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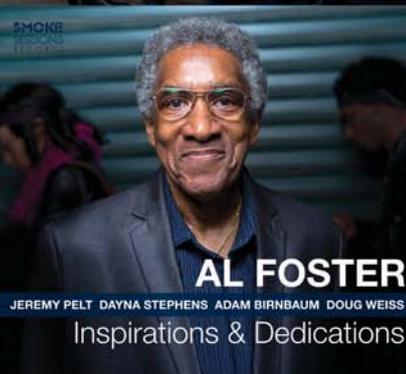
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Acclaimed guitarist **BILL FRISELL** makes his Blue Note debut with **HARMONY**, a gorgeous and evocative journey across the landscape of American music of the last century featuring vocalist **PETRA HADEN**, cellist & vocalist **HANK ROBERTS**, and guitarist, bassist & vocalist **LUKE BERGMAN**.



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53

With **53**, the 15th album in a recording career that has now spanned 25 years since his stunning self-titled debut on Blue Note in 1994, the remarkable pianist **JACKY TERRASSON** presents a collection of original pieces brought to life by a varied cast of trio mates.



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By 1970 guitarist **GRANT GREEN**'s style had moved into funkier territory as captured on his first-ever live album **Alive!** featuring a hard-driving set of jazz-funk. The album is part of the **Blue Note 80 Vinyl Reissue Series: all-analog 180g vinyl** releases in standard packaging mastered by **KEVIN GRAY** from original master tapes and manufactured at **Optimal** with titles presented by themes. For more titles visit store.bluenote.com.



BLUE NOTE REVIEW
VOLUME TWO – SPIRIT & TIME

Get the 2nd edition of our **subscription vinyl boxset** before it's gone! Curated by **DON WAS**, the set includes **all-analog, 180g vinyl** reissues of **Africaine** by **ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS** and **Patterns** by **BOBBY HUTCHERSON**; a new **TONY WILLIAMS** tribute album on 180g vinyl + CD; **FRANCIS WOLFF** lithographs of **ART BLAKEY** and **ELVIN JONES**; the book **Spirit & Time: Jazz Drummers On Their Art**; the zine **Out of the Blue**; a set of **Topps Blue Note Trading Cards**; and a **Blue Note record brush**. Available exclusively at bluenotereview.com.



TONE POET SERIES
ALL-ANALOG AUDIOPHILE VINYL

TINA BROOKS' first recording **Minor Move** from 1958 further revealed his status as one of the most innovative tenor saxophone stylists in jazz when it was released in 1980. The album is part of the **Tone Poet Audiophile Vinyl Reissue Series: all-analog 180g vinyl** releases in **deluxe gatefold packaging** produced by **JOE HARLEY**, mastered by **KEVIN GRAY** from original master tapes, and manufactured at **RTI**. For more titles visit store.bluenote.com.

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JANUARY 2020

Inside

ON THE COVER

24 Centennial Heroes

Starting on page 24, our cover package looks at the careers and legacies of drummer Art Blakey (1919–'90), saxophonist Charlie Parker (1920–'55) and pianist Dave Brubeck (1920–2012). Continuing on page 36, our centennial celebration shines a spotlight on other jazz pioneers born 100 years ago: trumpeter Clark Terry, drummer Shelly Manne and reedist Yusef Lateef.



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Dave Brubeck (seated) poses with the members of his namesake quartet: Joe Morello (left), Eugene Wright and Paul Desmond.

Cover collage, clockwise from upper-left: Art Blakey at a May 6, 1955, recording session at Van Gelder Studio in Hackensack, New Jersey; photo by Francis Wolff ©Mosaic Images LLC/mosaicrecordsimages.com. Dave Brubeck in a publicity still for the 1962 film *All Night Long*; photo from Roy Carr Press Agency/DownBeat Archives. Charlie Parker photo by William P. Gottlieb/Ira and Leonore S. Gershwin Fund Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress.

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Miles Okazaki

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Jesse Davis - NY Model Alto

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Mark Turner - Florida Model Hard Rubber



Seamus Blake - Tonamax Hard Rubber



Abraham Burton - New London Model



Bob Franceschini - New London Model

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Billy Eckstine (left) and Charlie Parker at Birdland in New York

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Centennial Celebration

OBITUARIES HONOR THE DECEASED, BUT they also convey a sense of loss: The world is a smaller, colder place without the presence of the departed. Centennial observations, however, generally are not about what we lost, but rather what we gained: The world is a larger, more interesting place thanks to the contributions of the departed. And that is the spirit permeating this issue.

Several months ago, when the DownBeat staff was brainstorming about a special centennial issue saluting artists born in 1919 or 1920, the challenge was to narrow down the group of honorees to a manageable yet hefty number. Readers will recall that in our September issue, we presented John McDonough's excellent article on Nat "King" Cole (1919-'65), a national treasure who helped transform our culture.

In this issue, our cover package shines a spotlight on three more titans whose artistry was essential to the development and evolution of jazz: drummer Art Blakey (1919-'90), saxophonist Charlie Parker (1920-'55) and pianist Dave Brubeck (1920-2012).

In these articles, our goal was not to chronicle all the key landmarks in each artist's career, but rather to celebrate the legacy of each musician, and examine the ripple effect of his influence on multiple generations of players.

What do those artists mean to us today, and how will future generations view their music? Nowadays, when we listen to a Blakey recording of "Moanin'," a Brubeck recording of "Take Five" or a Parker recording of "Ornithology," it pro-

vides a bridge to the past but also a connection to the present: Young musicians and fans discover these songs every day, helping to extend each artist's mighty legacy. The music still has the power to move us.

Once you start pondering the monumental impact of Bird, Blakey or Brubeck, it quickly becomes obvious that DownBeat could have devoted an entire 100-page issue to each one's career and influence. But we wanted to showcase multiple artists born around the same time.

Our cover package also includes shorter pieces on three other groundbreaking musicians: trumpeter Clark Terry (1920-2015), drummer Shelly Manne (1920-'84) and multi-instrumentalist Yusef Lateef (1920-2013). And even with all this great material, there are numerous artists born about 100 years ago who are not included, such as Paul Gonsalves, Carmen McRae, Ravi Shankar, Peggy Lee, Lennie Tristano, John Lewis, George Shearing and Anita O'Day.

Here at DownBeat, we perpetually strive for an editorial mix that honors the pioneers of the past, showcases the headliners of today and shines a spotlight on the rising players who might become the titans of tomorrow. One of the young artists in the October issue's Student Music Guide could, one day, enjoy a career that warrants a major centennial celebration in the 22nd century.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed creating it. Let us know your thoughts (be they positive or negative) by sending an email to editor@downbeat.com. **DB**

Mal Waldron
Free At Last
Extended Edition

Mal Waldron piano
Isla Eckinger double bass
Clarence Becton drums

Revisited and remastered, with additional takes, texts and photos, here is the very first ECM session, recorded November 1969, featuring the great American pianist Mal Waldron. The music sounds as fresh now as the day it was recorded.

Julia Hülsmann Quartet
Not Far From Here

Uli Kempendorff tenor saxophone
Julia Hülsmann piano
Marc Muellbauer double bass
Heinrich Köbberling drums

Award-winning pianist Julia Hülsmann expands her long-time working trio to a quartet here.

"It's clever, thoughtful, inquisitively contemporary jazzmaking, right in the ECM ballpark."

- John Fordham
The Guardian

Maciej Obara Quartet
Three Crowns

Maciej Obara alto saxophone
Dominik Wania piano
Ole Morten Vågan double bass
Gard Nilssen drums

The half-Polish, half-Norwegian quartet led by fiery alto saxophonist Maciej Obara is gaining ground as one of the most exciting groups on the contemporary jazz scene.

Keith Jarrett
Munich 2016

Keith Jarrett piano

A solo concert from Keith Jarrett – recorded on the last night of a European tour in Munich, July 2016 - finds the great improvising pianist at a peak of invention. Creating a spontaneous suite of forms in the moment with the assurance of a master builder, he delivers one of his very finest performances.

Ethan Iverson Quartet
w/ Tom Harrell
Common Practice

Tom Harrell trumpet
Ethan Iverson piano
Ben Street double bass
Eric McPherson drums

"Common Practice is both soothingly familiar and utterly distinctive [...] Like looking at a great painting or rereading a classic novel, this deceptively simple album reveals new facets with each listening."

- George Kanzler
New York City Jazz Record

Kit Downes
Dreamlife of Debris

Kit Downes piano, organ
Tom Challenger tenor saxophone
Stian Westerhus guitar
Lucy Railton cello
Sebastian Rochford drums

"Another forward step in his perpetual evolution... This album is full of nuance. In its dark and claustrophobic setting, it nevertheless creates illuminated open spaces. The music is introspective and spiritual and can waver between lullaby and nightmare."

- Karl Ackermann,
allaboutjazz

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Tools of the Trade

In your October issue, we were proud to see a photo of Autumn Salvo on the cover of the Student Music Guide. Many people have asked about the glove Autumn wears when playing the acoustic bass.

At this year's Next Generation Jazz Festival, we prominently featured a photo of Autumn on our stage banners, festival signs, ads, in the program, on wraparounds, etc. Photos of Autumn and "The Glove" were everywhere.

The downside: Rather than asking about our degree programs, our Jazzschool classes and workshops, or anything else about the California Jazz Conservatory, people who approached our booth asked about the glove.

So, for those who are curious, here is Autumn's response as to why she wears the glove: "It was recommended by my bass instructor Jeff Chambers. We both have hands that sweat too much when we play. He studied with Ron Carter, who was apparently huge into 'DIY hacks' for the bass, so you don't have to fight it. Wearing a glove is a hack that he figured out through trial and error. The glove prevents the extra amount of human gunk from interfering with the tone of the strings and fingerboard.

"My glove is just a string knit glove you could find anywhere. It works great and is cheap! I wear the glove whenever my hand touches my upright. I'm often asked if it interferes with my playing. For the first 10 minutes, your hand is 'slipping' a bit, because your sweat



Autumn Salvo, a student at California Jazz Conservatory

isn't gripping your hand to your bass. But after that little bit of time, it feels like second nature and I am able to move faster since I don't get 'stuck,' and the tone of my bass is saved!"

So, the glove is not a prop and it's not a gimmick. It's a clever DIY solution for bass players who find themselves in a slippery situation.

Bottom line: If the glove fits, wear it!

PAUL FINGEROTE, MARKETING DIRECTOR
CALIFORNIA JAZZ CONSERVATORY
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Remembering Roy

In your December issue, I was deeply moved by journalist Matthew Kassel's profile of the late Roy Hargrove, who took first place in the Trumpet category of the 2019 DownBeat Readers Poll.

I was reminded of my first encounter with this extraordinary musician. I was standing next to alto saxophonist Frank Morgan at the 1987 North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague, Netherlands, as we checked in at the Bel Air Hotel. I introduced myself to Frank and asked if I could interview him for my then in-progress book, *The Jazz Scene*.

Pointing to the young man standing next to him, Frank replied, "Here's the guy you should interview: Roy Hargrove." At the time, Roy was 17 years old.

Later that evening, I caught a performance billed as "Frank Morgan, Special Guest of Trio Rein de Graaff, Introducing Roy Hargrove." As the set got underway, I was immediately convinced that this teenage prodigy was someone to pay close attention to. He blew away the entire audience! Roy soon would be acknowledged as an artist of the first rank.

W. ROYAL STOKES
ELKINS, WEST VIRGINIA

Transformative Label

Regarding your November issue's cover story on ECM: It's hard for me to put into words how significant ECM Records has been to me, particularly when I was just getting into jazz.

I first heard LPs on the ECM label around 1972: Keith Jarrett's *Facing You*, Dave Holland and Barre Phillips' *Music From Two Basses* and Circle's *Paris Concert*.

The music immaculately recorded and presented by ECM helped to transform my life and turn me into a lifelong jazz lover.

BOB ZANDER
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

Corrections

- In the November print edition, the photo of Matt Wilson on page 66 should have been attributed to Bill Milkowski.
- In the December print edition, the name of photographer Muga Miyahara was misspelled on pages 6, 24 and 26. All the aforementioned photo credits have been corrected in the digital editions of the magazine.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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Beat

T.K. Blue Explores Legacy of Randy Weston

T.K. Blue never will forget the first time he heard pianist Randy Weston perform. Especially because when he found himself at The East, a Brooklyn-based arts education center that held jazz concerts on the weekends, he thought he was going to see Ramsey Lewis.

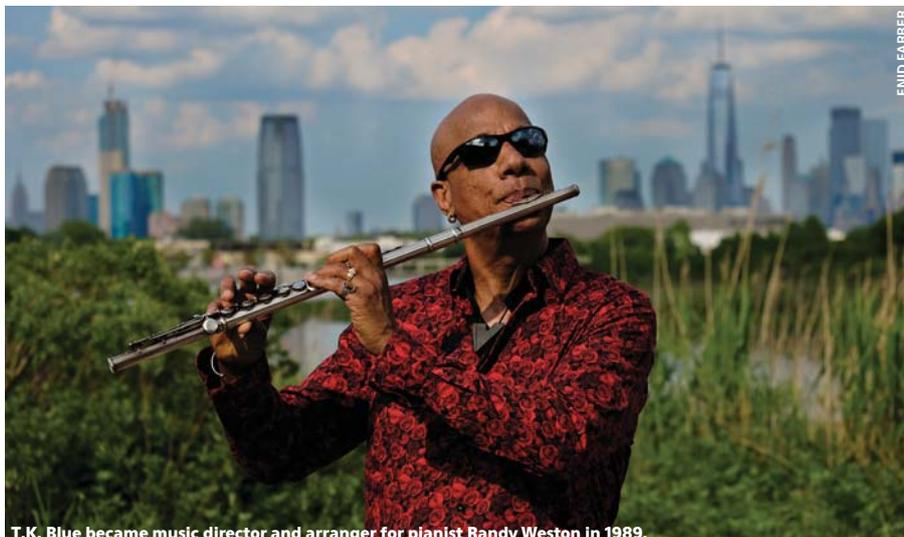
“When I got there, it was Randy Weston!” Blue remembered, with a laugh. “I had never heard of him. He came out with his son [Azzedin Weston] on congas, and it was quite mesmerizing. I had never heard that kind of symmetry between two musicians. I was so attracted to what he was doing musically.”

So much so that some time later, at a 1980 event raising funds for the fight against apartheid in South Africa, Blue boldly asked if he could sit in with Weston.

“And the very first tune that I ever played with him was ‘Hi-Fly,’” Blue said. “And all I had was my piccolo at the time. He said, ‘High-flying piccolo. Let’s do it.’”

The two went on to play many more songs together. Blue joined Weston’s backing band, African Rhythms, and took on the role of music director and arranger for the group in 1989, positions that the saxophonist and flutist held until the pianist’s death on Sept. 1, 2018. During that time, they developed the kind of tight friendship that comes from creating art together. And it’s that relationship that inspired Blue to pay tribute to Weston on his latest album, *The Rhythms Continue* (JAJA).

It’s as warmhearted and spirited as the musician it honors. Recorded over the course of a single day this past February, the record spins from Blue’s originals, which range from funk-infused swing to powerful balladry, to an array of Weston tunes that show off his early days as a bebop pioneer to the growing influence of African and Asian sounds on the pianist’s work.



T.K. Blue became music director and arranger for pianist Randy Weston in 1989.

The album also boasts an impressive roster of players. Some were former collaborators of Weston’s, like African Rhythms members Alex Blake and Neil Clarke, and Chinese pipa player Min Xiao Fen. Others were friends or just lucky enough to be mentored by him, like the many pianists who appear throughout, including Kelly Green, Mike King and, on the majority of the tracks, Sharp Radway.

“We come from the same roots,” Radway said of Weston. “We both really loved Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington. Randy played in church. I played in church. We both come from similar cultures. His father was born in Jamaica and my parents are from there. We share the same love of Africa and African music. As a result, we approach the piano the same way.”

A key aim of *The Rhythms Continue* is to paint as complete a picture of Weston’s musical legacy as possible. To do so, Blue also chose a handful of compositions by Melba Liston, the

groundbreaking trombonist who was Weston’s chief arranger for the better part of 30 years.

“I knew Melba before Randy,” Blue said. “I got to know her through Patti Bown, when they were both members of Quincy Jones’ big band. I used to go up to her house and pick her brain about things. So, I knew I wanted to honor her and have some female energy on the album.”

That energy and those songs are welcome additions and wind up having the effect of turning the spotlight back to Weston, helping to highlight the generosity and boldness that he exuded for the entirety of his 92 years.

“He touched me and he touched the lives of so many people,” Blue said. “Especially in situations of adversity. A lot of guys would be in a negative situation and come to him for sympathy, and before you know it, he has you laughing. Because he makes you realize that the thing you’re bummed about, in the context of life, is really not that important.” —Robert Ham

Riffs >



Artemis

From Mount Olympus: Blue Note Records recently announced the signing of supergroup Artemis, which includes pianist Renee Rosnes, clarinetist Anat Cohen, tenor saxophonist Melissa Aldana, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, bassist Noriko Ueda, drummer Allison Miller and vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant. The ensemble is expected to release its first album in 2020. "Their musical conversation is sophisticated, soulful and powerful, and their groove runs deep," Blue Note President Don Was said in a press release.

bluenote.com

Highest Honor: Trumpeter and composer Wadada Leo Smith was awarded the UCLA Medal during a Nov. 8 presentation at the institution's Herb Alpert School of Music. His "life and work exemplifies the fertile intersection of theory and creativity that we encourage our students to explore," said Eileen Stempel, dean of the school of music. The medal, first awarded in 1979, is the highest honor UCLA grants to individuals. Past recipients include Ella Fitzgerald, Quincy Jones, Toni Morrison and Bill Clinton.

ucla.edu

Winter in New York: Winter JazzFest returns for its 16th year, hosting performances by a far-reaching cast of players in Manhattan and Brooklyn, including Christian Sands, Jamie Baum, Karriem Riggins and Terri Lyne Carrington. A kickoff event with drummer Nate Smith is slated for Dec. 13, with the festival running Jan. 9–18.

winterjazzfest.com

Final Bar: Criss Cross Jazz founder Gerry Teekens died Oct. 31. His label issued hundreds of albums, most recently by Noah Preminger and Lage Lund. ... Saxophonist Kadri Gopalnath, who collaborated with Rudresh Mahanthappa on 2008's *Kinsmen*, died Oct. 11 at the age of 69 in Mangaluru, India. ... After exploring the bandstand as a performer in the 1950s, Fred Taylor began promoting jazz performances around the Boston area. Taylor died Oct. 26 at the age of 90.



Guitarist Bill Frisell is now based in New York, following nearly three decades in Seattle.

No Matter the Coast, Bill Frisell's Guitar Sings

THE LATEST REMINDER THAT GUITAR ICON

Bill Frisell remains a road warrior at 68 came in late September, when he crisscrossed the American heartland from one solo concert to the next. After spending a week at home in Brooklyn, where he relocated in the fall of 2017 after 29 years in Seattle, Frisell embarked on another round of touring, this time behind *Harmony*, his inaugural leader date for Blue Note.

During a tour break, Frisell discussed the project, recorded last March with vocalist Petra Haden, cellist-vocalist Hank Roberts and baritone guitarist-bassist-vocalist Luke Bergman. For much of the 47-minute album, a trio of harmonically intertwined voices frame Frisell's probing explorations. That said, Haden has ample space to render penetrating readings of songs culled from the Great American Songbook ("Lush Life," "On The Street Where You Live") and the Americana Songbook ("Hard Times," "Red River Valley"), as well as "Deep Dead Blue," a tune that Frisell composed with Elvis Costello and recorded with him in 1995. She also wrings poignancy from Jesse Harris' lyrics to "There In A Dream," composed by bassist Charlie Haden (1937–2014), her father, once a frequent bandstand partner of Frisell's.

"The way Petra's musical ear zeroes in on a note makes me think of the way Charlie heard pitches," Frisell said. "There's genetic material in there. She sings with a real assuredness—I can push against her notes in ways that, with other people, might knock them over."

Asked whether he himself sings, Frisell pointed to his hands. "My guitar is where I feel my voice is," he said. "Even if I'm alone, like in the shower, I can't bring myself to do it. It did break out one day in Seattle, like 25 years ago, when I'd been riding my bike for hours, and was in an underpass with a lot of cars, a lot of noise, and suddenly found myself singing out loud. It was like Sonny Rollins

on the bridge or something."

Although Frisell's affinity for Rollins might not be readily apparent in his notes and tones, he continues to regard the saxophonist as a lodestar. "He's a god to me," Frisell said. "If I ever lose my own way, I look to him, and then, 'OK, that's what it's all about.'"

He added: "Of course, I listen to more than Sonny Rollins. But a light bulb went off when Sonny played 'The Surrey With The Fringe On Top' or 'I'm An Old Cowhand' or whatever. It struck me that he played songs he heard in a movie or a Broadway show or that were floating around when he was a kid because he loves them and has a connection. It sort of gave me permission to reopen the doors to my own life."

"Bill has deep ears for appreciating many different kinds of music and different forms," said Roberts, who met Frisell in 1975 and began collaborating with him in the mid-'80s. "He doesn't come off as a jazz guy trying to play some different style. He loves that music, and that sincerity is attached to the way he plays it. Of course, he has so many tools in his musical toolbox that if you've listened a lot to the traditional forms you might hear some other things that he brings to it."

Although the aptly titled *Harmony* is a new release, Frisell already has recorded another forthcoming Blue Note album, a studio date with bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Rudy Royston. The trio enjoyed a long residency at the Village Vanguard in August. "It was amazing to be able to do those three weeks without staying in a hotel for \$200 to \$300 a night," Frisell said. "In New York, a lot of things will happen on the spur of the moment. These last couple of weeks I was driving alone through the middle of the country, and I don't know what's happening out there, but it's scary. It's weird to say, but I feel safer here. I feel like I've come home."

—Ted Panken

Nguyễn Lê Blends Past and Present

SINCE HIS CRUCIAL 1996 RECORDING, *Tales From Việt-Nam*, electric guitar virtuoso Nguyễn Lê has married the music of his ancestral Vietnam with cutting-edge contemporary jazz. “Traditional Vietnamese music used to be considered as kind of corny,” said Lê during a phone interview from his home in Paris. “But now there’s a new interest in the tradition. And I want to show the Vietnamese people that their own tradition can be hip and can be very exciting to mix with new elements from modernity.”

Overseas (ACT), his latest recording, finds the bandleader blending a contemporary aesthetic with the kind of traditional Vietnamese music explored on his 2017 album, *Hà Nội Duo*, an intimate encounter with singer/multi-instrumentalist Ngô Hồng Quang, who returns on the new album. “He is, for me, very symbolic of that new generation of traditional musicians in Vietnam,” said Lê. “Because they were born with that tradition, they know it from the bottom of their hearts. At the same time, they’re young, very talented and very open-minded. They grew up in this modern society and are very curious about learning everything. They read music better than me, they can play everything and they have new points of view on the tradition.”

Seattle-based trumpeter Cuong Vu, who guests on *Overseas*, praised Lê’s organic approach to this unique kind of fusion. “I’m struck by how well the traditional Vietnamese music and its characteristics have been integrated into one coherent and homogeneous sound/approach on Nguyễn’s latest project. And he’s able to do it in a way where the sum of the parts sound completely holistic, avoiding the pitfalls that so often are problematic for fusing different genres and cultures together; where it sounds synthetic and cheap, as if it’s just cultural appropriation.”

Originally composed for a performance project combining dance, acrobatics and music, and directed by Tuan Le—founder of the world-renowned Nouveau Cirque du Vietnam and a former choreographer for Cirque du Soleil—Lê’s music for *Overseas* captures the soul of traditional Vietnamese music via zither, jaw harp, bamboo flute and bamboo xylophone while introducing modernist elements. Hanoi-born beatboxer Trung Bao enlivens “Noon Moon” and “Square Earth” with his EDM-inspired vocal percussion techniques. And on the exhilarating “Beat Rice Box,” he goes toe-to-toe with the leader. “He’s fantastic,” said Lê, of the Portland-based Bao. “He doesn’t read music, but of course he has a great ear. He’s a born musician.”

Other tunes like the atmospheric “Origin” and the African-flavored “Tribal Symmetry” are awash in ambient sounds. On the North African-flavored closer, “Red Sky,” Lê conjures up metal-lesque fury in his distortion-laced licks, and he

unleashes fiery fusion chops on the shredding vehicle “Year Of The Dog.”

“I’m kind of obsessed with speaking with my own voice on the instrument,” Lê said. “I’m really trying to integrate everything that I’ve learned from all the musicians I have played with from all over the world. And it shows up in my phrasing, in my sound, in every inflection.”

—Bill Milkowski



Guitarist Nguyễn Lê’s latest album is *Overseas*.

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Brian Charette's new album is a solo organ project titled *Beyond Borderline*.

Charette Follows the Muse

WHILE HE HAS SUPPLIED CONVENTIONAL, greasy-sounding Hammond B3 organ in straight-ahead settings—supporting masters like saxophonists George Coleman, Lou Donaldson, Charles McPherson and Houston Person—Brian Charette explores some uncharted waters on his latest SteepleChase release, *Beyond Borderline*. A follow-up to 2013's *Borderline*, it once again finds Charette exploring tones, textures and tweaked harmonies in the exposed setting of solo organ.

Recorded live, the 12-track *Beyond Borderline* is another unconventional offering from the unorthodox organist. "I think at this point, it's safe to say that I am the black sheep of the B3," he laughed.

Aside from gorgeous renditions of Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge" and Duke Ellington's "Prelude To A Kiss," all of the other tunes on *Beyond Borderline* are Charette originals. "Silicone Doll" is his sly nod to Ellington's "Satin Doll," while "5th Of Rye" is a meditation on the fifth interval. Both "Wish List" and "Girls" use the harmonic language of contemporary classical composer Olivier Messiaen, while "Hungarian Bolero" is based on a Romani harmony. "There's more notes in Messiaen's scales so there's, in effect, more possibilities for chords," Charette explained. "And because I'm playing unaccompanied, the songs go wherever the harmony takes me."

In spite of the potent harmonic nature of his tunes, walking bass lines and syncopation are still very evident on the jaunty medium-tempo swinger "Girls," the uptempo burner "Good Tipper" and the smoking "Public Transportation."

"I don't want my music to be overly cerebral or pretentious," said the Connecticut native and longtime New York City resident. "I'm dealing in these kinds of heady concepts, but I'm trying to deliver them in a way that is easily digestible and not snobby."

"Public Transportation" is the perfect example of Charette's yin-yang approach to the B3. "I'm basically playing bebop on it, but I'm sprinkling in this other harmony, as well, so it sounds edgy," he said. "One of my great areas of interest is taking this kind of Messiaenic harmony and dipping in and out of it, which is something I also explore with my sextet."

On recent SteepleChase sessions with baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber and harmonica ace Yvonnick Prené, Charette made less audacious choices. "I was playing more of a supporting role on those records and being a little more conservative with my tone choices and drawbar settings," he explained. "These Messiaenic harmonies can be a bit off-putting for traditionalists. But on my own projects, like *Beyond Borderline*, I'm going against the grain. I'm trying to give an alternative approach to the traditional Hammond B3 organ sound, but I don't want to make it seem like I'm anti-Jimmy Smith or anti-tradition. I just have all these varied interests—traditional organ, classical piano, Olivier Messiaen, electronic music—and I'm trying to combine them together in a very personal way."

It's Charette's "oddball" choices, he believes, that separate him from the pack. "If you listen to Joey DeFrancesco, this is the best Hammond organist there has ever been, in my opinion. And there's no way that I can compete with him on that level. So, I'm trying to find a voice for myself that makes me easily identifiable."

"I think my music sometimes leaves people scratching their heads a little bit, especially if they're accustomed to a more traditional harmonic and sonic approach to organ music," he said. "I'm trying to find a perfect balance where I can kind of have my own sound without alienating people. And I'm always trying to do these things gently, without pushing it too hard."

—Bill Milkowski

Jennings Amps up Social Engagement

JEROME JENNINGS STAYS FOCUSED ON HIS goals. After getting his start in his home state of Ohio, he earned degrees from Rutgers University and The Juilliard School and is now firmly ensconced on the New York scene, having earned a reputation as a creative drummer who's up for just about anything. Jennings has worked with legends ranging from Sonny Rollins, Benny Golson and Hank Jones to Earth, Wind & Fire vocalist Philip Bailey. "It's surreal," he said of getting summoned for high-profile projects, "but you can't get too caught up in the call, because you have work to do."

In recent years, Jennings has begun to assert himself as a leader. His first album, 2016's *The Beast* (Iola), showcased a band made up of long-time friends and collaborators, including trumpeter Sean Jones, tenor saxophonist Howard Wiley, trombonist Dion Tucker, pianist Christian Sands and bassist Christian McBride, with vocalist Jazzmeia Horn dropping in for a version of the standard "You Don't Know What Love Is."

Although it presented itself as a straightforward hard-bop record with one surprising track—a beautiful arrangement of New Edition's 1984 r&b hit "Cool It Now"—*The Beast* wrapped a social message inside hardcore acoustic jazz. It included a blazing version of Freddie Hubbard's "The Core," written as a tribute to the Congress of Racial Equality, and the title piece was inspired by an encounter Jennings had with the police. The album's final track, "New Beginnings," laid an impassioned speech by actor/activist Jesse Williams, from the 2016 BET Awards, over the music.

"In the liner notes, you'll see that it deals with the undercurrent of police violence and people who have been caught up in the system, many times falsely," Jennings said. "Musically, I think I got the point across that there's somebody out here who still wants to swing and play acoustic music, but I also wanted to make a social statement."

His new album, *Solidarity* (Iola), is even more socially engaged than its predecessor. The new tracks carry dedications to prominent female and LGBTQ figures, including murdered Brazilian politician Marielle Franco, philosopher Audre Lorde and transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson. Jennings includes Dizzy Gillespie's "Bebop" to root the music in jazz history and Shanice's 1991 r&b hit "I Love Your Smile"—the original recording of which featured a saxophone solo from Branford Marsalis—for something more modern.

The band on *Solidarity* includes trumpeter



Josh Evans, saxophonist Stacy Dillard, trombonist Andrae Murchison and pianist Zaccai Curtis. Only McBride returns from *The Beast*. Given the subject matter, Jennings wanted female voices represented, so he invited guest saxophonists Tia Fuller and Camille Thurman and bassist Endea Owens. "If you do a record that's dedicated to women, and women of color, how can you not have women on the record? You need that energy, because it's gonna shape things ... and also, I have to have their OK, I feel."

Thurman, who contributes vocals on "I Love Your Smile," said, "I was very happy when he told me that I would be singing this song. I remember hearing and singing it as a child. I also remember memorizing and scatting Branford's solo. This was a classic for all '80s babies."

The most stunning track on *Solidarity*, though, is "Convo With Senator Flowers." Jennings sets a speech by Arkansas Sen. Stephanie Flowers, protesting open-carry gun laws, to a drum solo. It wasn't an improvisation, though; it was a painstakingly crafted composition. "This was probably one of the most challenging pieces I've ever gotten together," Jennings said, "because it's not an exercise—you're actually playing the rhythm of someone's speech. It took me a while to work that up. It was very much premeditated and methodical." It fits with the rest of *Solidarity* in that he's foregrounding women's narratives and, in this case, a woman's actual voice, lending support without ever dominating the conversation. —Philip Freeman



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Seeking New Contexts

Adversity has been a steady motivator in the career of Polish trumpeter Tomasz Dabrowski, starting with his early desire to play the saxophone. When he was 13, he signed up for the school band in Rozental, a small village of 800 located 30 miles from Gdansk. But upon learning that all of the saxophone chairs had been filled, he accepted trumpet as an alternative, a decision that ultimately changed his life. He wouldn't be exposed to jazz for another year or two, hearing some traditional jazz performances at a nearby festival. But he said he already possessed the inquisitiveness to improvise. "I was interested in improvisation since a young age," he explained. "I guess I always liked doing things my way, and figuring out how to do stuff on my own terms."

Some 20 years later, Dabrowski is one of Europe's more versatile and curious players, a musician eager to challenge himself with shifting contexts and self-imposed limitations. Since relocating to Denmark in 2008 to study at Syddansk Musikonservatorium on Odense—he later moved to Copenhagen, where he still lives, earning a master's degree at the Rhythmic Music Conservatory—he steadily has initiated new projects and collaborative situations, revealing his range and broad interests.

But it hasn't been easy. Upon entering high school in Warsaw, Dabrowski was forced to change his embouchure, essentially sidelining him from playing for almost three years. "It was so bad, I remember my lips bleeding one time during a gig," he recalled. While he achieved success locally, winning a competition (juried by, among others, the saxophonist Zbigniew Namysłowski) that afforded him the opportunity to study in Odense, he still struggled financially and culturally in expensive, privileged Denmark, learning the language and adapting on the fly.

While Dabrowski had a network of collaborators in Warsaw, he had to forge a new circle of partners in Copenhagen. "I started my own groups because nobody asked me to play with them," he said. "Now, it's a completely different story, but I definitely had to pay my dues." Starting with the Tom Trio and eventually disparate quartets like Ocean Fanfare and FREE4ARTS, he forged dynamic combos to interpret different sides of his musical personality. But a key facet of his exploration is to perpetually try new things, such as launching a solo project five years ago—organizing 30 concerts in 30 different cities across 12 European countries, resulting in the aptly named 2016 album *30th Birthday/30 Concerts/30 Cities* (Barefoot).

"My nature is to constantly change," he



Tomasz Dabrowski

said. "I simply get bored with too much of one thing, one band, one concept."

That thinking also led Dabrowski to New York, where he arranged fruitful recording sessions with percussionist Tyshawn Sorey (*Steps*), and a trio with pianist Kris Davis and drummer Andrew Drury (*Vermilion Tree*), as well as travels to Japan, where he formed the quartet Ad Hoc. "After all my experiences in the U.S.A., Japan and Europe, I noticed that one-time projects are good to try things out, and to play with incredible players," he said. "I also noticed the best music comes out if I play with people I trust. So, I started making bands with people who can practice with me, who I feel a connection to, because that takes the music to a whole different level."

That belief is manifested on two recent recordings. *First Nature* (Barefoot) by Ocean Fanfare is a richly nuanced, darkly melodic post-bop quartet with alto saxophonist Sven Dam Meinild, bassist Richard Andersson and drummer Peter Bruun, where the smoldering, interactive aesthetic of Dave Douglas' bands is clear in Dabrowski's tensile, creamy tone. *When I Come Across* (Audio Cave), the second album from his quartet FREE4ARTS with Meinild, guitarist Simon Krebs and drummer Kasper Tom, draws from moody indie-rock in its flinty energy, while maintaining a rigorous improvisational ethic.

Even as he's focused on these projects, Dabrowski remains dedicated to new things. "Reinventing myself over and over again, that's what I want—finding new questions, new contexts."

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Aaron Weinstein's new album is a trio project titled 3x3.

In Weinstein's Sets, Jazz and Comedy Mix

IT'S OFTEN NOTED THAT JAZZ MUSICIANS and stand-up comedians have certain similarities: a need for split-second timing, an emphasis on improvisation, an air of spontaneity that masks years of practice. It's exceedingly rare, however, to find someone who excels at both—that is to say, someone like jazz violinist Aaron Weinstein.

The bow-tied and bespectacled Weinstein, 34, is in love with swing, hot-jazz and vintage songs, which he plays with élan and chops reminiscent of his violin heroes: Joe Venuti, Stéphane Grappelli, Stuff Smith and Svend Asmussen.

Weinstein, who topped the category Rising Star-Violin in the 2019 DownBeat Critics Poll, is equally adept on mandolin. He also makes quirky short films and sprinkles his sets with a deadpan, brainy humor that plays with the limits of the musician-fan relationship and pokes fun at his own image. In his five-minute animated film *Say What? A Geriatric Proposition*, he begins by noting that he frequently hears, "You know, you look like you just came from your bar mitzvah." The film then relates the story of an elderly woman fan who makes a highly inappropriate suggestion at the reception following one of his concerts.

On his sixth leader album, *3x3* (Chesky), Weinstein plays live in the studio with fellow swing enthusiasts—guitarist Matt Munisteri and bassist Tom Hubbard—covering vintage tunes like "Chinatown, My Chinatown," "Nola" and "Makin' Whoopee."

"I don't really see any of this repertoire as antique," explained Weinstein, who showed up for the interview in Chesky's New York office impeccably attired in his customary neckwear, a plaid shirt and contrasting plaid jacket. "The dividing line between so-called 'old' and 'modern' music is funny," he mused. "Is 'Giant Steps' old? If someone is playing something right now, I think there's nothing more modern than that."

Weinstein's parents gave him his first violin when he was 9. "Then I got a Joe Venuti record when I was about 13," recalled the mostly self-taught player. "It changed everything. ... That was the first time I had heard jazz and jazz violin. Had I heard Coltrane previously, it would have been a whole different thing."

In his junior year of high school, Weinstein sent a demo to Bucky and John Pizzarelli, asking for some feedback. He got more than he bargained for: an invitation to sit in on a gig with Bucky. The guitarist then proceeded to invite the teenager to play a show with him the week after that, and Weinstein was off to the races.

During his four years at Boston's Berklee College of Music, which Weinstein attended on a merit-based scholarship, he commuted to New York on weekends to play gigs, often with one of the Pizzarellis.

Since then, Weinstein has worked to carve out a unique niche in the annals of musicians who do comedy. "With Jack Benny, the punch line was his bad violin playing, the 'tragedy' of the playing. Victor Borge was so great, too, but all his comedy at the piano was at the expense of the piano.

