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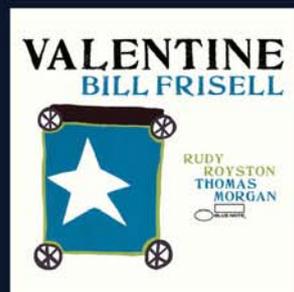
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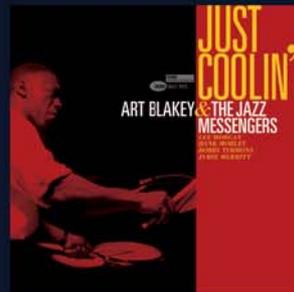
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JANUARY 2021

inside

ON THE COVER

24 Chris Potter *'Room of Mirrors'*

BY DAVE CANTOR

Chris Potter, who topped the Tenor Saxophone category in the 2020 DownBeat Readers Poll, describes the "one-man band" approach he took for his latest Edition album, *There Is A Tide*. Potter plays more than a dozen instruments on the album, which he recorded during the pandemic.



Han Bennink (left), Ruud Jacobs and Sonny Rollins perform at the Persepolis jazz club in Utrecht, The Netherlands, on May 6, 1967.

30

Cover photo of Chris Potter by Bill Douthart

FEATURES

30 Sonny Rollins *When 'Newk' Went Dutch*

BY ED ENRIGHT

35 Best Albums of 2020 *5-, 4½- and 4-star albums from the past year*



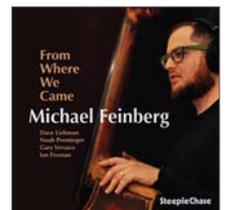
46 Django Bates



49 The Royal Bopsters



50 Tani Tabbal Trio



52 Michael Feinberg

JAZZ SCHOOL

58 Integration of Singing into Jazz Ensembles

By Dominique Eade

62 Start Composing Now

By Dan Wilensky

64 Putting Rhythm First

By Jimi Durso

66 Transcription

Matt Wilson Drum Solo

68 Toolshed

70 Gear Box

DEPARTMENTS

10 First Take

12 Chords & Discords

15 The Beat

43 Reviews

73 Jazz On Campus

74 Blindfold Test

Ryan Keberle



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DAVE STAPLETON

Chris Potter

Solo But Not Alone

MANY MUSICIANS NOWADAYS ARE MAKING A NEW TYPE OF album—one shaped by the isolation necessitated by the spread of COVID-19. Often referred to as quarantine albums, or pandemic albums, these projects were completed during the current era, when the coronavirus has made it next to impossible to safely assemble a group of musicians in a recording studio.

Our cover story focuses on Chris Potter's *There Is A Tide*, a solo album on which he played all the instruments: tenor and soprano saxophones, clarinet, bass clarinet, flute, alto flute, piano, keyboards, electric and acoustic guitars, bass, drums and percussion.

Potter, who is widely revered for his saxophone prowess, told *DownBeat*, "I've always played different instruments and felt that I learned a lot, even about how to approach the saxophone from my use of other instruments ... But getting to where I felt like I could communicate something at the level I wanted to, it took a lot of work—and a very careful use of what my skill set is, and not going beyond it."

Many other musicians have taken creative routes to craft albums during the pandemic. Satoko Fujii (piano), Ikue Mori (laptop) and Natsuki Tamura (trumpet) swapped audio files over the internet to make the avant-garde album *Prickly Pear Cactus*. Pandemic albums also are out from Taylor Swift (*Folklore*), pop singer Charli XCX (*How I'm Feeling Now*) and r&b singer Teyana Taylor (*The Album*).

Jazz titan Fred Hersch has delivered the brilliant, aptly titled, solo piano set *Songs From Home*. Isolated in the Pocono Mountains with a 7-foot Steinway, Hersch performed and recorded 10 tunes. The program includes Joni Mitchell's "All I Want," Duke Ellington's "Solitude" and The Beatles' "When I'm Sixty-Four," as well as two originals.

