH © THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

IGLAUER CHRONICLES BLUES HISTORY

Bruce Iglauer has devoted the last half-century to helping blues musicians realize their full potential, while rarely tooting his own horn. He sticks to that approach with *Bitten by the Blues: The Alligator Records Story* (University of Chicago Press, press.uchicago.edu), his new memoir about life as head of the Chicago-based independent blues label he founded in 1971 to record Hound Dog Taylor & The HouseRockers.

For every triumph recounted here, there is another self-effacing tale of a missed opportunity or questionable business decision.

"It seemed the right time to document all these marvelous experiences I've had and these amazing people I've met and worked with," he said. A who's-who of the Chicago blues world (and beyond) flows through *Bitten by the Blues*, including Alligator stalwarts Koko Taylor, Lonnie Brooks and Shemekia Copeland, and international stars Professor Longhair, Albert Collins and Johnny Winter. Iglauer and co-author Patrick A. Roberts provide an enlightening view of the music-making process—from scouting talent in obscure clubs to the quest for originality in the studio to marketing and distribution.

Iglauer has a unique perspective of modern blues. "I've been in the presence of and worked with so many of the great blues artists of the contemporary era," he said. "If fans want to get a sense of what these people were like as human beings, how they created their music, how they created their records, this book gives good insight into that process. I tried hard not to build the

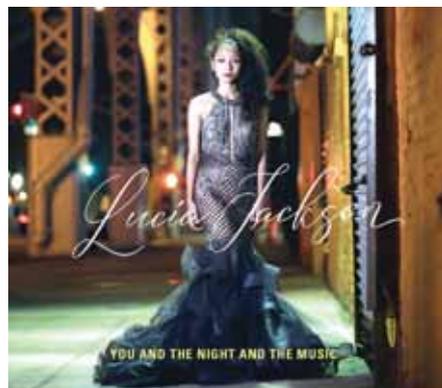
book around myself, but rather to be the camera."

Other labels, including Chicago label Delmark Records—founded by Iglauer's first blues boss and mentor, Bob Koester—have made significant contributions to the blues during Alligator's reign. But Iglauer reluctantly accepts credit for his innovative full-service approach, particularly in forging close personal and management relationships with his artists.

One of Alligator's budding stars, Chicago bus-driving bluesman Toronzo Cannon, raved about how his affiliation with Iglauer's label has affected his career. "As far as being put on a path of promotions, stability and being taken seriously as an artist, it's refreshing and satisfying," he said. "It feels comfortable when somebody needs something to say, 'Just call the label.' It's cool to be handled."

But Iglauer became contemplative when asked about the label's future. "I don't have an answer to your question," he admitted. "I do not have a protégé. I have all these great people who work for me, but none of them is a producer. They've got good ears and they're responsive, but they're not talent scouts the way I am. ... I look at talent that could be important blues talent 20 and 30 and 40 years into the future. Selwyn Birchwood [a Florida bluesman first spotted by Iglauer winning the 2013 International Blues Challenge] is 33, and I think, 'Is he the guy who will become the B.B. King of the future?' I'm hoping to find and nurture that person."

—Jeff Johnson



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ECM founder Manfred Eicher writes that he saw new possibilities in the improvised music of the Art Ensemble of Chicago.



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ART ENSEMBLE CHRONICLED IN MASSIVE BOX SET

In the comprehensive, 296-page booklet that accompanies ECM's 21-CD box set *Art Ensemble Of Chicago And Associated Ensembles*, label founder Manfred Eicher states that, from the time he launched the label in 1969, it was his desire to work with Roscoe Mitchell, Lester Bowie, Joseph Jarman and Malachi Favors, who named themselves "The Art Ensemble of Chicago" after transplanting from Chicago to Paris in the summer of that same year.

The band's music, Eicher writes, "seemed to propose a new and exciting model for improvised chamber music, opening a fresh chapter after the seismic achievements of Coltrane, Ornette and Cecil Taylor had brought 'jazz' to a culmination of sorts." That impression deepened after Eicher witnessed AEC concerts in Paris and other cities, "where the polystylistic complexity of the music was paralleled by the uniqueness of the presentation, with movement, costumes, face-paint, and billowing clouds of incense smoke."

In 1978, after ECM producer Thomas Stöwsand introduced Eicher to the band, he recorded the Art Ensemble's *Nice Guys*, as well as the eponymous album by drummer Jack DeJohnette's band New Directions and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith's *Divine Love*, each featuring trumpeter Lester Bowie. Over the next four decades, Eicher generated four more AEC albums (*Full Force*, *Urban Bushmen*, *The Third Decade* and *Tribute To Lester*), and another 13 dates that embody what he describes as the "lines of influence radiating outwards" from it.

Prepared in acknowledgment of ECM's 50th

anniversary in 2019, this compilation includes four Bowie-led albums from the 1980s—*I Only Have Eyes For You* and *Avant Pop* by Brass Fantasy, and *The Great Pretender* (an instrumental quintet with his then-wife, vocalist Fontella Bass) and *All The Magic* (a double-disc set—one features the same unit augmented by vocalist David Peaston; the other is a phantasmagoric solo recital by Bowie).