"Although my music is serious, the time onstage in between the music doesn't need to be. It's part of the performance. ... The audience is there to be entertained."

In a phone interview, Munisteri, a first-call guitarist who, among many other gigs, is the music director for singer Catherine Russell, said, "Any chance I get to play a gig with Aaron means that not only do we get to play music, but we get to sit around backstage and make one another gig with laughter. Aaron will really push—even if he's played two choruses that were great, he'll go for a third to try to top himself. Playing with him is like driving a sports car: You know that if you push him harder, he'll go further." —Allen Morrison



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Alexander Interprets Holiday



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“I CAN’T REMEMBER A TIME WHEN BILLIE Holiday’s music wasn’t in my life,” says Dee Alexander, the Chicago singer who collaborates with the Metropolitan Jazz Octet on *It’s Too Hot For Words: Celebrating Billie Holiday* (Delmark). “As a child, my mother played her records, and I awakened to Billie Holiday many mornings.”

Alexander, locally renowned for decades of performances in an ever-expanding array of contexts, and heard as a host on the syndicated WFMT Radio Network, shared a story about waking up as a child and going to find her mother. “I came into the kitchen in my little onesie, rubbing my eyes and asking, ‘Why was that lady crying?’—I said ‘crying,’ not ‘crying’—about her man? What did he do to her?” The lyric was from Holiday’s blues “Fine And Mellow”: “My man don’t love me/ He treats me awful mean.”

“We all know Billie suffered that,” Alexander acknowledges, but Lady Day’s famous songs of mistreatment and despair aren’t among the 10 tracks she and MJO tenor saxophonist and co-leader Jim Gailloroto chose to interpret anew. “I wanted to sing positive lyrics, like “Things Are Looking Up,” she says. And indeed, *It’s Too Hot For Words* reforms the Holiday narrative by focusing on the vocalist’s self-assertions, romantic yearnings and simple joys.

“I was on the hunt for more obscure music by Billie,” explains Alexander, who came up in the 1970s working with rock and r&b bands, advanced to on-the-job training with members of the AACM and spent 10 years in the late pianist Ken Chaney’s soulful Xperience. Since then, she’s become a leader in her own right and a sought-after collaborator. “I wanted songs that people weren’t so familiar with, keeping in mind at the same time that people want to hear songs by Billie they *are* familiar with.”

So, while “Strange Fruit,” with its horrific description of a lynching, is a central track,

arranged for the octet’s five horns and rhythm section, plus a string sextet to showcase Alexander’s unflinching power, the album starts with a rousing “Ain’t Nobody’s Business If I Do,” then turns to other upbeat and optimistic connections. The finale is an optimistic, Depression-era ditty in which Alexander avows, “My heart keeps singing I love you/ 24 hours a day.”

The octet veers between intimate chamber group sounds and bold little-big-band statements. Throughout, Alexander exudes warmth, conviction, rhythmic certainty, precise diction and hard-earned effortlessness. Her tonality is pure, rich and comforting, especially in her low and middle ranges. “I want you to feel like you’re in your soft, fuzzy robe when you’re listening to me, like you just came out of the shower or out of the bath and are cozy,” she says. “I’m always trying for the honey in my voice.”

“Dee is able to pull off just about anything you ask of her,” says Gailloroto, who was wowed by Alexander upon first exposure in late 2017, and hopes *Too Hot For Words* is just the beginning of their association. “She can scat, sing at a whisper, or can make you cry. We did a lot of test recordings with her and a piano, so the arrangers could get a sense of the emotions she was going for, and it was pretty easy to write after that. We’d learn what the song was about for her, just based on her voice, and do a treatment. She’s also fearless, totally willing to go in directions that are unique to the situation.” An example is Alexander’s surprise shift from montuno to swing at the peak of “Too Hot For Words.”

Considering there’s other Holiday repertoire suited for similar Dee Alexander-MJO attention, might there be a volume two? “It’s a strong possibility,” the singer says. “But I’m also focused on a special project of original material with John McLean, the guitarist. Because I have my own story to tell.”

—Howard Mandel



Nick Grondin's new album is titled *A View Of Earth*.

Grondin Promotes Cultural Diplomacy

AT THIS YEAR'S UMBRIA JAZZ FESTIVAL, Nick Grondin made his mark without even lifting his guitar. He served as the conductor for an ensemble of six Italian guitar students expressing themselves on John Scofield's "Do Like Eddie" and two of his own tunes.

A Berklee College of Music guitar faculty member for the past seven years, Grondin serves as an instructor at the Berklee at Umbria Jazz Clinics, whose participants traditionally strut their stuff in a performance at the end of the annual festival in Perugia, Italy.

"For two intense weeks before the show, we built the repertoire and then worked on how to create the music in new and exciting ways with rhythm cycles, harmonic changes, improvisation and dynamics," Grondin said from his home in the Boston area. "But the most exciting thing is showing the beauty of combining elements and learning how to play together without border crossings."

The student band played the journey-like "Softline" from Grondin's new album, *A View Of Earth* (Everybody Wins Music). The 10-song collection melds rock, folk and contemporary jazz, layered with luminous colors, time shifts and plenty of saxophone gusto. The styles move fluidly, such as on the melodic gem "Ships Passing" with wordless vocals by Aubrey Johnson, followed by "Everybody Wins," which opens as a bluegrass-tinged rockabilly cooker with skipping drums before settling into an intriguing arrangement for piano, trumpet, saxophone and guitar.

Grondin also sings and scats Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing."

"Jimi was my original guitar hero," he said. "I admired him so much, the way he innovated. This may be his deepest song. So, we had to be

cautious in honoring his spirit, but I did add my own ideas to make it more jazz, to swing it with a half-time feel and extend the harmony."

Grondin has an impressive academic resume, too. He attended the EDIM music school in Paris, earned his bachelor's from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and received a master's in jazz composition from New England Conservatory of Music in 2008. This spring, he earned his doctorate of musical arts from NEC.

Grondin also spent two years at Harvard University teaching jazz harmony and jazz improvisation classes, where he learned a valuable lesson from Herbie Hancock, who was delivering a lecture series there: the importance of jazz being an art of cultural diplomacy.

"At Berklee, I applied for a grant to record an album," he said. "In my application, I wrote about my conversation with Herbie, as well as my experience at the Panama Jazz Festival, where I coached and mentored Panamanian students, as well as taught them a master class." Grondin received the grant, which set into motion two days of studio time (with engineering thrown into the mix) with an ensemble that included many of his Boston friends, as well as guests.

Valuable support on *A View Of Earth* came from pianist/keyboardist Jon Cowherd, who appears on six of the 10 tracks. "I had known Nick for a few years before he called me to play and help produce this session," said Cowherd. "Nick surrounded himself with the perfect folks for the job—great soloists but also team players, which is what it takes to pull off a project like this: musicians whose goal is creating beauty together and not merely to impress as individual soloists."

—Dan Ouellette



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Berlin Fest, Deventer Take Bold Risks

HALFWAY THROUGH COMPOSER AND multi-instrumentalist Anthony Braxton's six-hour opening performance at Jazzfest Berlin, I saw a guy who looked a little lost, and asked him how he was feeling.

"I'm not bored but not entirely engaged either," he said. "All I can do is keep finding ways to experience it."

He disappeared like a nomad into the wilderness of Braxton's Sonic Genome event at Berlin's Gropius Bau museum—the project's third performance after Vancouver in 2010 and Turin in 2015. Sonic Genome involved 60 international musicians playing 500 of Braxton's compositions as they formed, dispersed and reformed into fresh ensembles and traveled throughout the museum. For the listener, this created a cabinet of mirrors, with spectators themselves moving around the space, choosing where to listen and look, and what to listen and look for. Music came from behind and above, below and beside. The breakdown of any unified perspective or ensemble and the necessity of joining manifold transient communities in the performance was meant to act as an antidote to tribalism and present a utopian model for an ideal society. Yes, it was that deep.



MONIKA KARCZMARCZYK

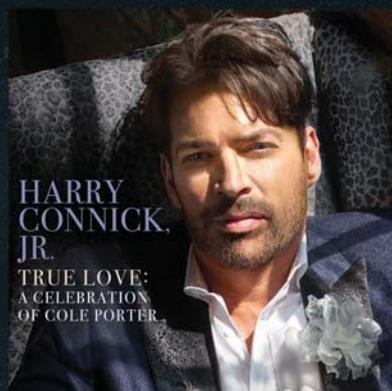
Saxophonist Anthony Braxton (left) performs Nov. 3 with his Zim Music ensemble during Jazzfest Berlin.

In a public talk, Braxton described Sonic Genome as an avant-garde theme park à la Disneyland, aimed at the "friendly experimenter" who might be uninitiated but curious. Braxton also called 42-year-old Jazzfest Berlin Artistic Director Nadin Deventer a "visionary and an activist"—and his Sonic Genome concept put forces in motion that carried throughout the

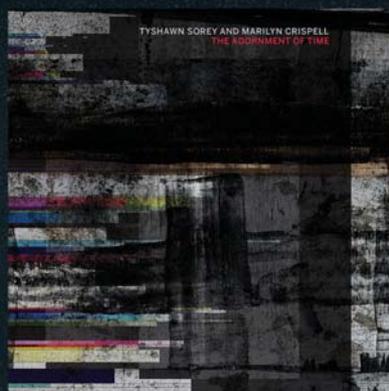
entire festival. In 2018, Deventer's initial year as the festival's first woman director, she programmed music in unfamiliar spaces, shaking up expectations. In this 2019 edition, which ran Oct. 31–Nov. 3, Deventer took the radical next step of interrogating how artists create utopian and practical spaces for themselves, and crafted a related program of immersion and collectivity

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that extended from audience placement to the music itself.

That involved some bold risks. Experimental seating in the Haus der Berliner Festspiele's main space broke with the convention of strict audience and artist separation. Onstage seating beside and behind performers, along with lounging floor pads in place of the traditional front-row seats, gave the audience unusual angles and proximity that threw spectatorship and listening into question. This audience immersion also resulted in some sound issues and sightline trouble—my view was dominated by the grand piano's raised lid one night—reminding us that conventional concert halls were designed as distraction-free spaces where the most wholly absorbed listening is possible. Still, the seating experiment was worth minor hassles, because it put us in conversation with abstract improvisation or at least brought us closer to it.

Deventer's merging of audience and performers felt like a nod to the concurrent 30th anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall. Echoes of Berlin's storied permissiveness during the Weimar cabaret era and late 20th-century club culture were heard and seen in the festival's wild mainstage Late Night Labs and Quasimodo club shows like James Brandon Lewis' Unruly Quintet. Deventer's festival-defining collective

them similarly harked back to the Berlin Wall era, when communes and artist collectives proliferated. Artists explored this theme in a festival discussion led by Emma Warren, who commented on the importance of London's homespun Total Refreshment Centre venue to the city's improvised music scene. Angel Bat Dawid spoke about the AACM's influence on her own Chicago-based Participatory Music Coalition—and when she gave some powerfully emotional testimony on her uniqueness as a black woman in the room, it might have been the most profound performance of the festival.

Of course, jazz is itself a collective art form, and Deventer carefully programmed groups whose music interrogated notions of utopia and collectivism. The most successful of these included a performance of Ambrose Akinmusire's celebrated *Origami Harvest* album, which combined a string quartet, small-group jazz improv and hip-hop in an ever-shifting blend that progressed beyond Third Stream music into a fourth stream of styles that reached the mind, body, heart and soul. And Braxton's second performance, with his Zim Music ensemble, presented a one-hour septet chamber improvisation of ordered freedom that churned abstract phrases with warmth and humor, especially in his own multi-instrumental playing.

Most of this music wasn't easy listening—

my audience scan showed Braxton's Zim Music producing many furrowed brows. On the other hand, the hr-Bigband's Ornette Coleman tribute featuring pianist Joachim Kühn and clarinetist Michel Portal received fulsome applause, which might have had as much to do with the show's familiarity as its quality. After so much demanding abstraction and uncharted territory, this user-friendly big band program—an irony, given Ornette Coleman's one-time agitation of the jazz order—treated the older festival audience to the rare nostalgia of relatively traditional instrumentation, virtuosic solo passages and passive spectatorship that required only clapping at customary moments.

During my own wayfaring at the six-hour Sonic Genome event, a seat in one of the museum's dark video rooms proved fatal to my jet lag. I woke 10 minutes later when two attendees raised their voices in an argument about whether you can call Braxton's music "jazz." That hoary old chestnut of a debate missed the point, though having dreamt through a few minutes of the utopian experiment felt just right. I went back to the musical action refreshed and ready to help build Braxton and Jazzfest Berlin's waking dream. That was really the only choice—this year, a festivalgoer had to find the integrity to create her own place in events.

—Michelle Mercer



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Art Blakey

MIGHTIEST

MENTOR

By Ted Panken

No drummer more palpably imprinted their sonic identity and aesthetic principles on the soundtrack and culture of late 20th- and early 21st-century jazz than Art Blakey (1919–'90).

For 35 years, Blakey's vehicle was the Jazz Messengers; their message remains as vibrant as ever in the year of the leader's centennial. Tribute bands led by acolytes Ralph Peterson, Carl Allen and Lewis Nash continue to channel Blakey's mojo on Messenger repertoire by notable alumni such as Benny Golson, Wayne Shorter, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Curtis Fuller and Bobby Watson.

New releases help extend Blakey's legacy. *Our Father Who Art Blakey: The Centennial* (Summit) is the second big band homage by Valery Ponomarev, a trumpeter on numerous Messengers albums between 1977 and 1980. And on *Children Of Art* (Capri), guitarist Joshua Breakstone (not a Messenger) interprets tunes by ex-members.

Labels, too, are capitalizing on Blakey's brand. Austria's In+Out Records is reissuing the long-out-of-print *The Art Of Jazz*, documenting Blakey's 70th birthday concert in Leverkusen, Germany, by a large ensemble that mixed the contemporaneous 1989 Jazz Messengers with a cohort of Messenger immortals and Blakey's old friend Roy Haynes, who propels much of the proceedings. In early 2020, Blue Note plans to release *Just Coolin'*, a previously unissued studio date from March 8, 1959, with the same personnel—Morgan on trumpet, DownBeat Hall of Fame inductee Hank Mobley on tenor saxophone, Bobby Timmons on piano and Jymie Merritt on bass—who made the classic live album *At The Jazz Corner Of The World* five weeks later.

Blakey's five-star drumming was the core of his immense footprint. "Art could reach inside your emotions," Golson said on WKCR in 1996. "There was no wasted effort when he played. It was meaningful, logical and sounded fantastic—the epitome of swinging. His style was such that you didn't want to hear or play with any other style."

The day after Blakey died, Max Roach, who wasn't predisposed to hyperbole, told *The New York Times*: "Art was an original. He's the only drummer whose time I recognize immediately. His signature style was amazing; we called him 'Thunder.' When I met Art on 52nd Street in 1944, he was already playing polyrhythms independently

with all four limbs. He was doing it before anybody was."

Peterson, the last drummer to share the bandstand with Blakey, recently elaborated on the characteristics that differentiated his mentor from generational contemporaries like Roach and Haynes. On the previous evening at Manhattan's Jazz Standard, he'd led the Messenger Legacy Sextet, including alumni Brian Lynch (trumpet), Bill Pierce (tenor saxophone), Robin Eubanks (trombone) and Essiet Essiet (bass) through two rousing sets. As on the 2019 release *Legacy Alive* (Onyx)—with Watson on alto saxophone and ex-Messenger Geoffrey Keezer on piano—they projected the admixture of primal energy, intellectual clarity, high science and unrelenting swing that informed the elite Jazz Messengers editions.

"The size of Art's beat is one thing," Peterson said. "The strength of his hi-hat is another. But conceptually, it's how he'd set up phrases and ensemble sections—big band drumming in a small group setting. Not that he was constantly coming up with new things to play, but his placement and timing, his sense of drama and theater within the framework of the music, were always fresh, contemporary and in the moment. When you think about all the music he played from memory, the amount of brainpower could probably power a small city."

"He was a master of getting to the listener's ear what he was feeling inside," said Kendrick Scott, who has absorbed Blakey's precepts through a long association with trumpeter and Messenger alumnus Terence Blanchard. "His Gretsch drums were the optimal sound for jazz; his vocabulary is baked into the lexicon of jazz drumming. You can't *not* go through Art Blakey if you want to play jazz drums."

Former Messenger Branford Marsalis praised Blakey's "ear for melody and photographic memory," which he applied toward establishing an apropos drum part for every tune.

"I'd have an idea of what I wanted when I brought something in, but Art played it the way he felt it, and it worked," pianist Donald Brown said. "His mix of patterns made you know it was Art Blakey. His press



Art Blakey performs at a 1955 Jazz Messengers show at a Bronx club.
(Photo: Francis Wolff ©Mosaic Images LLC/mosaicrecordsimages.com)

Roy Haynes (left), Blakey and Philly Joe Jones on Nov. 2, 1958, during a session for *Drums Around The Corner*.



FRANCIS WOLFE © MOSAIC IMAGES, LLC / MOSAICRECORDS IMAGES.COM

roll sounded like a rubber band being stretched—when he released it, it intensified the groove.”

Equally consequential to Blakey’s legacy are his contributions as a bandleader and teacher, as Roach implied by stating, “Art was a great man, which influenced everybody around him.”

From 1955—when Blakey and pianist Horace Silver co-led the inaugural Jazz Messengers with Mobley, trumpeter Kenny Dorham (replaced in 1956 by Donald Byrd) and bassist Doug Watkins—until his final, 1990 unit with Lynch, Keezer and Essiet, he recruited cream-of-the-crop young improvisers with strong compositional skills, channeled their individualism into serving the group sound and molded them into leaders.

Circa 2019, Blakey’s collective personnel constitute a who’s who of mainstream jazz expression. The list includes trumpeters Charles Tolliver, Woody Shaw, Eddie Henderson, Wynton Marsalis and Wallace Roney; saxophonists Jackie McLean, Gary Bartz, Carlos Garnett, David Schnitter, Donald Harrison, Kenny Garrett and Javon Jackson; trombonists Steve Turre, Slide Hampton and Steve Davis; pianists Walter Davis Jr., John Hicks, Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, James Williams, Mulgrew Miller and Benny Green; and bassists Reggie Workman, Buster Williams, Charles Fambrough and Peter Washington.

On one recording, Blakey remarked, “I’m going to stay with the youngsters—it keeps the mind active.” Pragmatic motivations, not least of them financial, fueled his career-long predisposition to work with young musicians, but he also

responded to emotional imperatives. In a 1987 interview, he said that he’d raised 14 children, some biological, some adopted. “I was an orphan,” Blakey said. “I like a family—it gives me something to live for. I learn from the kids. When the young guys come in the band, I learn from them.”

To be specific: Blakey’s father abandoned his mother during pregnancy. She gave birth to Blakey on Oct. 11, 1919, in Pittsburgh. She died when he was 6 months old. Blakey was raised by his mother’s cousin, a Seventh Day Adventist. Her home had a piano, which he learned to play. At 13, he learned of the adoption and responded by leaving home.

After a few months working in a steel mill, he parlayed his piano skills and can-do attitude into a gig at a local club. A few years later, the owner ordered Blakey to switch to drums after Pittsburgher Erroll Garner sat in on a tune. For the next several years, Blakey learned on the job, which spanned after-hours sets and breakfast jams, applying advice from local drum men (among them Kenny Clarke) to the nuances of directing a show from the drum chair.

Conflicting chronologies trace Blakey’s path from local hero to international avatar, but a likely scenario is as follows: During the latter 1930s, Blakey met drum master Chick Webb, who took him under his wing, and demonstrated proper execution of the force-of-nature press roll that would be a signature component of his flow.

In 1942, Pittsburgh native Mary Lou Williams—who’d returned home after a decade-plus with Andy Kirk’s Twelve Clouds of Joy—

was impressed by Blakey’s skills and took him to New York’s Kelly’s Stables with a sextet. Subsequently, he led a group at Boston’s Tic Toc Club and toured with Fletcher Henderson.

In 1944, Dizzy Gillespie recruited Blakey to play drums with Billy Eckstine’s bebop big band, whose soloists included Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Fats Navarro, Dexter Gordon and Gene Ammons. “I was doing funny stuff on drums, trying to play shuffle rhythms,” Blakey said in Gillespie’s 1979 memoir, *To Be, or Not ... To Bop*. “He stopped me ... and said, ‘We want you to play your drums the way you play them.’”

Blakey’s page-turning conception rendered the rhythmic innovations of bebop with the dynamic control and showmanship of Webb and Sid Catlett, his lodestars. In 1947, the drummer performed on Thelonious Monk’s first Blue Note recordings, as well as important bebop dates by Navarro, Gordon and James Moody, and played in an octet iteration of the Jazz Messengers.

Blakey (aka Abdullah Ibn Buhaina) spent much of 1948 and early 1949 in Africa, absorbing drum language and Islamic philosophy. He then re-established himself in New York.

By 1950, he was a frequent presence at Birdland, as captured on several dynamic airchecks. As the decade progressed, he documented several collaborative drum summits with Afro-Caribbean masters, and fueled landmark releases by, among others, Monk, Mobley, Dorham, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Nichols, Horace Silver, Lou Donaldson and Clifford Brown.

In 1954, Blakey joined forces with the latter three players on the spectacular location date *Night At Birdland*. In the aftermath, Blakey and Silver consolidated with a more curated unit whose three bellwether albums set a template for the emerging approach dubbed hard-bop, where practitioners rendered bebop vocabulary with a hard-blowing, blues-tinged, churchy feel. When they parted ways in 1956, Blakey appropriated the Jazz Messengers title.

For the next two years, Blakey led several energetic but unfocused units. In 1958, he formed another benchmark band with Golson, who recruited fellow Philadelphians Morgan,

different. When he did, it was something special vis-à-vis what happened before.”

As Workman added, Blakey, who lived as hard as he played, “had his habits over the years,” and could behave unreliably and obstreperously when in their thrall. “He was an institution,” Workman said. “He’d been through every band, every situation, the ups and downs, yin and yang. A lot of us went through it with him. He kept that institution together, and created a structure that enabled many of the young players who came along to find themselves in the music business.”

After the sextet disbanded, Blakey led short-lived units during the ensuing decade, none of

Although Blakey’s comportment during his golden years was not exactly equivalent to the persona of, say, Fred Rogers, he had, Workman observed, “matured as a person.”

“I’d heard stories about how intense Art could be, but he wasn’t like that with us,” Pierce said. “He was a great manipulator. He was gifted at seeing what people needed to feel, so that he could get the most out of them. But I think he genuinely thought, ‘These are young, dumb assholes; I’d better help them out.’ The earlier guys were more or less his peers, or at least they tried to behave that way. We didn’t see ourselves as Art’s peers. We wanted to be in the company of the great man and learn as much as we could.”

“Art taught in the Socratic manner,” Branford Marsalis said. “He’d force you to think, and through thinking, you arrive at the answer.”

“He mirrored your personality back at you,” Harrison said. “If you were selfish, Art might show you that you’re selfish. He’d paid attention to all the people he’d been around. He told me: ‘When you get your band, make sure you realize every person is different, and don’t lose them. Figure them out, and nurture them until they get where they’re going.’ He told me things about the alto saxophone that nobody else ever told me—how to play with a trumpeter, how to play dynamics, how to use your throat. You’d have thought he was a saxophone teacher.”

Donald Brown recalled a rehearsal when Blakey deployed his piano background: “Art asked if I could voice the chord to give it more weight. I wasn’t sure what he was talking about, so he came over and demonstrated. For him to do that was a lesson you can’t put a price on.”

Still, Blakey mentored most effectively from the drum chair, backing up words with deeds. “He’d talk you through your solo, saying things like ‘play the blues’ or ‘double up,’ giving guidance on how to make your moves,” Harrison said.

“Playing with him and having him interpret my music was simultaneously experiencing something you’ve listened to and idolized, while participating in real time,” Lynch remarked. “Then you have a challenge of playing and listening. He’s like: ‘You can take it up to here, but if you can’t take it further, I will run over you and flatten you like a pancake—but go for it if you dare.’ When you got to that level, then the *real* stuff came out, all the extra-special goodies.”

Among the many Blakeyisms that alumni frequently cite is this gem: “This isn’t the post office.” Indeed, to be a Jazz Messenger was not a lifetime gig. Although it wasn’t always a smooth process, Blakey also taught by letting go.

“This is not a job,” he told an interviewer in 1973. “It’s not a right—it’s a privilege from the Almighty to be able to play music. We’re only here for a minute, small cogs in a big wheel. You’re no big deal; so you get up and do your very best. You play to the people—not down to the people.”

DB

‘Blakey’s vocabulary is baked into the lexicon of jazz drumming.’ —Kendrick Scott

Timmons and Merritt. That configuration made an LP titled *Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers*, which later would be known simply as *Moanin’*, after Timmons’ now-iconic opening tune. On the album, Golson tailored his compositions “Blues March” and “Along Came Betty” in ways that expanded Blakey’s timbral palette across the entire drum kit, establishing the orchestrational attitude that would inform the Jazz Messengers aesthetic until the end.

In fall 1959, Shorter assumed the tenor saxophone and music director chairs. He remained until summer 1964 (when he joined Miles Davis); during his tenure, Blakey refined and expanded the format. Paired with Morgan on the front line, Shorter contributed a string of now-classic tunes (among them “Lester Left Town,” “This Is For Albert,” “Ping Pong”) that captured Blakey’s elemental funkiness while postulating allusive, captivating, highbrow harmonic content. When Blakey shifted to a three-horn configuration in 1961, Shorter took full advantage of the new possibilities, while bandmates Hubbard, Fuller and Cedar Walton added to the mix, contributing pieces (“Down Under,” “The Core,” “A La Mode,” “Mosaic”) that remain highlights of the canon.

“Art was dogmatic in how he interpreted arrangements and wanted to present his band,” Workman said. The 2020 NEA Jazz Master joined the Messengers in 1962, after a year with John Coltrane. “He wanted the band to be uniform—well-dressed, well-presented, each set tight—like he’d been used to in his earlier days. We were trying to get Buhaina to move with the times, so we gave him arrangements that forced him to perform something

sufficient duration to develop a distinctive identity until a 1975–77 edition with Ponomarev and Schnitter, which played new Walter Davis Jr. compositions like “Uranus,” “Backgammon” and “Jodi.” In 1977, Blakey recruited Watson and James Williams, and encouraged them to write. Bill Pierce soon joined the mix.

They were still Messengers in 1980, as was Fambrough, when 18-year-old Wynton Marsalis replaced Ponomarev on the front line. With a book that mixed old standbys with new tunes featuring ’70s harmonies and beat structures (e.g., Watson’s “In Case You Missed It,” Williams’ “Soulful Mr. Timmons”), the Jazz Messengers were again synchronous with the zeitgeist—an aspirational landing spot for the best and brightest players.

“The challenge was to tailor what we were listening to into something that this man who had a proven formula would play,” Watson said. “It was open; Art depended on his composers. I’d sneak some Trane changes into my tunes, because Art wasn’t going to play a Coltrane tune.”

“It’s interesting to see the creative tension engendered by younger musicians trying to bring innovations into this packaged format,” Lynch said. “You can hear Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Olu Dara, Eddie Henderson, Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Wallace Roney ... all of them playing *Moanin’*.”

One draw for the “youngsters,” Pierce observed, is that “something in Art’s music made you think, ‘Maybe I can do that,’ whereas Miles and Coltrane were a little further away. I won’t say it wasn’t intellectual, but not so much that you had to be a deep thinker to enjoy it.”

Blakey’s “young lions” frequently depict him doling out tough love as a quasi-father figure.



Charlie Parker performs in New York in 1949.
(Photo: ©Herman Leonard Photography LLC)

Charlie Parker

‘BIRD’

ENDURES!

By J.D. Considine

To say that Charlie “Yardbird” Parker was one of the greatest jazz musicians who ever lived is a bit like saying the *Mona Lisa* is a well-known painting.

In the jazz world, Parker is a towering figure, a founding father whose only other peer would be Louis Armstrong. It isn’t just that bebop, which remains the basis for modern mainstream jazz and a substantial amount of its avant-garde, is essentially his invention; for jazz educators, Parker’s music is what Shakespeare is to English teachers, not just a curricular keystone, but a central component in understanding how the language works. It would be hard to imagine what the music would sound like had Bird’s compositions and recordings never existed.

Yet when Parker died, on March 12, 1955, *The New York Times* responded with a death notice that read more like a police report than a tribute to a musical great. Although the story acknowledged that Bird was “one of the founders of progressive jazz, or be-bop” and was a “virtuoso of the alto saxophone,” most of the *Times*’ item was devoted to the circumstances of his death, due to lobar pneumonia, in the apartment of the Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter (aka Kathleen Annie Pannonica Rothschild). “The police said Mr. Parker was about 53 years old,” the paper reported.

He was actually just 34.

While the establishment took little note of Parker’s passing, the jazz world was in a frenzy of mourning and remembrance. The poet Ted Joans, who once roomed with Parker, organized a graffiti campaign with some friends, plastering alleyways, jazz club washrooms and other hipster haunts with a heartfelt message: “Bird Lives!” Although in some sense an act of rebellion, insisting that genius like his could never be extinguished, the phrase gradually became a jazz credo, a testament to the enduring power of the bop aesthetic.

Well, for a few decades, anyway. “Unfortunately, I do not have the sense that young players in college learn his music the same way we did when learning how to play,” said drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, who with alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa will be co-headlining a Charlie Parker-based tour, *Fly Higher*, through the coming year.

“When I was in school at Berklee College of Music in the ’80s, people were walking around with ‘Bird Lives’ T-shirts on. I don’t see that anymore. Then, people really understood the importance of learning as much history as possible before finding their own sound, or at least doing it simultaneously. All the modern players that I knew had a deep understanding of Charlie Parker and the repertoire—people like Greg Osby and Steve Coleman, though they did not necessarily play that repertoire or Bird licks.”

In fairness, it’s worth asking whether Parker himself, had he lived to some ripe old age, wouldn’t also have moved on from the sounds of his youth. Still, Carrington’s observation raises a crucial conundrum: How can Charlie Parker be both historically significant and currently topical? Which parts of his sound and myth have held on, and which have faded away? How exactly does Bird live in 2020?

Charles Parker Jr. was born on Aug. 29, 1920, in Kansas City, Kansas. His father, Charles Sr., a Pullman cook, was originally from Mississippi; his mother, Addie, Charles’ second wife, hailed from Oklahoma. Addie, by all accounts, was a doting and protective mother, while Charles Sr. was a heavy drinker, and frequently absent. By the time the boy was 10, his parents had split up, with Addie and young Charlie moving across the river to Kansas City, Missouri.

How Charlie grew up is a story that, often as not, relies mostly on mythology. We can blame him for much of that, as Bird seemed to delight in preying on the credulity of those willing to interview him. For instance, in an interview published in the Sept. 9, 1949, issue of *DownBeat*, Parker told Michael Levin and John S. Wilson that he bought his first saxophone at age 11, and that he did so after being inspired by the sound of Rudy Vallée. Other stories have him turning pro at the prodigious age of 13.

Perhaps the most accurate account of Parker’s youth can be found in Stanley Crouch’s assiduously researched *Kansas City Lightning: The Rise and Times of Charlie Parker*. Based on decades of research, includ-



EDWARD OZERN, DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Parker accepts a 1950 DownBeat Readers Poll award for top Alto Saxophonist, presented by DownBeat's Leonard Feather.

ing extensive interviews with people Parker grew up with, Crouch's version doesn't mention Vallée. Instead, his reporting suggests that Bird didn't really take to the alto until he was at Lincoln High School, where he quickly rose to first chair in the school band.

Cocky and audacious, he was eager to move beyond his school music experience, and when he was laughed off the bandstand after his first attempt to play with the pros at the High Hat Club, his response wasn't to give up but to practice obsessively, showing a determination that did not crop up elsewhere in his schoolwork. "I used to put in at least from 11 to 15 hours a day," he told Paul Desmond in a 1953 radio interview. "I did that over a period of three to four years."

An early gaffe was immortalized in Clint Eastwood's 1988 biopic, *Bird*. The 15-year-old Parker was at a jam session at Kansas City's Reno Club, and somehow got two bars ahead of the form. As he soldiered on, oblivious, drummer Jo Jones used his ride cymbal to "gong" the hapless young saxophonist, but Parker paid no heed. Finally, Jones, in frustration, tossed the cymbal at the nervous young altoist's feet. Mortified, Parker told his friends that he'd be back. But as Crouch put it, "Charlie Parker didn't come back—not for a long time, not until he was sure he would never be so wrong again."

But for years, the most avidly retold part of the Charlie Parker myth wasn't the way he applied discipline and determination to become the absolute master of his instrument. Instead, it focused on the drug habit he acquired in his late teens, and suggested that, somehow, it was heroin, and not hard work, that explained Bird's flights of genius.

Journalist Ira Gitler, in his 1985 book, *Swing*

to *Bop*, recalled that in an earlier essay he had wondered whether Bird's genius came "in spite (or because?)" of his drug use. "Drugs do not necessarily help musicians play better," he eventually decided, "but the music could not have been the same without everything that went into it. Now I would take the question mark off 'because.'"

Certainly, there were plenty of players at the time who believed that if Bird played like that while using, then they needed to start using, too. Saxophonist Grace Kelly heard about this firsthand from the late Frank Morgan. "He would tell stories about how, as a young teenager, he completely idolized Parker, and everyone was saying he was going to be the next Charlie Parker," she said. "And then, when he finally got to meet him, he saw his drug habit, and that's how Frank got hooked. Because he thought, 'If he's doing this, it must be what I need to do.'"

"I try to avoid that whole tortured genius/drug addict discourse," Mahanthappa said. "I think the epitome of that was Clint Eastwood's movie. ... But the tortured genius thing is kind of played out in general, right?"

Mahanthappa—whose 2015 album, *Bird Calls* (ACT), used modern rhythmic and compositional techniques to reinterpret and reinvigorate Parker's music—is director of the jazz studies program at Princeton University, so he has ample opportunities to think about the jazz legend's contemporary relevance. "I have young players who, if I ask them what they're listening to, oftentimes it's essentially their peers," he explained. "A few of them are going back historically. But when trying to explain to them why we should be listening to Charlie Parker, as I'm explaining it I'm kind of re-explaining it to myself, too."

In some sense, the real challenge in further-

ing Parker's legacy today is dealing with the academicizing of his music. Type his name into the search window on the website of music publishing/distribution company Hal Leonard, and more than 200 items come up, ranging from multiple volumes and versions of the *Charlie Parker Omnibook*, each with five dozen transcribed Parker solos, to play-along volumes, to *Charlie Parker for Bass*. Thanks to such tools, players today have an astonishing command of the bebop idiom. But does that help them understand why and how Parker still matters?

"As far as the jazz education books, that's where you see the vital essence of the stuff get sucked out of it," Mahanthappa said. "You know, where something that Charlie Parker played is presented as a lick that fits over these particular chords, and you can buy a book where somebody has transposed that 'lick' into 12 different keys. Suddenly, people are learning jazz that way, instead of just learning one Charlie Parker tune, or one Charlie Parker solo by ear. People are trying to learn the stuff out of books without really checking out the recordings."

Not Kelly. When she was introduced to bebop, it was a real ear-opener: "The first thing I thought was, 'Wow, I've never heard the saxophone sound like this.' The vocabulary was so different than what I'd been listening to before, which was Johnny Hodges and Stan Getz."

When Kelly started studying Parker's work, her teacher made sure that she got more than just the notes on the page. "We actually worked through the whole *Omnibook*, and that's really where I learned all about bebop vocabulary and articulation," she recalled. "I would not only listen to the songs, but put on headphones and listen to it hundreds of times, write down all his articulations and try, when I was playing his transcriptions, to make it as close to Charlie Parker as possible. My teacher kept pointing out that it's one thing to just read the notes, but where you're really going to learn the most is if you completely internalize this stuff."