"This idea came up just to do something—to try to throw a little beauty out into the world," Hersch, 65, told *DownBeat* via Zoom. "People under the age of 40 can't even play a CD; they don't have a [disc] drive; they don't have a stereo. People are listening with headphones. So, I wanted to invite them into my world a little bit, to imagine that they're just hanging out with me. And I'm playing things that mean something to me, not just musically, but lyrically, in terms of the sentiment of those songs."

One quality many of these pandemic albums have in common is a sense of intimacy, a notion of direct, unfiltered communication between artist and listener. During these troubling times, such purity of artistic intent can feed the soul.

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- JOHN PIZZARELLI

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Keith Jarrett
Budapest Concert

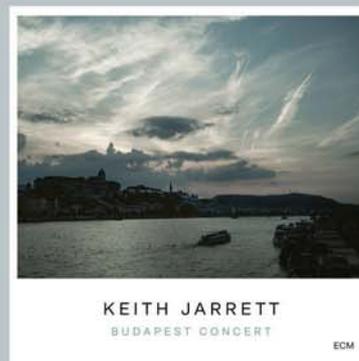
Keith Jarrett: piano

An imaginary suite. Everything for the musical moment – Keith Jarrett's solo concert at Béla Bartók National Concert Hall from 2016.

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- Nate Chinen, New York Times

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Anja Lechner, François Couturier

Lontano

Anja Lechner: violoncello

François Couturier: piano

"German cellist Anja Lechner and French pianist François Couturier, draw from a massive database of internalized European classical traditions. While creating 'Lontano', their influences range from Bach to Anouar Brahem, to Henri Dutilleux. But the material is merely a launching pad for these artists; now approaching two decades performing together, they've codified their own improv language – a gorgeous interplay that many musicians work a lifetime to find."

– Simon Rentner, WBGO

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Dino Saluzzi: bandoneon

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Elina Duni / Rob Luft

Lost Ships

Fred Thomas / Matthieu Michel

Elina Duni: voice

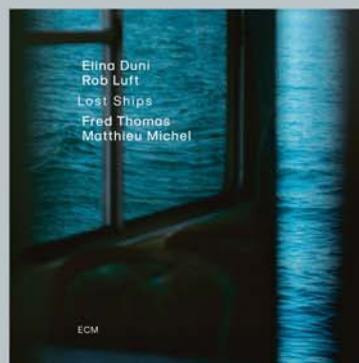
Rob Luft: guitar

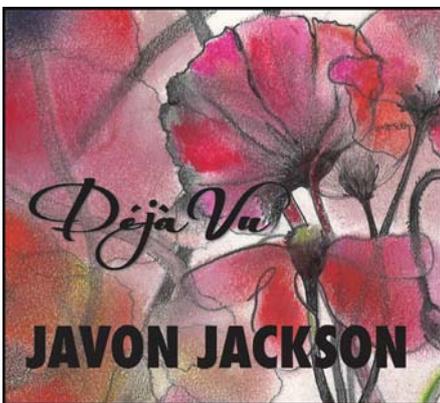
Fred Thomas: piano, drums

Matthieu Michel: flugelhorn

Rooted in Albanian and Mediterranean folklore as well as Jazz and French chanson, Elina Duni's expressive grounded voice and the three instruments fit in a filigree network of sounds.

CD





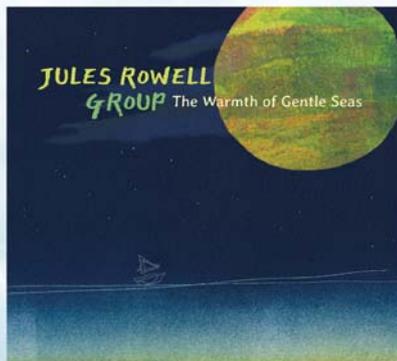
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—Jim Macnie, *DownBeat*

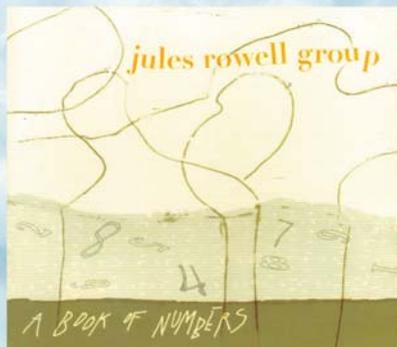
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Gifted Trailblazers

Thank you for the excellent, thoughtful obituary for Gary Peacock in your November issue. He was one of my favorite bass players of the past 50 years, since I first got into jazz. His ability to swing, but to also open tunes up in new and adventurous ways, was unique and continually fascinating.