On *In Europe*, from 1980, Bowie again played with New Directions (which also featured guitarist John Abercrombie and bassist Eddie Gomez). A more recent DeJohnette location date, *Made In Chicago* (2015), features the leader with Mitchell and Henry Threadgill, his classmates at Chicago's Wilson Junior College in 1962 and 1963, and their mutual mentor, Muhul Richard Abrams (1930–2017). DeJohnette has led or been a sideman on more than 70 ECM sessions, beginning in 1971.

In addition to Mitchell's appearances with the Art Ensemble, the collection includes his double-disc 2017 extravaganza *Bells For The South Side*, which features nine musicians, including Tyshawn Sorey on trombone, piano, drums and percussion; *Nine To Get Ready* (1999) and *Far Side* (2010), both by The Note Factory; and two iterations of a 2007 project called The Transatlantic Art Ensemble, one led by Mitchell (*Composition/Improvisation Nos. 1, 2*), the other by saxophonist Evan Parker (*Boustophedon*).

ECM's state-of-the-art production values are palpable on the recordings from 1978 to 1985. As Paul Steinbeck observes in his 2017 book, *Message To Our Folks* (University of Chicago

Press), audio engineer Martin Wieland "accurately captures the Art Ensemble's unique sound spectrum while bringing out nuances in the high frequency range that had been neglected on the band's earlier recordings." Steinbeck quotes AEC percussionist, Famoudou Don Moye, as saying, "It sounds like us."

"I think Manfred showed people how to run a successful recording company," Mitchell remarked, perhaps remembering that *Nice Guys* and *Full Force* each sold 40,000 units in the United States alone. "They pay all the royalties, they're often present at the recordings, and they help with getting tours and concerts. They pay special attention to detail."

The oft-reserved Mitchell was particularly effusive about the box set's booklet, a feat of design ingenuity and editorial intelligence that does the music justice, augmenting well-reproduced album covers with a slew of archival documents and photographs, and essays by luminaries like George Lewis, Vijay Iyer and Steve Lake. "ECM has totally outdone themselves here," Mitchell exclaimed as he glanced through a digital version of the booklet. "They put some effort into this. These are serious people here."

The Art Ensemble of Chicago is planning to release a new album—featuring live and studio tracks—on the Pi Recordings label around the time of the band's performance at the 2019 Big Ears Festival (March 21–24) in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"This is exciting," Mitchell said. "I'm ready to get back to my eight hours of practicing a day."

—Ted Panken

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REMEMBERING BLUES LEGENDS

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards have been quick to express their ardor for authentic American blues, their dedication ironclad since their struggling days in the early 1960s as members of Little Boy Blue & The Blue Boys. In 2016, these two musicians and the other Rolling Stones—Charlie Watts and Ron Wood—honored several of the key figures in blues history by renovating a dozen of their classics on the Grammy-winning album *Blue & Lonesome* (Interscope). Now, the Stones roll out *Confessin' The Blues* (BMG/Universal, therollingstones.com), their handpicked collection of 42 songs by blues masters. The set, which has album cover art by Wood, is available in vinyl and CD formats, including a vinyl bookpack, featuring five 10-inch records and six prints by illustrator Christoph Mueller.

Confessin' taps a rich vein of American music. The personalities of these blues greats are so distinctive that the fire and mettle of their recordings rage fiercely across the decades with no expiration date. Given that the Stones grew up enthralled by Chicago blues, it makes perfect sense that the Chess label's heavyweights are present. Chuck Berry shows off his prowess with "Carol" and "Little Queenie" (the former covered by the Stones' on the band's first U.S. album in 1964). Little Walter unleashes his genius on "Blue And Lonesome" and three other crown jewels. Muddy Waters' honest expressionism sanctifies "Mannish Boy" and three more canonical tracks, while Howlin' Wolf pulveriz-

es four with outbursts of sensual pleasure and/or melancholy. Bo Diddley's present also, placing "Mona" (check out the Brits' version on 1965's *The Rolling Stones, Now!*) and two other ham-bone-beat favorites.

Moving on from the Chess royal roster, the Stones endorse Slim Harpo's "I'm A King Bee," another tune they covered in the early years, before Jagger and Richards took flight as songwriters. Jimmy Reed has a seat in their Hall of Fame, represented by his 1961 hit "Bright Lights, Big City" and the lesser-known "Little Rain." Robert Johnson? Of course. Find "Stop Breakin' Down Blues," treated by the Stones on 1972's *Exile On Main Street*, and the brokenhearted "Love In Vain Blues," famously reimagined on the band's 1969 album, *Let It Bleed*.

Still another source of timeless creative nourishment for the Brits is Rev. Robert Wilkins' "Prodigal Son," interpreted on their *Beggars Banquet* LP (1968). The high quality of the Stones' choices is continually unflinching, from B.B. King's "Rock Me Baby" and John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Chillen" to Magic Sam's "All Your Love" and Buddy Guy's 1991 manifesto "Damn Right, I've Got The Blues."