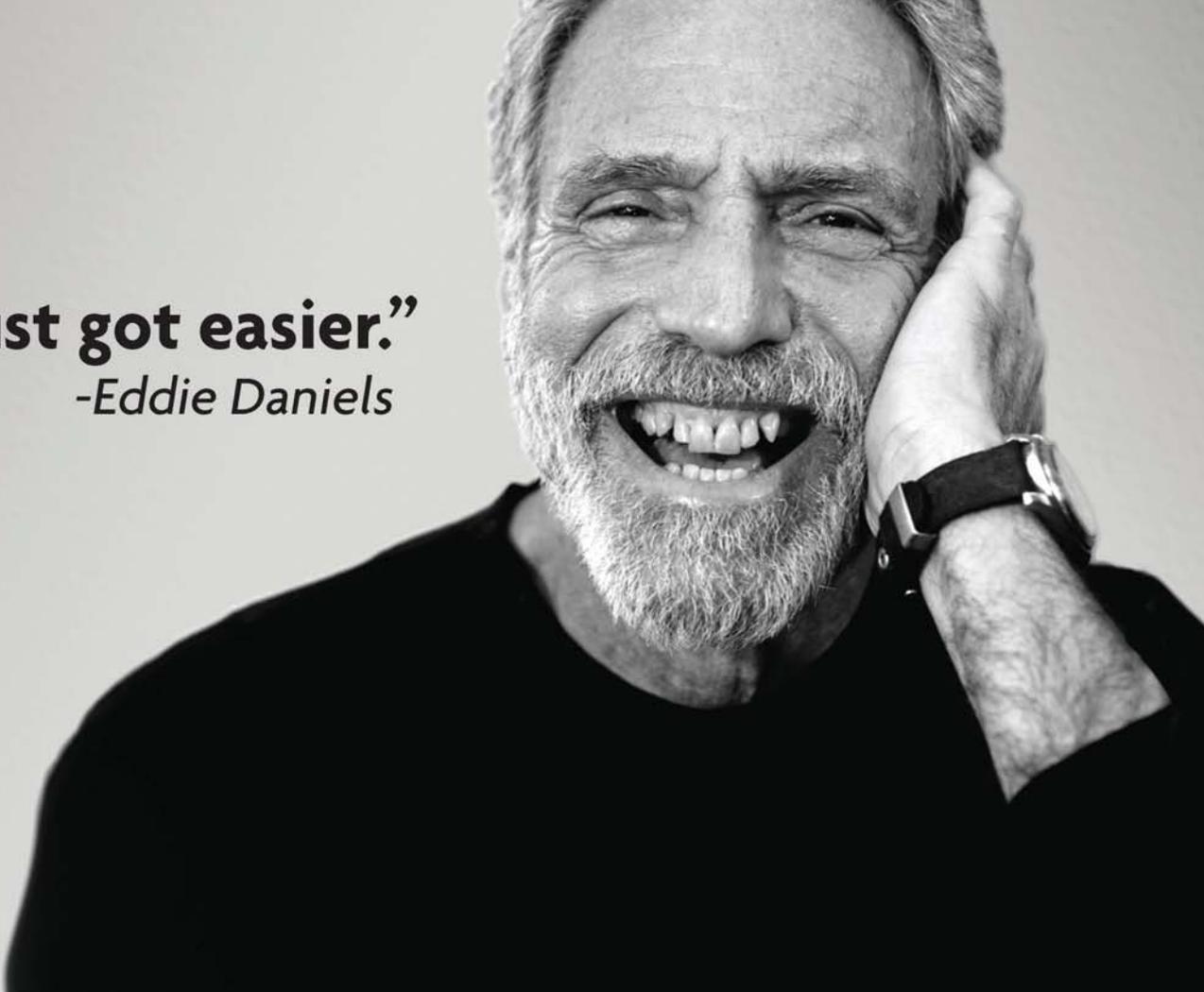
One of the few things Parker told DownBeat in his 1949 interview that did not seem to be a put-on had to do with the limitations that some listeners wanted to apply to jazz. "They teach you there's a boundary line to music," he said, "but, man, there's no boundary line to art."

"Today, there's so much music that's happening, great music," said saxophonist Vincent Herring, whose new tribute album, *Bird At 100* (Smoke Sessions), was recorded with fellow alto men Gary Bartz and Bobby Watson.

"But at the same time, there are certain people that it's mandatory check out. You have to know Wayne Shorter, because it's part of the music. You have to know Thelonious Monk, because he's a cornerstone of the music. The music continues to evolve, and regardless of where it goes, Charlie Parker will always be one of the cornerstones of the music." **DB**

“Life just got easier.”

-Eddie Daniels



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Dave Brubeck

NEW ERA

AT 100

By John McDonough

A few years after the death of Leonard Bernstein in 1990, his longtime personal publicist, Maggie Carson, said an unexpected thing: “In all the years I worked with him, I’ve never been busier than now.”

The lesson was simple: Death is not the end, particularly when it involves a great, palpable legacy. The artistic output of the deceased might be over, but the legacy he or she leaves often lives on—relevant, yet vulnerable to cultural changes—in unpredictable ways and with a purpose that can evolve with time.

After a century of recorded history, the jazz world has become a cosmic anthology of great legacies, each with advocates to plead its case before the doorkeepers of Valhalla. Sometimes, as in the case of Bernstein, the advocacy is assumed by the family and an institutional infrastructure that is up and running. In other cases, when descendants are not there or otherwise occupied, it falls to individual scholars, researchers and biographers to do the advocacy.

The family of Dave Brubeck (1920–2012)—sons Darius, Chris, Dan and Matthew, and daughter Cathy—would like to see their father enjoy a similar kind of perpetuity, one that will last well beyond the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Indeed, Brubeck’s centennial year will be marked in many ways, including a major biography by Philip Clark, *Dave Brubeck: A Life in Time* (due in February from Hachette), and the new book *Dave Brubeck’s Time Out* by Stephen A. Crist. The latter, from Oxford University Press’ Studies in Recorded Jazz series, focuses on Brubeck’s classic 1959 album, *Time Out*. Even more important will be a changing of the guard overseeing the more organic parts of the pianist/composer’s heritage, as the Brubeck Institute comes to an end and the organization Brubeck Living Legacy replaces it.

No legacy can be sustained without a great career on which to stand. Brubeck’s was as epic as it was long, touching many generations. Coming in the wake of jazz’s first brushes with both popularity and modernity—swing into bebop—Brubeck was progressive both musically and socially. As early as World War II, when he created one of the early service bands, the Wolf Pack, he insisted to his commanding officer that the group be integrated. Later, he canceled a tour in the South rather than replace Eugene Wright, his

African American bassist. At a time in the ’50s when jazz was in cultural retreat, Brubeck became a household word and the subject of a cover story in *Time* magazine. He played the first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954 and had one of history’s rare top-10 hit jazz albums with *Time Out*. It became a career landmark.

There are two parallel strategies for building and sustaining such a career legacy, each with its own purposes and values. One is keeping the music before to the public, a job largely controlled by record companies and market conditions. As a strategy, though, the impact of a major reissue or a previously unreleased recording can be fleeting and largely outside the control of artist estates.

The other strategy involves a more institutional investment, a direct partnership between the artist and a school that can act as both a career archive and an active agent of future evolution through music education. In 1999 and 2000, that was the path Dave and Iola Brubeck chose.

Iola was her husband’s Boswell. Seeing importance in his work early, she saved practically every concert program, review, clipping, arrangement, tax return, photograph, contract and document. In a trade where musicians typically leave a tissue-thin paper trail, Brubeck’s 70-year career is among the most exhaustively documented in jazz. Beyond that was Brubeck’s immense book of compositions, which include some of the most famous jazz standards (“Take Five,” “The Duke,” “Blue Rondo À La Turk”), plus a diverse library of chamber and orchestral works. In the ’90s, the question was: What to do with it all? The Brubecks began exploring options—Yale, the Smithsonian, others.

Meanwhile, Don DeRosa, president of the University of the Pacific, was thinking about the future of his school’s music conservatory—and its most famous alumnus. He spotted a unique opportunity. “DeRosa had a particular vision of actively keeping Dave’s music alive,” said Chris Brubeck. “This meant not only chronicling and digitizing the archives but seeing that his music was played by



Dave Brubeck performs at Zardi's in Hollywood in 1953. (Photo: ©Ross Burdick/CTS IMAGES)



Brubeck, his bandmate Paul Desmond (far left) and a group of Indian musicians listen to sitar player Halim Abdul Jaffar Khan in 1958 during a global tour sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

student musicians as well. That sounded good. Dave didn't want to see his legacy end up at some prestigious place buried in a million crates. But the most important thing that keeps a name alive is tying it to an education mission. You pass directly on to new players a knowledge of that legacy. That's what makes it a living legacy. Records may reach more people, but it's a passive relationship. What was appealing to my dad was reaching young players born in the '80s and '90s, so that they could carry forth some of his musical and creative values."

The result was the Brubeck Institute, established in 2000. "It was originally an island by itself," recalled Patrick Langham, who arrived in 2003 to oversee the first group of full-scholarship undergrad Brubeck Fellows while also running the separate UOP jazz studies program. "But they had no peer group within the music school and no dedicated faculty. I came to bridge the institute with the conservatory. There was the name Brubeck, but no one really knew what it was yet or its potential."

The essential terms of the original accord between the university and the Brubecks transferred custody—but not ownership—of the archive to the school and established a Brubeck Jazz Festival. "It introduced the fellowship program, and it grew from there," Langham recalled. "Outreach was a major part of it—going out and visiting other schools." The original agreement covered 10 years, and it was renewed in 2010.

"In 20 years, the institute brought the university into a strong position in jazz education and really upped the game of the entire jazz program," Chris Brubeck said.

In October, the university hosted its final Brubeck Jazz Festival, and the occasion brought back to the campus many former Brubeck Fellows and alumni, most now well into their own careers. "After UOP I went to The New School, then Juilliard," said Lucas Pino, a 2005

Brubeck Fellow who leads the acclaimed No Net Nonet. "Though both were extremely positive, they pale in comparison to how formative and impactful the Brubeck Institute was."

In the early years of the Brubeck Institute, Dave himself was deeply involved. "He would do everything," said Simon Rowe, who headed the institute from 2011 to 2016. "He'd perform with Brubeck Fellows and do concerts. He would visit often and perform classical and jazz pieces. He was delighted to have this innovative organization celebrating his values and music."

In March 2019, Pamela A. Eibeck, then the University of the Pacific's president, sprang a big surprise. As of Dec. 31, she announced, UOP and the Brubeck family would not be renewing their 20-year accord. The Brubeck Institute would be dissolved, the archive would leave, and the fellowship program would be revised and renamed the Pacific Jazz Ambassadors.

Rowe—the former executive director of the Brubeck Institute who now is the executive director of the Roots, Jazz and American Music program at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music—suggested that the relationship UOP had with such an iconic figure as Dave Brubeck was a huge coup, particularly in the jazz education world. "I expect there's a bit of disappointment. Perhaps it's a missed opportunity. But when I was there, the Brubeck Institute's relationship with the university was above my pay grade. Universities are hierarchical, and people at the top make their own decisions."

As of Jan. 1, a new setup will put a lot of those decisions into the hands of the family, which has created a 501(c)3 nonprofit institution called the Brubeck Living Legacy. It will replace and carry on the mantle of the old Brubeck Institute, but through a network of relationships. Chris Brubeck explained that it will have a wider and more flexible structure untethered from a single institution. To put it simply, the Brubeck Living Legacy intends

to put wheels on what was once the Brubeck Institute and take jazz education "on the road."

"Yes," Brubeck said, "and to make it available to as many people who might be interested. That means developing a series of partnerships in different contexts, giving the education mission a mobility it didn't have in one location."

"The chance to partner with different organizations was a key part of our work with the Brubeck Institute," Rowe said. "We found doors usually opened wide at the mention of the name Brubeck. So, it wasn't difficult to find partners."

And so they should again, especially in the year of the Brubeck centennial. "The Jazz Education Network meeting in New Orleans in January is a big event," Chris Brubeck said, "and that's exactly in the heart of where we need to be. Darius, Dan and I will be there reminding jazz educators of what's going on with the new Brubeck Living Legacy and getting their ideas on how we can creatively partner up to do some things together." Directly after New Orleans, the Brubecks will kick off the centennial year at Dizzy's in New York, and from there join the jazz cruise aboard the ship *Celebrity Infinity* for another Brubeck celebration.

The biggest item on the Living Legacy calendar so far is the first Brubeck Jazz Summit, a major jazz summer camp in association with Classical Tahoe and Sierra Nevada College. It's an extension of what formerly was called the Brubeck Jazz Colony, where 30 young people would gather from around the world under the umbrella of the Brubeck Institute. "We're basically keeping this tradition of intensive study for one week alive," said Rowe, who will serve as artistic director for the camp. (Details are posted on the website classicaltahoe.org.)

At the time DownBeat interviewed Chris, he was looking ahead to another partnership, the Dave Brubeck Symposium held in October 2019 at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. It was one of the rare occasions when all the Brubeck brothers, as well as Cathy, have gathered together for a public event.

For the foreseeable future, Dave Brubeck's legacy will be in the charge of the Brubeck Living Legacy and his five children, all with lives and careers of their own. Beyond that, plans are still being developed. Among the Brubeck Institute's many accomplishments were the cataloging and digitizing of the vast archive Iola Brubeck gathered. It is now in the "cloud" and will be accessible to researchers through the Brubeck Living Legacy website.

"I have a little bit of an emotional response to the demise of the Brubeck Institute," Rowe said. "But my overarching feeling is that things change and evolve. The advent of Brubeck Living Legacy is a new day and a new way forward. So, I think that's more important than what's past or might have been. The main thing now is what could be."

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Reggie Quinerly



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WORDS TO LOVE

Drawing inspiration from the universal theme of love, Reggie Quinerly crafts an emotionally inspired program of original music and lyrics. The Texas born, New York based drummer has been a fixture on the scene for some time, but has recently emerged as a creative and promising bandleader since his 2012 debut.

To assist in the recording *Words To Love*, Quinerly assembled a talented ensemble of world-class musicians that include vocalists Milton Suggs and Melanie Charles, saxophonist Jaleel Shaw and the dynamic pairing of pianist Orrin Evans and bassist Ben Wolfe.

"A drummer and composer of swinging disposition."
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Clark Terry instructs Daud El-Bakara during a master class at Settlement Music School in Philadelphia on Jan. 22, 1990.



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ETERNAL TEACHER

While many listeners discovered Clark Terry during his time with *The Tonight Show* band in the 1960s and '70s, a new generation of fans has emerged, thanks to Alan Hicks' 2014 documentary, *Keep On Keepin' On*, which chronicled the trumpeter's mentorship of pianist Justin Kauflin, then in his twenties.

But Terry's support for young players began long before then. Apart from being one of the most distinctively melodic and humorous voices in the trumpet lineage, Terry (1920–2015) remained a fierce ally of emerging artists throughout his career.

"Clark Terry embodied the beauty of what our jazz family was, and is, and did so until his final moments," said longtime friend and collaborator Quincy Jones. "When we were coming up in the '50s as young beboppers, we had no choice but to stand together, because all we had was each other. For Clark, that was the essence of what our music was: family, tradition, life, love, sharing, giving back, encouragement and staying involved in the perpetuation of our craft."

As a teen, Jones frequently would receive informal instruction from Terry amid the trumpeter's busy tour schedule. Terry's willingness to share had an impact on the 14-year-old, one that would reverberate as Jones began to "pay it forward," mentoring those coming up behind him. "It would be years later," Jones said, "after I began touring with [Lionel Hampton] and Dizzy [Gillespie], that I fully understood how exhausted [Terry] would have been after a long night working—and how truly generous and kind he was to me."

In 1959, Terry put his money where his mouthpiece was. He left Duke Ellington's band to join his young mentee's group for a gig in Paris—a gesture that Jones described as one of the most humbling moments of his life. Terry

seemed to view taking chances on rising and unknown players as an important opportunity. Perhaps no one remembers that investment as viscerally as vocalist Dianne Reeves.

"Clark really saw the content of people's artistry before anything," said Reeves, who credits Terry as the artist who "discovered" her. "So, he invited young women, young men, young women of color, young men of color—it didn't matter. He saw you. And that is a very, very powerful gift that he gave all of us, because it helped us to move forward."

Reeves views her time on the bandstand with Terry as a "living school" whose fearless professor prompted her to take risks of her own. "I started to experiment," she said. "He would egg me on or pull me back. His belief in me gave me an immeasurable amount of confidence."

Reeves and Jones recount their time with Terry as a holistic study through which they learned how to conduct themselves both on stage and off.

Drummer Sylvia Cuenca spent nearly two decades touring with Terry, who got her phone number one night after she sat in with him at the Village Vanguard. "A few weeks later, he hired me for a Grammy party gig and he continued to hire me for another 17 years," Cuenca said. In addition to absorbing his "concise and lyrical phrases locked into time," she, too, came to know Terry's three-dimensional mentoring. "Observing him off the bandstand," she said, "I've realized the importance of handling oneself with poise, dignity and class."

Like that of Art Blakey, Terry's influence as a mentor extends through multiple generations. "He was one of the greatest trumpeters to ever grace the planet," Jones said. "His shoulders are among those I was allowed to stand upon to become the musician that I am today."

—Stephanie Jones

BOLD MOVES FROM BEHIND THE KIT

A case can be made that no other drummer of his era had, in today's parlance, a stronger "brand" than Shelly Manne. A consummate studio artist, he resisted the pyrotechnics of Buddy Rich, Max Roach and Elvin Jones, but when his name was attached to a project, listeners could bank on its inventiveness, quality and widespread appeal.

The head spins when reading through the discography of this astonishingly prolific artist, who was born in New York in 1920 and died in Los Angeles 64 years later. Manne played in the bands of Benny Goodman, Stan Kenton and Dizzy Gillespie, and he was a key figure in the umbrella movement known as West Coast jazz, leading various groups.

Iconic recordings on which he played drums include Coleman Hawkins' "The Man I Love" and Sonny Rollins' *Way Out West*. He also recorded a series of trio albums with pianist André Previn, and wrote and recorded music for TV and films. Albums by Ella Fitzgerald, Art Pepper, Nancy Wilson and Tom Waits all benefited from Manne's artistry.

For all his achievements—including his stewardship of a club he dubbed Shelly's Manne-Hole in Hollywood—Manne still might be underappreciated today. But many of his leader albums—including *The Three & The Two*, a pairing of trio and duo performances from the early 1950s, and *2-3-4*, a 1962 album featuring Hawkins—are keenly appreciated by modern players.

And though *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* figures that Manne was "opposed to ostentatious displays of technical skill," his playing still can inspire awe today.

"He had a really amazing groove and cymbal beat," said drummer Matt Wilson. "But it was the way he integrated his playing with the ensemble, making it part of the fabric of the song, that really made him special. And his imagination was boundless.

"I was recently listening to a Vic Damone recording of 'Am I Blue,' not knowing who the drummer was. He was playing in an orchestrated fashion with brushes and hands. And then I instantly knew it was Shelly, because who else could have created this beautiful moment by gently hitting the cymbal with his thumb?"

Though Manne spent most of his career in the middle lane of jazz, he always kept his ears open to possible new directions. His 1956 LP *My Fair Lady* is regarded as the first instrumental jazz album devoted to songs from a single Broadway show, and it was voted the top



Shelly Manne's work as a leader and sideman exhibits the drummer's refusal to be pigeonholed.

jazz LP in DownBeat's Disc Jockey Poll.

Other mainstream artists wanted nothing to do with the "new" jazz, but Manne embraced it. He's the drummer, lest we forget, on Ornette Coleman's 1959 LP *Tomorrow Is The Question!*

"He refused to be pigeonholed, to be associated only with certain things," Wilson said. "In remaining open, he had the same spirit as Coleman Hawkins."

One of Manne's boldest achievements was the unjustly obscure 1963 album *My Son The Jazz Drummer!—Modern Jazz Versions Of Favorite Jewish And Israeli Songs*, featuring trumpeter Shorty Rogers, saxophonist Teddy Edwards and other luminaries. Reissued on CD in 2004 under the title *Steps To The Desert*, the program anticipated the Jewish music adaptations of such modern artists as John Zorn, Uri Caine, Don Byron, Frank London and David Krakauer.

Manne pushed in yet another direction with his "vaguely African music" (as Steely Dan's Walter Becker described it to *Guitar Magazine*) for the TV show *Daktari*, which ran from 1966 to 1969.

"Many years before the coining of the term 'world music,' Shelly was hip to its possibilities in jazz," said pianist Bill Mays, whose 1983 album, *Tha's Delights*, featured the drummer. "He played all kinds of percussion instruments including *berimbau* [a Brazilian musical bow]. It was really hip then and, like Shelly, it's just as hip now." —Lloyd Sachs

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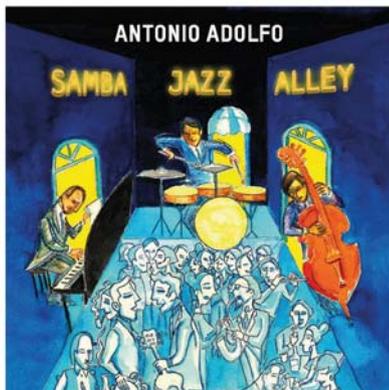
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THE EVOLUTIONIST

Yusef Lateef, the Detroit-bred multi-instrumentalist and composer who was born in 1920 and lived to be 93, was a musician of Walt Whitman-esque multitudes. Lateef (whose birth name was William Emanuel Huddleston) traveled down so many different creative paths during the last 30 years of his life—many far afield from mainstream jazz—that the bewildering variety can blunt an understanding of the specifics.

Lateef's late work, documented on dozens of albums, most on his own YAL label, deserves wider circulation—both for the intrinsic merits of his best music and as a marker of his inexhaustible life force. Lateef's productivity *sped up* as he aged. He was a progressive from the get-go, but his music turned more experimental, even radical, as he approached and then marched through his octogenarian years. Lateef called himself an "evolutionist."

"It was in Yusef's nature to experiment," said percussionist Adam Rudolph, Lateef's closest collaborator during the last 25 years of his life. "He put no limits on himself. He believed that anything you can imagine as an artist, you can do, if you develop the craft for it."

Lateef's autumnal period began at age 61 when he started a four-year research residency at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, in 1981. Recorded in 1983, *In Nigeria* (Landmark) finds Lateef's wailing tenor saxophone and wooden flutes channeling the wisdom of the ancestors and the essence of the blues, alongside animated African percussionists and vocalists. The music winks at Lateef's early assimilation of African, Middle Eastern and Far East influences in the 1950s, but eschews song forms and other jazz tropes—except for the ever-present cry of the blues that remained part of his heartbeat for life.

In the late 1980s, Lateef explored meditative music. On *Yusef Lateef's Little Symphony* (Atlantic), which won a Grammy Award in the New Age category, Lateef plays saxophones, flutes, percussion, synthesizer and keyboards; he improvises freely over trance-inducing textures and static harmony. The chamber pieces on 1989's *Nocturnes* (Atlantic) convey an enticing, Satie-like tranquility.

At the opposite extreme, Lateef made four raucous, two-tenor albums in 1992-'94 on YAL with a traditional rhythm section and a guest tenor saxophonist on each: Archie Shepp, Von Freeman, Rene McLean and Ricky Ford. They pack the wallop of a stiff drink—Lateef's nightcap to jazz conventions, save an occasional 12-bar blues.

Lateef increasingly favored diverse ensembles, earthy rhythms, spontaneous forms, abstraction and extensions of the world-music experiments he started in the '50s and the African music he studied in the '80s. He built



melodies from speech rhythms and employed an intervallic composing system. Sometimes, he and Rudolph would split an ensemble in two, each composing for half without knowing what the other was writing. These ideas bear fruit on the exceptional concert album *The World At Peace (Music For 12 Musicians)* (YAL/Meta). Recorded in 1995, the project was co-led by Lateef and Rudolph, and featured an improvising ensemble of reeds, brass, strings and percussion. Some pieces are loose and improvisatory, some are through-composed. *Towards The Unknown* (YAL/Meta) from 2010 features Rudolph's soulful *Concerto For Brother Yusef*, with Lateef's stentorian tenor sound streaked with blues moans amid strings and percussion.

Lateef also composed prolifically in a classical vein, including four symphonies and three string quartets, though much of this formal concert music remains unpublished and unrecorded. The 14-minute *String Quartet No. 3*, premiered posthumously in 2015 by the Momenta Quartet, unfolds in four movements that evoke the expressionism of Berg and Bartók; but Lateef's fanciful melodic and rhythmic gestures are his own. This piece deserves a place in the repertoire, as do several twilight-of-tonality solo piano miniatures on the 1991 album *Yusef/Lateef's Encounters* (Atlantic).

On *The African-American Epic Suite For Quintet And Orchestra* (ACT) from 1994, a 45-minute tone poem merges orchestra, Lateef and Eternal Wind, a quartet rooted in world-music fusions. The conceptual breadth makes a statement. As Lateef told this writer in 2001: "My music represents everything I've studied and applied in my own way." —Mark Stryker

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TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Waiting Game
Motéma..... Dec.

Waiting Game absorbs the Black Lives Matter movement's simmering fury and converts it into artistic fuel as Carrington addresses homophobia, the genocide of Native Americans and the exile of political prisoners. Her keen focus on song-based compositions helps shape her thematic clarity on the first half of this double-disc set, as does the scintillating rapport she's struck with her band. The drummer and bandleader dedicates the second half of the album to "Dreams And Desperate Measures," a four-part instrumental suite that begins with a gossamer arrangement of haunting woodwinds, melancholy strings, a pensive guitar, piano and bass, all in dialogue.



Matthew Stevens (left), Terri Lyne Carrington, Debo Ray, Kassa Overall, Morgan Guerin and Aaron Parks all contribute to Carrington's *Waiting Game*.

DAVE DOUGLAS

Brazen Heart Live At Jazz Standard
Greenleaf Music.....April

Trumpeter Douglas' *Brazen Heart Live At Jazz Standard* captures his 2015 quintet during eight sets. The road-tested troupe—saxophonist Jon Irabagon, pianist Matt Mitchell, bassist Linda May Han Oh and drummer Rudy Royston—tackles 26 separate songs, most played at least twice in this massive set. Five songs, though, are played only once, which is where listeners can start to nerd out over the flow and shape of these performances. For example, the Friday night crowd gets treated to three pieces the band would play just a single time during the run, while the Sunday night audience heard the quintet stretch out on a 23-minute version of "Bridge To Nowhere" and a 22-minute medley of "My Cares Are Down Below" and "The Pigeon And The Pie."

ELIANE ELIAS

Love Stories
Concord.....Sept.

Elias' prodigious talent grows stronger as the years pass; a feat capable by only the true elites of the music world. Her romantic vocals invite the listener to delve into her timeless grace and sophisticated presence as a commanding singer, pianist, composer, producer and lyricist. Her stately arrangements, soothing, sensual vocals and piano musings are enhanced by a majestic string orchestra as standards, Brazilian classics and three originals are locked in with laid-back ease.

DELIA FISCHER

Tempo Minimo
Labidad/Nomad.....Oct.

Delia Fischer again proves that she's an innovative composer and lyricist of Brazilian pop. The 12 songs on *Tempo Minimo* are crafted with irresistible melodies and poetic lyrics about time, love and the search for meaning in an era of splendid digital isolation. The arrangements make creative use of flutes, clarinets, strings and electronica—as well as Fischer's understated vocals—to blend Brazilian, jazz, pop and classical elements into something sui generis.

TED NASH TRIO

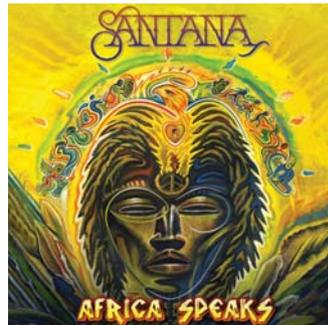
Somewhere Else: West Side Story Songs
Plastic Sax Records.....Nov.

With no pressure to prove himself as a composer, multireedist Nash takes on the daunting challenge of interpreting one of the 20th century's greatest musical treasures, *West Side Story*. The songs that Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim wrote—steeped in the sounds of jazz and Latin music—have been interpreted before, but the energy and imagination that Nash and his ensemble bring to the task are exceptional. They transform this passionate material into both a tribute to, and a meditation on, the songs' beauty and power.

SANTANA

Africa Speaks
Concord.....Aug.

Combining Albert King-influenced string bending with his own unique

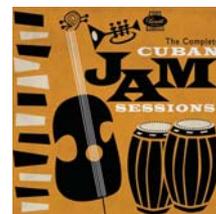


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Hidden Seas

Cavalo..... Nov.

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Lebroba

ECMJan.

JOEL HARRISON

Angel Band: Free Country, Vol. 3

HighNote March

MARQUIS HILL

Modern Flows Vol. II

Black Unlimited Music Group...Jan.

ABDULLAH IBRAHIM

The Balance

Gearbox Aug.

IN COMMON

In Common

Whirlwind.....Jan.

INTER ARMA

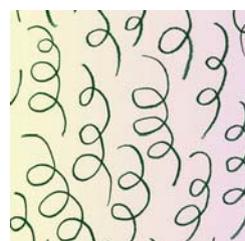
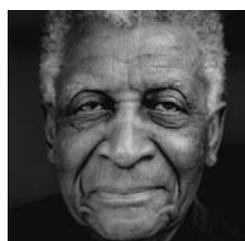
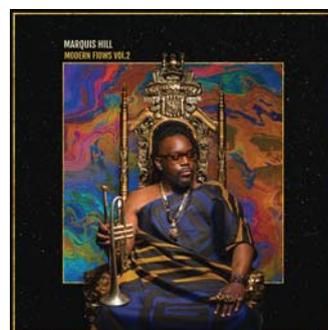
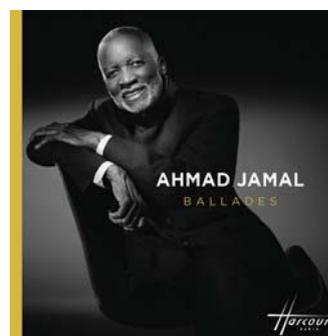
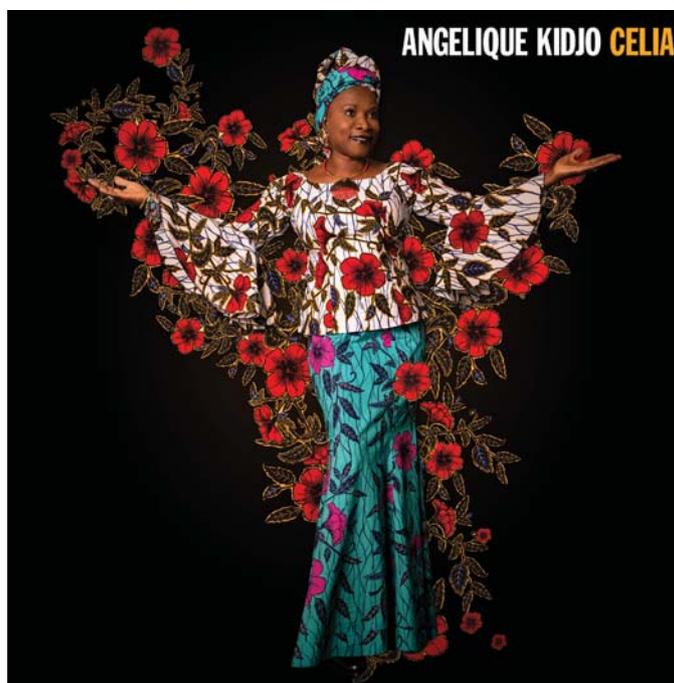
Sulphur English

Relapse..... April

AHMAD JAMAL

Ballades

Jazz Village/[PIAS]..... Nov.



ANGELIQUE KIDJO

Celia

Verve..... July

KONX-OM-PAX

Ways Of Seeing

Planet Mu..... Aug.

QUINSIN NACHOFF'S FLUX

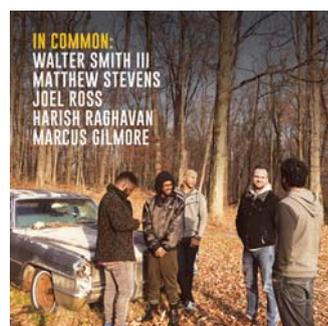
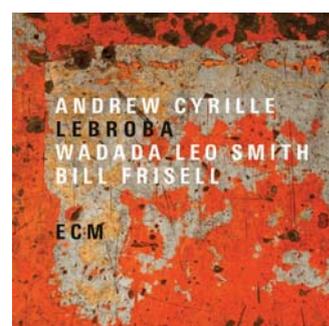
Path Of Totality

Whirlwind.....Dec.

MARCO PIGNATARO

Almas Antiguas

Zoho.....Jan.



THE JAMIE SAFT QUARTET

Hidden Corners

RareNoise..... Oct.

THE STEADY 45s

Don't Be Late

Happy People.....Feb.

TINARIWEN

Amadjar

Anti-..... Nov.

MATTHEW SHIPP

Ao Vio Jazz Na Fábrica Selo

SESC..... March

TEETH OF THE SEA

Wraith

Rocket Recordings.....April

TORN/BERNE/SMITH

Sun Of Goldfinger

ECM.....June



HISTORICAL ★★★★★ ½

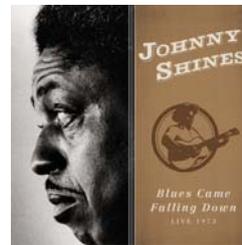
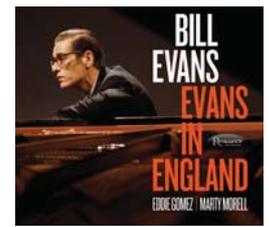
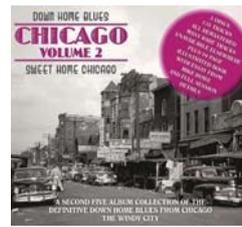
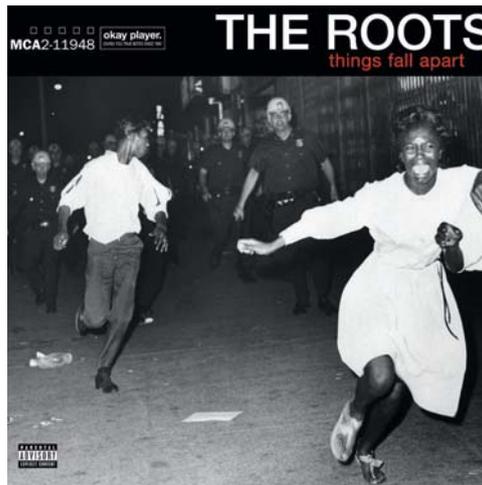
BILL EVANS
Evans In England
ResonanceJune

MILFORD GRAVES
Bäbi
Corbett Vs. DempseyFeb.

THE ROOTS
Things Fall Apart
Geffen/UMe/
Urban Legends.....Oct.

JOHNNY SHINES
*The Blues Came Falling
Down—Live 1973*
Omnivore/Nighthawk.....Aug.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
*Down Home Blues: Chicago
2—Sweet Home Chicago*
WienerworldNov.



NEW ★★★★★

**JOSHUA ABRAMS &
NATURAL INFORMATION
SOCIETY**
Mandatory Reality
Eremite.....June

CLAUDIA ACUÑA
Turning Pages
Delfin.....April

UMUT ADAN
Bahar
Riverboat.....June

ARENI AGBABIAN
Bloom
ECMMay

YAZZ AHMED
Polyhymnia
Ropeadope.....Dec.

AIMÉE ALLEN
Wings Uncaged
AzulineJan.

JD ALLEN
Barracoon
Savant.....Sept.

FABIAN ALMAZAN TRIO
*This Land Abounds
With Life*
BiophiliaJuly

MONTY ALEXANDER
*Wareika Hill (Rastamonk
Vibrations)*
MACD.....Nov.

JACOB ANDERSKOV
*Mysteries (Kinetics Live In
Köln)*
ILK.....Jan.

GRETJE ANGELL
... In Any Key
Grevlinto.....Oct.

MASHA ART & LRK TRIO
Anesthesia
LosenJuly

ALLISON AU QUARTET
Wander Wonder
Self Release.....April

AXEBREAKER
Brutality In Stone
Phase.....April

THE BAD PLUS
Activate Infinity
Edition.....Dec.

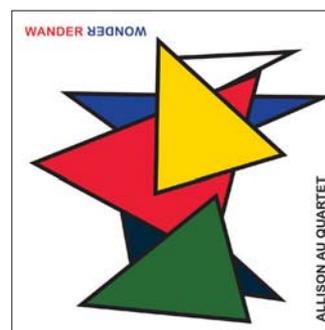
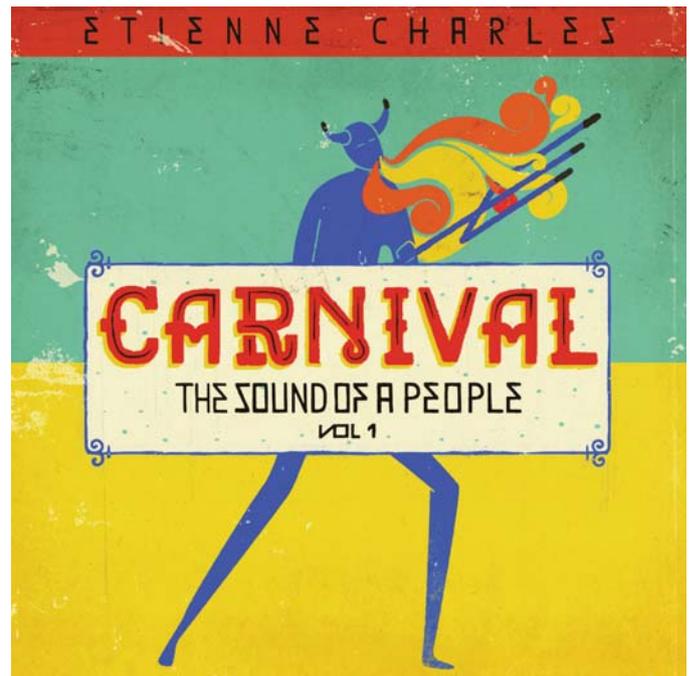
BANDA BLACK RIO
*O Som Das Americas
(The Sound Of The
Americas)*
Universal MusicOct.

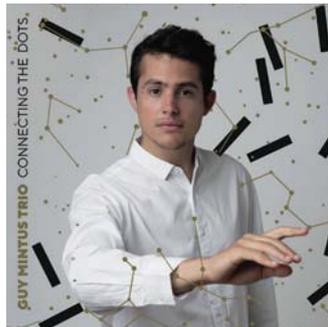
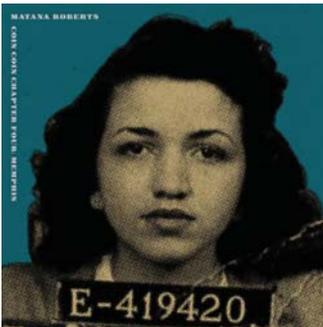
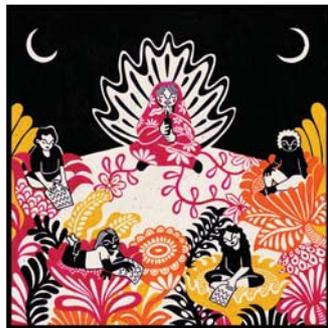
JON BATISTE
*Anatomy Of Angels:
Live At The Village
Vanguard*
Verve.....Nov.