In the article, I enjoyed reading Jack DeJohnette's comments about his bandmate since 1983 in Keith Jarrett's Standards Trio, but I was pretty disappointed that Jarrett himself wasn't quoted. But then I realized that Jarrett has been dealing with serious health issues, suffering a pair of strokes in 2018, which caused his left side to be partially paralyzed.

If it is possible, please publish a feature on Jarrett. I would like to hear his thoughts about



Drummer Jack DeJohnette (left), bassist Gary Peacock and pianist Keith Jarrett

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Peacock, as well as many of his other collaborators, some of whom have passed, including Paul Motian, Charlie Haden, Dewey Redman and Jon Christensen. I would also like to read about his stories of the past, what his life is like now and what his hopes for the future are.

BOB ZANDER
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

Respectful Salute to Peacock

The tribute to Gary Peacock in your November issue was wonderful. More enlightening was Gene Perla's letter ("Precious Memories of Peacock," Chords & Discords), which gave a personal perspective on the nonperforming aspects of Peacock's life.

JAMES DORSEY
BERWYN HEIGHTS, MARYLAND

Pat Metheny selected Linda for his quartet and has highly praised her bass playing. I first discovered Emmet on Herlin Riley's 2016 album, *New Directions*. I have heard Emmet live about six times, and every show is like the history of jazz piano.

In your list of 25 musicians, I agree that Christian Sands and James Francies will have long and significant careers. I first heard Sands live with Christian McBride's band Inside Straight and was impressed then and every subsequent time I have heard him live (a total of six times). I also was very impressed by Francies' piano and keyboard work when I saw him with Pat Metheny's Side-Eye in 2019 and leading his own band later in the year.

Most of the musicians included in your first two installments of "25 For The Future" (published in 1999 and 2016) have made major achievements since they appeared on the list. Let's hope this year's picks make a major impact in the near future.

MARC NEBOZENKO
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Gratitude from Ukraine

What with the world slowing down and frontiers closing, it's no wonder they told me at the local post office here in Ukraine that my issue of *DownBeat* was somehow late this month. I'm not blaming anyone—no doubt I will eventually receive all your issues—and I will definitely renew my subscription for the print edition.

I will proudly wear my *DownBeat* T-shirt to the next Jazz on the Dnieper festival (as I have in years past). A few years ago at this festival, when Cyrus Chestnut signed one of my copies of *DownBeat*, who knew the world of jazz would be so different?

I'd like to thank *DownBeat* for continuing amid all this chaos. I've been loyal to your respected magazine for 10 years, and I'll stand by you. One day, the festival, musicians and everything will be back to normal.

VITALY OSADCHY
DNIPRO, UKRAINE

No Patience for Puns

I must point out the outrageous pun in the piece on saxophonist Charles McPherson in your December issue: "Moving from jazz composition to writing for dance was a leap for McPherson." This sort of writing bespeaks drug use by the writer. Is this the type of journalism you want to promote?

Rampant "hilarious" puns and just-for-fun colloquialisms don't seem appropriate in the discussion of our deadly serious art form.

BOB OBERG
APTOS, CALIFORNIA

Bright Future Ahead

I was very pleased to see the third installment of your "25 For The Future" article in the November issue. Overall, it is a very good package. Of those 25 musicians, I have heard 13 of them, and I agree with 11 of those picks.

Personally, I would have liked to see Linda May Han Oh and Emmet Cohen on the list.