Another blues icon being saluted this season is guitarist and vocalist Luther Allison (1939–'97). Producer and label founder Thomas Ruf pays homage to Allison in a huge way, stuffing the box set *A Legend Never Dies: Essential Recordings, 1976–1997* (Ruf Records, rufrecords.com) with seven CDs, four DVDs and an

88-page hardback book that features an essay, reflections on the man by members of his inner circle and a complete discography. Silenced by cancer just as he was attaining international fame, Allison combined dazzling technique with an intense stage presence. An Arkansas native who logged many hours in Chicago blues taverns before relocating to France, Allison was often a singer and songwriter of depth during his affiliation with Ruf Records.

Whether in straight-ahead blues, blues-rock or soul-blues grooves, Allison shone brightly on concert stages. There's plenty of evidence here, including the live albums *Montreux 1976* and *Let's Try It Again* (1989), as well as nearly seven hours of film documenting appearances in Europe, the States and an island off the coast of Africa. Allison can be seen performing with customary fieriness, heroically, just days before dying.

While he often reveled in a visceral vibe, Allison also took great pleasure in moderating himself to various degrees, bringing a sense of modulated suspense to stretches of his concerts and to many studio tracks. One stirring example finds his packing layers of painful resignation into "Drowning At The Bottom," on his *Reckless* album. Fans should take special note of Allison's one acoustic album, *Hand Me Down My Moonshine*. On that album, his singing and guitar phrases temper all the hopes and disappointments that compose the human condition.

—Frank-John Hadley



CURATORIAL DELIGHTS

The Blue Note label is following up its inaugural Blue Note Review set, 2017's *Peace, Love & Fishing*, with a second volume in the subscription series. Like its predecessor, the set *Spirit & Time* features a vinyl pressing of exclusive tracks with a corresponding CD. The new set is filled with audio and visual treasures. The hefty box includes new, 180-gram vinyl pressings of rare albums by drummer Art Blakey and vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson, lithographs of photos of Blakey and drummer Elvin Jones taken by Francis Wolff, a magazine and a pack of Topps trading cards featuring Blue Note musicians.

The compilation included with *Peace, Love & Fishing* (which now is sold out) featured a variety of previously unreleased recordings. The compilation for *Spirit & Time* includes eight tracks, seven of which are newly recorded versions of drummer Tony Williams' original compositions (which he recorded during his second stint on Blue Note). The eighth is "Juicy Fruit," an unreleased track from Williams' 1993 album, *Tokyo Live*, recorded with his quintet.

Don Was—Blue Note president and Blue Note Review publisher—curated both volumes in the subscription series. *Spirit & Time* focuses primarily on the work of drummers. "I was off on a kick, listening to the six records that Tony Williams made for Blue Note from '85 to '93," Was recalled. "They are among the greatest records in the catalog, and they really don't have the requisite amount of appreciation that they deserve."

The bandleaders represented on *Spirit & Time* include Brian Blade, Kendrick Scott, Tony Allen and Chris Dave, all of whom are currently on the Blue Note roster, as is the British trio GoGo Penguin. Also featured are Eric Harland, who has collaborated extensively with Blue Note saxophonist Charles Lloyd, and Nate Smith, who frequently has worked with Blue Note vocalist José James.

"Juicy Fruit" is a Williams composition that

appeared on his album *Native Heart* (1990). "I went through all the tapes from *Tokyo Live*. He recorded two sets for five nights," Was explained. "This was from the first night, which was a little raw. They don't quite have the balances right. But the playing is everything you love about Tony: He had that unique mixture of eloquence and power and musicality. He defined a new way of playing drums."

The vinyl reissues in the new set are Blakey's *Africaine* (recorded in 1959, first released on vinyl in 1981 and then on CD in 1998) and Hutcherson's *Patterns* (recorded in 1968 and released in 1980). In contrast, the sole reissue included with *Peace, Love & Fishing* was Blue Mitchell's *Step Lightly*. That set also included a scarf designed by John Varvatos. Was opted for more vinyl for the new box set: "Last time, we had a scarf, which was expensive, and we didn't have a suitable item like that. So we thought, 'Let's just do more music.'"

Spirit & Time includes a magazine titled *Out of the Blue*, which features interviews with Billy Hart and Victor Lewis, as well as a paragraph of text and a sketch of Bud Powell by Colleen Williams, Tony's widow. There's also a collection of quotes from other drummers, writings about Williams by Blade and a comic strip in which Terence Blanchard shares the story of when fellow trumpeter and Jazz Messenger alumnus Freddie Hubbard sat in with Blakey's group. "There's a lot of insight into jazz drumming," Was said of the publication. "I learned a lot from it."

Vinyl collectors and audio nerds will be drawn to the subscription series. "This time we had Joe Harley from Music Matters overseeing the mastering," Was noted. "So, everything is audiophile and all done according to Music Matters specifications."

Spirit & Time is limited to 2,000 units, and the set is scheduled for a November release.

—Yoshi Kato

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—Jazz Corner



On the box set *Monk's Dreams*, pianist Frank Kimbrough leads a quartet through interpretations of all of Thelonious Monk's compositions.