OLCAY BAYIR
Rüya: Dream For Anatolia
ARCJune

**SCOTT BRADLEE'S
POSTMODERN JUKEBOX**
The Essentials II
Concord.....Feb.

ESPEN BERG TRIO
Free To Play
Odin.....Dec.





BILLY BRANCH & THE SONS OF BLUES
Roots And Branches: The Songs Of Little Walter
 Alligato..... Sept.

ALAN BROADBENT TRIO
New York Notes
 Savant..... Aug.

BROCK/ULERY/DEITEMYER
Wonderment
 Woolgathering..... Oct.

MATT BREWER
Ganymede
 Criss Cross..... June

BROKEN ENGLISH CLUB
White Rats II
 L.I.E.S. Aug.

MICHAEL JEROME BROWNE
That's Where It's At!
 Borealis April

KEVIN BURT
Heartland & Soul
 Little Village Foundation...Feb.

TAYLOR HO BYNUM 9-TETTE
The Ambiguity Manifesto
 Firehouse 12 Dec.

ETIENNE CHARLES
Carnival: The Sound Of A People, Vol. 1
 Culture Shock Inc..... May

AVISHAI COHEN/YONATHAN AVISHAI
Playing The Room
 ECM Nov.

EMMET COHEN TRIO
Dirty In Detroit
 Self Release June

GEORGE COLLIGAN
Again With Attitude
 Iyouwe..... Sept.

THE COMET IS COMING
Trust In The Lifeforce Of The Deep Mystery
 Impulse!..... March

CHICK COREA
Trilogy 2
 Concord Jazz..... Nov.

BOB CORRITORE & FRIENDS
Do The Hip-Shake Baby!
 SWMAF July

SYLVIE COURVOISIER/ MARK FELDMAN
Time Gone Out
 Intakt..... Sept.

ROXY COSS
Quintet
 Outside In..... Oct.

MARILYN CRISPELL
Dream Libretto
 Leo March

STEPHAN CRUMP'S ROSETTA TRIO
Outliers
 Papillon Sounds May

CAROLINE DAVIS & ROB CLEARFIELD'S PERSONA
Anthems
 Sunnyside..... Dec.

KRIS DAVIS
Diatom Ribbons
 Pyroclastic Nov.

JOEY DEFRANCESCO
In The Key Of The Universe
 Mack Avenue April

ADAM DEITCH QUARTET
Egyptian Secrets
 Golden Wolf Dec.

WHIT DICKEY TAO QUARTETS
Peace Planet & Box Of Light
 AUM Fidelity Oct.

JOYCE DIDONATO
Songplay
 Warner Classics/Erato May

DAVE DOUGLAS
UPLIFT: Twelve Pieces For Positive Action In 2018
 Greenleaf Music April

DRAKSLER/ELDH/LILINGER
Punkt.Vrt.Plastik
 Intakt..... Feb.

MARK DRESSER SEVEN
Ain't Nothing But A Cyber Coup & You
 Clean Feed..... Aug.

EABS
Slavic Spirits
 Astigmatic..... Nov.

PETTER ELDH
Koma Saxo
 We Jazz Dec.

ELEPHANT9
Psychedelic Backfire I/II
 Rune Grammofon Sept.

HARRIS EISENSTADT
Old Growth Forest II
 Astral Spirits..... Sept.

ELKHORN
Sun Cycle/Elk Jam
 Feeding Tube..... July

MOPPA ELLIOTT
Jazz Band/Rock Band/Dance Band
 Hot Cup..... March

ENDON
Boy Meets Girl
 Thrill Jockey..... April

RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS
Contemporary
 Alligator Dec.

PETER EVANS/SAM PLUTA
Two Live Sets
 Carrier..... June

FERRAN FAGES
Un Lloc Entre Dos Records
 Another Timbre March

TANJA FEICHTMAIR
Omnixus + Solo
 Leo June

AMINA FIGAROVA
Road To The Sun
 Amfi..... June

JONATHAN FINLAYSON
3 Times Round
 Pi..... Jan.

MARY FLOWER
Livin' With The Blues Again
 Little Village Foundation... Oct.

MIMI FOX
This Bird Still Flies
 Origin June

BILL FRISELL
Harmony
 Blue Note Nov.

BILL FRISELL/THOMAS MORGAN
Epistrophy
 ECM June

ANTHONY FUNG
Flashpoint
 Tiny 1 Jan.

VYACHESLAV GANELIN/ DENISS PASHKEVICH/ ARKADY GOTESMAN
Variations
 Jersika Sept.

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COMPETITION OPENS

JANUARY 2ND

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TRILOGY 2



CHICK
COREA



CHRISTIAN
MCBRIDE



BRIAN
BLADE



Malina of Creeds



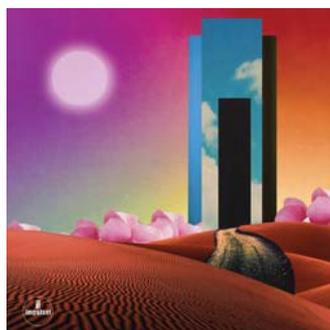
Evan Parker & Kinetics Chi&sm



Jason Palmer Plays Anita Baker
Dione Edgalle
Dove Brinkley
Jel Pops



Mette Juul
Change
Sahel Sounds



JOE MARTIN



Taylor Ho Bynum



9-tetto

The Ambiguity Manifesto



EMMET COHEN TRIO
DIRTY IN DETROIT
with BENJIE HALL & KYLIE POOLE



JOE MARTIN

TIM GARTLAND
Satisfied
Taste Good Music June

**GARZONE/ERSKINE/
PASQUA/OLES**
3 Nights In L.A.
Fuzzy Music Oct.

SARA GAZAREK
Thirsty Ghost
Self Release Oct.

RHIANNON GIDDENS
There Is No Other
Nonesuch Aug.

BRANDON GOLDBERG
Let's Play
Self Release Aug.

BENNY GREEN
Then And Now
Sunnyside Jan.

LARRY GRENADIER
The Gleaners
ECM April

**JOHNNY GRIFFITH
QUINTET**
*The Lion, Camel &
Child*
GBRecords May

MARK GUILIANA
*BEAT MUSIC! BEAT MUSIC!
BEAT MUSIC!*
Motéma July

RIGMOR GUSTAFSSON
Come Home
ACT April

HAMA
Houmeissa
Sahel Sounds May

ENRIQUE HANEINE
The Mind's Mural
Elegant Walk Jan.

TOM HARRELL
Infinity
Highnote Aug.

**KEVIN HAYS & LIONEL
LOEKE**
Hope
Edition Oct.

**KEVIN HAYS/MARK TURNER/
MARC MIRALTA**
Where Are You
Fresh Sound Nov.

MIHO HAZAMA
Dancer In Nowhere
Sunnyside March

**FRED HERSCH & THE WDR
BIG BAND**
Begin Again
Palmetto Aug.

HOT CHIP
A Bath Full Of Ecstasy
Domino Aug.

**OSCAR HERNANDEZ &
ALMA LIBRE**
Love The Moment
Origin Nov.

HOUSE GUESTS
My Mind Set Me Free
Shake It Nov.

HUMAN FEEL
Gold
Intakt May

**THE HUMANITY
QUARTET**
Humanity
Cellar Live Feb.

IBIBIO SOUND MACHINE
Doko Mien
Merge May

**ROB ICKES &
TREY HENSLEY**
World Full Of Blues
Compass Dec.

ISTHMUS BRASS
We Need A Little Christmas
Summit Dec.

**ETHAN IVERSON QUARTET
WITH TOM HARRELL**
Common Practice
ECM Nov.

**ANNE METTE IVERSEN'S
TERNION QUARTET**
Invincible Nimbus
Brooklyn Jazz
Underground June

**INGRID JENSEN AND
STEVE TRESLER**
*Invisible Sounds:
For Kenny Wheeler*
Whirlwind Jan.

KEITH JARRETT
La Fenice
ECM Jan.

**THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN
CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH
WYNTON MARSALIS**
Big Band Holidays II
Blue Engine Dec.

PUREUM JIN
The Real Blue
Cellar Sept.

**ANNA MARIA JOPEK &
BRANFORD MARSALIS**
Ulotne
Self Release Jan.

METTE JUUL
Change
Universal Music Group Dec.

**BENJI KAPLAN AND RITA
FIGUEIREDO**
Benji & Rita
Big Apple Batucada Oct.

MAKAR KASHITSYN
Jazz Animals
Rainy Days Oct.

BRUCE KATZ

Solo Ride
American Showplace..... Nov.

HELENA KAY'S KIM TRIO

Moon Palace
Ubuntu..... March

DAVE KELLER

Every Soul's A Star
Catfood..... Jan.

FRANKLIN KIERMYER

Exultation
Dot Time..... May

KING LOUIE ORGAN TRIO

It's About Time
Shoug..... Aug.

**ALEX KOO/MARK TURNER/
RALPH ALESSI**

appleblueseagreen
Clever Tree..... Aug.

KRISTIN KORB

That Time Of Year
Storyville..... Dec.

CAROLINE KRAABEL

LASTI LAST2
Emanem..... May

JOACHIM KÜHN

*Melodic Ornette Coleman:
Piano Works XIII*
ACT..... March

BRIAN KROCK

liddle
Outside In..... July

**TIMO LASSY & TEPPU
MÄKYNEN**

Timo Lassy & Teppo Mäkynen
We Jazz..... Aug.

**INGRID LAUBROCK/AKI
TAKASE**

Kasumi
Intakt..... Dec.

DUSTIN LAURENZI

*Snaketime: The Music Of
Moondog*
Astral Spirits/Feeding Tube
..... June

**MICHAEL LEONHART
ORCHESTRA**

Suite Extracts Vol. 1
Sunnyside..... Nov.

JAMES BRANDON LEWIS

An Unruly Manifesto
Relative Pitch..... Feb.

CHRIS LIGHTCAP

SuperBigmouth
Pyroclastic..... Oct.

CHRISTIAN LILLINGER

Open Form For Society
Plaist..... Aug.

LOS LOBOS

Llego Navidad
Rhino..... Dec.

JUDITH LORICK

The Second Time Around
JLJ International..... Jan.

MADNESS OF CROWDS

Tulips
Hippo Machine..... April

MAISHA

There Is A Place
Brownswood..... Jan.

**MANX MARRINER
MAINLINE**

Hell Bound For Heaven
Stony Plain..... May

JOE MARTIN

Étoilée
Sunnyside..... May

LISA MAXWELL

Shiny!
Self Release..... Aug.

BILL MAYS

Live At COTA
No Blooze..... July

MARILYN MAZUR

Shamania
RareNoise..... June

RON MCCLURE

Lucky Sunday
SteepleChase..... Dec.

THE MCCRARY SISTERS

A Very McCrary Christmas
Rounder..... Dec.

**THE PETE MCGUINNESS JAZZ
ORCHESTRA**

Along For The Ride
Summit..... Aug.

MCPHEE/BUTCHER

At The Hill Of James Magee
Troost..... April

BRAD MEHLDAU

Finding Gabriel
Nonesuch..... Aug.

**CAMILA MEZA & THE NECTAR
ORCHESTRA**

Ámbar
Sony Masterworks..... June

DOMINIC MILLER

Absinthe
ECM..... July

GUY MINTUS TRIO

Connecting The Dots
Jazz Family..... June

MINYESHU

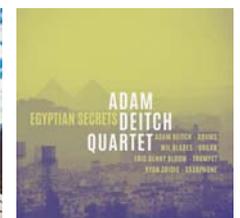
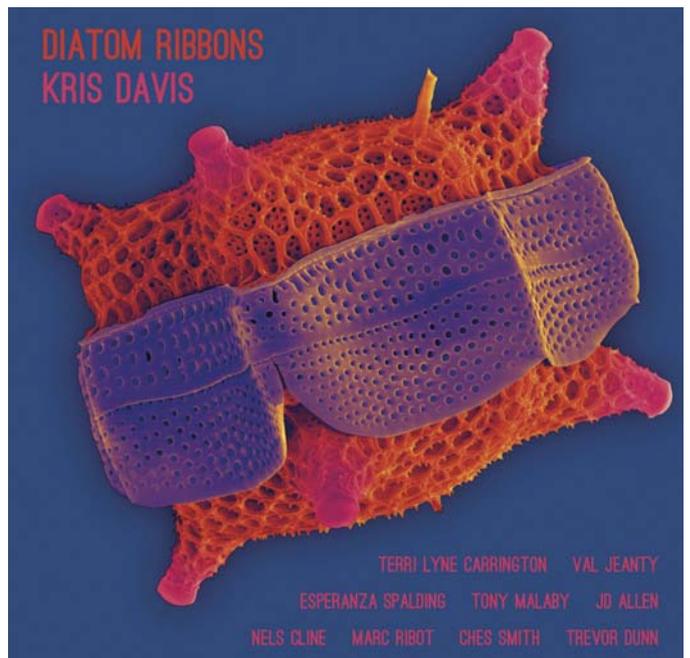
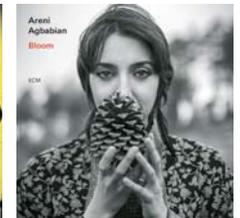
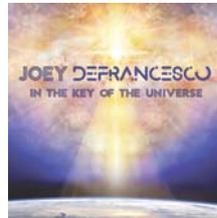
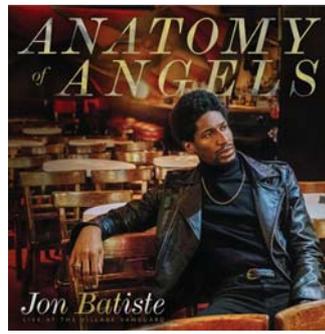
Daa Dee
ARC..... Jan.

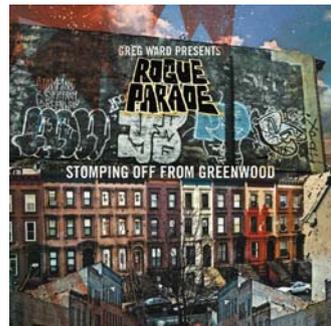
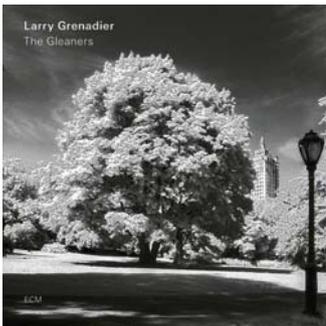
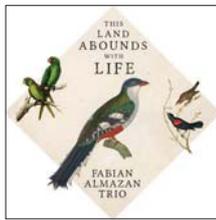
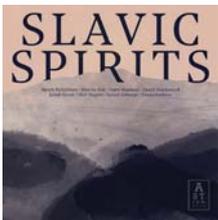
YOKO MIWA

Keep Talkin'
Ocean Blue Tear..... Sept.

MDOU MOCTAR

Blue Stage Session
Third Man..... May





BEN MONDER
Day After Day
Sunnyside..... July

KELLY MORAN
Ultraviolet
Warp Jan.

GEORGIA ANNE MULDROW
Overload
Brainfeeder..... Jan.

**MICHAEL MUSILLAMI/
RICH SYRACUSE**
Dig
Playscape..... Dec.

MUSSON/THOMAS/SANDERS
Shifa: Live At Café Oto
577 Records Oct.

**BILL NACE/SUSAN ALCORN/
CHRIS CORSANO**
Live At Rotunda
Open Mouth Dec.

NATURE WORK
Nature Work
Sunnyside..... Aug.

**THE NEW YORK
ALL-STARS**
Live Encounter
Ubuntu..... Dec.

**NEW YORK SKA-JAZZ
ENSEMBLE**
Break Thru
Brixton..... Feb.

**NOBILE/BURRELL/
MONCADA**
Reaction And Reflection
Rudi Feb.

OCHS/CLEAVER
Songs Of The Wild Cave
Rogue Art..... Jan.

OLA ONABULÉ
Point Less
Rugged Ram..... Dec.

OUT TO DINNER
Different Flavors
Posi-Tone Sept.

JASON PALMER
Rhyme And Reason
Giant Step Arts March

JASON PALMER
*Sweet Love: Jason Palmer
Plays Anita Baker*
Steeplechase..... Nov.

EVAN PARKER & KINETICS
Chiasm
Clean Feed..... Nov.

CHARLIE PARR
Charlie Parr
Red House Nov.

ED PARTYKA JAZZ ORCHESTRA
In The Tradition
Neuklang July

PETERSON-KOHLER COLLECTIVE
Winter Colors
Origin Dec.

**RALPH PETERSON & THE
MESSENGER LEGACY**
*Legacy Alive: Volume 6 At
The Sidedoor*
Onyx Productions..... Aug.

GUILHERME PIMENTA
Catopé
Self Release Oct.

LESLIE PINTCHIK TRIO
*Same Day Delivery:
Leslie Pintchik Trio Live*
Pintch Hard..... Dec.

**PRESERVATION HALL
JAZZ BAND**
A Tuba To Cuba
Sub Pop Oct.

TOM RAINEY TRIO
Combobulated
Intakt..... May

**METTE RASMUSSEN/
CHRIS CORSANO**
*A View Of The Moon
(From The Sun)*
Clean Feed..... Feb.

JOHN RAYMOND
Real Feels Live, Vol. 2
Sunnyside..... April

KATE REID
The Heart Already Knows
Self Release Jan.

**DAVE REMPIJ/JIM BAKER/
JOSHUA ABRAMS/
AVREEAYL RA**
APSYS
Aerophonic..... Dec.

**DAVE REMPIJ/BRANDON
LOPEZ/Ryan Packard**
The Early Bird Gets
Aerophonic..... July

STEPH RICHARDS
Take The Neon Lights
Birdwatcher..... March

MATANA ROBERTS
*Coin Coin Chapter Four:
Memphis*
Constellation..... Dec.

SCOTT ROBINSON
Tenormore
Arbors..... May

TAD ROBINSON
Real Street
Severn..... Oct.

**RONNIE EARL &
THE BROADCASTERS**
Beyond The Blue Door
Stony Plain..... Nov.

MARK RONSON
Late Night Feelings
RCA Aug.

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"WFLIII Drums sound like I think a drum is supposed to sound. They inspire me to play better and I connect emotionally to the sound. Every time I've set a WFLIII kit up in a studio, it's been an improvement over what was there before. I love these drums".

– Scott Williamson

Nashville session player, Bob James,
Nathan East, Blake Shelton

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JOEL ROSS

KingMaker
Blue Note June

BOBBY RUSH

*Sitting On Top Of
The Blues*
Deep Rush/Thirty
Tigers Oct.

CATHERINE RUSSELL

Alone Together
Dot Time March

**ANTONIO SANCHEZ &
MIGRATION**

Lines In The Sand
Cam March

**FELIPE SALLES INTER-
CONNECTIONS ENSEMBLE**

The Lullaby Project
Tapestry Jan.

MIGHTY MIKE SCHERMER

Bad Tattoo
Finedog/VizzTone May

SCOPES

Scopes
Whirlwind May

CHRISTIAN SCOTT ATUNDE

ADJUAH
Ancestral Recall
Ropeadope June

**ARIAN SHAFIEE AND WENDY
EISENBERG**

A Scarlet Fail
VDSQ March

THE MATTHEW SHIPP TRIO

Signature
ESP-Disk March

MATT SLOCUM

Sanctuary
Sunnyside July

SOMESURPRISES

somesurprises
Drawing Room Sept.

SOMETHING BLUE

Maximum Enjoyment
Posi-Tone April

CARMEN SOUZA

The Silver Messengers
Galileo Music Dec.

MARY STALLINGS

Songs Were Made To Sing
Smoke Sessions July

BRYNN STANLEY

Classic Christmas
SonoPath Dec.

**YALE STROM'S BROKEN
CONSORT**

Shimmering Lights
ARC Music Dec.

DAVE STRYKER

Eight Track III
Strikezone Aug.

DAVE STRYKER

Eight Track Christmas
Strikezone Dec.

HELEN SUNG

*Sung With Words: A
Collaboration With
Dana Gioia*
Stricker Street Jan.

TARTIT

Amankor/The Exile
Riverboat June

VANESE THOMAS

Down Yonder
Segue Dec.

HENRY TOWNSEND

Mule
Omnivore Feb.

**GIANLUIGI TROVESI/
GIANNI COSCIA**

*La Misteriosa Musica Della
Regina Loana*
ECM Dec.

**BENNY TURNER &
CASH MCCALL**

Going Back Home
Nola Blue May

JEREMY UDDEN

Three In Paris
Sunnyside Oct.

THE VAMPIRES

Pacifica
Earshift July

CHUCHO VALDÉS

Jazz Batá 2
Mack Avenue Jan.

**PETRA VAN NUIS &
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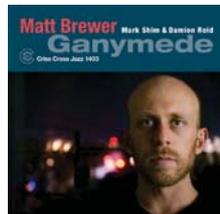
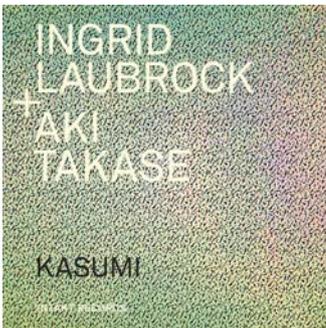
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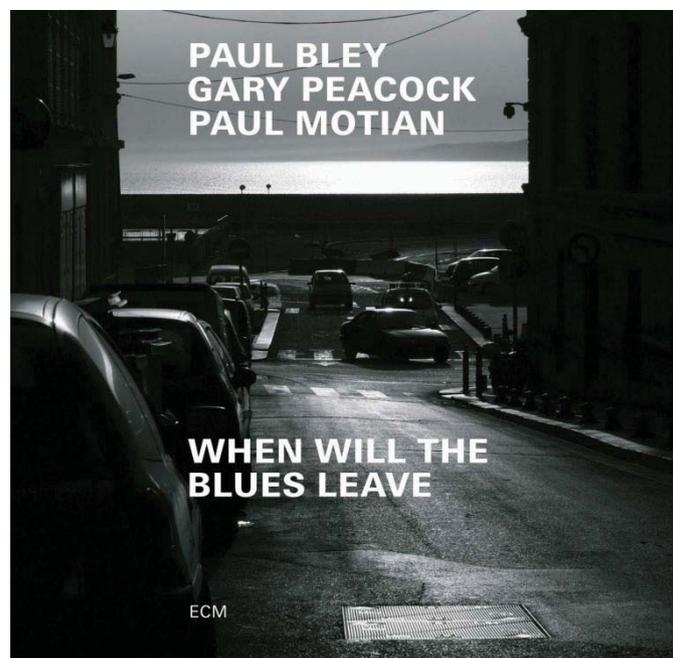
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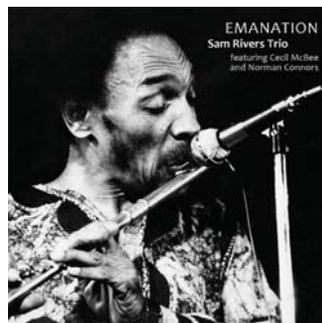
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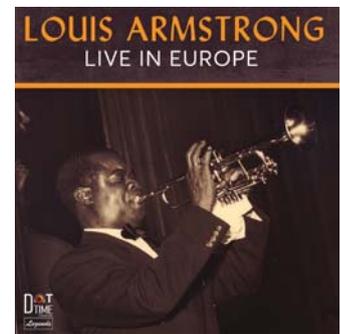


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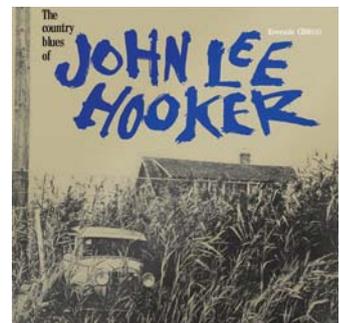


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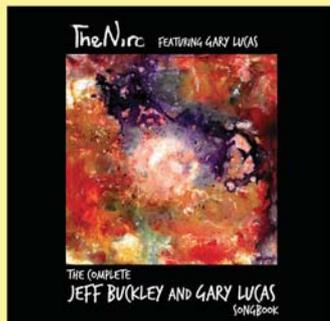
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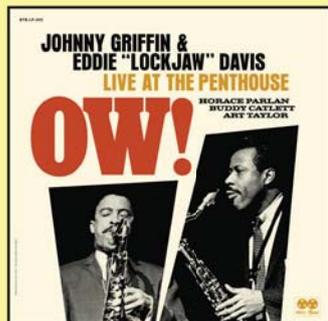
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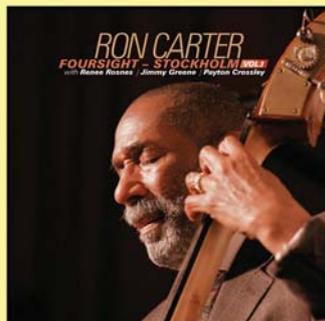
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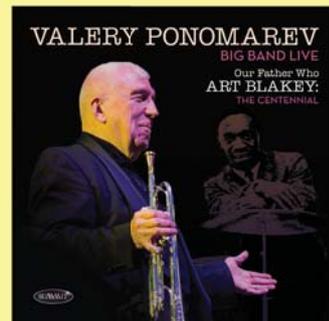
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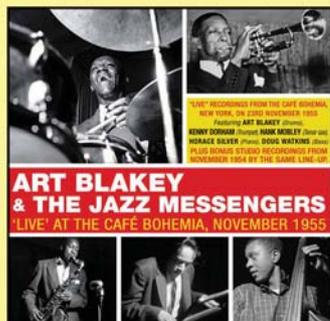
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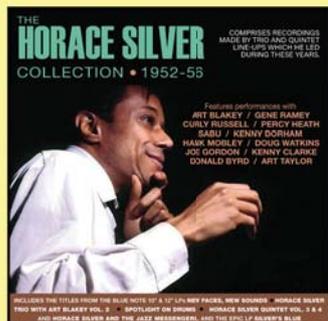
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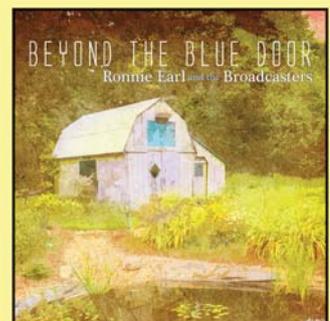
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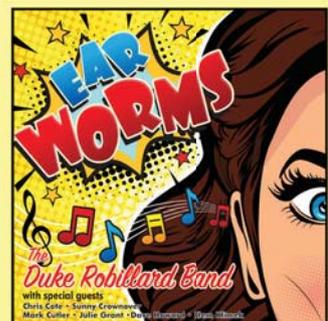
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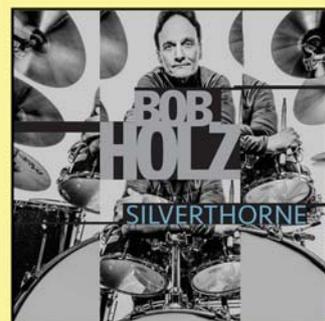
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On *El Rayo De Luz*, Marta Sánchez's compositions are lyrical and infectious.

Marta Sánchez Quintet *El Rayo De Luz*

FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT 587
★★★★★

When pianist Marta Sánchez moved to New York in 2011, she already had become known as one of the most promising musicians in Spain. Since then she has started to amass an impressive catalog of original music, particularly with her quintet, built on wandering, polyphonic melodies rooted in the plangent beauty of the Spanish folk tradition.

Her compositions are lyrical and infectious and never overly mannered. They remind us that a great chamber-jazz composer can inject vitality into well-trodden influences (Guillermo Klein, Carla Bley, Andrés Segovia, Claude Debussy) if she roots them in her own history. Pretty soon, Sánchez might enjoy the kind of fandom in New York that she does in Madrid.

The folk quality in Sánchez's music comes through in two ways: via her shapely melodies and the illusion of collective invention in her quintet's sound. Since her first quintet record,

Partenika (2015), the major story of this ensemble has been her ability to coalesce multiple lines—played on alto and tenor saxophone, and piano—into a purling stream. It's not quite right to call this music singable, as if you'd be able to carry it home in your head, humming a single line back to yourself. But it feels like you ought to be.

On *El Rayo De Luz*, Román Filiú's alto saxophone and Chris Cheek's tenor trace the skyline of each composition: What each saxophonist plays tends to be rather simple, coming in long-ish tones, rather than zigzags or angular leaps. But their roles are so intertwined that it's always hard to know who's in the lead and who is the support. It's as if Sánchez has invented a new form of hocketing.

Below the horns, the rhythm section spins a web of complexity. She plays counterintuitive patterns and twirling phrases with a lithe, gliding touch on the piano, adding an element of gentle agitation, sparring with Rick Rosato's bass and Daniel Dor's drums, ensuring that these tunes levitate even as they weave. (Her love for six- and nine-beat time signatures helps with that.)

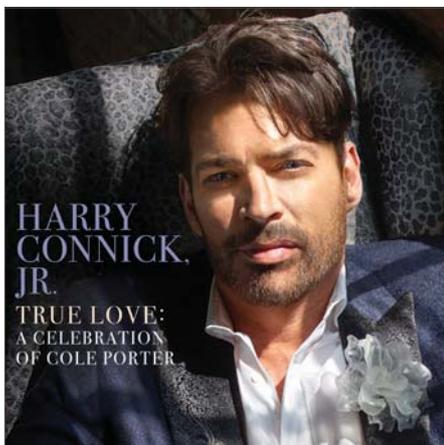
On "Unchanged," the album's closer, each chord Sánchez plays sounds as if it were a few inches further off the ground than the last. As Cheek improvises a steady, smearing solo, half of what he invents seems like it could be the written-out melody of another song.

Filiú begins "Parmesano" with a stream of long, bending notes, sounding wistful and secretly pained. Cheek sprinkles a descending melody over him, and the rhythm section fills in with splashes of caution and apprehension. Later, with Dor's rolling beat starting to resemble a bolero, Sánchez lays out for two full minutes. She only returns at the end, pulling things back to center with a sharp, short, piano-bass-drums coda. It's a reminder that all of this lovely, loosely unspooled music began somewhere: in the fastidious province of her mind, as a notion of something that should be shared.

—Giovanni Russonello

El Rayo De Luz: Cascadas; Parmesano; Nenufar; El Cambio; El Rayo De Luz; I Will Miss You; Dead Flowers; Unchanged. (47:36)
Personnel: Marta Sánchez, piano; Román Filiú, alto saxophone; Chris Cheek, tenor saxophone; Rick Rosato, bass; Daniel Dor, drums.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com



Harry Connick Jr. *True Love: A Celebration Of Cole Porter*

VERVE B0030829

★★★★

Harry Connick Jr. arrived with the great Marsalis migration from New Orleans to Columbia Records during the late '80s. Since then he's received noticeably less interest from the jazz press than, say, his contemporary Kurt Elling, whose wiggled-out hipness is less suspect in jazz circles than Connick's ring-a-ding-swing cool. But they're twins in many ways. Each is a crooner. Each was born in 1967. And each, in his own

Bria Skonberg *Nothing Never Happens*

SELF RELEASE

★★½

Bria Skonberg can play. And she can sing in a hazy style that falls between Melody Gardot and Norah Jones. But on her latest album, the bandleader still can't seem to decide if she wants to put an individual stamp on contemporary pop songs, make political statements or indulge in muscular musical conversation with her bandmates. Some artists commingle disparate elements like these to create a unified whole. Here, the result is more jarring than consolidated, despite some good intentions and novel ideas.

A case in point is Skonberg's "Blackbird Fantasy," which melds Paul McCartney's "Blackbird" and "Black And Tan Fantasy," the 1927 composition by Duke Ellington and trumpeter Bubber Miley. There's no faulting Skonberg's desire to pay tribute to Miley with a plunger-mute solo that plays beautifully off Darrian Douglas' hi-hat attack. But McCartney's melody fits poorly into the dominant, slow-drag ostinato bed that opens the medley. The conceit of stitching together two immensely popular artists across four decades to underline a point about racial equity is noble, if flawed. The other extreme is using Sonny Bono's "Bang Bang" as commentary on gun vio-

way, honors a distinct retro sensibility.

On *True Love: A Celebration Of Cole Porter*, Connick makes his Verve debut with a brightly flavored songbook. It just might be a coincidence that *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Cole Porter Song Book* originally launched Verve into the big time.

But Connick's charts wrap Porter in a big-band punch, à la Billy May and Don Costa in Sinatra's prime or Buddy Bregman in Ella's songbooks; there's appealing ingenuity in his work. "Anything Goes" skips along on some frothy saxophone writing, while the reeds have a cushiony cuddle on "Mind If I Make Love To You," and "I Love Paris" is set off by droll counterpoint.

Connick's fans should devour it all. A main reservation is one regarding omission: Porter is a lyricist of literary pedigree. So, it seems tactless to overlook his verses, particularly the brief but beautiful "Suntanned, windblown" on "True Love." Or his adroit turnaround on "All Of You," "a passing fancy or a fancy pass." Ella didn't make that mistake in 1956. —John McDonough

True Love: A Celebration Of Cole Porter: Anything Goes; I Love Paris; I Concentrate On You; All Of You; Mind If I Make Love To You; Just One Of Those Things; In The Still Of The Night; Why Can't You Behave; Begin The Beguine; You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To; True Love; You're Sensational; You Do Something To Me. (50:46)

Personnel: Harry Connick Jr., vocals, piano; Neal Caine, bass; Arthur Latin, drums, percussion; Mark Braud, Seneca Black, Wayne Bergeron, Rob Schaefer, trumpet; Dion Tucker, Andy Martin, Alan Kaplan, Bill Reichenbach, trombone; Geoff Burke, Jerry Weldon, Dan Higgins, Bob Sheppard, Greg Huckins, saxophone; Bruce Dukov, conductor, strings.

Ordering info: harryconnickjr.com



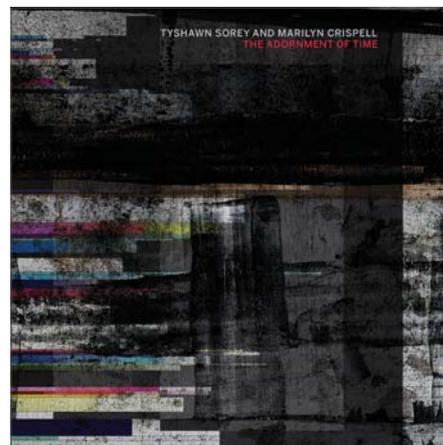
lence, topping it with a bolero-styled trumpet solo. In the end, it's just a kitschy take on an awful song, and Bono's cloying lyrics transmit no irony. Much more successful are the instrumental features, the churning "Villain Vanguard" and the slippery "I Want To Break Free," which combine with the softly anthemic "Square One" to showcase an artist with exceptional musical skills.

—James Hale

Nothing Never Happens: Blackout; So Is The Day; Blackbird Fantasy; Square One; Villain Vanguard; Bang Bang; What Now; I Want To Break Free. (41:36)

Personnel: Bria Skonberg, trumpet, vocals; Patrick Bartley, saxophone (5, 7, 8); Doug Wamble, guitar; Mathis Picard, piano; Jon Cowherd, organ (1, 2); Devin Starks, bass; Darrian Douglas, drums.

Ordering info: briaskonberg.com



Tyshawn Sorey and Marilyn Crispell *The Adornment Of Time*

PI 83

★★★★

There is a type of improvisation that seems almost mystical to witness. It's full-blown, free-flowing and intensely narrative, the arc of which is only established as the players play and we listen along, trying to keep up. And it's the essence of drummer Tyshawn Sorey and pianist Marilyn Crispell's work together.

The Adornment Of Time—which follows an initial 2014 collaboration—is a single, unbroken live improvisation recorded at New York's The Kitchen. On the album's surface, it seems to follow a typical free-improv progression: a hushed, melodically sparse first act of Crispell's lightly swung, delicate fingering moves into a cymbal-heavy middle section, cresting like waves smashing into a cliff-face, before ending on a melancholic dissolution into silence. Yet, there is a refreshing egalitarianism.

Both artists are chameleonic on their instruments; Sorey uses a variety of pitched bells and textural brushwork to evoke the soft melodies of the reverberating piano, while Crispell hammers out a hard-swinging rhythmic complexity in the middle section, densely packing in the notes and showing flashes of her earlier work as part of Anthony Braxton's "classic" quartet.

While the more dynamic bursts can feel somewhat overwhelming in their quick-fire interplay, they provide a necessary counterpoint to the meditative opening and closing sections, with the latter being dominated by languid phrases. A work this instinctual and eminently present-tense can seem difficult to unpack from the perspective of a recording, yet within it lies the key to the jazz form: the synaptic rushes of musicians communicating purely in the moment.

—Ammar Kalia

The Adornment Of Time: The Adornment Of Time. (64:57)

Personnel: Tyshawn Sorey, drums, percussion; Marilyn Crispell, piano.