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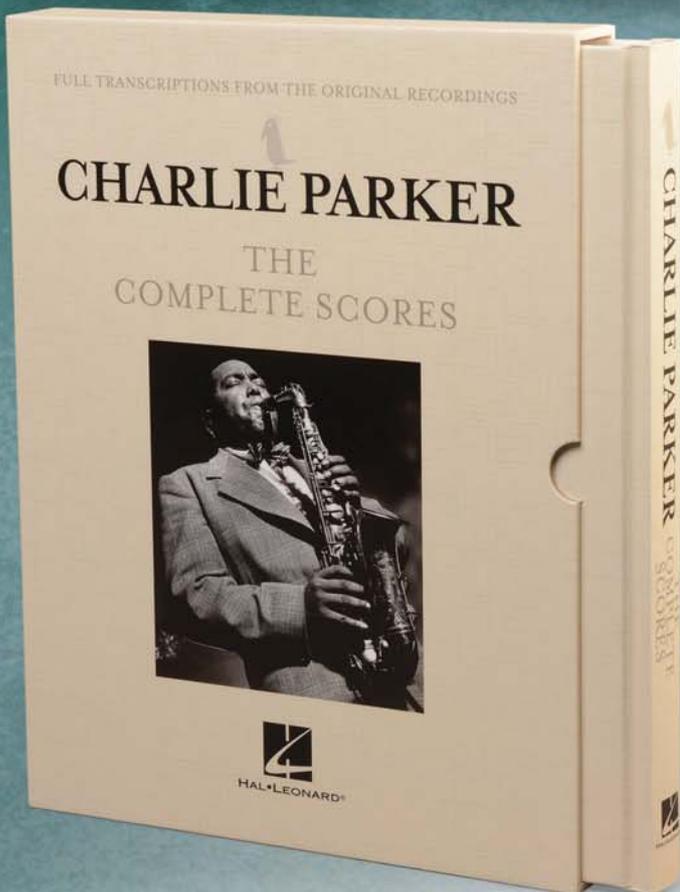
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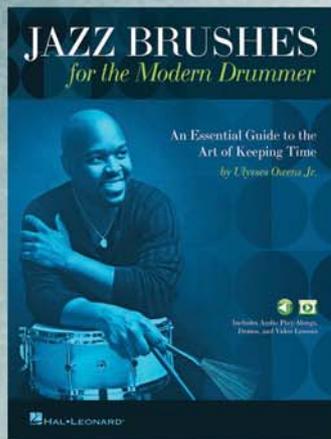
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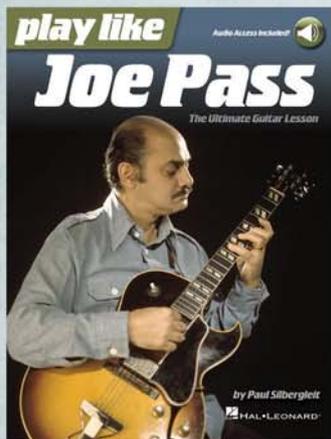
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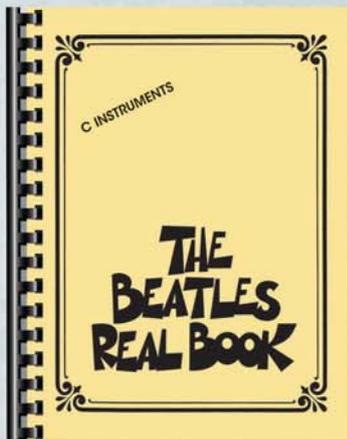
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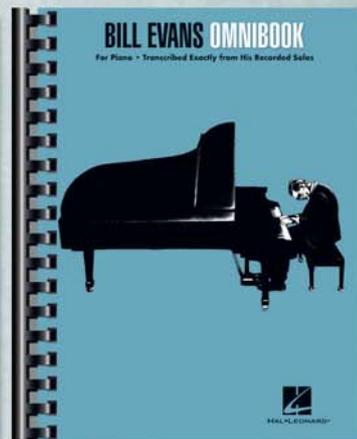
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Inside >

16 / Nels Cline
18 / Yellowjackets
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Eric Reed Reframes the Music

In 1966, pianist Glenn Gould sat down at the BBC to discuss, among other things, his approach to interpreting classical repertoire. At one point, Gould addressed the importance of originality in interpretation, underscoring the need “to do it differently, to actually cover new ground. ... One turns performance into composition. This is the key to it.”