KIMBROUGH GOES ALL MONK

The first time pianist Frank Kimbrough heard Thelonious Monk's music, he wasn't impressed. "I didn't appreciate it," said Kimbrough, on the eve of the release of his six-CD tribute to the master, *Monk's Dreams: The Complete Compositions Of Thelonious Sphere Monk* (Sunnyside). "I was a classical music pianist, and I thought he was bumbling in his playing. I didn't understand it. But then when I was in my early twenties and living in Washington, D.C, it hit me. I was in an apartment listening to music with friends. We were all unemployed and just hanging out during the day. I think we were listening to a compilation of [music released by the] Riverside [label]. The conditions were right. And Monk just hit me. I started to get it."

Soon, Kimbrough jumped into Monk's repertoire and began studying his compositions, harmonic language and conceptions of playing. After moving to New York, Kimbrough got a steady gig at The Village Corner, a now-defunct club that was located one block east of The Village Gate (now Le Poisson Rouge). "From

1985 to '90, I played solo piano for six hours," he said. "So, I studied a lot of jazz solo music by Bill Evans and, of course, by Monk, and how they approached standards. Over the years, I learned a good number of Monk tunes and committed them to memory."

Later, Kimbrough would co-found the Jazz Composers Collective, study with Andrew Hill, become friends with Paul Bley and collaborate with Ben Allison and Maria Schneider in her namesake orchestra. Throughout all of Kimbrough's endeavors, Monk (1917-'82) continued to hold a gravitational pull on him.

Last fall, Seth Abramson, the artistic director at Jazz Standard, asked Kimbrough to participate in a series of Monk centennial shows. The pianist agreed and then recruited drummer Billy Drummond, bassist Rufus Reid ("That was a no-brainer") and his longtime friend Scott Robinson on reeds. The two shows took place Nov. 27-28. "I was happy to be included in the series," said Kimbrough, who figures the band played 15 Monk tunes. "I thought it was just

going to be a one-off gig with no future to it beyond those shows."

Then Maitland Jones—co-founder of Princeton University's JazzNights concert series and someone who had seen Monk perform at the Five Spot in 1957—approached Kimbrough with the idea of recording all of Monk's compositions. "That was a tough one that Mait suggested," Kimbrough recalled. "This is not something I would do on my own initiative. But Mait presented me with a challenge, so I figured, 'Why not?' Still, I thought, 'Am I sending myself off on a fool's errand?' It would be a risk aping Monk's style; it could come off as mawkish or go the other way, meaning, taking all the melody out of his compositions. So, I decided to play the tunes correctly, with the respect they deserve, not playing *at* them. I wanted to give the tunes the full weight of what he wrote, to give each tune its own space."

Kimbrough, Robinson, Reid and Drummond reconvened in April at Kitano for two nights, expanding their set list to 30 Monk tunes. Then the quartet was invited by producer Matt Balitsaris to record for six days at his Maggie's Farm Recording studio in Pipersville, Pennsylvania. The band recorded 68 Monk tunes—30 of which were first takes. Kimbrough also played solo renditions of "Crepuscle With Nellie" and "Blues Five Spot."

Robinson, who brought his arsenal of horns to the sessions, provided some marvelous surprises, including a dark-toned reading of "Straight, No Chaser" on contrabass sarrusophone. "Scott will play the melodies and will displace them by a beat to bring the tune to a different place than you expect them to be in the time," Kimbrough said. "Scott had complete freedom. I didn't tell him what to play. He had studied the pieces and knew what he wanted to do. So, on 'Thelonious,' he alternated between trumpet and tenor saxophone. The only time I asked him for an instrument was on 'Locomotive,' which I was hearing with a bass clarinet."

The pianist met with Sunnyside head François Zalacain to discuss the milestone project, which he green-lighted. "François got it," Kimbrough said. "I had the funding for the recording and I met him, not having ever worked with him before. He was the first and only person I approached. Call it informed intuition."

Kimbrough said that each Monk composition has its own distinct personality. "Duke wrote hundreds of songs—some great ones, some chaff or filler. I didn't find that with Monk's works. All 70 are worth playing. When a composer writes, the melodies have meaning. Our intention was to play respectfully. Everyone was aware of the centennial last year and all the Monk projects, but can there ever be too much in recognizing Monk as an important composer? His music is past, present and future all at once."

—Dan Ouellette

ART KANE



The book *Art Kane: Harlem 1958* explores the origin of one of the most famous photos in jazz history and includes this version, identifying the 57 musicians.

HERDING CATS: HARLEM 1958

Many jazz fans have seen the iconic image, but few know its complete backstory. On Aug. 12, 1958, graphic designer and fledgling photographer Art Kane took a 35mm photograph of 57 jazz musicians on the doorstep of a Harlem brownstone at 17 E. 126th St.

Five months later, it was the lead photo in *Esquire* magazine's spread on the past, present and future of jazz. In 1962 it became part of the first jazz coffee table art book, *Esquire's World of Jazz*. In 1994, Jean Bach assembled an hour-long documentary, *A Great Day in Harlem*, on the making of the photograph. And 10 years after that, the photo provided a key plot point in Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal*.

"It was a still," Kane said years later, "but it was a living thing." And so it remains.