Ordering info: pirecordings.com

The Hot Box

| Critics | James Hale | Ammar Kalia | John McDonough | Giovanni Russonello |
|---|------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Marta Sánchez Quintet <i>El Rayo De Luz</i> | ★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★½ | ★★★★ |
| Harry Connick Jr. <i>True Love</i> | ★★★ | ★★½ | ★★★★ | ★★½ |
| Bria Skonberg <i>Nothing Never Happens</i> | ★★½ | ★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★½ |
| Sorey/Crispell <i>The Adornment Of Time</i> | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★½ | ★★★½ |

Critics' Comments

Marta Sánchez Quintet, *El Rayo De Luz*

Sturdy mainstream compositions and playing, never better than when Cheek and Filiú blend their saxophones over the rugged rhythm section. Sanchez's playing is more florid than focused, but the combined effect is nicely balanced. —James Hale

A beautifully fresh record from the pianist, featuring immense lyricism from dual saxophones that provide an enveloping melodic conversation. —Ammar Kalia

Sánchez paints in pastel wisps, like a musical watercolor. Horns mix and mingle gently like two columns of smoke, weaving gossamer fugues. This music unfolds with an inner calm that holds emotion at a polite distance. —John McDonough

Harry Connick Jr., *True Love: A Celebration Of Cole Porter*

Connick's arrangements, which rival Richard Weiss' Bobby Darin charts for bombast, seem at odds with his laconic vocals, and do little to enhance Porter's lyrical subtlety. —James Hale

A lavish recording from mothers' favorite crooner. The credentials are all there: gorgeous orchestration and pitch-perfect singing. Yet it lacks the creativity and soul that could elevate this album from a nostalgic pastiche to something worth sitting up and taking notice of. —Ammar Kalia

Everything normative has grown passé; virtue no longer clings to the things of yesteryear. So, maybe there's something to be said for letting Connick—the object of your wife's uncomplicated hetero fantasies since 1989—just keep on Connicking. No shade. —Giovanni Russonello

Bria Skonberg, *Nothing Never Happens*

A pleasing, if middle-of-the-road, record showcasing Skonberg's warm vocal tenor and similarly enveloping trumpet playing. The source material is erratic, and as such, the record hangs together loosely, leaving us wanting more bite and less luster. —Ammar Kalia

A superb singer and musician crossing charismatic pop and jazz. But she won't be defined either way here. This is one to see in action, though the album offers some strong material with high-gloss production. —John McDonough

Skonberg steps halfway out of the hot-jazz identity she's inhabited for the past decade, compiling what feels like a demo tape of possible creative directions: Norah Jones singer-songwriterism; some high-flame, kinda-free improvising; and a dash of blue-eyed soul. —Giovanni Russonello

Tyshawn Sorey and Marilyn Crispell, *The Adornment Of Time*

Like late-period Cecil Taylor, Crispell has mellowed, suffusing her work with more air than fire. Sorey breathes rhythmic accents into those spaces and gracefully leads his partner into stormier waters. —James Hale

Three islands: a shiny pool of meditative probes, a volcano of stock free-jazz fire and a brief fortissimo thunder storm. Between? Long stretches of limbo, barren as a lunar landscape. Sorey's smarts have sprung a Cagean prank. Laugh's on us. —John McDonough

Crispell and Sorey use rough blasts of sound to expand what your ear can handle. Then they draw the sonic shades down low, so you have to focus to hear anything at all. Throughout, they're listening closely to each other, showing you how it's done. —Giovanni Russonello

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Jeff Goldblum and The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra
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★★★★½

Some celebrity music-making is more about the celebrity than it is about the music. And then there's the cliché about actors returning to their first love. But neither of these apply to Jeff Goldblum. He plays with a natural swing and a deft, uncomplicated touch. If you asked him about influences, he might mention Teddy

Carmen Lundy
Modern Ancestors
 AFRASIA 13823

★★★★½

It's hard not to be impressed by the amount of work Carmen Lundy puts in on *Modern Ancestors*. Not only did she do all the writing, she sings lead on all the tracks, and provides keyboards, guitars and/or percussion on most. And on the bluesy "Burden Down, Burden Down," where she plays synth, guitar and tambourine, as well as sings, the combination really smokes, with Lundy bringing the harmonic sophistication of jazz to the immediacy of soul singing.

Unlike the widely praised *Code Noir*, which found her sticking with a straight-ahead quartet anchored by the redoubtable Patrice Rushen, *Modern Ancestors* relies on an assortment of studio players. While that allows her more stylistic range, it leaves the album with a less consistent sound. Immediately following the rhythmically charged Cubano groove of "Ola De Calor" comes "Flowers And Candles," a socially conscious ballad that blends awkward lyrics with a dreamily meandering melody. One has heat and focus, the other good intentions, but lukewarm sentiment.

The best moments come when Lundy ignores structure and delivers her lyrics with a line that seems less composed than improvised. "Jazz On

Wilson. There's the same grace and instinctive melodicism, though Lee Morgan's "The Sidewinder" and some other bold choices included on his latest recording suggest the pianist is hip to the hard-bop generation as well.

Goldblum does Herbie Hancock's "Driftin'" and Lalo Schiffrin's "The Cat," and it's here that his pianism comes across most clearly, flattered by light, spacious arrangements and cracking production values. He has a big reach and he's not averse to throwing in the odd unusual voicing. It'll surprise newcomers that Goldblum's not the main singer, though; guests include Sharon Van Etten, Fiona Apple, Miley Cyrus and Gregory Porter. But Goldblum does a lovely, tired "Little Man You've Had A Busy Day" right at the end, with that little hitch in his voice.

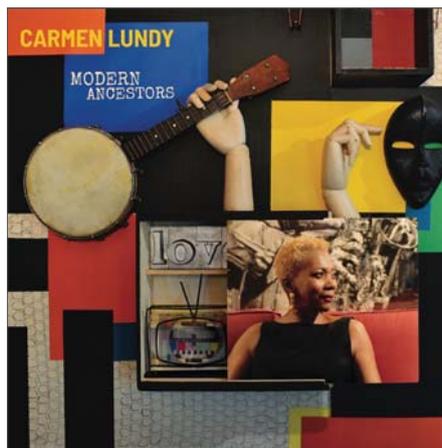
A more coherent album than *Capitol Studios Sessions*, as the title maybe implies, but a year on, and five years into his Carlyle Hotel residency in New York, Goldblum's new career seems to be right on track.

—Brian Morton

I Shouldn't Be Telling You This: Let's Face The Music And Dance; The Sidewinder/The Beat Goes On; Driftin'; The Thrill Is Gone/Django; The Kicker; Don't Worry 'Bout Me (Poinciana Beat); The Cat; Four On Six/Broken English; If I Knew Then; Little Man You've Had A Busy Day. (39:28)

Personnel: Jeff Goldblum, piano, vocals (11); Gilbert Castellanos, trumpet; James King, Scott Gilman, saxophone; Joe Bagg, Hammond organ; John Storie, guitar; Alex Frank, bass; Kenny Elliott, drums; Sharon Van Etten (1), Inara George (2); MSO Men's Chorus (2), Miley Cyrus (4), Fiona Apple (6), Gina Saputo (9); Gregory Porter (10), vocals; Anna Calvi, vocals, guitar (8).

Ordering info: vevelabelgroup.com



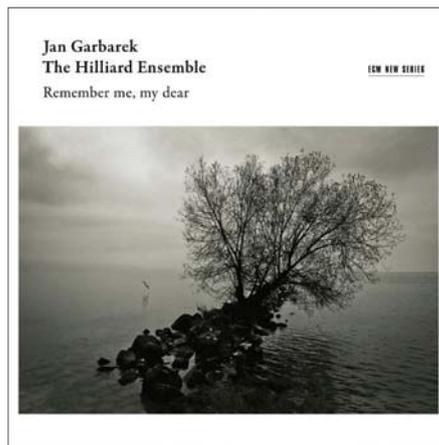
TV" is a case in point, with a whimsical lyric imagining a world in which jazz is as popular as chat shows. There's a lovely groove, and her harmonized backing vocals recall the soulful side of Joni Mitchell. But it's the way her rhythmically fluid, tonally adventurous melody evokes a saxophone solo that makes her dream of popular jazz seem so appealing.

—J.D. Considine

Modern Ancestors: A Time For Peace; Burden Down, Burden Down; Ola De Calor; Flowers And Candles; Jazz On TV; Meant For Each Other; Eye Of The Storm; Clear Blue Skies; Affair Brazil; Still. (51:42)

Personnel: Carmen Lundy, vocals, keyboards, guitar (2, 6, 9), tambourine (2); Julius Rodriguez, piano; Andrew Renfro, guitar; Curtis Lundy, bass (1, 3, 4, 10); Kenny Davis, electric bass (2, 3, 7), bass; Terreon Gully, Kassa Overall, drums (2, 5, 8, 9); Mayra Casales, percussion (2, 3, 7, 8, 9).

Ordering info: afasiaproductions.com



Jan Garbarek/The Hilliard Ensemble
Remember Me, My Dear
 ECM 2625

★★★★★

Twenty-five years ago, Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek co-released an ECM album, *Officium*, with The Hilliard Ensemble, the highly regarded British vocal group that specializes in early European music. It was an unexpected hit, and one of the most profound recordings the 72-year-old Garbarek—who has played with Keith Jarrett and George Russell, among other luminaries—has made. His soprano and tenor saxophones blended seamlessly with the four-person vocal ensemble, creating an eerily beautiful, almost sacred sound. Since then, Garbarek has collaborated with the group three more times, including on *Remember Me, My Dear*, recorded in 2014 at a church in Switzerland.

This album is their last together, as The Hilliard Ensemble has since disbanded. And because it was recorded in a church, the sound is echoey and diffuse, qualities that help Garbarek, playing soprano, harmonize with the ensemble on a textural, as well as a harmonic level. The music certainly casts a spell, beginning with Garbarek's haunting solo introduction on "Ov Zarmalani," the first track.

The album—mostly including selections from the previous collaborations—moves along in slow, careful motion, like a creeping fog, except for "Alleluia Nativitas," which feels a bit like a jig and on which Garbarek gets bluesy. Still, for the most part, things stay stylistically the same, and *Remember Me, My Dear* in many ways feels like one unending melody that will continue on, despite the group having played its last song.

—Matthew Kassel

Remember Me, My Dear: Ov Zarmalani; Procurans Odium; Allting Finns; Litany; Dostoino Est; Sanctus; Most Holy Mother Of God; Procedentum Sponsum; Se Je Fayz Deuil; Alleluia Nativitas; O Ignis Spiritus; We Are The Stars; Agnus Dei; Remember Me, My Dear. (77:41)

Personnel: Jan Garbarek, soprano saxophone; David James, countertenor; Rogers Covey-Crump, tenor; Steven Harrold, tenor; Gordon Jones, baritone.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Nicholas Payton
Relaxin' With Nick
 SMOKE SESSIONS 1907

★★★★½

Almost in the middle of Nicholas Payton's new two-disc set, he delivers a sterling musical manifesto, "Jazz Is A Four Letter Word," which he initiates with a Fender Rhodes ostinato that's soon parroted by bassist Peter Washington.

As the song begins, Payton explains to the audience assembled at New York's Smoke Jazz & Supper Club that the tune was inspired by a book that drummer Max Roach was working on before he died. As the tune progresses, the bandleader layers in prerecorded dialogue

of Roach explaining why he viewed the word "jazz" as a pejorative that lessened the excellence of black American musicianship. Payton later sings the title in an urbane style that recalls '70s iconoclast Gil Scott-Heron.

It's a work that connects late-20th century soul and modern hard-bop, the song demonstrating Payton's acumen on the acoustic piano, as he unravels a punchy improvisation before moving on to trumpet—the instrument he's most renowned for—and blows tart-flavored melodic passages.

While moving from trumpet to keyboards on "Jazz Is A Four Letter Word," the bandleader also engages in some antiphonic banter between the two instruments that shows a keen awareness of nuanced phrases and restraint. In lesser hands, it would have devolved into a circus act. But with Payton leading a trio—which also includes drummer Kenny Washington—hokeyness is kept at bay. And from a sociopolitical standpoint, it shows that Payton hasn't let up on his campaign, beginning roughly in 2011, to obliterate the word "jazz" in favor of "Black American Music."

Payton's BAM crusade became a polarizing topic for much of the decade, and it also sometimes threatened to overshadow his expansive musicianship. But as that aforementioned song—and the rest of this date indi-

cate—he's lost none of his musical ingenuity, subversive humor or reverence for history.

The trio intermingles some of Payton's more recent originals—like the pneumatic "C," on which he lays down an elegant piano motif that would make Ahmad Jamal smile, and the jaunty "F (For Axel Foley)," where he spars with Kenny Washington's jabbing drum accents on the Fender Rhodes and electric keys—with inventive makeovers of Benny Golson's "Stablemates" and Victor Young's "When I Fall In Love." On the latter, Payton showcases his vocal talents by unraveling the melody in a whispery manner that glides across the glacially paced arrangement, resulting in bewitching splendor.

The sanguine nature of these May and June 2019 recordings is a sly show-and-prove tactic. And except for "Jazz Is A Four Letter Word," BAM's underlining sociopolitics don't scream too loudly.

Say what you will about Payton's polemics, there's no denying his artistry.

—John Murph

Relaxin' With Nick: Disc One: Relaxin' With Nick; C; El Guajiro; Stablemates; Eight; Jazz Is A Four Letter Word; Othello; Tea For Two. Disc Two: 1983, F (for Axel Foley); A; I Hear A Rhapsody; Five; When I Fall In Love; Praalude. (60:03/58:43)

Personnel: Nicholas Payton, trumpet, piano, Fender Rhodes, vocals, effects, samples; Peter Washington, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com

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Hadar Noiberg (left) and Chano Domínguez

Sunnyside Radiates Warmth

A spate of new albums on the Sunnyside label don't have all that much in common, aside from the fact that they're all quite good. Laszlo Gardony's solo piano record feels like a throwback to Michel Petrucciani, while Guillermo Klein's latest release nods to the legendary tango artist Carlos Gardel. Gerald Cleaver's experimental bop outfit, Violet Hour, reunites after a hiatus, while pianist Chano Domínguez and flutist Hadar Noiberg unite for the first time on *Paramus*. And drummer Dan Weiss, playing alongside a pianist and two bassists, pulls in a wide variety of influences for *Utica Box*. Sunnyside seemingly has a bright future.

Laszlo Gardony, *La Marseillaise* (Sunnyside 4034; 40:07 ★★★½) During the past 25 years or so, Gardony has released a number of solo piano albums—including *Changing Standards*, *Clarity* and *Serious Play*. His latest monologue was recorded live, a context in which Gardony thrives. His playing here is lush, loose and splashy, with blues-inflected, barrelhouse detours, as on "Bourbon Street Boogie," where he summons images of a saloon pianist. Gardony, now in his early 60s, plays the whole piano, much like predecessors he appears to be channeling, like Earl Hines.

Gerald Cleaver & Violet Hour, *Live At Firehouse 12* (Sunnyside 1565; 45:56 ★★★½) Drummer Cleaver puts forth a kind of kinetic and chameleonic hard-bop on this live recording, which features the same band from his 2008 album *Detroit*. This recording, too, crackles with energy, evoking the raw energy of, say, an Art Blakey dispatch, along with the elasticity of Miles Davis' second quintet. The music keeps changing, even as you want to peg it as a straight-ahead affair. But it's much more than that.

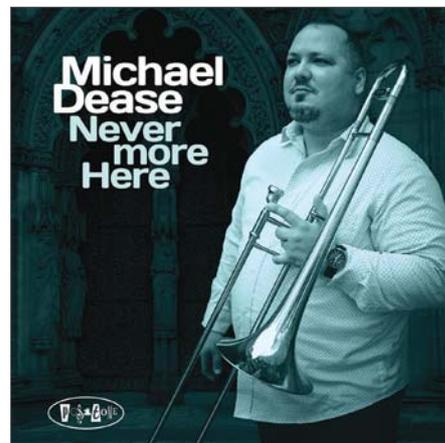
Chano Domínguez & Hadar Noiberg, *Paramus* (Sunnyside 1564; 64:14 ★★★★★) Spanish pianist Domínguez joins up with Israeli flutist Noiberg on this lovely duo record, delicate and deeply felt. *Paramus*—which, as

it happens, was recorded in Paramus, New Jersey—begins with a festive air, as the pair work their way through a number of sprightly tunes, including Paco De Lucía's "Canción De Amor" and "Carrusel," a Domínguez original that feels like a *choro*. The mood progressively gets more contemplative but no less enchanting; one highlight is the minor-key rumination "Morenika," a Ladino folk tune. It simply feels as if these two have much more to explore—and hopefully they'll do so.

Dan Weiss Trio Plus 1, *Utica Box* (Sunnyside 1573; 64:48 ★★★½) Drummer Weiss' album takes its name from the inhumane crib-like contraption that once was used to confine psychiatric patients. The idea is that Weiss won't be boxed in. But he doesn't have to make his point so literally to get it across: It's obvious that his approach is broad and ecumenical. The centerpiece is the 17-minute title track, which features dramatic peaks and troughs as Weiss plays tight rock beats that build to intense climaxes only to fall away and then appear again. Weiss and his bandmates nod to a lot of influences, intentionally or not: the Isley Brothers, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Led Zeppelin. This album is all over the place, in the best sense of the phrase.

Guillermo Klein y Los Guachos, *Cristal* (Sunnyside 1567; 53:23 ★★★★★) The Argentine pianist, composer and bandleader is working at the top of his game—and so is his 11-piece group, which includes jazz luminaries like alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón, guitarist Ben Monder and drummer Jeff Ballard. Here, Klein features his own compositions, as well as those of Carlos Gardel, the early 20th-century tango singer whom Klein listened to growing up. But the album isn't sentimental or even *recherché*. *Cristal* is thoroughly modern, with groovy beats, sophisticated horn voicings and a folksy feel that only could have come from Los Gauchos. **DB**

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



Michael Dease *Never More Here*

POSI-TONE 8201

★★★★

Before reading his liner notes, there's no way to know that *Never More Here*, trombonist Michael Dease's latest album, is a reference to the Charlie Parker centennial. Once the connection is made, though, the title makes perfect sense: Musically, Bird was never more here than now.

Likewise, the music itself makes a somewhat oblique tribute. None of the tunes are by Parker, nor is there anything obviously imitative about the playing. *Supersax Redux* this isn't. But if you listen to the way Dease and his bandmates play—to their use of ornamentation, approach to harmony, to the deep, bluesy feeling that underlies everything—it's hard to miss their debt to Parker.

The album opens with "Mirror Image," a nicely contrapuntal waltz by Dease's pianist, Renee Rosnes, that features clever cross-rhythms, as well as some impressively double-tongued 16th-note runs by the leader, and closes with an impressively cool rendition of John Lewis' "Milestones," on which Rosnes, bassist Gerald Cannon and drummer Lewis Nash work in sly subdivisions of straight-bop time. In between, we get a mini-big band setting of Billy Taylor's gospel-tinged "I Wish I Knew"; a pleasantly dissonant run through Eric Alexander's "Frenzy," featuring blissfully angular solos by trumpeter Randy Brecker and guitarist Jocelyn Gould; and the wonderfully relaxed "A Harmonic Future," a Jimmy Heath tune that finds Dease trading his tenor trombone for tenor saxophone with no lack of confidence or technique. It's solid playing all around, and a fitting tribute to Bird at 100.

—J.D. Considine

Never More Here: Mirror Image; A Harmonic Future; Slow Dance; For Hofsa; I Wish I Knew; Blue Jay; Shortcake; Frenzy; Lament; Milestones. (64:18)

Personnel: Michael Dease, trombone, tenor saxophone (2); Steve Wilson, alto saxophone (1, 4, 10), soprano saxophone (2), alto flute (3); Markus Howell, alto saxophone (5); Diego Rivera, tenor saxophone (5); Randy Brecker, trumpet (8); Renee Rosnes, Luther Allison (5), piano; Jocelyn Gould, guitar (3, 4, 8); Gerald Cannon (1–4, 8, 10), Rufus Reid (6, 7, 9), Endea Owens (5), bass; Lewis Nash, Jason Tiemann (5), drums.

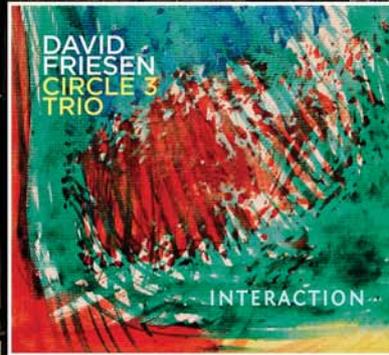
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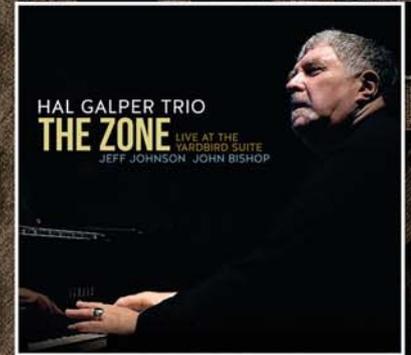
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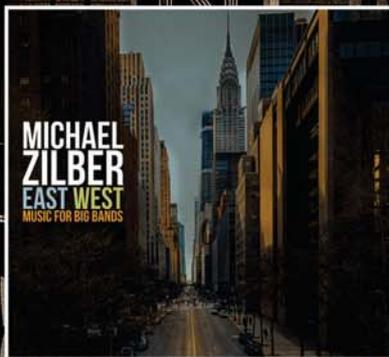
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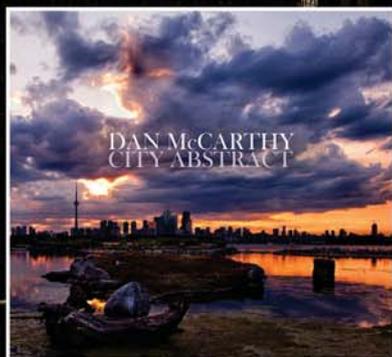
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Marc Copland

And I Love Her

[ILLUSIONS] MIRAGE 4004

★★★★½

Pianist Marc Copland has an uncanny way of inhabiting a tune, working his way through it from the inside out while exploring new harmonic possibilities along the way. And in bassist Drew Gress and drummer Joey Baron, he's got two kindred spirits to join him on his quest. Their uncommonly sensitive, conversational approach is steeped in the tradition of Bill Evans' classic trio, though Copland's collective (which previously served as the rhythm section for John Abercrombie's last two albums) pushes the envelope even further here.

Their ethereal take on "Afro Blue" might be the most strikingly impressionistic of the set. Opening with a free-flowing dialogue between Baron and Gress, it only begins to allude to the familiar melody at the two-minute mark, shortly after Copland enters the picture. Baron's simmering 6/8 feel sets an understated, swinging tone as Copland's penchant for reharmonization kicks in. This organic, in-the-moment approach also informs versions of "Cantaloupe Island," as well as "And I Love Her," both imbued with mysterioso reharmonization. Baron throws down a chugging groove on the free-form "Mitzi & Jonny," then showcases his brushwork on a harmonically tweaked rendition of Cole Porter's "You Do Something To Me" to close out the album in classy, slightly subversive fashion. —Bill Milkowski

And I Love Her: Afro Blue; Cantaloupe Island; Figment; Might Have Been; Love Letter; Day And Night; And I Love Her; Mitzi & Jonny; You Do Something To Me. (65:50).

Personnel: Marc Copland, piano; Drew Gress, bass; Joey Baron, drums.

Ordering info: illusionsmirage.com



Todd Marcus

Trio+

STRICKER STREET 1003

★★★★½

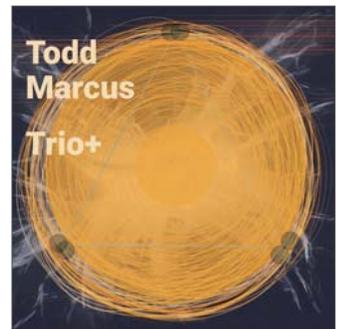
A forward-thinking forceful sound is on display here from bass clarinetist Todd Marcus, who also plays the standard B-flat clarinet on *Trio+*.

Marcus' four-part work, *Something Suite*, is the focal point, as his trio dispenses jagged solos in turn. But the bandleader cites Sonny Rollins' strolling trios as an inspiration for this sparse instrumentation, and that playful openness is hard at work. At times, though, the album resembles the mid-'50s work of Chico Hamilton and Buddy Collette: The band is stately and unhurried, exploring the sound in a nearly monastic setting. There is motion and soul, but it's embedded around ample room to breathe. "How Deep Is The Ocean" opens with Marcus vibrating next to bowed bass, long tones creating a slow, warm friction. Standard "My Foolish Heart" is an even gentler vehicle for the reedist, his band all space and patience. That open space quickly is filled by "Neophilia," a funky foray that enters bouncing off a riff supplied by the bass. Marcus wails over the energetic support, soaking up the groove. A frenetic "Invitation" takes the band further out, trumpeter Sean Jones joining in. Following Marcus' free-form solo, Jones steps in with a blast, briefly reaching the atmosphere before easing back to Earth. —Sean J. O'Connell

Trio+: Something Suite, Movements 1-4; Cantata; Amy Pookie; My Foolish Heart; Neophilia; How Deep Is The Ocean (Intro); How Deep Is The Ocean; Invitation; Plummeting. (63:19)

Personnel: Todd Marcus, bass clarinet, clarinet; Ameen Saleem, Jeff Reed (5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12), bass; Eric Kennedy (5, 10), Ralph Peterson, drums; Sean Jones, trumpet.

Ordering info: toddmarcusjazz.com



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Dave Specter
Blues From The Inside Out

DELMARK 859

★★★★★

Dave Specter is nothing if not stylish, from his natty attire and cool demeanor onstage to his studio work with labelmates at Delmark's Chicago studio.

The guitarist's fretwork on *Blues From the Inside Out* is even more elegant and sophisticated than on his first 11 rock-solid solo releases for the imprint. This time, though, Specter adds to his arsenal as he steps up to the mic for three turns as lead vocalist. His singing is perfectly adequate, but Brother John Kattke, who gets four turns at the mic, has a more dynamic voice. It's Specter's six-string prowess that's the best reason to spend time with his latest dispatch. It's also the one constant. Specter is as flashy as he wants it to be, but not to the detriment of the material. He's a jazzman's bluesman, so the bandleader brings those chordings and riffs to the mix, too.

The dozen tunes run the gamut, musically: There's the blues-rock shuffle of the title track; the Professor Longhair-inspired bayou blast of "Ponchatoula Way"; the soul anthem "March Through The Darkness"; the wah-wah driven funk of "Sanctifunkious"; the r&b-flavored instrumental "Minor Shout"; and the Latin-tinged "Opposites Attract."

His guest on two tunes, Jorma Kaukonen, of Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna fame, is a perfect complementary guitarist. There's never a shortage of fine supporting artists on Delmark recordings, and Specter's production and Steve Wagner's engineering lead to a crisp, clean sound.

—Jeff Johnson

Blues From The Inside Out: Blues From The Inside Out; Ponchatoula Way; March Through The Darkness; Sanctifunkious; How Low Can One Man Go?; Asking For A Friend; Minor Shout; The Blues Ain't Nothin'; Opposites Attract; Soul Drop; Wave's Gonna Come; String Chillin'. (61-23)

Personnel: Dave Specter, guitar, vocals (1, 5, 6); Jorma Kaukonen, guitar (5, 8); Brother John Kattke, piano, organ, vocals (2, 3, 8, 9); Harlan Lee Terson, bass; Marty Binder, drums; Bill Brichta, acoustic guitar (11); Ruben Alvarez, percussion (2, 7, 9); Liquid Soul Horns (2, 8, 10); Sarah Marie Young, Devin Thompson, Tad Robinson, vocals.

Ordering info: delmark.com

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— Roberto Magris

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Digging Up the Neglected

Junior Watson, *Nothin' To It But To Do It* (Little Village Foundation 1033; 51:42 ★★½)

Perennially underappreciated, Watson has the sound, the authority, the creative spontaneity and the admiration of his peers to be counted among the best guitarists of the past 30 years. The Californian's latest solo effort, his fourth, shows that he remains a master, injecting new life into disregarded blues, r&b, soul-jazz, soul and ska songs of the 1950s and 1960s. Watson's magic touch affects five instrumentals, including organ trio leader Sam Lazar's "Space Flight" and The Skatalites' Duke Ellington homage "Ska-Ra-Van," both elevated by the measured, intense involvement of saxophonist Gordon Beadle. Vocals, though, are the album's vulnerable point. Alabama Mike busts his gut on two tracks, but Watson and Lisa Leuschner Andersen, splitting eight cuts between them, don't convey anything out of the ordinary.

Ordering info: littlevillagefoundation.com

Ilya Portnov, 3 (Self Release; 36:52 ★★★★★) Harmonica player Portnov, a Russia-born 30-something with a graduate degree from New England Conservatory, became a serious proponent of homegrown American music only recently, starting with 2017's *Strong Brew* album. On this follow-up release, the West Coaster brings a sense of discovery even more startling than before to investigations of blues, jazz, funk and 1960s soundtrack music. Emboldened by blues-and-beyond guitarist-producer Kid Andersen, Portnov, on eight original instrumentals and Brazilian pianist Chiquinha Gonzaga's "Corta Jaca," uses his dexterous technique as a means to free-spiritedness. "Sphere Dance" offers a liberating spirit similar to little-remembered harmonica maverick Peter Ivers.

Ordering info: ilyaharmonica.com

Giles Robson, *Don't Give Up On The Blues* (American Showplace 7890; 60:10 ★★½) Best known for having partnered last year with Joe Louis Walker and Bruce Katz on the award-winning album *Journeys To The Heart Of The Blues*, British harmonica player Robson is possessed of an excited delivery that places him smack dab in the thick of Little Walter's legacy. Supported by a band led by pianist-organist Katz for his second solo outing, Robson streams electro-magnetic riffs and licks like a precision machine. "Way Past Midnight," an instrumental tour de force, has Robson and Katz (on organ) sharing emotional power and insight. On the debut side, Robson's no great shakes as a singer on nine of his songs.

Ordering info: americanshowplacemusic.com

Miss Bix & The Blues Fix, *We Don't Own The Blues* (Self Release; 54:49 ★★½) Formerly a smooth-jazz chanteuse and a children's music advocate, Leslie "Miss Bix" Bixler was stirred to take a new direction after spending several months in the Delta studying the blues.



Recorded back home in Los Angeles, this reissued 2017 album luxuriates in bluesy connotations with her able, controlled roots-rock voice at the fore. Bixler's an above-average songwriter, sharing acute assessments of human nature in romantic situations. Big help comes from Ralph Carter, who has a credible blues touch as album producer and multi-instrumentalist.

Ordering info: missbix.com

Brody Buster's One Man Band, *Damn! I Spilled The Blues* (Booga 01; 35:01 ★★★★★)

Do-it-all Buster isn't a geeky sideshow. Confident in his own skin with a what-the-hell-why-not attitude, the Kansan sounds ruthlessly honest with a jagged, unkempt blues sound made of his strep-throated voice, his metallic guitar, his wailing harmonica and his pounding drum. Buster's fascinating voice is an integral part of the rhythm at the same time it lays bare the lyrics of tough originals about rancid love ("Bad News"), doomsday ("2029"), drunkenness ("Week Long") and, among other things, a zany escapade in Florida ("Alligator Blues").

Ordering info: brodybustermusic.com

Myles Goodwyn, *Friends Of The Blues 2* (Linus 270421; 57:12 ★★½)

Goodwyn, a charter member of the once hugely popular Canadian rock band April Wine, doesn't pretend to be a full-bore blues artist. A fan of Muddy Waters in the 1960s, today Goodwyn finds it refreshing to rekindle his affection for the genre in the studio with mostly Nova Scotian musicians who he believes are well-versed in the blues. He's mostly correct. On his second enjoyable *Friends* pop-blues effort, Goodwyn again uses his wood smoke-voice and a guitar projecting personality on tuneful originals that are charged with pleasure. The strikingly personal "I Love My Guitar" is the standout track. With a strained vocal, the straightforward blues "When Your Ship Came In (I Was At The Train Station Drinking)" flounders.

Ordering info: mylesgoodwyn.com



Lauren Lee *Windowsill*

EYES&EARS 19-091

★★★★★

Lauren Lee sings a bit off-kilter, her phrasing doesn't make natural arcs and she's certainly not one to take the most expected musical paths. However, the bandleader always maintains a cool, even tone that makes all her zigs and zags easy to follow. When scatting alongside her work on keys, she breezes along like a welcome, blustery fall day. She's making tricky decisions on *Windowsill*, but she and her group are deft at making these bold moves work.

The first half of "Tomorrow Is Coming" is a slow-building free-jazz meditation that takes a sudden turn into a spiritually uplifting ballad without any hint of whiplash. Brad Mulholland's flute acts as the perfect accent for the vibe that's cultivated here, as if it represents the astral-soul of Lee's voice on a journey. "Aback" is as fine a setting as any for Marcos Varela's bass to showcase the same inspired lyricism that Lee displays. And closer "She Who Journeys" is a constantly rising composition that travels boldly, but in such a way that the song's—and the album's—conclusion feels like a natural culmination.

There's enough conventional playing here to make the more difficult passages work. (Across the album, Andy O'Neill is confidently supportive, never too flashy behind the drums, keeping the whole thing aloft.) But this isn't a high/low or art/pop dichotomy. These are entirely different considerations. Lee—in her voice and at the keyboard—is, in a very balanced way, presenting a unique approach, but one grounded enough to support the contrasting moods and musics, which really is what makes *Windowsill* so engrossing.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Windowsill: Windowsill; X-Berg; Get Off Me; Peaks And Valleys; Tomorrow Is Coming; So Long; Aback; She Who Journeys. (49:16)
Personnel: Lauren Lee, piano, Rhodes, vocals; Brad Mulholland, alto saxophone, clarinet, flute; Marcos Varela, bass; Andy O'Neill, drums.

Ordering info: earsandeyesrecords.com

Echoes Of Swing *Winter Days At Schloss Elmau*

ACT 9105

★★★★

Echoes Of Swing's *Winter Days At Schloss Elmau* evokes a nostalgia for when the season commanded excellent food and long evenings listening to music. This album departs from the band's previous all-instrumental recordings, with American vocalist Rebecca Kilgore providing excellent accompaniment on standards and a few original compositions.

The first cut, "Winter Moon," marks the pacing and frame for Kilgore, who enters with a velvety-smooth voice. The second tune, "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening," will delight any lover of American poetry, as pianist Bernd Lhotzky sets this beloved Robert Frost work to music. Lhotzky also uses his sleight of hand to compose tunes for two additional poems, Shakespeare's "Sonnet 97" and Emily Brontë's "The Night Is Darkening Round Me." One slight concern is "drear" being pronounced as "dear," changing the meaning of the line in Brontë's poem from denoting dreariness on a winter night to conjuring up images of an inamorato. Regardless of that quibble, competent musicians make this album a welcome addition to any seasonal collection. —Michele L. Simms-Burton

Winter Days At Schloss Elmau: Winter Moon; Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening; I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm; The Bell That Couldn't Jingle; Snowbound; Winter Wonderland; Snow; Looks Like December; It's Getting To Be That Time Of Year; Sonnet 97; Winter Days; The Night Is Darkening Round Me; The Three Wise Men. (49:05)

Personnel: Bernd Lhotzky, piano; Colin T. Dawson, trumpet; Chris Hopkins, alto saxophone; Oliver Mewes, drums; Rebecca Kilgore, vocals; Henning Gailing, bass; Rolf Marx, guitar (4, 8, 9, 10).

Ordering info: actmusic.com



Stephane Wrembel *Django L'Impressionniste*

WATER IS LIFE 14

★★★★★

Through several installments of *The Django Experiment* and his annual Django A GoGo festival, Stephane Wrembel has committed to carrying on the legacy of French-Romani guitarist Django Reinhardt. And for *Django L'Impressionniste*, Wrembel selects and recreates 17 lesser-known solo compositions that Reinhardt recorded between 1937 and 1950.

Wrembel did the research on the more obscure pieces here and came up with a kind of definitive set list. Defined by a free-spirited cultural exchange and swinging jazz feel, Reinhardt's "Nuages," the standard "Tea For Two" and plenty of numbered improvisations fill out the album. As it turns out, the numbered improvs were not as off-the-cuff as one might assume; rather, they were composed and performed by Reinhardt on repeated occasions, like the studied, classically formal "Improvisation 2" and the Spanish-style "Improvisation 6."

Wrembel has a preternatural feel for the material here, so rest assured, Reinhardt's work is alive and well in his hands.

—Denise Sullivan

Django L'Impressionniste: Improvisation 1; Improvisation 2; Parfum; Solo Improvisé No. 1; Solo Improvisé No. 2; Tea For Two; Improvisation 2; Variation No. 2; Naguine; Echoes Of Spain; Improvisation 3; Variation No. 1; Improvisation 3; Variation No. 2; Improvisation 6; Improvisation 2; Variation No. 3; Improvisation 5; Improvisation 4; Belleville; Nuages. (67:14)

Personnel: Stephane Wrembel: guitar.

Ordering info: stephanewrembel.com



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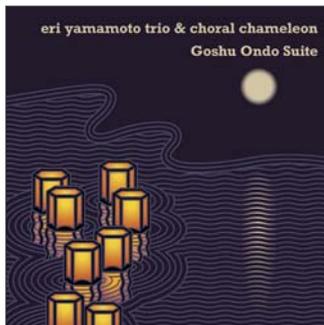


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**Eri Yamamoto
Trio & Choral
Chameleon**
Goshu Ondo Suite
AUM FIDELITY 112
★★★★



The most revealing portion of Eri Yamamoto's seven-part *Goshu Ondo Suite* lies at the beginning of "Part 3," where the pianist/composer plays alone for three thrilling minutes. In that time, one hears succinct stepwise motion in the left hand against fluid improvisation and vivid chords in the right, all leading to a decisive rhythmic motif—the same motif that strategically reappears throughout the piece. Yamamoto's ability to extrapolate a concerto from a snippet of music is the notion behind this extended composition, recorded live at New York's Paul Taylor Dance Studios. The concept undergirding the work derives from the *gōshū ondo*, a traditional dance melody from Shiga, Japan, a city where Yamamoto each year as a child would attend the Bon Festival, a song-and-dance-filled celebration of generations past. To recall the festival's feeling of communal joy, Yamamoto wrote full-voiced melodic lines for Choral Chameleon, a 50-person choir. Despite that heft, Yamamoto manages to maintain a balance between the vocals and the superbly refined sound of her trio. By the gospel-tinged finale, what's left is a nimbly crafted rhapsody of East and West, jazz and folk, singer and player.

—Suzanne Lorge

Gondo Ondo Suite: Gondo Ondo Suite, Parts 1–7; Echo Of Echo. (54:47)
Personnel: Eri Yamamoto, piano; David Ambrosio, bass; Ikuo Takeuchi, drums; Choral Chameleon, vocals.
Ordering info: aumfidelity.com

**Denson/Pilon/
Blade**
Between Two Worlds
RIDGWAY 014
★★★★½



When today's jazz artists express a sense of being between worlds, it's tempting to expect a genre-splicing result. For Bay Area bassist Jeff Denson, his record's title instead reflects a philosophical matter, one concerning the divide between the physical world and one dedicated to ephemeral pursuits, like music. As a result, his latest album carries a straightforward, post-bop sound, but the music remains the product of distinct perspectives blended into a generally seamless whole. Splitting writing duties with French guitarist Romain Pilon, *Between Two Worlds* traces the cleanly drawn lines of a modern guitar trio, no matter whose music sits at the center (which is held together by the imagination of drummer Brian Blade). Among Denson's compositions, "Song Of A Solitary Crow" is a standout, with Pilon's guitar shifting into a gruff, bluesy drive that finds some unexpected corners. Highlighted by Denson's mournful bow work against a flickering backdrop from Pilon, the album's title track carries a rewarding darkness that's shaded by Blade's muted touch. In bringing together its voices so capably, the record at times lags into a pleasant but monochromatic tastefulness through its medium-tempo pacing, which is rewardingly disrupted by a few quicksilver turns from Blade on "Listen Up."

—Chris Barton

Between Two Worlds: Sucré; Song Of A Solitary Crow; En Trois Temps; Génération; Nostalgic Farewell; Listen Up; Madrid; Lost And Found; Between Two Worlds; Azur. (62:39)
Personnel: Jeff Denson, bass; Romain Pilon, guitar; Brian Blade, drums.
Ordering info: ridgewayrecords.net

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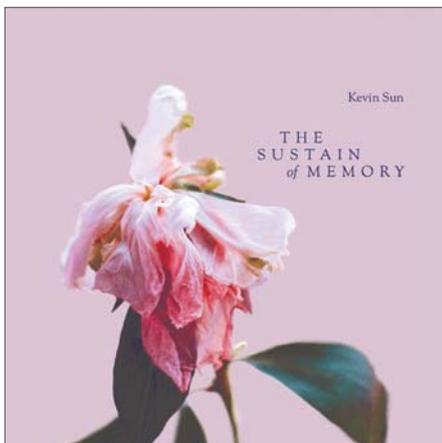
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Kevin Sun
The Sustain Of Memory
 ENDECTOMORPH 007

★★★★½

Memory renders pain as data. Later, maybe as a part of therapy, we attempt to conjure sentiment using emotional language. But at the time, we experience those events as pure feeling.

The architecture of Kevin Sun's second album, *The Sustain Of Memory*, matters. (And in light of its accomplishment, using the word "architecture" here feels proportionate.) Three pieces sprawl over a two-disc set, each piece featuring a different combination of players, from trio to quintet, and distinct compositional qualities.

The first piece, "The Middle Of Tensions," consists of a quartet playing across six parts, its labyrinthine structure evoking a definite sense of narrative, thanks in part to Sun's novel emotional vocabulary. His jagged and sometimes skittish playing prizes unfettered harmonic exploration.

"Circle, Line," the second piece, is for trio. Its longest section is just about three minutes, as each of the composition's episodes retreat into a series of concepts and sketches that unfurl with stubborn linearity. Emotionally and melodically sparse, Walter Stinson's bass adds depth and momentum to *Memory's* most challenging stretch. It teeters on the cusp of tedium without ever fully succumbing. But after the flatness of "Circle, Line," the album closes with "The Rigors Of Love," an intense, harmonically virtuosic and compositionally complex piece. Sun delivers one of the album's fiercest solos here.

Love, and its attendant miseries, aren't discrete. Modern life wants to separate the two, pleasure and pain. But our physiology refuses. The temporary unity of the two was actually love's finest accomplishment. It's this album's, too.

—Andrew Jones

The Sustain Of Memory: Disc One: The Middle Of Tensions; Circle, Line. Disc Two: The Rigors Of Love. (65:48/48:22)

Personnel: Kevin Sun, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Adam O'Farrill, trumpet; Dana Saul, piano; Walter Stinson, Simón Willson (3), bass; Matt Honor, Dayeon Seok (3), drums.

Ordering info: endectomorph.com

Sarah Chaksad Orchestra

Tabriz
 NEUKLANG 4211
 ★★★

The big band has been a relative rarity in jazz for the past half-century or so. This isn't a surprise, given the prohibitive costs of recording and performing with a large ensemble. Still, there's plenty of work left to be done in the format, as Basel, Switzerland-based bandleader and saxophonist Sarah Chaksad ably demonstrates. *Tabriz* takes its name from a city in Iran—the country where Chaksad's father was born—while borrowing some traditional motifs to incorporate and invoking ancient melodic inputs. Chaksad has shown herself to work well in small groups, but the orchestral setting here really suits her. *Tabriz* simply feels expansive in a way that small groups just don't.

—Dustin Kratoch



Tabriz: Dreamcatcher; Tabriz; Home; Mehamn; It's Too Late; The Flower; Song Of A Lark; Thankful. (67:32)

Personnel: Sarah Chaksad, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Andreas Böhlen, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, clarinet, flute; Pepe Auer, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Cédric Gschwind, tenor saxophone, flute; Fabian Willmann, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, clarinet; Hildegunn Øieth, trumpet, goat horn; Charles Wagner, Jonas Winterhalter, Octave Moritz, trumpet; Lukas Wyss, Lukas Brügger, Paco Andrea, trombone; Thomas Lüscher, piano; Valentin Hebel, Wolfgang Muthspiel (2), guitar; Julie Fahrner, vocals; Sebastian Gieck, bass; Eva Klesse, drums.

Ordering info: neuklangrecords.de

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Measured Connections

Berlin-based composer **Joanna Bailie** delivers work that masterfully collides field recordings, spoken word and old music recordings on **Artificial Environments (NMC 252; 61:47 ★★★★★)**, a thoroughly beguiling collection of pieces performed by Plus-Minus Ensemble, a chamber group she co-founded. The tripartite "Symphony-Street-Souvenir" moves through the gradually slowing opening section of Brahms' C minor symphony, gaining heft as its meticulous piano lines decelerate; blends distant-sounding carillon melodies from Copenhagen with sparse piano and strings; and complements a mix of music-box melodies and sine-wave tones with plummeting strings. The relationships within each section are wonderfully ambiguous, leading one to wonder, what's pulling what?

Ordering info: nmcrec.co.uk

New York electric guitar quartet **Dither** mixes pieces by its members and outside composers on **Potential Differences (New Focus 235; 71:24 ★★★½)**, unveiling a panoply of possibilities for their instruments. "The Wah One" arranges damped yet lacerating chords using the titular effect to sound like a chugging engine, while "The Warped One" directs the players to detune strings through the piece, basking in queasy movement. Elsewhere, the ensemble plays frenetic rounds on the intensely pulsing "The Garden Of Cyrus," forming dense thickets of shifting counterpoint that accelerate until the piece hydroplanes into sustained tones, while Ted Hearne's "Candy" passes around simple phrases of interlocking melodies, increasingly interrupted by tension and noise.

Ordering info: newfocusrecordings.com

Devonté Hynes, of Blood Orange fame, wrote the music on **Fields (Cedille 192; 60:47 ★★★½)** as a score for choreographer Emma Portner, collaborating closely with Chicago's **Third Coast Percussion**, which orchestrated his works. While known for alternative pop and r&b, Hynes started out

playing classical music, and the influence of minimalist Philip Glass shines through. At the same time, a penchant for woozy melodies and lush synth textures exerts itself, blending seamlessly with percussion that rings and gurgles seductively and establishes pulsing rhythms evoking the wide-open spaces evinced by the work's title.

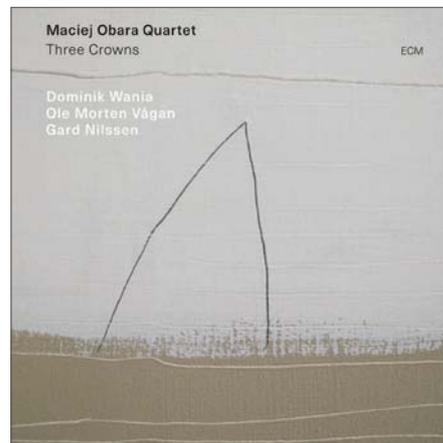
Ordering info: cedillerecords.org

London-based composer **Ryoko Akama** typically deals in sonic abstraction, with installations and scores that explore gesture, time and space. But for **Dial 45-21-95 (Another Timbre 146; 73:47 ★★★★★)** she was commissioned to create a set of pieces using defined pitches, something rare in her music. She took advantage of a residency at the archive of the Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski to inspire and develop these boundless pieces—many titled after objects or things she found there—which are beautifully realized by the superb ensemble Apartment House. Delicately and quietly voiced lines on clarinet, strings, vibraphone, flute, piano and guitar coalesce in gorgeously measured harmonies that hang in the air ambiguously, each melodic fragment steeped in mystery and provoking rumination.

Ordering info: anothertimbre.com

England's Tim Parkinson has toggled nonchalantly between experimental performance pieces and scored music, all of it investigating the meaning of sound. **Mark Knopfler** sensitively explores that latter material on **Tim Parkinson: Piano Music 2015–2016 (All That Dust 6; 63:29 ★★★★★)**, a set of often-austere solo works arriving as discrete studies that still feel obliquely connected. The elusiveness of the ultra quiet "Piano Piece 2015" stands in stark contrast to the exuberant jazz-like refractions of "2016 Last Piece," while the compositions in between somehow chart movement in Parkinson's thinking, as if cogitating aloud. **DB**

Ordering info: allthatdust.com



Maciej Obara Quartet Three Crowns

ECM 2662

★★★★★

After their 2017 ECM debut, *Unloved*, Polish saxophonist Maciej Obara and his quartet make their return with *Three Crowns*. In addition to six new tunes from the bandleader, the album features improvisational renderings of music by one of the most significant composers of the 20th century: Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933–2010). Though Górecki's work has been subjected to improvisational treatments before, these renditions bear special distinction for being sanctioned by his family, whom Obara came to know while living in Katowice, where the composer once was based. The first Górecki interpretation, "Three Pieces In Old Style," is so beautifully reimagined that it sounds as if it's emanating from another world. Pianist Dominik Wania opens in a deeply respectful mood, allowing Obara's incisive tone to keen overhead, while bassist Ole Morten Vågan and drummer Gard Nilssen roam a rain-kissed landscape below.

"Blue Skies For Andy" is among the stronger Obara originals—not only for its melodic strength but also its patience. It has a classic sound that feels warm to the ears, as precise as it is free. Other highlights range from the savvy urbanism of "Smoggy People," notable for Wania's postmodern swing, to the more geometric "Glow," which recalls the tightly knotted compositions of fellow altoist Tim Berne. Obara's bandmates grow in real time, though nowhere so maturely as on "Mr. S," an homage to trumpeter Tomasz Stańko that rolls in on a wave of melancholy and sunshine in equal measure. Like the title track, it's flexible and always attached to something pure and knowable. There is no mystery here. Only life.

—Tyran Grillo

Three Crowns: Three Pieces In Old Style; Blue Skies For Andy; Smoggy People; Little Requiem For A Polish Girl; Vang Church; Three Crowns; Glow; Mr. S. (62:23)

Personnel: Maciej Obara, alto saxophone; Dominik Wania, piano; Ole Morten Vågan, bass; Gard Nilssen, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Mareike Wiening
Metropolis Paradise

GREENLEAF MUSIC 1073

★★★★½

The relaxed, resolute mood of *Metropolis Paradise*, drummer Mareike Wiening's full-length debut, belies the drama behind the scenes of its creation. A week before her quintet was to record, Wiening's regular pianist Glenn Zaleski broke his elbow in a bike accident. The sessions couldn't be rescheduled.

That's a lot of weight to put on any recording, but give credit to Wiening, her fill-in pianist, Dan Tepfer, and the rest of the ensemble for not bowing to the pressure. It seemed to work to the group's advantage, as the rhythm section pays strict attention to one another throughout these eight songs. Tepfer takes extra care to lock in with Wiening's quick turnarounds and cricket-like hops on "2 In 1," and hangs back throughout "Viewpoints" and the title track. His restraint does him few favors in his solos; a turn on "Free At Last" feels pat and a little unsure. But Tepfer makes up for it by retaining his role as this ensemble's backbone. The extra space left open is taken over by saxophonist Rich Perry and guitarist Alex Goodman's juicy playing. The latter slithers through each track like a rivulet of mercury, while the former is cooling lava, still giving off plenty of warmth. And that leaves Wiening to flit and flow throughout with the lithe flexibility of a dancer. —*Robert Ham*

Metropolis Paradise: Free Time; 2 In 1; For A Good Day; Misconception; Viewpoints; Relations; Metropolis Paradise; Free At Last. (52:55)

Personnel: Mareike Wiening, drums; Dan Tepfer, piano; Rich Perry, tenor saxophone; Alex Goodman, guitar; Johannes Felscher, bass.

Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com



Chris Madsen

Bonfire

OUTSIDE IN 1923

★★★★½

Chris Madsen's compositions delve into balladry, the blues and a modernism that edges on the abstract—but remains accessible. The tenor saxophonist knows how to gin up tension, and, as the sequencing of this substantial album proves, he also knows the value of release. *Bonfire*, with its connotations of community, celebration and risk, is an apt title for this Chicago group's engaging work.

Madsen and his cohort (pianist Stu Mindeman, drummer Dana Hall and bassist Clark Sommers) don't abide by conventional head-solo-head structure. Rather, they play off each other conversationally. But Madsen just digs diverse grooves: Listeners get the lanky title track, the furious "Lone Wolf" and "It Is All Of Value," an intriguing work where Madsen asserts himself, blowing low and saucy. The album's focal point is "Hundred Center," a ballad featuring the leader at his most relaxed and Mindeman at his most expansive. The finale is "Cellar Door," a ballad that starts on a bluesy note and builds to a liberating, genre-free pulsation. Madsen's straightforward tone takes on unusual warmth, Sommers gets a star turn, and Mindeman and Hall—as much colorist as timekeeper—throw off sparks, taking this ambitious album out on a satisfying note. —*Carlo Wolff*

Bonfire: Authority; Lone Wolf; Bonfire; Hundred Center; It Is All Of Value; Cool Sun; Dragline; Cellar Door. (52:54)

Personnel: Chris Madsen, tenor saxophone; Stu Mindeman, piano; Clark Sommers, bass; Dana Hall, drums.

Ordering info: outsideinmusic.com



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BLUE CANADA

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Kengchakaj Kengkarnka

Lak Lan

NEXT LEVEL 1931

★★★★

Lak Lan, Bangkok-born, New York-based pianist Kengchakaj Kengkarnka's debut recording of original compositions, seeks to address if not resolve the bandleader's multiple—perhaps conflicting—influences and impulses. The album also captures a musician in search of his style: Kengkarnka has a grasp of several contemporary idioms and a willingness to explore them. Yet his tracks come to life only fitfully. Starting with a nod to Professor Longhair, the pianist quickly turns his ensemble to light, unhurried funk on "Hom Rong." Next, he offers up the carefully measured, Brazilian-flecked, multipart title track, complete with wordless vocals. Less structured, still moody "Lom Huan" follows, but feels static. By contrast, "6849" is a quasi-minimalist rocker that doesn't quite cut loose, but finds Israeli altoist Shai Golan stretching out and Kengkarnka fearlessly going with him. The pianist has more grit in his fingers than the smoothly articulated, minor mode filigree he uses here as a default. And these musicians all clearly have the chops to do what they will, write what they imagine and play what moves them. In the future, may fun and freedom ring out over confusions or conundrums.

—Howard Mandel

Lak Lan: Hom Rong; Lak Lan; Lom Huan; 6849; Sneha; Deceptible; What Called Home; New Chapter; Fa(ck); Mind The Gap; Revolving. (72:39)

Personnel: Kengchakaj Kengkarnka, piano; Srintip Phasuk, vocals, effects; Shai Golan, alto saxophone; Niall Cade, tenor saxophone; Hugh Stuckey, guitar; Perrin Grace, bass; Nolan Byrd, drums.

Ordering info: outsideinmusic.com



Lilli Lewis Project

We Belong

LOUISIANA RED HOT 1196

★★★★½

Pianist/vocalist Lilli Lewis and her group have an amiability to their sound that can't be denied. And *We Belong* is a well-crafted work that just refuses to come off as overly precious.

While bounding about in a meshing of genres where Lewis' soulful, r&b-tinged vocals meet impressive arrangements on a panoply of songs, her New Orleans-bred chameleonic dexterity gets brought to the fore. Moving from the afrobeat of "Interlock" to the gospel dirge of "Coretta's Song" and then the straight-up blues of "Anybody Anymore" all feel like natural turns. "Warm And Gentle People" is a particularly ambitious song, more epic in scale than the other selections here—more narrative and jazzlike in form than the somewhat conventional r&b-influenced tunes.

For a debut album, *We Belong* is a substantive articulation of the Lilli Lewis Project's voice. But it also lacks a cohesiveness that veteran ensembles so effortlessly display, despite the recording affably reflecting the soundworld of that multimodal music city down in Louisiana.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

We Belong: Interlock; Coretta's Song; Anybody Anymore; When The Sun Comes Down; When The Rain Comes In; Kisses; Warm And Gentle People; Beauty Beyond Reason; Turn It Around. (42:10)

Personnel: Lilli Lewis, piano, vocals; Smokey Brown, guitar; Wade Hymel, drums; Ryan Murray, percussion; Ole Oddlokken, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone; Dr. Jimbo Walsh, bass; Dr. Michael White, clarinet (2); Kirk Joseph, sousaphone (2, 5); Glen David Andrews, vocals, trombone (5); Mark Bingham, Liz Hogan, Sarah Phillips, vocals.

Ordering info: louisianaredhotrecords.com



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Carmen Sandim

Play Doh

ROPEADOPE 521

★★★★

Though Carmen Sandim's sophomore album is named for the faux-dough beloved by children, *Play Doh* demonstrates an incredible amount of mature complexity. The recording reveals Sandim's experiences as an evolving musician, devoted family member and someone with a passion for the sonic character of her Brazilian roots. Not only does the music reflect Sandim's detailed appreciation for harmony and tonal contrast, it displays a strong sense of self-awareness.

Play Doh's musicality is approachable without context, despite sporadic appearances by less-familiar Brazilian instruments like the cavaquinho, surdo and pandeiro that fill "Free Wilbie." Bruce Williamson's round-toned clarinet on "Isaura" transitions smoothly among notes, while retaining impactful moments as he shares pitches with Khabu Carter Young's electric guitar. Similarly, the vacillating intensity of Dru Heller's rim hits during "Undergrowth's" spooky opening work on more than one level. The shifting 6/8 and 4/4 meters in "Aruru, Juju" and the placement of a formidably nimble drum solo back-to-back with Young and Sandim's unison melody on "Me Gusta La Angustia" parallel the emotion and unrelenting progression of real life.

—Kira Grunenberg

Play Doh: Aruru, Juju; Aura-Celia; Undergrowth; Isaura; Me Gusta La Angustia; Waiting For Art; Hear The Trees; Play Doh; Free Wilbie. (64:30)

Personnel: Carmen Sandim, piano; Shane Endsley, trumpet; Bruce Williamson, reeds; Alex Heitlinger, trombone; Khabu Carter Young, guitar, cavaquinho (9); Bill McCrossen, bass; Dru Heller, drums; Bill Kopper, acoustic guitar (7, 9); Raoul Rossiter, percussion (9).

Ordering info: ropeadope.com





Various Artists New Improvised Music From Buenos Aires

ESP-DISK 5033

★★★★½

With the right resources, travel to nearly any point on the globe is possible. While it's getting harder to be cut off from the rest of the planet, it's still possible for a culturally or geographically bound community to nurture a distinct scene. Such enclaves can be well served by compilations that present the best players, each contributing material that demonstrates the idiosyncratic ideas and methods that make them unique.

If Argentina has such a scene, this compilation does not make a strong case for its individuality. While much of the music on *New Improvised Music From Buenos Aires* is eminently listenable, it never sounds uniquely of a place. "We're connected with everyone," observes reedist Luis Conde, of the duos Rulemares and Duquesa in the album's liner notes. Certain musicians here—pianist Agustí Fernández or trumpeter Leonel Kaplan—are either from Europe or have played there extensively. And even the performers who work only in Argentina sound pretty aware of jazz and free-improv from around the world.

What the album really represents is simply a cross section of diversely oriented, technically accomplished musicians who are well acquainted with sounds from around the globe. Kaplan, soprano saxophonist Pablo Ledesma and bassist Mono Hurtado play melancholy chamber jazz. Cornetist Enrique Norris and pianist Paula Shocron evoke Don Cherry's vulnerable lyricism. So, while the musicians on this album have the chops and acumen to hold their own with players from anywhere else in the world, only a few of them have the ability to stand out.

—Bill Meyer

New Improvised Music From Buenos Aires: Improvisation On Graphic Score 2; Primer Jugo Bovino; Amable Amanecer; Relámpagos I; Che; Relámpagos II; La Playa Pequeña; Solo Piano Improvisation; 18:18; Relámpagos III; La Puerta R; Improvisation 0681; Plaza Y La Vía; Transición. (71:49)

Personnel: Pablo Díaz Quinteto; Rulemares; Agustí Fernández; Pablo Ledesma; Mono Hurtado; Duquesa; Leonel Kaplan; Christof Kurzmann; Norris Trio; Paula Shocron; Data Peluda; Enrique Norris; Cinética; Pablo Ledesma; Mono Hurtado; Fulgor Al Bies.

Ordering info: espdisk.com

Emma Frank

Come Back

JUSTIN TIME 262

★★★★

Need a calming balm after a long day? A musical refuge from the bombardment of chaos and mayhem? Then allow Emma Frank to soothe you with a pleasant sonic massage, one that emanates from every track on *Come Back*. There's an unchanging meditative groove here that varies little in tempo, while her voice probes an assortment of human conditions. Her work is particularly precise, in perfect sync with Aaron Parks' piano.

"Before You Go Away" exudes yearning and regret, and brings to mind a soulful blend of Buffy Sainte-Marie and Joni Mitchell. Frank plumbs even deeper on "I Thought," thinking she's to blame for the changes we all experience. "Two Hours" brings more serenity, and Frank settles into a stream of solitude with a haunting refrain that edges closer and closer to a sentimental mood. With "Dream Team" comes a scat-like wordlessness that intercepts any possibility of boredom, and Frank sparks Parks, the two then moving smoothly as one, a dauntless duo. It's a wonderful sound when her words joyously collide with his notes, blending almost indistinguishably.

One wish: The lingering tranquility she has perfected here should be set aside somewhat,



allowing more of that robust quality she possesses to shine through. In short, a little less folk and a little more funk.

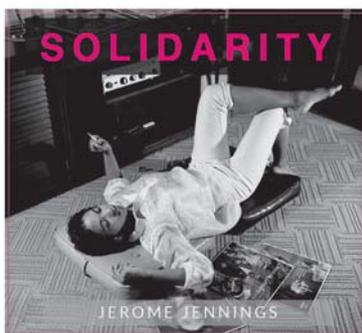
Frank clearly has mastered the ballad, bur-nishing her lyrics with touches of literary panache. Balance this propensity with a few uptempo tracks and she'll continue her climb to the top, no matter the genre.

—Herb Boyd

Come Back: I Thought; Either Way; Two Hours; Sometimes; Promises; Dream Team; See You; Lilac; Before You Go Away. (31:35)

Personnel: Emma Frank, vocals; Aaron Parks, piano, synthesizer; Tommy Crane, drums; Zack Lober, bass; Franky Rousseau, guitar, synthesizer; Simon Miller, trumpet (6); Chieh-Fan, viola, violin (1, 3); Pedro Barquinha, guitar, bass, percussion, synthesizer (9).

Ordering info: justin-time.com



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A Stand Worth Taking

Historical / BY SUZANNE LORGE

Hersch Trio Marks 10 Years

The newly launched box set *The Fred Hersch Trio: 10 Years/6 Discs* (Palmetto FH10YB; 56:08/58:03/57:46/58:34/68:01/63:58 ★★★★★) captures a landmark ensemble in the studio, on the road and at its spiritual home, the Village Vanguard in Greenwich Village. Two of the albums' six discs were session gigs and the remaining four recorded live. Curiously, Hersch assigned impressionistic titles to the studio dates—*Whirl* and *Floating*—while the live dates all received more pragmatic treatment: the two-disc *Alive At The Vanguard*, *Sunday Night At The Vanguard* and *Live In Europe*.

There might be something behind this. During his live performances, when he's creating music instinctively, Hersch commands the room—quietly, but assuredly. He's so confident in himself and his trio mates—bassist John Hébert and drummer Eric McPherson—that they hardly ever need to rehearse. Despite Hersch's onstage composure, when he plays, there's always something intensely personal stirring just below the surface.

Hersch released *Whirl*, the trio's debut album, in 2010, just a year after forming the group and two years after surviving a near-fatal health crisis. The title cut, a Hersch original, spins dynamically around an ominous melodic riff, providing contrast with his other compositions on the album, like the lilting waltz of "Snow Is Falling ..." or the jaunty mixed-meter badinage of "Skipping." For his originals, Hersch finds source material in those he admires: He dedicated that last cut to prima ballerina Suzanne Farrell, whose pirouettes inspired its motion.

A few more years into its musical relationship, in 2012, the trio recorded *Alive At The Vanguard*, the second and third installments in this collection. The band approached the tunes on this record—an even mix of standards and originals—with familiarity and ease; each note seems to spring wholly new from the trio's fingers. On the recording, Hersch acknowledges the ensemble's growing penchant for Thelonious Monk tunes, one of which usually closes their sets. Here, it's a slow, shimmering "Played Twice"—part of a medley that also includes "The Song Is You." Gorgeous.

Hersch was nominated for a Grammy for best improvised solo on "You & The Night & The Music," from the trio's 2014 release, *Floating*, the fourth disc here. The solo—on the first track—starts without preamble and gambols in a syncopated fever toward a smooth outro. It's the ideal setup for the second tune, the title track, a dreamy, open exchange among the three players. "*Floating* is the magic sound-place where the trio spends a lot of time—trusting each other so much



Pianist Fred Hersch

that we can leave space," Hersch wrote in the liner notes.

By the time the trio released *Sunday Night At The Vanguard* in 2016, the fifth disc, the band had been playing together steadily for seven years and had attained an unusual synergism. They'd found a preferred curation for their sets: the retrofitted Broadway standard ("A Cockeyed Optimist") first, followed by a handful of originals (like Hersch's eerie "Serpentine") and the requisite Monk tune (the powerful "We See"). Hersch's work on the latter would earn him another Grammy nomination for Best Improvised Jazz Solo; the trio received its first nod, being nominated in the Best Jazz Instrumental Album category.

The trio's 2018 *Live In Europe* came as a surprise. They discovered that tape had been rolling during the penultimate concert of a 2017 European tour—it was too good to waste.

On this disc, the sixth in this retrospective, they reprise "Skipping" and "We See"—and again snagged Grammy nominations in the same categories as in 2016. But on this record, Hébert and McPherson figure more prominently than on others, sending up impeccable improvisations on tunes like "Snake Maltings" and "Scuttlers," while Hersch lays out a bit.

In these moments, especially, the group bond—unspoken and personal—is palpable.

DB

Ordering info: palmetto-records.com

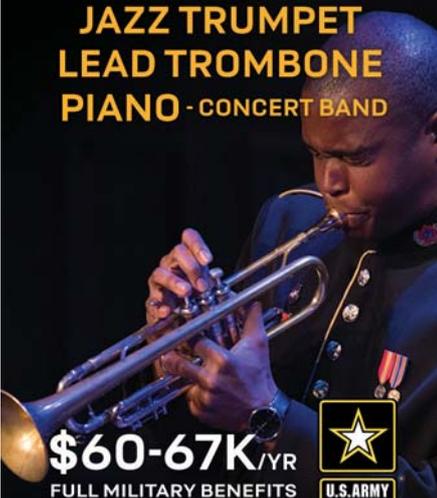


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Florian Hoefner Trio

First Spring

ALMA 83092

★★★★½

Pianist Florian Hoefner's concept on *First Spring* was to use bluegrass as a starting point for his jazz arrangements. And while the two distinctly American forms might seem odd bedfellows, Hoefner's melodies and juxtapositions succeed at conjuring a high-lonesome Aaron Copeland or Bill Evans on a pastoral trip.

Hoefner trades the quartet lineup of his previous efforts for a trio set up here. With Andrew Downing on bass (often bowed, standing in for fiddle) and Nick Fraser on drums, the trio succeeds at making real Hoefner's intent for the six reworkings and three originals on *First Spring*: Make it new.

The original compositions fit into the thematic whole with grace and agility. "First Spring" is a lithe and lovely slice of melody and movement; "Winter In June" captures the tentative and somber mood of its title without faltering; and "Solstice" speeds along on the wind of Hoefner's deft fingers.

As for the interpretations, "Hound's Tune," which takes on the work of fiddler Rufus Guinchard, is driven by Downing's bass stylings, the trio's execution demonstrating simultaneous urgency and confidence. Traditional Scottish folk song "Maid On The Shore" sails on Hoefner's exquisite melody as the rhythm section carries the song along. The finale, "Rain And Snow," has been recorded by acts like The Grateful Dead and Bill Monroe. But the ominous arrangement here is fitting for a song characterized in folk circles as a murder ballad. And while it's not necessarily recognizable as the traditional song some of us know and love, Hoefner seems to be saying, "What's the point, unless you can innovate?"

—Denise Sullivan

First Spring: Hound's Tune; Calvary; First Spring; Maid On The Shore; Winter In June; Loosin Yelav; Short Life; Solstice; Rain And Snow. (58:24)

Personnel: Florian Hoefner, piano; Andrew Downing, bass; Nick Fraser, drums.

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Rabbit's Tale Jumps Around

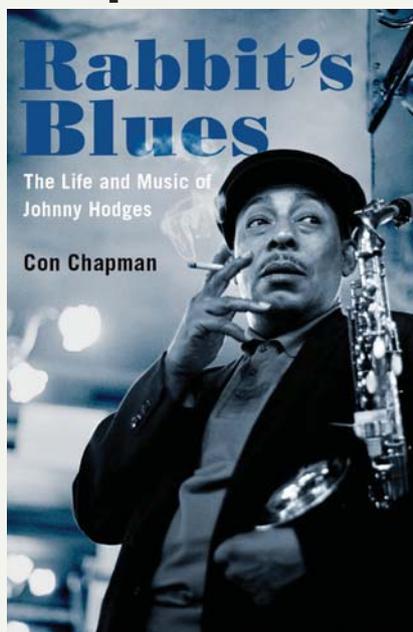
Duke Ellington knew an indispensable sound when he heard it. For decades, his orchestra highlighted the sensual glissandos of alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges. Now, almost 50 years after his passing, he's received his first full-length biography. Author **Con Chapman's *Rabbit's Blues: The Life and Music of Johnny Hodges* (Oxford University Press)** is a well-researched account of this important (if generally quiet) performer that departs from a typical chronological narrative.

Hodges' early life in the Boston area provides much of the book's key revelations. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1907, Chapman describes the musician's familial lineage alongside the history of Boston's predominantly African American South End neighborhood, where he moved as a child. The local scene shaped his direction, but Hodges' most significant influence early on was New Orleans hero Sidney Bechet. While determining when and why a youthful Hodges received the abiding "rabbit" nickname remains cloudy, Chapman dutifully lays out all of the possible sources.

When Ellington brought Hodges into his ensemble in 1928, the saxophonist's personality transformed the band. Ellington's orchestra became Hodges' musical home—aside from a few departures—until his death in 1970. The two men depended on each other, and Chapman describes how the saxophonist remained loyal to the bandleader while also harboring some chagrin at questionable finances and, perhaps, conflicts over women. Hodges also built different kinds of partnerships with other important Ellingtonians, primarily composer Billy Strayhorn and saxophonist Ben Webster. For a few years in the '50s and '60s, Hodges made small-group records outside the orchestra's orbit, until he tired of the responsibilities of bandleading. Somewhat ironically, Hodges' 1951 r&b hit, "Castle Rock" (written by his tenor saxophonist, Al Sears), helped pave the way for rock 'n' roll, the music that many feel eclipsed jazz in the public consciousness.

Most of Chapman's sources include government documents, media reports and recognized Ellington experts, such as Stanley Dance. He does not include original interviews in the book, likely because the vast majority of Hodges' colleagues have been deceased for years. But fresh conversations with prominent and still-outspoken musicians who worked on his '60s records with organist Wild Bill Davis or his 1970 album *3 Shades Of Blue*—Kenny Burrell or Ron Carter, for example—could have added vital first-person perspectives.

Rather than simply tell a linear story of how Hodges' life progressed, Chapman separates the main narrative from chapters

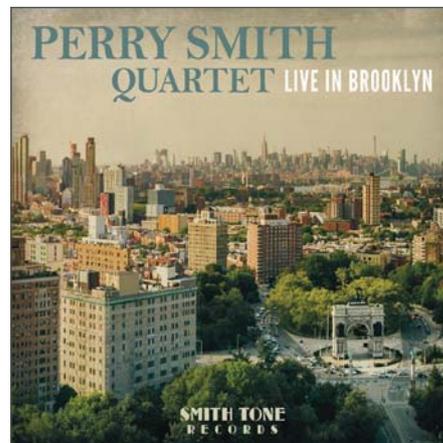


devoted to specific subjects and ideas. This structure delivers some fuller descriptions of Hodges' work without seeming digressive. One chapter describes his tone—something the saxophonist said he just developed by accident. Another, "The Competition," delves into the differences between Hodges and alto giant Benny Carter. Chapman accurately depicts Hodges delivering an unmistakable emotional wallop, while Carter offers a model of superb harmonic development. But the author wisely avoids making qualitative comparisons. Despite the chapter title, there was no rivalry between these longtime mutual admirers.

Still, Chapman's discussions of Hodges' work would have been enlivened with more of his own thoughts and analyses of the beauty—or flaws—in key recordings, rather than just reporting on what earlier critics stated. He also slips up with an omission in his description of Hodges' representation "in the broader stream of American culture beyond the narrow channels of jazz." The author's list of literature and a television show does not include the saxophonist's memorable, but brief, appearance in 1965's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Rabbit's Blues concludes with a mention of Hodges' ongoing influence on contemporary alto players, and Chapman rightfully cites varied saxophonists as his inheritors; these range from Darius Jones to Grace Kelly. More could be discussed about how Hodges influenced these two in particular, but the way Chapman's book reaffirms Hodges' enduring presence is cause for celebration. **DB**

Ordering info: oup.com



Perry Smith Quartet *Live In Brooklyn*

SMITH TONE

★★★

Live In Brooklyn marks the debut of a band led by guitarist Perry Smith. Three of the six tunes are new Smith originals, while the bandleader adds in a version of Rube Bloom's "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," Sonny Stitt's "The Eternal Triangle" and the standard of all standards, Jerome Kern's "All The Things You Are."

Opener "Starlit Skies" sets the album's tone, Matt Aronoff's bass nudging things into a gently loping groove while Smith and saxophonist Melissa Aldana tackle the melody in unison before the guitarist wanders off on a solo journey. His tone is clean, with just enough reverb to give it warmth and presence. The second piece, "Premonition," pulls the same trick, allowing Smith and Aldana to travel a long road together before they embark on individual side paths, exploring the tune's lyrical and harmonic possibilities. It's bebop, with all the flourishes and traded fours that the genre implies, and it makes no attempt to disguise itself as anything else. Which is also the problem.

There's nothing wrong with the music on *Live In Brooklyn*: Everyone plays well, Smith's compositions are pretty (if unmemorable) and it swings. The bass could be mixed a bit more prominently, but the drums are loud enough to keep the energy level high. Ultimately, though, the album fails to argue convincingly for its own existence. Bebop, after all, had gone from an insurgency to an established language by 1948. The modernist dictum to "make it new" is completely ignored; Smith and his bandmates might as well have put on straw hats and sleeve garters to play Dixieland. This album has nothing to say beyond "on this night, this happened," and that's not quite enough. —Philip Freeman

Live In Brooklyn: Starlit Skies; Premonition; Don't Worry 'Bout Me; Golden Days; The Eternal Triangle; All The Things You Are. (50:29)

Personnel: Perry Smith, guitar; Melissa Aldana, tenor saxophone; Matt Aronoff, bass; Jay Sawyer, drums.