Now, tied to the 60th anniversary of the photo comes the ultimate homage, *Art Kane: Harlem 1958* (Wall of Sound Gallery, wallofsoundgallery.com), which assembles every frame shot that afternoon. It's like stumbling into tapes of all the rehearsals of a classic record, plus dozens of alternate takes of the same tune. Also included are brief essays by Quincy Jones, Benny Golson and Kane's son, Jonathan; short profiles of each musician in the photo; and some related photos.

The volume captures an eye-popping convergence in jazz history. In 1958, it was possible to hear many of the most important figures in jazz history still at the peak of their powers—Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Mary Lou Williams, Coleman Hawkins and John Coltrane. Such artists gathered fairly often in various settings. In December 1957, many appeared on CBS's *The Sound of Jazz*. A week earlier, a studio reunion of the old Fletcher Henderson Orchestra produced one of the wildest big band sessions in jazz history. And every July there was the annual festi-

val at Newport.

Yet, this remains an extraordinary summit of the jazz establishment, and the camaraderie is evident. Most were more interested in visiting than posing. Rex Stewart was the only one who brought his horn. Others brought cameras, intuitively understanding the sense of occasion. Dizzy Gillespie and Milt Hinton shot several rolls. Hinton's wife, Mona, took 8mm movies, many of which were used in the Bach documentary. The early shots make clear that Kane's major challenge was to impose some order, giving new meaning to the phrase "herding cats." What he couldn't control, he used. Musicians assembled themselves in no particular hierarchy. Three kids looked out from an open window. A dozen more sat on the curb alongside Count Basie.

Looking at the photography today, one thinks of two things. First, we note some who were not there. Duke Ellington was in Milwaukee. Davis, Coltrane and Armstrong were on the road. Benny Goodman was in Los Angeles. Ella Fitzgerald was recording at Mr. Kelly's in Chicago. But where were Billie Holiday and Ruby Braff? Or Ben Webster?

Second, like a class picture, a large group photo like this also becomes a metaphorical clock. As time passed, it became a prolonged measurement of jazz's ineluctable roll call of mortality. Eight months later, Lester Young was suddenly gone. He was the first. Sixty years later, the clock is still ticking: Only Benny Golson and Sonny Rollins still are with us.

Not since Esther Buley and Hank O'Neal's *Charlie Parker* in 1995 has a single moment in jazz been so fully visualized in book form. In addition to the standard hardcover edition, it is available in a limited edition, signed by Golson, Jones and Jonathan Kane. —John McDonough

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A BURST OF ZAPPA REISSUES

Frank Zappa died in 1993, but his career still is going strong with each year bringing new recordings, merch, controversies and commentary.

This year, production company Eyellusion announced a Frank Zappa hologram tour in the near future with early-'70s footage of the guitarist accompanied by former bandmates. Meanwhile, LUNO (iamluno.com) produced a limited-edition Frank Zappa stereo console, complete with turntable, speakers and Zappa whiskey glasses.

More interesting, though, is the release of *The Roxy Performances* (UMe), a seven-disc set presenting the entirety of the Dec. 9-10, 1973, run at the West Hollywood theater. This year also saw the release of *Burnt Weeny Sandwich* and *Chunga's Revenge* on vinyl for the first time in three decades, both on 180-gram and issued through UMe (universalmusicenterprises.com). These are part of the ongoing collaboration between the Zappa Family Trust and the imprint to introduce new titles and to restore old ones to circulation.

To help overwhelmed Zappa fans cope with this onslaught of new music, academic Charles Ulrich has published a 798-page book, *The Big Note: A Guide To The Recordings Of Frank Zappa*

(New Star, newstarbooks.com), a doorstop if ever there was one. For each of Zappa's 1,663 tracks on his 100 albums legally released through 2015, Ulrich details the circumstances of the recording session or live performance, the musicians involved, the solos, edits to the track, the original plans for the piece and any arcane reference in the lyrics. This is bolstered by quotes from Zappa or his collaborators about the track, followed by a discussion of where else the song surfaced on other albums and tours.

Accompanying these track-by-track notes are similar descriptions of each album as a whole, sidebars on every musician who toured with the bandleader, sidebars on other interesting characters and topics, plus a long introductory essay. What's interesting is that, although it presents plenty of pointed opinions by Zappa and his sidekicks, it doesn't present any by the author.