Ordering info: perrysmithmusic.com

Alice Zawadzki

Within You Is A World Of Spring

WHIRLWIND 4746

★★★★★

Capturing a sense of Gaia's wisdom on her earthy release, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Alice Zawadzki's grounded connection illuminates eight dramatic compositions hued with mystique and eclecticism. Love stories, social justice, sadness and a touch of whimsy flow from Zawadzki's pen as she brews a genre-potpourri of folk and pop, fused with elements of jazz, r&b, classical and Celtic. Her violin creates intense textures in unison with the soul-drenched Amika String Quartet on the title track. Based on Emil Aarestrup's writing, it's a reflection of Zawadzki's uplifting philosophy, which was detailed in an email to DownBeat: "[T]here is always a powerful and mysterious seed inside us that is growing, working, promising new life Even the coldest winter will always reliably give way to spring." Zawadzki's stellar vocals complement the r&b and gospel influence on "Keeper," and then she bonds with the forest for "The Woods," a tune centered on her spoken-word poetry. Emphasizing the powerful force of love in reuniting an estranged couple, the bandleader reassures listeners on "O Mio Amore," the album's comforting closer. —Kerlie McDowall



Within You Is A World Of Spring: Within You Is A World Of Spring; God's Children; Superior Virtue; Es Verdad; The Woods; Keeper; Twisty Moon; O Mio Amore. (50:11)

Personnel: Alice Zawadzki, vocals, keyboards, violin; Rob Luft, guitar; Fred Thomas, drums, percussion, keyboards, tenor banjo (4, 8); Misha Mullov-Abbado, bass; Hyeleim Kim, taegum (5); Simmy Singh, Laura Senior, violin (1, 2, 7, 8); Lucy Nolan, viola (1, 2, 7, 8); Peggy Nolan, cello (1, 2, 7, 8).

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com

Andrés Vial

Gang Of Three

CHROMATIC AUDIO 041419

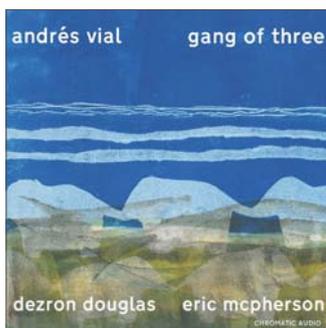
★★★★½

Montreal-based pianist Andrés Vial embraces an aesthetic that seems torn between modern American and European jazz, even as his compositions on *Gang Of Three* are informed by a much greater variety of music from all over the world.

Some song titles readily give away those influences: The melancholy "Chacarera Para Wayne" (an homage to Wayne Shorter) is based on an Argentine folk dance and displays Vial's talent at weaving a rich melodic and harmonic fabric out of a rather simple theme; and "Samba Fantasma" is a subtle take on the Brazilian staple. But the highlight here is arguably "Put Your Spikes In," a piece rooted in mbira music of the Central African Gbaya people, with a recurring and surprisingly angular theme that allows Vial to put his stamp on the piece.

As a composer and an improviser, the bandleader constantly is focused on melody. Throughout the trio date, his solos often are well-paced and thoughtful, and serve his design. Bassist Dezron Douglas' muffled sound is a perfect foil to the pianist's bright delivery. But because he's not restricted to a purely rhythmic assignment on the album, drummer Eric McPherson successfully takes on that role—particularly during the spectacular introduction of the Shorter tribute.

—Alain Drouot



Gang Of Three: Atonggaga Blues; Chacarera Para Wayne; Gang Of Three; Ferguson; Montaigne; February Waltz; Put Your Spikes In; Samba Fantasma; Cascadas. (51:44)

Personnel: Andrés Vial, piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Eric McPherson, drums.

Ordering info: chromatic-audio.com

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A portrait of Peter Eldridge, a man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit jacket over a patterned shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

PETER ELDRIDGE ON SONG REINVENTION

Peter Eldridge (Photo: David Belusic)



Peter Eldrige performs at Birdland in New York on Sept. 22, 2019.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF SONG REINVENTION

By Peter Eldridge | Photo By David Belusic

Like a lot of you, I love many contrasting styles of music. I love jazz repertoire (including the Great American Songbook), pop tunes old and new, Brazilian, Latin and world music, soul, classical repertoire (especially 20th-century choral music) and the repertoire of the great singer-songwriters. Each has had its own distinct effect on my soul, heart and mind.

What I love more than anything else, though, is the idea of “personalizing” a piece of music from one of the genres listed above and making it my own, through playing with elements of harmony, melody and rhythm—so much so that it can make a tried-and-true (and perhaps even overdone) song feel like new.

Happily, the jazz community has come to embrace, even encourage, taking a tune and revitalizing it to fit elements of your own musical identity. Many of the standards we all know and love have been sung for decades by countless vocalists, so they are ripe for some reimagining and rearranging. This goes for pop, rock and soul tunes as well. It’s deciding what it is that you, as the vocalist/instrumentalist/interpreter/arranger, can bring to the party to make the song feel fresh again; perhaps making the lyric feel like it’s coming from a significantly different emotional world from where it originated, or that your arrangement brings out an entirely different meaning in the lyric because of how you set it musically. That’s a substantial element

in my definition of a successful arrangement or “reinvention”—to bring out a new lyrical focus, to bring out something that hasn’t really been heard before.

For me, the initial idea of working a tune to make it “mine” came from a vocal perspective, even though I also play and compose at the piano. As a child, I began my musical studies as a classical pianist. Due to an intense fear of the vulnerability that comes with singing, I didn’t start using my voice in any real capacity until college. I just felt way too exposed and uncomfortable when attempting to wear the vocalist “hat.” I hid, more than happily, behind my piano and accompanied anyone I could, both in classical repertoire and jazz standards. Over the course of a few years, I began overcoming this fear, understanding the unique expression that singing is capable of and actually garnering an appreciation for that vulnerability that I found so initially debilitating. It finally dawned on me it was a form of strength and not weakness. I remember when that realization finally hit me, it was completely emancipating.

Eldridge collaborated with pianist/arranger Kenny Werner (left) on *Somewhere*, released July 5, 2019, on Rosebud Music.



I remember slowly developing my own set of rules and freedoms in regard to phrasing, emotion, feel and vocal color of a particular song. Instead of emulating my vocal heroes (which, of course, is a necessary and invaluable part of the process), I began digging deeper into my own musical ideas, some good and some not so good. And soon after that I was incorporating my piano skills in conjunction with my voice to “reimagine” a song I was passionate about. I would study it over and over again until I felt there was some fundamental aspect of it I could play with—the harmony, the meter, the rhythm of the language, or often some combination of all three—in the hopes it would make it feel new, make the lyric mean something different than in previous versions, but all the while (hopefully) still respecting the original intentions of the composer.

In my teachings at both the Manhattan School of Music and now at Berklee College of Music, I’ve heard many an arrangement where the lyric felt more like an afterthought, a consequence, instead of the actual reason behind a particular song reinvention. Not to say it isn’t possible to get wildly adventurous musically, but it can never be at the expense of the lyrical intention. People connect to songs through words full of heartbreak, humor, passion, confusion, anger, love, even sarcasm (thank you, Rodgers and Hart). The arrangement can’t eclipse that connection. The natural flow of the language needs to feel as organic and conversational as possible. I feel that too many arrangements fall short on this aspect. Life

experience and context, even for young vocalists, need to be part of any song’s journey.

While I believe it is permissible to play with the rhythm of a lyric to make the phrasing sound more natural or make the sentiment clearer in some way, it is important to keep the pitches of the original melodic line as the composer wrote it. There are instances when the arranger intentionally (through a variety of musical concepts) contradicts the emotional nature of a song, if the original version feels a bit too old-school or corny/dated, or overplays the emotional nature for dramatic intent. In the unsettling place we are in as a country, sometimes it just feels appropriate to be unemotional or blasé or apathetic with the sentiment. But you owe it to yourself (not to mention to the composer) to bring out any elements of beauty, context and uplift that you can. It is needed these days.

So, let’s jump in. If the concept of “song reinvention” is completely new to you, here are a few ways of getting the initial wheels turning. Like any form of developing and creating, there inevitably will be a fair amount of trial and error. The hit-or-miss factor looms large at first, but try it anyway. And as with any craft, the more you keep at it, the more you develop your own skill set and musical tools to play with. Either way, here are a few ideas to get you started:

First Considerations

What is it that you love about your chosen song? Spend time with the lyric, its rhyth-

mic ebb and flow. Consider the ways it could evolve or be played with by speaking the text emphatically. Try to lose the original rhythmic (metric) flow to find a new one. If it’s a Great American Songbook tune, the lyrics sometimes can feel antiquated, so I usually write a paraphrase of the lyric to put it into my own language (again, for context). And in the beginning stages, I usually try to find what I would consider to be a particular “hook” for the arrangement—a specific groove, perhaps a reoccurring instrumental motif to anchor it. And, of course, it is good to really know the original melody/form of the chosen song note-for-note (listen to instrumental versions, not just vocal ones). Having that initial foundation leads to compelling alternative choices.

Opposite Directions

One relatively obvious method of changing things up in your reinvention is to basically do the opposite of what already exists in the song you’ve chosen. If it’s a song that has a lot of harmonic motion, strip it back to as little motion as possible. If it’s basically a three-chord tune, you have all kinds of opportunity to add intrigue or intensity by adding harmonic information. If you’re used to a particular favorite recording of a standard or classic pop tune, change the basic character of it (instrumentation, dynamics, tempo, etc.) to open it up to other directions. If the song has a traditional verse/chorus/verse sensibility and the dynamic tends to ramp up into the chorus, go in the counterintuitive direction and bring the chorus dynamic way down. If the melodic phrases feel tight or constricted in any way, loosen them up by adding an extra measure at the end of a particular compelling phrase so it can breathe. This can make a song feel more expansive and gives the listener planned “extra time” to sit with the emotional impact of the lyric. Adding extra bars sometimes can feel a bit unsettling, but “messing with the math” of measures and form can be a powerful factor in reinvention.

If your song is a ballad, it might be appropriate to approach it as an uptempo swinger or samba. And, vice versa: Busy, energetic, wordy, uptempo tunes can be very effective when performed in a slowed-down, stately manner. Be careful to make sure the lyrics don’t become too heavy-handed or sentimental, whatever direction you choose to go with them.

Changes in Feel

A change of rhythmic focus can be a sure-fire element in reinventing. These days, there are a variety of apps (my current favorites are the DrumGenius and Percussion apps) and computer programs (Garageband, Logic, etc.) where you can find dozens and dozens of grooves that you can loop and experiment

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with. You can sing your chosen song a cappella while auditioning various grooves and time signatures to see how the feel affects the natural flow of a lyric. (I love to do this activity in my car; great things happen while driving). I've always said there is nothing like a good groove and an open mind to inspire and create, whether referring to composing or re-arranging. Loops/grooves provide freedom. Part of the job is already done for you, so you can focus on harmonic colors, instrumental motifs or melodic elements instead.

Reharmonizations & Suspensions

Often you can stay relatively close to the pre-existing harmonic structure of a chosen piece, but at one specific point in the tune it can be fun to drastically reharmonize just four or eight bars (second "A" sections work very well) and then return back to the traditional harmony right afterward. I call it "leaving home and coming back again." It can be a wonderful surprise for the listener and a way to shake things up without having to reinvent the wheel and tackle the whole song form. Another easy and usually successful concept is to use pedal notes in the bass line (the fifth of the key is always a good place to start, the fourth also can be very powerful, and sometimes the seventh), perhaps in a last "A" section. Pedal notes add a sense of mystery and suspension, not resolving until necessary. The trial-and-error aspect when you're starting to reinvent tunes is making sure your reharmonization has "legs," and you're not just changing chords for the sake of changing them. There needs to be an emotional pull attached, and hopefully a theoretical reason

why the change exists.

Another very accessible concept is simply to use the relative minor (if the original version is in a major key, obviously) as a starting place. It's not necessarily making a happy song "sad"; the relative minor ends up creating something deeper than that. It's amazing how one little adjustment can add so much nuance and give new meaning to a song's lyric. The same can be said for a simple change of meter or groove. I'm a sucker for a bossa nova or a bolero, but things can get "cutesy" pretty fast if you're not careful. Keep these types of grooves earthy and open.

Even 8ths

Try taking a jazz standard (usually a ballad) and removing any semblance of swing feel, sticking to more of an even-eighth-note feel. It has the potential of turning the song into a sort of "arty" pop tune. I've done this with songs like "Prelude To A Kiss," "You've Changed" and, dare I say, "All Of Me." It makes the song feel like it's coming from a singer-songwriter place. If I'm going in this direction, I usually omit any diminished chords from the arrangement (as they tend to hint at an old-school character), and perhaps use more triadic, open-fifth and add-two types of chords. And to reiterate, the goal is to update the song but still respect the composer.

Uneven Meters

Sometimes just putting a particular song into an odd meter—like 5/4, 7/4, etc.—can organically open up the phrasing and allow a little time and space for the lyrics to breathe. It can be that "magical" element that makes the

lyric come front and center. With more traditional meters, I'm probably overly fond of 6/8 in my arrangements—the circular nature of anything in 3/4 or 6/8 is always emotional and satisfying to me.

Band Input

If you have the luxury of using a rhythm section in your reinvention process, invite your band members into the process and ask for their artistic contributions. Deciding what instruments to use in your arrangement can be very important. Sometimes subtracting or swapping out an instrument for another colors the arrangement beautifully and becomes an integral aspect of it.

Other Reinvention Devices

Try beginning the tune a cappella and rubato, perhaps using the bridge as an introduction. Another idea: Take some element of the original tune—a horn lick, a vocal phrase or some characteristic that's integral to the original version—and move it to a different instrument or give it a different function. Perhaps stretch it out and make it an accompaniment figure, or have it sung if it was instrumental.

Comparative Listening

I hope that this article provides you with some tools to jump-start your way into your own "song reinventions." Let me leave you with some suggestions for comparative listening that will reveal song reinvention at its finest:

- Carmen McRae's version of "Skylark" with the Ralph Burns Orchestra vs. Gretchen Parlato's 2005 version with guitarist Lionel Loueke.
- Lucy Ann Polk's version of "Easy Living" vs. Kurt Elling's version.
- Seal's version of "Kiss From A Rose" vs. Becca Stevens' version.
- The Beatles' version of "If I Fell" vs. Nando Lauria's version.
- Ella Fitzgerald's version of "Ridin' High" vs. Fay Claassen's version.
- Etta James' version of "The Man I Love" vs. Kate McGarry's version. **DB**

Peter Eldridge remains at the forefront of both the singer-songwriter and jazz realms as a vocalist, pianist, composer and arranger. He is also a founding member of the internationally acclaimed vocal group New York Voices, which continues to tour internationally and has performed at some of the world's most preeminent venues and festivals. He has been involved in two Grammy Award-winning projects with Paquito D'Rivera and the Count Basie Orchestra. Some of Eldridge's notable collaborations include projects with Bobby McFerrin, Fred Hersch, Becca Stevens, Chanticleer, George Benson, Michael Brecker, David Byrne, Jonatha Brooke, Kurt Elling, the New West Guitar Trio, Jane Monheit, the Swingles, Anat Cohen, Betty Buckley, Janis Siegel, Paula Cole, Jon Hendricks and Mark Murphy. His most recent CD is a collaboration with pianist Kenny Werner titled *Somewhere* (Rosebud Records). Eldridge's original songs and collaborations have been covered by artists such as D'Rivera, Nancy Wilson and Jane Monheit. He collaborated with playwright Cheryl Coons to co-write *The Kiss*, a musical about the life and loves of Gustav Klimt. In addition, Eldridge was head of Manhattan School of Music's jazz voice department for 18 years and is now part of the voice faculty at Berklee College of Music. Visit him online at petereldridge.com.

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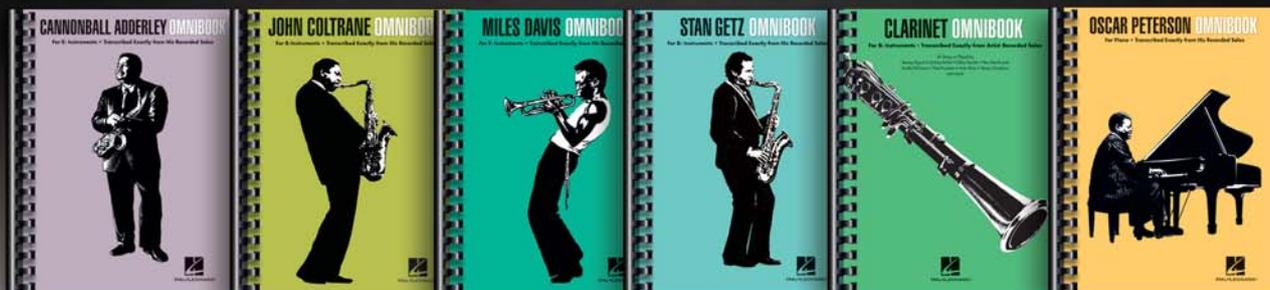
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PERRY HALL

Mike Holober

Cultivating Aural Imagination To Elevate the Writer's Craft

In addition to my work as a pianist, composer, and arranger, I have had a long career as a jazz educator, first at SUNY Binghamton, then at the City College of New York, the Manhattan School of Music and at the BMI Jazz Composer's Workshop, where I had the honor of teaching alongside Jim McNeely. Over the years, I have developed a variety of strategies to help students deepen their skills as composers and arrangers. This involves teaching the rules of the craft, but I also try to cultivate an intuitive mindset that encourages the ability to hear in a way that can significantly complement rules and established methods. In this master class, I will

elaborate on just a handful of these ideas, with the goal of illustrating how intuition, and a well-developed aural imagination, can significantly improve a writer's craft.

PITCH

I believe the most important thing in orchestration/voicing is the awareness that you are writing a specific sound that occurs at the intended pitch, not just writing the pitch. While pitch is a fixed and determined entity, its sound can be endlessly variable—and a good writer must be able to hear this.

Activate your aural imagination; ask yourself what it actually sounds like—not just the

melody or the harmony, but how it registers—the color, the impact, the default dynamic. How does it compare to, blend and balance with, or complement other already existing sounds? I often tell students that if they write in concert without picturing what the instruments are actually doing, and then push the transpose button, I will be able to tell—the compromise will reveal itself.

This is why I always write transposed: I feel it brings me closer to the conception of the actual sound in the very moment I am writing. When I think of alto saxophone playing the pitch of middle C, I imagine the alto playing the A shown in Example 1 on page 86. The

idea of middle C is only a part of the necessary information.

Determining whether a pitch registers as high, middle or low also depends in large part on which instrument is playing it. Take, for example, a middle D. Picture this on flute, trumpet, baritone saxophone, guitar, trombone and, finally, piccolo (see Example 2). On the flute it sounds low, but on the baritone sax it sounds high; on the guitar and trombone it sounds midrange, while on the piccolo it's so low that it isn't even on the instrument. The pitch is identical, but the sound (which includes the color, the impact, the default dynamic, as well as the density, transparency and weight) is entirely different.

The ability to imagine how a pitch will actually sound is also vital to assigning your instrumentation. Just because a pitch is within an instrument's range doesn't mean it will actually sound optimal.

Let's take the concert F pitch in Example 3 as an illustration. Should you assign it to the baritone saxophone (Example 4)? This note is certainly within the instrument's range, and it's not difficult to play—but what are you trying to achieve? If an exposed, reedy and singing lushness is what you are after, then this might be a good choice; but if power is your goal, consider the other options: what about tenor trombone and bass trombone, tenor saxophone, alto

saxophone or guitar (Example 5)? It's the same pitch, but which sound better matches your intent? The point is, never assign pitches just because they happen to be within the range of an instrument. Use your aural imagination to evaluate which orchestration will best express what you are hearing.

RANGE

Like most writers, I try to write within each instrument's optimal range (mostly, but not exclusively), and taking sound into consideration, rather than just pitch, can help you avoid the mistake of *unintentionally* writing outside the optimal range of an instrument.

This applies to sectional writing as well. I remember a comment that trumpet player Marvin Stamm once made at a reading of student jazz orchestra compositions: He said he wanted to "have a talk" with the writer who "wrote all of that saxophone music for the trumpets." He was referring to a trumpet-section passage that had been written in low-register four-part soli that would have been more suitable for saxophones because of the range. The top voice was fine, but the writer had not considered the optimal range of the trumpet section as a whole; in that low register, written in soli, the sound was "muddy" (though, when they played the first trumpet part in unison rather than soli, they sounded fine.)

But saxophones would have sounded fantastic on that soli. This is why I tell students to try to write what is "indigenous" to the instruments. Each instrument (and section) in a jazz orchestra has its own unique qualities, and when composing and arranging/orchestrating you should capitalize on those strengths, rather than asking them to do something that might be better achieved by a different instrument or section.

DYNAMICS

Using your aural imagination can also open up new ways to deal with dynamics. If you want a specific melody or passage to be louder, for example, you can use orchestration and composition (rather than just a higher dynamic marking) to achieve what you are looking for.

Let's consider the melody shown in Example 6. How can we make it louder? A default solution might be to put all four trumpets on it, because trumpets are loud, right? But assigning the trumpets to the melody would sacrifice too much of the target dynamic intent, regardless of what is written for the saxophones and trombones.

A more successful approach (Example 7) might be to write the saxophones on the melody in octave unison (in this case they are actually stronger than the trumpets in terms of rel-



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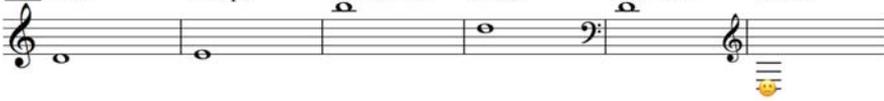
Example 1

#1 Alto Saxophone



Example 2

#2 Flute Trumpet Baritone Sax Guitar Trombone Piccolo



Examples 3–5

#3 #4 Baritone #5 Tenor/Bass Trombone Tenor Sax Alto Sax Guitar



Example 6

#6 even 8th ♩ = 138



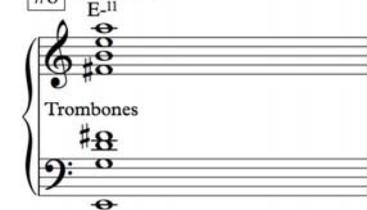
Example 7

#7 even 8th ♩ = 138



Example 8

#8 Trumpets



Example 9

#9 Trumpets



ative range), and then compose new music for the brass in a register that easily achieves the dynamic. In other words, it's not just about which instruments are capable of high volume; it also has everything to do with range, and what combination of sounds can achieve the dynamic you are looking for.

Here, I've also chosen some basic hits or "comping," being careful not to step on or distract from the melody. The music is now much louder than it was when the trumpets were playing the melody. Of course, there are many other possible variations/combinations to this solution (four saxophones in true unison, with the baritone mixed into the trombones; four-note trombone voicings with no root; or with the baritone on the root, or on the fifth in bar 2). The point is, working through multiple iterations, with your aural imagination fully activated, will help you find an orchestration that best expresses what you are after.

ECONOMY

Thinking about orchestration as transactional is another useful way to train your aural imagination. When you assign notes to a player, that player is no longer available to do something else. Was it a good investment of that instrument?

Let's use the Trumpet IV part in Example 8 to illustrate this. Ask yourself, is Trumpet IV contributing enough in this open voicing? Its note is a 10th below Trumpet I in its mid-low range, doubling a note in Trombone I in its mid-high range, placing it at a marked volume disadvantage to both of these instruments. Could you get better value by moving Trumpet IV somewhere else?

In my solution (Example 9), I moved Trumpet IV up, so that the trumpets are now in closed position (a common practice, and for good reason). This helps minimize the range-related volume issue (particularly acute in trumpets), and also removes the doubling of Trombone I—a note that certainly needed no reinforcement. It also mitigates the overly open nature of upper-register trumpets voiced in perfect fourths, which in this context would sound thin.

These voicing variations demonstrate just a sampling of how much can be done by reinvesting a single instrument. (The first four trumpet voicings also retain the original quartal intent.) They are all essentially "correct," but activating your aural imagination will enable you to determine which voicing will take your writing from "pretty good" to great.

If orchestration is transactional, it is equally important to economize your resources. In other words: Don't waste their breath! Here, a sense of overall effort should also guide your decisions. For example, be considerate about rests, especially for brass. Leave

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your soloists time to both rest and to “travel.” What sounds better: a 16-bar passage for four trombones, where Trombone II leaves out all of their notes as they walk up front for their solo, or beautifully crafted music for three trombones where the happy soloist nestles in with the rhythm section after a nice little rest?

Continually picture yourself in the players’ shoes (or chairs)—this is their brain on your notes, not your brain. This kind of consideration will show respect for the players and signal appreciation for them playing your music so well.

STUDY/IMITATE/ASSIMILATE/EVOLVE

The best way to train your aural imagination is to study other writers. Stravinsky said, “Lesser artists borrow, great artists steal.” To me, this says learn the language, study scores, train your ears, and know the history and what it sounds like. How extensive is your vocabulary of voicings? You can expand your toolbox by studying some great examples: Sammy Nestico’s tuttis on “Hayburner,” Thad Jones’ hits on “Three And One,” Bob Brookmeyer on the intro of “American Express,” Maria Schneider behind the tenor solo on “Hang

Gliding” or Jim McNeely on the shout of “Extra Credit.” You can’t learn language in a vacuum—have a look at scores, and listen a lot. This also includes listening to your own music. Take every opportunity to participate in readings, organize a group reading with other writers, or even start your own big band. Like looking in a mirror (or listening to a recording of yourself playing), the truth will be staring right back at you.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Brahms said, “Without craftsmanship, inspiration is a mere reed shaken in the wind.” In other words, having an idea or a blast of conceptual brilliance probably won’t get you sonically far enough in terms of expressing your idea or conception. Listening to a lot of music will not only train your aural imagination, it will also help you learn the possibilities of the craft—and this is what will elevate your writing. Of course, practically anything played by a good band can sound “pretty good”—but “pretty good” is nowhere near good enough, and the only way to go from good to great is by using your imagination to explore solutions that are not only technically “correct,” but sound exactly right as well.

Studying lots of music (and not just jazz) can also expose you to some of the most exciting ways to bend the rules, go beyond accepted conventions and develop your own voice. I often point out that “always means usually, and never means not so often.” In other words, there is the potential for anything to be the right thing to do at a particular given moment. Context is everything, and what something actually sounds like should always be your guide.

But craftsmanship remains vital, because knowing the rules will help you find the sound you are looking for. Don’t worry that there will be nothing left to write after all of the “don’t do this, don’t do that” in the learning process—the speed at which your vocabulary will expand will far outpace the “cleaning up” of substandard craft. As your aural imagination evolves, you will realize that the possibilities are endless. **DB**

Mike Holober has released six recordings as a leader and can be heard on more than 75 recordings as a sideman. His current projects include The Gotham Jazz Orchestra, Balancing Act (a jazz octet with voice) and The Mike Holober/Marvin Stamm Quartet. Holober’s jazz orchestra credentials include composing and conducting for the WDR Big Band, hr-Bigband and Westchester Jazz Orchestra, where he has written projects for artists such as Miguel Zenón, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Al Foster, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Eli Degibri and Avishai Cohen, among others. He recently returned to the helm of his own stellar big band with the 2019 release of *Mike Holober & The Gotham Jazz Orchestra: Hiding Out (ZOHO)*, a double CD featuring two multi-movement suites along with other works. Holober is a full professor at the City College of New York, where he has taught for 25 years. He also teaches jazz composing and arranging at the Manhattan School of Music, and served as associate director of the BMI Jazz Composer’s Workshop from 2007 to 2015. He was recently endowed as the inaugural CCNY Stuart Z. Katz Professor of Humanities and the Arts for his project *This Rock We’re On: Imaginary Letters*, an extended work in the form of an oratorio for jazz orchestra, voice, cello and percussion. Visit him online at mikeholober.com.

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Reggie Quinerly

Shifting the Drummer's Perspective from Sideman to Bandleader

Perspective is the drummer's key advantage on the bandstand. From our seat, we see everything. We see the audience members who are losing themselves in the vibe, and those who are just lost. We notice the club manager's furrowed brow as they pace the floor, wondering if the venue will meet its numbers for the night. And we notice everything that every other member of the band is thinking, feeling and doing—including checking their Instagram feeds from stage right in between solos.

Perspective, and the rich insight that it brings, is a part of what makes being a drummer so fulfilling. It's what allows the drummer

to be the heartbeat of the ensemble. It's what enables you to foster a sense of cohesion among so many distinctive artists with such distinctive sounds. It's powerful and compelling. Yet it can also be limiting, as it requires you to apply such deep and unrelenting focus to everyone else's voice that you're less inclined to focus on cultivating your own.

Most drummers will not tell you that they began playing the drums because they wanted to be in the spotlight. When I found myself drawn to the drums at age 6, my only goal was to become good enough to accompany the older musicians who seemed so talented and cool. Even as I grew up and continued

to study music, both formally and informally, I remained steadfast in my commitment to being the best sideman possible. The idea of leading a band, or even composing my own work, never crossed my mind until I was nearly 30—long after I had put in my 10,000 hours.

Over the years, I've encountered many other drummers who share my experience. While there is an established and undeniable tradition of powerhouse drummers who changed the game as bandleaders such as Elvin Jones, Art Blakey and Roy Haynes, most people are still conditioned to see drummers in the supporting role. It requires intentionality, passion and a few disruptive forces to

shift the drummer's path from the side to the center of the stage. And no matter how seamless or fraught that journey is, it tends to include a few key milestones: accepting that you actually have a sound worth hearing, cultivating that sound into a distinctive voice and learning how to communicate that voice to and through other musicians—while still honoring the drummer's role as a supportive player on the bandstand.

ENVISIONING LEADERSHIP

My journey started in the practice room. I've always been most comfortable sitting behind the drums. On the throne, confidence came from the ability to execute my rudiments and being prepared for anything that might come my way on the stage or in the studio. And prepared I was—at least that's what I thought.

Then, during my freshman year at The New School, I started taking lessons with pianist Jason Moran. I'd known my fellow Houstonian for some time, and opted to study with him because I always respected the fearless spontaneity at the center of his distinctive musical personality. I knew that he would challenge me, but I thought I knew what to expect. And then, as I was setting up my cymbals before our lesson, he said, "Imagine your drums are set up center stage at Carnegie Hall for a solo performance. The place is packed and silently awaiting your first note. I'll give you half a minute to think about what you are going to play. Now go!"

To be honest, I don't remember if or how I found my way through that exercise. I do know that it was the first time I ever truly envisioned myself in a formal leadership role on the bandstand. It was the first time I was put in a position where an audience (fictitious as they were) depended on me to assert my point of view. And in response to that prompt, I began the slow process of becoming comfortable with my own sound, embracing the mix of confidence and vulnerability required to actually listen back and assess my development.

So, there I was, nearly 15 years after I started seriously studying music, and just beginning to accept that I had something to say. The next challenge was figuring out what that something was. I was starting to become a composer.

I have found as more drummers transition into bandleaders, the role of composition can emerge as an important way to develop a group sound. Composing can bring unique challenges for drummers. When we write for other instruments, we have to develop a new musical identity—one that fully takes into consideration rhythm and its convergence with melody and har-

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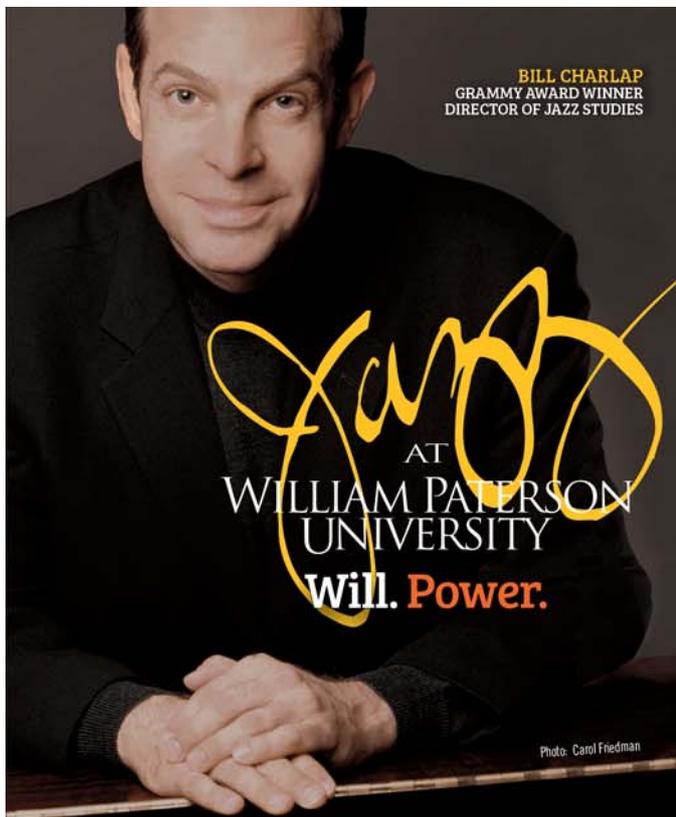
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mony. It was particularly daunting for me, given my love-hate relationship with the piano. Well, I actually love the piano; it's my limited finger dexterity that I hated. I physically couldn't produce the sounds I was hearing in my head. To make matters worse, I was now in graduate school and had given myself the challenge of composing one song each day while enrolled in a rigorous program.

PLAYING MY OWN GAME

The breakthrough came when I started to play my own game. Given the nature of our instrument, drummers are constantly thinking about rhythm and how that relates to song form. I began to investigate this rhythm-first composing technique by playing melodies I knew on the drums; Charlie Parker and Dizzy tunes seemed like the most logical first step. I figured if those worked, why not begin writing my own melodies and going back and filling in the harmony later? Armed with my recording device, I would improvise one-bar phrases. After listening back and editing ideas, I began to transcribe what I heard. I wrote out my strongest ideas, and orchestrated them into the main motives. I then assigned the stick strokes to various pitches. I stretched these ideas over basic song structures like 12-bar, 16-bar and even odd-bar repetitive forms.

This approach produced results that reminded me of the highly influential compositions of Thelonious Monk, who was a master of combining easy, singable musical motives with inventive rhythmic techniques. His writing showed how rhythms and melodies could be inverted, displaced, stretched and condensed in unique ways. I dis-

After dedicating my career to helping other artists bring their vision to life, I found that providing others with the right mix of guidance and autonomy came easier when I assumed the leadership role.

covered drummers have a unique approach to harmony because we often have to rely on what sounds good to us, as opposed to it following conventional rules on how things typically resolve. I basically broke a bunch of rules and learned how to get comfortable with the quirks that make my compositions unique to me. As I learned to trust my process, my sound turned into a distinctive voice that reflected my point of view.

COMMUNICATING MY VISION

Learning how to communicate my vision to, and through, other talented musicians has been an energizing experience. After dedicating my career to helping other artists bring their visions to life, I found providing others with the right mix of guidance and autonomy came much easier when I assumed the leadership role. I've always admired bandleaders who trust and recognize each player's individual strengths. I draw inspiration from these role models each time I venture into the studio or onto the stage as a bandleader.

On my most recent album, *Words To Love* (Redefinition Music), when thinking about the overall sound, the first musician who came to mind was the great bassist Ben Wolfe. I've always been impressed

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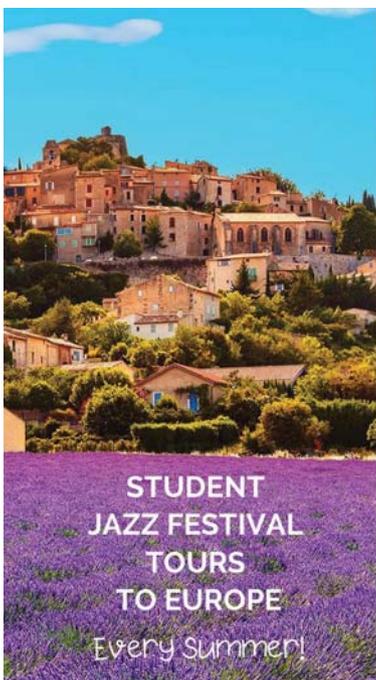
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by his clarity of tone and thoughtful bass lines. I was stepping out of my comfort zone by combining several vocalists with my original lyrics and compositions. Ben had spent a significant part of his career accompanying vocalists like Dianna Krall and Harry Connick Jr., and I wanted to tap into this aspect of his experience. His approach, insight and creative openness proved to be invaluable in the recording process. Having him agree to the project put me at ease.

After we talked, I shared my vision of having a group of musicians that listened, possessed a subtle intensity in their playing and could also approach several styles. His immediate reaction was to recommend our mutual friend, pianist Orrin Evans. My music personally benefited from their synergy and rapport, which dates back more than 20 years. Ultimately, communicating my voice is about conveying a vision, establishing very few non-negotiables and then giving the cats whatever support they need to bring that vision to life. It's about setting them up for success.

LEVERAGING PERSPECTIVE

So, what's changed? How has my role as a drummer shifted with my transition from sideman to bandleader? It actually hasn't shifted very much at all.

My perspective as an artist always will be grounded in the insight gained from behind the drums. Playing the supportive role is core to who I am, and it's what I enjoy most about playing this music. I've just become more comfortable leveraging that perspective to shape my approach in the leadership role. And because nothing is new under the sun, reflecting on my own journey has enabled me to see parallel processes among many of the drum bandleaders I admire from the past and present.

Our role in the group still centers on facilitating the success of others. And yet, I suspect that we all share a spark of curiosity that challenges us to embark on a long path of self-discovery. The value of the outputs (gigs, set lists, albums, etc.) pale in comparison to the intrinsic value of overcoming self-doubt, celebrating the creative process and documenting your growth. **DB**

Drummer/composer Reggie Quinerly is a graduate of the Mannes School of Music at New School University, where he studied with Jimmy Cobb, Lewis Nash and Kenny Washington. He earned his master's degree in jazz studies at The Juilliard School. Quinerly has played with such leading artists as Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Joe Lovano, Greg Osby, and Chico and Von Freeman. He has collaborated with the next wave of musical leaders, such as Tim Warfield, Christian Sands, Orrin Evans and Melanie Charles. In 2017, Quinerly joined the Juilliard faculty, and last summer he joined the faculty at Hunter College, one of the constituent colleges of the City University of New York. Quinerly's 2018 recording *Words To Love* (Redefinition Music) is an emotionally inspired program of original music and lyrics. Visit him online at reggiequinerly.com.

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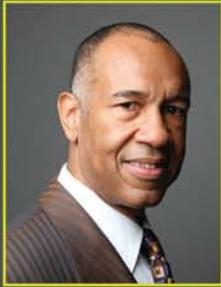
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How Competitions & Grants Help To Boost Jazz Musicians' Careers

By Phillip Lutz

About a half hour into the premiere of *Zero Grasses*, Jen Shyu's autobiographical one-woman show presented Oct. 30 at National Sawdust in Brooklyn, a video clip of her as an improbably confident piano wunderkind was projected above the stage. In it, she was playing Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* with the Peoria Symphony Orchestra before some 2,000 screaming schoolchildren.

The Tchaikovsky engagement was part of the prize for her win in the symphony's 1991 young artists' competition—just one of several competition victories the 13-year-old Illinois native had already notched—and she made the most of it, slashing her way through the challenging piece. But in *Zero Grasses*, the clip was not meant to dazzle the Brooklyn audience; rather, it was intended to serve as a backdrop against which she could illustrate the distance she had come from ambitious classical prodigy to acclaimed multidisciplinary artist.

These days, Shyu, an idiosyncratic improviser with a deep pool of institutional sup-

port—*Zero Grasses* was underwritten by the John Zorn Commissioning Series and incorporates material nurtured with funding from a Doris Duke Artists Award—is no longer taking part in competitions. Still, they were an invaluable step in her development as a singer, dancer, composer and instrumentalist.

"What I learned from the hours of practicing, the pressure of being onstage and learning how to relax, all of that's totally relevant today," she said.

Competitions have boosted the fortunes of many leading artists on today's jazz scene. Pianist Dan Tepfer—known for his improvisatory take on Bach's "Goldberg Variations," artful duos with veteran saxophonist Lee Konitz and mind-expanding albums marrying the mathematical and the musical—credits competitions with furthering his career. Yet he didn't consider entering one until a friend from the Paris Conservatory suggested he try out for the Martial Solal International Jazz Piano Competition in the City of Lights.

"I've always been a competitive kind of

guy," he said, "even though I don't think about music that way. Music is not about competition; it's about self-expression. But the idea of having an outlet, a deadline, an opportunity to show what I could do in front of people was exciting for me as a 20-year-old in 2002."

That year, the Solal competition attracted about 65 pianists from America to Armenia. Though Tepfer didn't make it past the semifinals, it helped him prepare for future competitions. In 2006, he won the East Coast Jazz Festival Competition as well as the Montreux Jazz Festival Solo Piano Competition, which netted him \$3,000 and 12,000 euros, respectively. And in 2007, he won the American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Fellowship, for which he received \$20,000.

"These things were a huge help to me at the time, in terms of being able to relax a tiny bit and actually spend more time practicing and less time doing things like teaching French classes or accompanying ballet classes," he said. "When you're young, especially nowadays, there just aren't that many opportunities



MARK SHELDON

Emmet Cohen, winner of the 2019 American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Fellowship



MARY KANG

Jen Shyu premieres *Zero Grasses* in New York on Oct. 30.



Ted Rosenthal, winner of the 1988 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition

to get up on a big stage. We really need that, to be confronted with success or failure.”

Through the APA, Tepfer built connections with like-minded pianists, including Aaron Diehl, who ended up winning the organization’s next jazz competition, in 2011. There, Tepfer took a turn in a noncompetitive performance. Eventually, he had a role in luring Diehl to live in his section of Brooklyn.

When Diehl won, he was four years out of The Juilliard School. Gigging when opportunities arose and developing what would become a sublimely refined trio on its own and in collaboration with singer Cécile McLorin Salvant, he said the prospect of the competition “set a goal for me.” It also prompted self-reflection: “I said, ‘OK, my goal isn’t so much “winning.” Maybe it’s an opportunity to represent myself musically, what I want to say, finding approaches that I want to explore and sharing this experience that lasts over several months.”

About 40 nominees, American citizens between 18 and 30, are chosen by music-school

deans, jazz pianists, presenters, foundation officials and professionals in artist management, according to Joel Harrison, the APA president, CEO and artistic director: “We ask, ‘Who do you feel is a great candidate for this kind of career assistance? Who’s worthy of the award and who needs a boost in his or her career?’”

Based initially on a résumé and 60 minutes of music, the list of candidates is whittled down in stages, until it reaches five finalists, each of whom receives \$20,000. During the next year, they play sets at Indianapolis’ Jazz Kitchen and other concerts, including a finale in a downtown theater, where they accompany a celebrated singer and debut works for jazz piano and orchestra that APA has arranged for them.

At all stages in the process, Harrison said, the candidates are judged on technical command of the instrument, understanding of the jazz genre and evidence of “unique musical qualities that can reach out over the footlights to touch the audience.” The judges include academics, famous pianists, agency professionals and a representative of Mack Avenue Records,

which provides a contract to the winner, who also receives \$50,000, plus payment for a position as artist-in-residence at the University of Indianapolis. Public relations services are part of the package, as is an additional \$25,000 in career assistance disbursed as needed.

More recent Cole Porter Fellowship winners include Sullivan Fortner (2015) and Emmet Cohen (2019).

“If your goal is to move people into the professional realm,” Harrison said, “what better way is there to do it than by setting up all these professional opportunities as part of the competition?”

For Diehl, who drew on his assistance for emergency hotel bills and worked a deal for his first Steinway, the APA ties go beyond the financial. When he needs lodging in Indianapolis, he can stay with the family that hosted him during the competition.

“Receiving a fellowship is the icing on the cake,” he said. “But it is not really about receiving the award. It’s about an entire community involved in the experience.”

Community is also central to the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. It was created in 2012 by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center “to focus on the history of Newark as it is related to jazz,” said Dave Rodriguez, executive producer and artistic director of NJPAC. The competition honors Newark native Vaughan (1924–’90) and her cohort in more than name.

“We’re looking for a signature voice—a voice that, when you hear a recording, in the first few notes you know who that person is,” Rodriguez said. “But we’re also looking for that discipline you have as a jazz artist—people like Sarah and Betty Carter, true students of the music. They know the history, the heritage, the chord changes they’re singing around.”

Open to singers of any age or place of residence, the competition receives up to 2,000 applicants from all 50 states and, in growing numbers, foreign countries. All are seeking the winner’s prize of \$5,000 and an appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival, though “it’s really been a stepping-off point for vocalists,” Rodriguez said. The organizers have booked winners at the Montreal Jazz Festival and connected them with the Concord label.

Christian McBride, NJPAC’s adviser for jazz programs and a four-time judge, cautioned that “the concept of competition should not be taken literally. What it does is get peo-

ple excited. People show up. It creates a buzz.” He added, “You can hear when someone’s a little more developed, is a little more at ease in telling their story. I remember when Jazzmeia Horn won the Sarah Vaughan vocal competition [in 2013]. At some point everyone turns around and looks at each other and goes, ‘Uh-huh, that’s her.’”

Horn, in an email, cited Vaughan as the first singer she was deeply interested in: “I developed my sound as a singer by practicing all of her phrasing and diction, as well as tones. She is special for me because as a woman with a deeper voice I felt shy about it and hid my natural voice for a while until I heard her sing. She encouraged me to embrace my speaking voice, as well as my sassy singing voice.”

The Vaughan competition, she continued, “opened up a window of opportunities as the whole jazz community was talking about my dynamic presence on the scene in New York City.” She added: “Once I won the Thelonious Monk Competition [in 2015], I was set because the momentum from the S.V. Competition was already there and this added to it.”

Horn found that her everyday activities as a student at The New School—preparing charts and practicing stage skills, intonation and bebop harmony—dovetailed with the competitions’ demands. “I was already doing this exact thing in school and on the scene, but

I went even harder for both of these competitions because I wanted to win.”

Expanding on that thought, pianist Ted Rosenthal, winner of the 1988 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition and a longtime teacher at Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music, said: “Students most typically become more interested in competitions after they graduate, but the juries, recitals and the like that require preparation serve them well in competitions.”

For more than three decades, the Monk competition, as it was commonly known, played a pivotal role in identifying and empowering the next generation of jazz musicians. Building on that legacy, the newly minted Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz International Competition represents a changing of the guard for one of jazz’s most important institutions. The inaugural edition, which focuses on guitar, will take place Dec. 2–3 in Washington, D.C.

Rosenthal noted that the Monk competition helped him gain bookings and raise his profile generally—a universal goal of would-be competitors. “Students are definitely thinking about getting to the next level in their career, and competitions are one way of making that happen,” he said.

Getting to the next level means overcoming inertia, and that holds for seeking financial support, said Shyu, who has won grants



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from more than a dozen major organizations, ranging from the Guggenheim Foundation to the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission. In her workshops, she said, “I always tell my students, ‘It just takes five minutes to dip your foot into something or go to a place. You’ll find something.’”

Working the system implies understanding it, from the inside if possible. After graduating from Stanford University, Shyu took pertinent day jobs, as assistant producer at the experimental theater and as an assistant grant writer at a new-music festival, while at night she chased jazz gigs in a sequin dress (which appears in *Zero Grasses*, an echo of another persona that, like that of the classical virtuoso, she outgrew).

“I was finding out about foundations and understanding what a grant was, what a work sample was,” she explained.

She learned to be resourceful. When her first application for a highly competitive grant from the Asian Culture Council was rejected—she wanted to study indigenous music in Taiwan—she borrowed the money and went anyway. Once there, she found that she needed less money than she had expected and, on reapplying, asked for less—and got the grant. “That was a huge deal,” she said.

As competition for support grows, developing creative strategies is critical, said guitarist and bandleader Joel Harrison, who boasts multiple grants from big organizations. (He is not related to APA’s Joel Harrison.) “At one point there was a thriving ecosystem of performance opportunities in jazz, and as that has diminished, other ways of making money have arisen, but not nearly enough,” he said.

Harrison’s success with traditional funders includes five grants from Chamber Music America, whose New Jazz Works program alone has, as of 2019, awarded 236 commissions since 2000 for works by ensembles led by U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Among the requirements: The works must be for groups of two to 10 pieces and include improvisation as a central element.

To what does Harrison owe his appeal to CMA? His title for a septet piece that won a grant in 2009, “Singularity,” offers a clue. “They’re looking for something different,” he said.

Harrison has been notably proactive. He has formed a nonprofit, Lifeorce Arts Inc., to commission works. And he solicits on his website, writing: “The greatest gift anyone can give a composer is the chance to write a new piece!” His suggestions range from “a piece for a special occasion” (e.g., a solo violin piece for a wedding anniversary) to “a work that crosses disparate cultures” (e.g., India and jazz, Appalachia and Cuba, Renaissance Choral with Africa).

Harrison also has sought out innovative funders. In 2019, he won a \$15,000 grant from the nonprofit South Arts’ Jazz Roads program. He will use the funding in September and October of 2020 to bring his *Free Country* project to six venues in six Southern states. Harrison is but one of 31 artists awarded a total of \$360,000 in the first round of the program, an elaborate attempt to bring jazz to underserved parts of the country while offering financial security for the musicians.

“We want to try to get something that’s a little more stable, a little more planned, and something a little more where artists are given

money in advance, so they can control the experience,” said Sara Donnelly, director, jazz for South Arts.

Maintaining control, Shyu said, is facilitated by creating momentum amid an ever-shifting funding landscape. “After you get the first one,” she said of grants, “the second one is easier to get and it just builds exponentially.” She found that her initial Taiwan research led to a succession of awards that took her all over Asia, where she discovered a voice—one of the many she synthesized in *Zero Grasses*.

“I’m always evolving,” she said.

DB



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Sonny Rollins

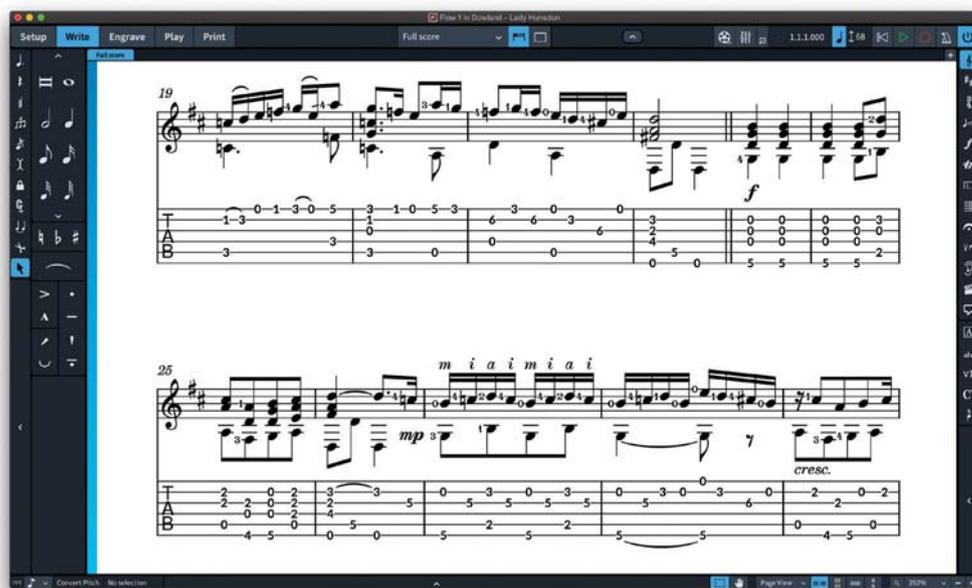
Sonny Rollins' Tenor Saxophone Solo on 'Solid'

It's been 65 years since Sonny Rollins recorded his blues "Solid," released on the 1956 LP *Moving Out* (Prestige), but his playing is so idiosyncratically personal that it still stands up against anything that's been put out since. He was about 24 years old at the time of these 1954 recording sessions, and his raspy tone is already fully developed. His solo also includes bebop-inspired improvisational devices that would become core elements of the tenor saxophone icon's signature style.

There's his tendency to clip the ends of his

phrases, something we associate not just with Rollins but with bebop in general. But he doesn't overdo it. There are numerous instances of Rollins ending on a long tone (such as bars 8, 18, 22, 24, 27, 35, 39, 58 and 61). Although in many of these, the ending notes are only as long as a quarter note, that's sufficient to create a contrast with the staccato-like endings of the other phrases.

There's also the double-timing, another bebop staple. While much of his five-chorus solo is eighth-note-based, Rollins does go



Steinberg Dorico Pro 3 *Automatic Score Condensing, Faster Workflow*

Almost on cue, Dorico, the music-notation and scoring program from Steinberg, turned 3 years old as version 3 of the software was released this fall. Each major release since the product's introduction in 2016 has made major leaps and bounds in terms of features, efficiency and overall user-friendliness, and Dorico 3 is no different. The new software is available in two iterations: the full-featured Dorico Pro 3 and the entry-level Dorico Elements 3. For this evaluation, we focused on the Dorico Pro 3 specifically. There are dozens of improvements across the application, spanning playback, engraving, note input, workflow and multiple refinements to the user interface.

One especially significant new feature of Dorico Pro 3 is automatic score condensing: taking many individual parts and combining similar instruments into the smallest number of staves possible. Most often, these are solo instruments that are adjacent in the score.

For example, if there are two individual flute parts playing a unison line, when condensed, the score will be marked with one set of notation along with "a2" to signify that both instruments are to play the line. If the parts are homophonic playing in rhythmic unison, both parts would be written into the score and the stems adjusted accordingly. If the two parts are playing different rhythms, Dorico still will condense the part into a single staff and make its best determination on how to display the two different rhythms. If voices cross each other minimally, auto condensing is still possible, but the more drastic the voice-crossing, the less likely Dorico will be able to make an automatic condensing of the phrase. As of now, section players cannot condense (meaning you cannot join Violin 1 and Violin 2 onto a single staff). While there are advanced settings to deal with other, more complicated condensing situations, this seems like one of those cornerstone features that Dorico will be focusing more effort on in future releases.

One of my favorite new features of Dorico Pro 3 is multi-staff note entry. With the note-input function enabled, you can now extend the enter-note caret to multiple adjacent staves by hitting "shift" and using the up/down arrows. Now, when you enter a note, it will be entered in all staves for which the caret is enabled. This is perfect for tutti sections or, possibly,

when you want to enter common rhythms and articulations among staves and then take a second pass to work out each individual harmony.

But Dorico 3's true power comes when you combine the new extended-entry feature with the existing "explode" feature that was added in Dorico 2. For example, you now can enter, on the fly, a full SATB progression across four staves simply by playing the chords from your MIDI keyboard. Obviously, the speed of entry will be partially determined by how familiar you are with Dorico's rhythm and articulation quick-keys, but I find that even when I haven't used the program in a while, that is one of the easier techniques to recall when starting a new piece of music.

This on-the-fly multi-staff "explode" feature also works with the piano grand staff by assigning notes based off of the split point.

Other big additions include guitar notation and more chord diagram options for fretted instruments. The new guitar notation now comes complete with tablature, chord diagrams, idiomatic notations such as bends, and advanced options for classical guitar such as right- and left-handed fingerings and string indicators.

You now have the ability to display chord diagrams for a number of different tunings or for non-standard fretted instruments—for example, standard alto balalaika tuning. There is support for dozens of tunings and instruments, and you can also customize the chord diagrams if the presets are not suiting your needs.

Dorico now ships with Olympus Choir Micro from Soundiron, which is a light version of Soundiron's Olympus Choir library. Choirs are one of Soundiron's most highly praised product lines, so having this included on top of all the other updates really makes this an exceptional update.

Also, for playback, you now have custom playback templates and also advanced options for editing MIDI data.

No matter what style of music you are writing for, if you rely on notation software, there is surely something in Dorico Pro 3 that will speed up your workflow and ultimately make your scores and parts easier for musicians to sightread and interpret.

—Matt Kern

steinberg.net

Zoom A1 FOUR/A1X FOUR Multi-Effects

Optimized for Acoustic Strings, Horns, Harmonica

The most important thing to know about the A1 FOUR and A1X FOUR from Zoom is that many of their onboard multi-effects patches are designed specifically for saxophone, trumpet, violin, acoustic guitar, upright bass and harmonica players. These pedals look like stomp boxes for electric guitar (they closely resemble the Zoom G1/G1X Four), but on the inside they're engineered to process the unique audio signals generated by acoustic string and wind instruments in live performance environments. In this regard, they are truly original innovations.

The wah effects for saxophone and trumpet are re-voiced in the A1/A1X FOUR by adding a low-pass filter to control the processed frequency response of the instruments. This allows the player to hit the peak frequency points while still blowing naturally into the horn, without losing any expected sonic response of attack and release. In short, you don't have to change the way you play to get the desired effect to work right.

The A1/A1X4 has plenty to offer string players as well. For example, the A1/A1X FOUR's distortion patch for violin shifts the clipping one octave higher, boosts the high frequencies and reduces the lows to allow for plenty of effect without losing the bowing attack. This creates a more balanced saturation that suits the instrument's subtle sonic characteristics and allows maximum expressivity.

What differentiates the A1X FOUR (pictured) from the A1 FOUR

(each retails for less than \$150) is an added expression pedal that can be used to adjust volume, pitch, reverb, delay and wah. The Zoom MAA-1 mic adapter is included with both models and provides an easy way to connect your microphone or pickup to the A1/A1X FOUR. The MAA-1 works with dynamic microphones and provides phantom power for condenser mics via two AA batteries.

I played saxophone, acoustic guitar and harmonica through the A1/A1X FOUR using a standard Shure SM57 mic.

To my ear, some of the more appealing presets included Sax San-B, a David Sanborn-like doubling effect; Sax MyLady, which includes an octaver; Hm Juke, an amplified harmonica sound inspired by Little Walter; Hm StevieW, a heavy chromatic-harp sound; AG D-28, which turned my beat-up old acoustic guitar into a classic Martin D-28; and AG Aerial, a highly transparent chorus. And that's just scratching the surface, considering the multitude of high-quality effects that can be combined and tweaked to suit a wide range of acoustic instruments.

The A1/A1X FOUR offers a looper, a tuner, anti-feedback function, built-in rhythm patterns and memory locations for storing user-created patches. Users can download Zoom's Guitar Lab software to access dozens of additional effects through a computer or mobile device. —Ed Enright

zoom-na.com



Korg B2 Series Digital Pianos

Authentic Sounds, Realistic Action, Modern Connectivity

Korg has refined its digital piano offerings once again with the introduction of the B2 series, which includes models B2, B2N and B2SP. These three instruments feature a straightforward selection of 12 smartly curated piano and keyboard sounds, distraction-free designs and updated in/out connectivity for use with a variety of computer software and music hardware.

Like the B1 digital piano, which Korg launched in 2017, the new B2 and B2SP feature Korg's Natural Hammer weighted piano action, which responds to the player's touch just like a real grand piano—the low register is heavier and the high register is lighter. As an alternative, the B2N's key bed is lighter in action, suitable for players who prefer an overall lighter touch and place a premium on portability.

All three models in the B2 series provide five pristine piano sounds derived from meticulous sampling and a new piano engine that reproduces the sympathetic string vibrations and damper resonances of various classic, concert-quality pianos. They include German Concert Piano, Classic Piano, Italian Concert Piano, Jazz Piano and Ballad Piano, each with its own unique character and sonic signature. Other sounds include three distinctive electric pianos (classic Rhodes, Wurlitzer and DX7), pipe organ, tonewheel organ, harpsichord and orchestral strings. Each of the 12 onboard sounds offer enormous tonal range and striking detail.

Advanced features like touch adjustment (Lighter, Normal, Heavier), transposition, reverb and chorus effects, metronome, pitch fine-tuning, MIDI control and auto power-off are easy to access using simple combinations of piano keys and three control buttons on the user interface—which is about as uncomplicated as you can get.

The B2 series pianos connect to smartphones, tablets and computers via USB MIDI and Audio cable, making it possible for them to function

as a MIDI controller and play sounds from external modules and sound libraries. Performance can be recorded as music data on a smartphone, and audio from a smartphone can be played through the instrument's built-in stereo speakers.

Korg's mobile sound module app for iOS, Module LE, is part of the bundle, providing access to a more extensive library of acoustic pianos and electric keyboards for use in live performance and music production.

A single sustain pedal comes with the B2 and B2N models, and the B2SP includes a three-pedal system plus a solidly built stand. Each model has a removable music rest that's wide enough to accommodate multiple pages of music and sturdy enough to support a smartphone or tablet. The B2N (MSRP: \$399.99) is available in black, and the B2 (\$499.99) and B2SP (\$599.99) both are available in black or white versions. —Ed Enright

korg.com



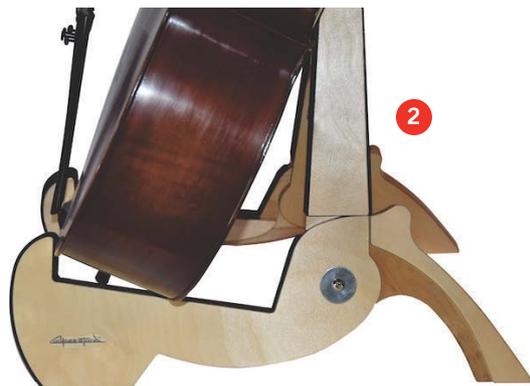
1. Surfaces Sized

ATV has introduced the EXS-5 electronic drum kit, which features drum and cymbal pads with playing surfaces similar in size to those of a typical acoustic drum set. The combination of two rack toms, one floor tom, snare, hi-hat, crash cymbals and ride cymbals helps to realize a comfortable and natural-feeling performance experience. **More info:** atvcorporation.com



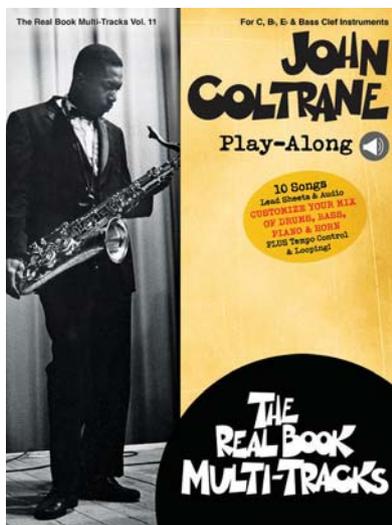
2. Uprighting Uprights

Cooperstand's Pro-CB stand is available in high-strength, multilamination birch for cello and upright bass. The stand is a secure, contoured, handcrafted enhancement to the instrument that sits upon it. The Pro-CB weighs 3 pounds, accommodates a variety of larger string instruments and features a four-footed base. **More info:** cooperstand.com



3. Coltrane Play-Along

John Coltrane Play-Along, Volume 11 of *The Real Book Multi-Tracks* series from Hal Leonard, presents lead sheets and professionally recorded audio tracks for 10 songs: "Blue Train," "Central Park West," "Cousin Mary," "Giant Steps," "Impressions," "Lazy Bird," "Moment's Notice," "My Favorite Things," "Naima" and "Syeeda's Song Flute." The interactive online audio interface includes tempo control, looping, instrument muting, a follow-along marker and song melodies performed on saxophone or trumpet on the "head in" and "head out." The full stereo tracks also can be downloaded and played off-line. Separate lead sheets are included for C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef instruments. **More info:** halleonard.com



4. Accelerated Production

From recording and editing tracks to mixing and monitoring in stereo or surround, Avid's S1 eight-fader control surface provides the comprehensive control and visual feedback to accelerate any music production workflow. The S1 offers integration with Pro Tools and Media Composer, plus native support for third-party applications such as Logic Pro, Cubase, Adobe Premiere Pro and more. **More info:** avid.com



5. Wider Sweet Spot

Eris E8 XT active studio monitors from PreSonus have large enclosures that produce an extended low-frequency response. The E8 XT's custom elliptical wavelength design provides high-frequency response with a broad 100-degree horizontal dispersion, resulting in a wider sweet spot. In addition, 60-degree vertical dispersion minimizes early reflections, helping to eliminate one of the most common sources of environmental interference, creating a more consistent response both on-axis and off-axis. **More info:** preonus.com



6. Stomp Synth

The SY-1 Synthesizer pedal from Boss features a polyphonic engine that delivers 121 responsive synth sounds, including leads, pads, organs and basses, plus a variety of sound effects and rhythmic synth patterns. Tone/rate and depth knobs on the SY-1 provide quick adjustment of synth voices. **More info:** boss.info



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Director of Jazz Studies Steve Roach conducts the 1:30 PM Jazz Ensemble during a concert at California State University, Sacramento.

BRUCE CLARKE, SACRAMENTO STATE CREATIVE SERVICES

At Sacramento State, Contrasts Shape Program

SACRAMENTO LONG HAS BEEN REGARD-ed as one of America's most diverse cities, and that spirit of heterogeneity is a strong characteristic of the jazz program at California State University, Sacramento (colloquially known as Sacramento State), according to Gaw Vang Williams, director of vocal jazz ensembles. "Not only is there a lot of socioeconomic diversity," Williams said, "but that translates into a lot of diversity in terms of musical experience."

Those types of differences are among the things Williams and program director Steve Roach look for when they set out to find new entrants to the undergraduate program.

"I look for enthusiasm and a willingness to try new things," Williams said. "For vocalists, regardless of whether they have a background in jazz or not, I'll ask them to improvise and scat, just to see what they do."

"The really serious ones are our dream students," Roach said. "A solid grasp of jazz language is important, but I want to find clearly defined passion. My final question to them is often, 'Why do you want to major in this?'"

The program, traditionally focused on jazz performance, is now evolving to include a specialization in jazz pedagogy. "We see ourselves as having a responsibility to influence the next generation," Williams said. "We want to ensure that tomorrow's music education professionals represent jazz, pop and other forms of contemporary music."

In addition to expanding the curriculum to include the kind of practical business-of-music courses that are spreading throughout jazz

programs nationwide, Roach is committed to exposing his students to a broad range of modern approaches to making music and reaching audiences. In that regard, it's no surprise to learn that Roach, a trumpeter, has invited Dave Douglas to interact with students twice in recent years. Douglas' DIY outlook is exactly the kind of thing that Roach hopes to pass on.

"We're very serious about nurturing and mentoring our students," Roach said. "Whoever you are in music today, you can't just rest on your talent. We encourage our graduates to go on and find where they can fit, regardless of whether or not they come into our program thinking they'll have a career as a performer."

Roach pointed to Sacramento State jazz graduates currently working as producers in Sweden, Germany and Los Angeles as examples that the approach is succeeding.

Part of teaching young musicians to think as broadly as possible includes some very basic activities. For the 20 students in Roach's vocal class, that means mandatory choir, while for instrumental students it means participating in the school's marching band, which Williams—who majored in percussion—remembers as one of the highlights of her time as a student at Sacramento State.

"Even if they do make a career as a performing musician, the reality is that graduates will likely find themselves playing in a pit ensemble or a studio band," Williams said. "As students, they need to play in as many ways as possible, network like crazy and learn to arrange their own music and lead a band." —James Hale



Wynton Marsalis

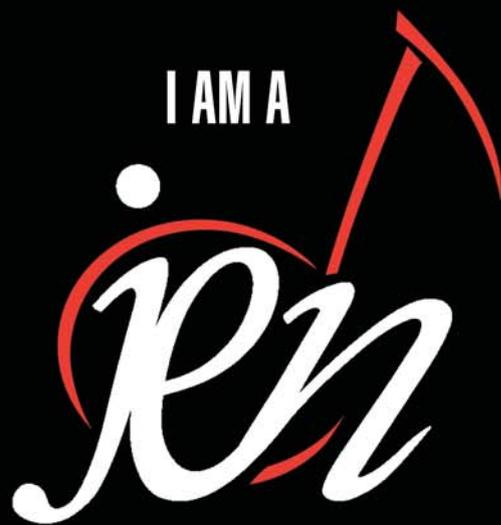
PIPER FERGUSON

Jazz Champs: Jazz at Lincoln Center's inaugural Jack Rudin Jazz Championship takes place Jan. 18–19 at Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York, where 10 prestigious university and college jazz programs will participate in rehearsals, workshops and competition events. The finals will feature performances by the three top-placing bands, followed by an awards ceremony. The competition honors the legacy of New York City real estate developer Jack Rudin (1924–2016), a longtime supporter of Jazz at Lincoln Center. "He was the first supporter for our Essentially Ellington Competition & Festival, which is now in its 25th year," said Wynton Marsalis, managing and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center. "We are proud to name this new collegiate competition for him." jazz.org

Furthering Gender Equity: The Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice has received a \$3-million donation to create the Terri Lyne Carrington Endowed Artistic Directorship in honor of its founder and artistic director. The institute celebrates the contributions women have made to the development of the art form. berklee.edu

Reciprocal Programs: To broaden the reach of its education programs, the Monterey Jazz Festival has announced a partnership with Texas Southern University in Houston. Student members of the recently formed MJF @ Houston All-Star Ensemble will have the opportunity to perform at MJF's Next Generation Jazz Festival (April 3–5) and the Monterey Jazz Festival (Sept. 25–27). montereyjazzfestival.org; tsu.edu

Morgenstern Fellowship: The Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University has appointed former DownBeat Editor Dan Morgenstern, 90, as executive director emeritus and announced a new fellowship in his honor. The first group of fellows includes vibraphonist Stefon Harris, author and jazz radio/TV personality Sheila Anderson and tenor saxophonist/educator Loren Schoenberg. An acclaimed historian, writer and educator, Morgenstern served as director of IJS for 36 years, from 1976 to 2012. rutgers.edu



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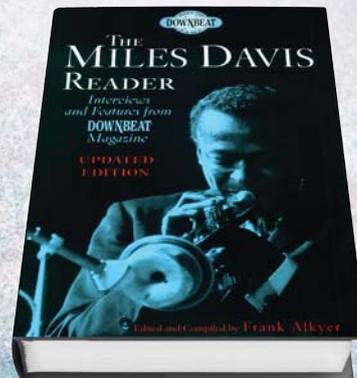
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Miles Okazaki

The most recent entry in Miles Okazaki's discography is *The Sky Below* (Pi), a recital of the 44-year-old, New York-based guitarist's rhythmically complex original compositions performed in a quartet with pianist/keyboardist Matt Mitchell, electric bassist Anthony Tidd and drummer Sean Rickman. The album serves as a follow-up to Okazaki's 2017 release, *Trickster* (Pi). On *Work*, a self-released, six-CD extravaganza from 2018, Okazaki interprets the complete canon of Thelonious Monk on solo guitar—a Gibson Charlie Christian archtop played through a Fender Twin Reverb amplifier, without effects or overdubs. This was his first Blindfold Test.

Tom Guarna

"Hope" (*The Wishing Stones*, Destiny, 2017) Guarna, guitar; Jon Cowherd, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

Someone influenced by Kurt Rosenwinkel. The tone is darker and the time-feel is more grid-like than what Kurt usually would play. The tone and some of the language—a lot of pentatonics in that last part—make me think it's the generation after Kurt. Not the type of record I usually listen to, but it's technically very strong. The most distinctive accompanist for me is the bassist, who plays aggressively and confidently—I'm thinking of people like Eric Revis, Matt Brewer or Linda Oh. For the guitarist, I'd guess Matt Stevens or maybe Gilad Hekselman, though this is more restrained than what Gilad usually plays.

Thumbscrew

"Thumbprint" (*Ours*, Cuneiform, 2018) Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.

Mary Halvorson. That's Thumbscrew with Tomas and Formanek. I've recently worked with Mary quite a bit, so I know how she sounds. Her compositions also have a recognizable style. There's her tone: the way she mics the guitar; her touch, which has an acoustic quality; and she characteristically uses open strings. She found an instantly recognizable thing. I love her commitment.

Russell Malone

"Time For The Dancers" (*Time For The Dancers*, High Note, 2017) Malone, guitar; Rick Germanson, piano; Luke Sellick, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

For a moment I thought about "Poinciana," then it started into a D-flat major thing to B major to the B7, and it sounded like "Moonlight In Vermont" for a minute. But then it wasn't that. The head sounded like something my old teacher, Rodney Jones, would play, but the soloing wasn't him. Maybe someone of that generation. Ed Cherry? It's not quite Benson-ish enough to be Henry Johnson. It's not modern-sounding enough to be Peter Bernstein. It's not the right rhythmic feel to be Bobby Broom. But someone around that area. I like that clean guitar tone, a bit rounded off, still with a sparkle. It isn't complex, but I like it. Someone with a bit of sentimentality to their aesthetic.

Jonathan Kreisberg/Nelson Veras

"Bye-Ya" (*Kreisberg Meets Veras*, New For Now Music, 2018) Kreisberg, electric guitar; Veras, nylon-string acoustic guitar.

For me, the guitar version of "Bye-Ya" is Bill Frisell's on *Monk In Motian*, but these guys both were killing. The only duet of nylon-string and electric I've heard with that much chops is Julian Lage and Gyan Riley, but they don't play that type of material. A lot of fast legato triplets; I'm trying to think who does that. It's difficult to play that articulated single-note stuff with the nylon-string—and he or she wasn't using a pick.



Miles Okazaki

JOHN ROGERS

Gilad Hekselman has those chops. So does Mike Moreno. Or Jonathan Kreisberg. [after] He's a monster. I should have known Nelson. We've played together, and he can execute those single-note lines with just the fingers—and keep the groove going.

David Gilmore

"Over Shadow Hill Way" (*Energies Of Change*, Evolutionary Music, 2015) Gilmore, guitar; Marcus Strickland, soprano saxophone; Luis Perdomo, piano; Ben Williams, bass; Antonio Sánchez, drums.

Holy trills! The tune started up an A dorian scale and down an A-flat phrygian scale. Interesting choice, because it's so simple. It's David Gilmore. I could tell when he did that offbeat thing—something about the articulation, the rhythmic placement of those notes.

That's a Wayne Shorter tune off *Atlantis* or *Phantom Navigator*—one of those records. I look up to David, because although he can play the shit out of the guitar, he's not always up front soloing—he's great at blending and making the groove happen. He elicits a lot of different sounds. There's a lot of space—patience—in his phrasing. I liked the drummer's kinetic, constant, unstoppable groove. The soprano player had a clean sound. Great track.

Julian Lage

"Look Book" (*Modern Lore*, Mack Avenue, 2018) Lage, guitar; Scott Colley, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums.

Someone with some country in their playing. It's a 16-bar tune in B major, a real guitar key. The guitarist sounds older than me, to be playing that type of tune. Parts sound like Bern Nix or someone like that, but it's not him. Those straight triads reminded me of Marc Ribot. It feels like a Danny Gatton type, but he's long gone and there's not enough chops. Maybe a person who normally plays more free and is playing more of a form here. They aren't using a lot of so-called jazz language.

The funny thing about doing this is you realize it's not just critics who pigeonhole musicians. You try to think who might play like that. You never know people well enough to know all the different things they can do. [after] Julian is hard to identify. He can do certain things on guitar that nobody can do; he can shred anyone under the table. But he chooses not to. He'll make you think he's a million different players. Here it seems he was playing real simple on purpose.

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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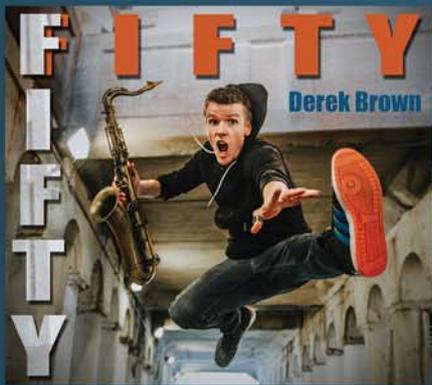
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