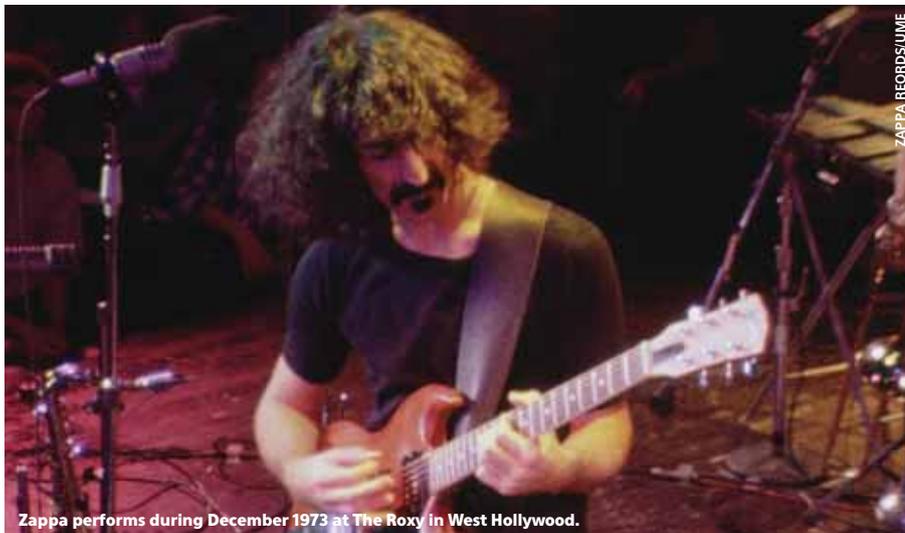
"Who cares about my preferences?" Ulrich said. "*The Big Note* is about Frank Zappa, not about me. ... Certainly, I have favorites and not-so-favorites. But I felt readers would be better served by detailed factual descriptions than by critical assessments. Let them make up their own minds."

Such self-effacing humility is rare in a writer.

And it could be welcomed by those who crave information more than analysis, though it could frustrate anyone looking for new perspectives, rather than more data.

The book's title comes from a Zappa quote recounted in the intro: "Perhaps the most unique aspect of The Mothers' work is the conceptual continuity of the group's Output Macrostructure. There is, and always has been, a conscious control of thematic and structural elements flowing through each album, live performance and interview. ... The Project/Object (maybe you like Event/Organism better) incorporates any available medium, consciousness of all participants (including audience), all perceptual deficiencies, God (as energy), The Big Note (as universal basic building material). ... It is not fair to our group to review detailed aspects of our work without considering the placement of detail in the larger structure."

Ulrich never explains how that is different from, say, the collected music and repeating themes and motifs of George Gershwin, Thelonious Monk or Stevie Wonder. Every composer and performer has a "tell," as poker players put it, a recurring signature trait. For artists such as Zappa or the Grateful Dead, who present



Zappa performs during December 1973 at The Roxy in West Hollywood.

songs in many different studio and concert situations, it can be helpful to take micro looks at each performance and a macro look at the entire body of work.

Ulrich does provide useful insights into Zappa's methodology as a stage conductor, composer, arranger and sound editor in the introduction. The author's discussion of the composer's use of odd meters, nested tuplets, suspended second chords, lydian modes and musical quotations is necessarily technical, but it opens a window on the unpredictable harmonies and

rhythms underlying seemingly silly songs.

"The mixture of low-brow humor and high-brow music was intrinsic to much of Zappa's work," Ulrich said, "so much so that it's hard to imagine it any other way. While it may turn off some listeners, others love it. And certainly the mixture of different types of music on his albums exposed listeners to things they wouldn't otherwise have heard. On *Sheik Yerbouti*, 'Bobby Brown Goes Down,' a big hit in Europe, is immediately followed by 'Rubber Shirt,' a xenochronous work superimposing a

bass line in 4/4 on a drum track in 11/4."

That juxtaposition of ambitious music and dormitory-style jokes is omnipresent on *Roxy*. Zappa was notoriously caustic in his comments about jazz, but he liked to hire jazz musicians who could read, because they were better prepared to handle odd meters, unusual chords and fast passages than most rock musicians. At these Roxy shows, the band behind Zappa was keyboardist George Duke (Cannonball Adderley), drummer Chester Thompson (Weather Report), trombonist Bruce Fowler (Toshiko Akiyoshi), bassist Tom Fowler (Jean-Luc Ponty), percussionist Ruth Underwood (Billy Cobham), saxophonist Napoleon Murphy Brock (George Duke) and drummer Ralph Humphrey (Don Ellis).

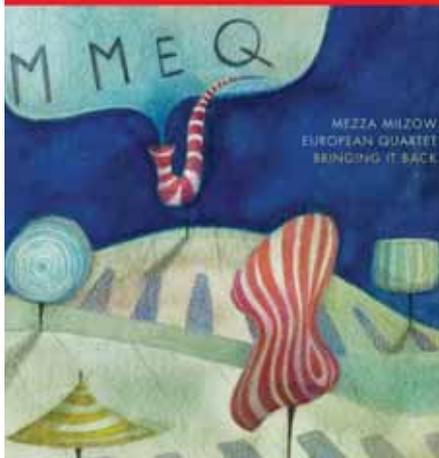
Lyrics easily can be deduced from such titles as "The Idiot Bastard Son," "Hollywood Perverts," "Penguin In Bondage" and "The Dog Breath Variations." This would be more enjoyable if the jokes were as funny as Zappa seems to think they are, and if his vocal pitch were as precise as the instrumentation. But some of the instrumental passages are exquisite, especially Duke's bluesy Rhodes solo on "Cosmik Debris," Underwood's lyrical marimba solo on "Uncle Meat" and Zappa's solo on "Penguin In Bondage." It would have been helpful if *The Big Note* had identified such gems in the catalog, but it's just not that kind of book.

—Geoffrey Himes



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TONY BENNETT'S PERPETUAL YOUTH

Several agendas come together in *Tony Bennett: Onstage and in the Studio* (Sterling Publishing, available from Amazon), an attractive, cleanly designed coffee table volume that arrives as an exceptional holiday value at only \$29.95.

It serves as something of a companion piece to director Unjoo Moon's 2012 documentary, *The Zen of Bennett*. Both projects bear the imprint of Danny Bennett, the 66-year-old son who, in a loopy sort of irony, became the father of his own father by conceiving, engineering and guiding the modern Tony Bennett we know today: the benign elder statesman whose classical cool has made him an admired symbol of integrity among younger generations. It comes from very different times and places. But in the zone of generational détente and fellowship in which Bennett resides, everything is cool.

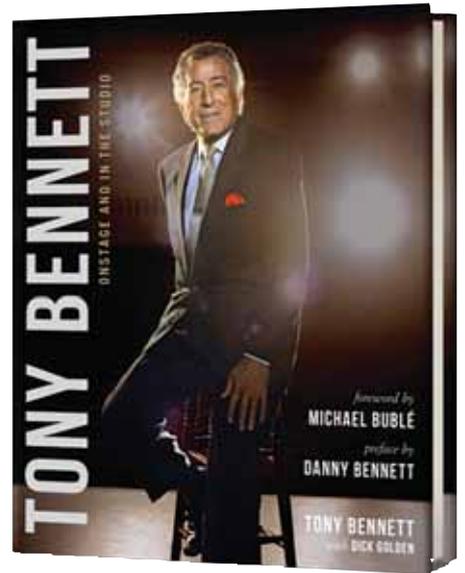
Artistic integrity is the narrative backbone that ties the pictures and text of this book together. Danny Bennett's voice is both brief and deep. In an introduction, he discusses how and why he left a minor career in rock to become his dad's business manager. But that doesn't mean he disappears or that this book doesn't have other purposes.

Its publication date was Sept. 14, and Tony Bennett's new Gershwin project with Diana Krall, *Love Is Here To Stay* (Verve/Columbia), came out on the same day, the book enhancing the album and vice-versa. It's a symphony of symbiosis under master conductor Danny Bennett, who is CEO and president of the Verve Label Group.

The main text here is provided by radio personality and family friend Dick Golden, whose first-person observations are interwoven with extended quotes and conversations with Tony and the Bennett clan, critics' kudos and even an occasional handwritten note from Lady Gaga or Keith Richards. The picture of Bennett leans toward profile, not exhaustive biography.

"And so, the whole premise of all the success you've earned," Golden writes of a recent conversation, "the core value of what motivated you ... was love!" This is a lovely, but rather lightweight, explanation of a seven-decade career, but the "love" theme grows contagious. When k.d. lang is asked what was the most important thing Bennett taught her, she says, "He's taught me to love life."

You can learn a lot about a man from his heroes. When discussing his work, Bennett is an inveterate name-dropper, not in order to



impress, but to associate himself with a litany of cultural idols from whom he took lessons: Frank Sinatra, Count Basie, Fred Astaire, Ella Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Harold Arlen and others. There is no ennui or weariness in Bennett, only awe at the footsteps in which he walks. He is like a star-gazing child who never outgrew the need to revere a handful of gods—even after he joined their rarified peerage. He loves to connect himself to these legends in a personal way. It gives him authenticity to be able to say that Sinatra taught me this, Astaire once told me that, or that Richard Rodgers advised him to "always listen to the audience." He even learned from the entertainer Ted Lewis. They are the accumulated nuggets of wisdom on which Bennett's career rests, and he is proud that he was able to get it all straight from the source.

A good coffee table book often relies as much on its art as its text—in this case, more so. The full-page photo spreads here are rich in texture, especially the big, spontaneous black-and-whites that capture the intimacy of the old-fashioned night club, when Bennett worked in a tux and people dressed up to see a star at ringside. His other working environment was the recording studio, where we see him in Columbia's legendary 30th Street studio conferring with Mitch Miller and surrounded by RCA 77-D ribbon microphones. Such images make the period come to life in a way text alone cannot.

—John McDonough

LUMINOUS DEBUT

When The Band was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1994, it was a well-deserved accolade based on the group's monumental accomplishments and influence.

During the past quarter-century, reverence has grown for the quintet: guitarist Robbie Robertson, organist Garth Hudson, drummer Levon Helm (1940–2012), bassist Rick Danko (1943–'99) and pianist Richard Manuel (1943–'86). And yet, the roots-rock ensemble remains partially in the shadow of Bob Dylan, thanks to a long, fruitful association.

Dylan recruited the group to back him on tour in 1965–'66, and he repeatedly would work with these musicians onstage and in the studio. The quintet plays on Dylan's studio album *Planet Waves* and the collaborative concert album *Before The Flood* (both released in 1974), as well as the recordings compiled on *The Basement Tapes* (widely bootlegged but officially released in 1975). When The Band performed its (supposed) farewell show in San Francisco on Nov. 25, 1976, the array of guest artists included Muddy Waters, The Staples Singers, Joni Mitchell, Dr. John and, of course, Dylan.

Although Dylan doesn't sing or play on The Band's luminous debut, *Music From Big Pink* (1968), his contributions are significant. As a composer, he had a hand in three of the 11 songs. He and Manuel wrote the transcendent "Tears Of Rage," which opens the album; Dylan and Danko wrote "This Wheel's On Fire." Dylan composed the album closer, "I Shall Be Released," and he did the painting that was used for the album cover art. (The portrait depicts six people, five of whom are playing instruments.)

Capitol/UMe is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the album with various editions, including a Super Deluxe set. Also available as a single CD, the album has six bonus tracks, with-outtakes and alternate recordings from the studio sessions held in New York and Los Angeles. These tracks provide entertaining insight into the vibe the five musicians collectively created. One outtake, Robertson's "Yazoo Street Scandal," matches the high quality of the original program. Another, Dylan's "Long Distance Operator," is intriguing but not essential.

In the liner notes, journalist David Fricke cleverly describes some of the sources upon which The Band drew in 1968: "Robertson and



A painting by Bob Dylan was used as the cover art for The Band's 1968 debut, *Music From Big Pink*.

Manuel, at that point The Band's primary composers, wrote like determined modernists with public-domain souls, digging at the previously unmapped common ground of Appalachian folk, old Atlantic R&B 45s, *Louisiana Hayride* broadcasts, the treble lightning of the mid-'60s Dylan and the grooving spirit of the San Francisco ballrooms."

Though Dylan's fingerprints might be slightly visible in the corner of the canvas, this album is a masterpiece painted by The Band. Half a century later, the music's timeless charm still mesmerizes. —Bobby Reed



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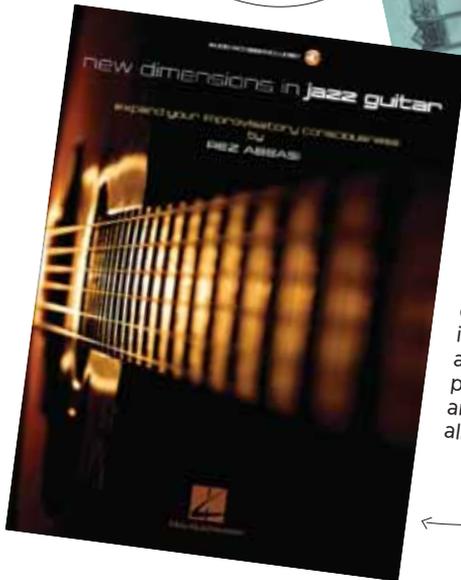
Trad Trumpet Insights

New Orleans Trumpet: A Down-Home Conservatory Method (Sher Music) by Jim Thornton offers an insider's explanation of all the building blocks necessary to play New Orleans-style jazz trumpet or cornet. The 110-page book presents often-elusive music theory concepts in an easy-to-understand manner. Suitable for beginners and pros alike, it provides correct chord charts for essential trad-jazz songs, to be used in conjunction with the iReal Pro play-along app. shermusic.com



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Dimensions of Invention

New Dimensions in Jazz Guitar (Hal Leonard) is a resource from guitarist, composer and producer Rez Abbasi that's aimed at helping intermediate and advanced players gain more control over their instruments. The book combines concepts derived from two distinct improvisatory worlds: American jazz and Indian classical music. Abbasi provides a variety of exercises and self-explorations to challenge all guitarists. hal Leonard.com

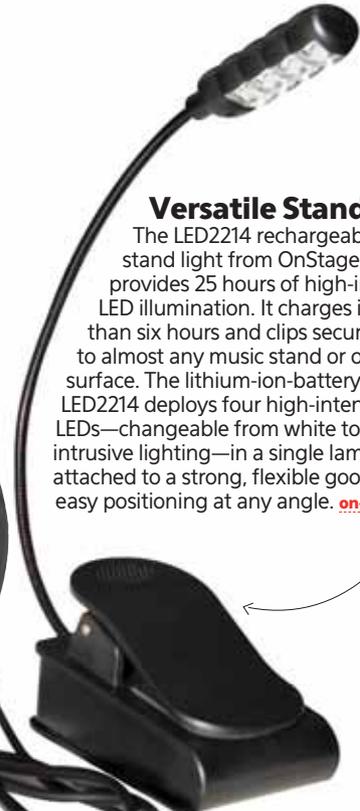
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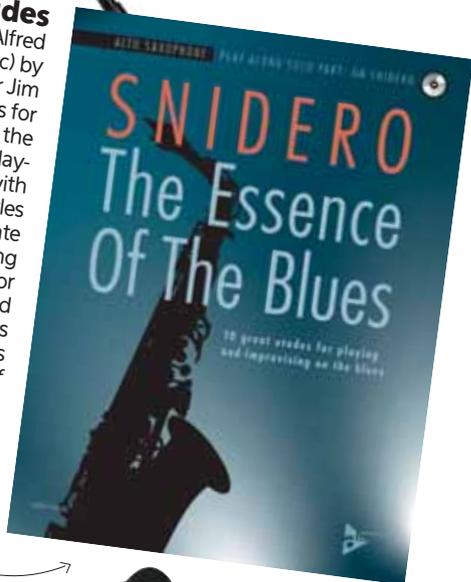


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alfred.com



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