Years later, those words blew Eric Reed’s mind. “We’ve always been taught to treat the European classics with such respect,” the pianist said, speaking over the phone from his office at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he holds the title Lecturer/Artist-in-Residence, Jazz Piano. “And the point [Gould] made was this: We have heard these pieces. Played. To. Death. If you’re just going to play the piece the way it’s always been done by everybody, then you really should consider another line of work.”

It wasn’t hard for him to see how that idea applied to jazz. “I look at arranging and harmonizing as a challenge,” he said. “Whether I’m rearranging Freddie Hubbard or Duke Ellington or Ned Washington and Victor Young, or Rodgers and Hart, I use the exact melody that was in the sheet music. Everything under that, as far as I’m concerned, is up for grabs.”

Take, for example, the interpretation of “Stella By Starlight” on his latest album, *For Such A Time As This* (Smoke Sessions). Played solo, it swaps the hard-bop drive the tune typically takes for a dreamy rubato. He also heavily reworks the changes, creating a dramatic harmonic shift on the song’s bridge, which, as written by Young, begins on a tension-building G7#5 underneath a D-sharp melody note. Reed’s reharmonization, by contrast, revoices that chord in a manner that calms the mood of the song and makes its melody more soothing to the ear.

“The song is a very beautiful piece,” he said,

and that’s what he wanted to reinforce in his reharmonization. “I did not want to come up with something that was jarring. I wanted to maintain some level of beauty.”

Figuring out how to reframe the harmony is not something Reed does on the fly. “I will sit and work on four bars of something for a week, until I get the movement that I want,” he said. “And sometimes I kept the chord changes the same. I didn’t harmonize every line, but I did certainly with quite a few of them.”

For this album, he had the advantage of extra arranging time, thanks to the pandemic. “This [was] an opportunity for me to practice a lot more than I had in previous years, because there were no gigs,” he said with a wry laugh. “Then I thought, wait a minute—if there’s no gigs, what am I practicing for?”

Once he decided the answer was to make an album, he began to ask himself what he wanted that album to be.

“It sounds like I’m teaching a little bit on the album,” he noted. “I guess that might be because of what I learned in such a short period of time since March, when this music started to take shape: COVID. Ahmaud Arbery. George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. The political climate. Learning. Having to unlearn things. Having to understand this world we live in, understand this country, and what the people that are running this country think of its citizens. All of that has been a very fast learning experience for me.”

Some tracks, such as “Thelonigus (For Thelonious Monk And Charles Mingus)” and the Cedar Walton-inspired “Western Rebellion,” address his influences. “Bebophobia,” on the other hand, is a lesson for “people who put down bebop music.” Although it boasts obvious period elements, the performance is pointedly contemporary. “Bebop is fundamental to jazz music,



On *For Such A Time As This*, pianist Eric Reed explores a bevy of musical styles, including gospel.

JIMMY KATZ

because it is the bridge from the swing-era musicians to what jazz became in the ‘60s,” Reed explained. “If you don’t have the bebop vocabulary, it’s like spelling without vowels.”

Elsewhere on the album, the pianist gets back to his roots in gospel music. “I was practically born in church,” he said. “My father was a preacher and he was raised in gospel music. My mom was raised in gospel music. We have relatives that are gospel singers and musicians. And to me, the best training a musician can ever receive is right there in the Black church.”

That’s especially evident on “Make Me Better,” where Reed shows off his commanding gospel left-hand technique. “I come by that left hand honestly,” he said. “When I came up as a child playing in church, I was the entire band. There were tambourines, hand claps and foot stomps, but for the most part, the only instrument was the piano. It was me driving the whole room.”

—J.D. Considine



Ellis Marsalis (1934–2020)

Newvelle In NOLA: The boutique vinyl label Newvelle has bundled together a new four-LP set, this time in tribute to New Orleans. *The New Orleans Collection* includes fresh music from soul singer Irma Thomas, guitarist Little Freddie King and pianist Jon Clearly, as well as the final recording of pianist Ellis Marsalis, who died April 1 at age 85. The Marsalis patriarch—who was accompanied on some tracks by one of his sons, percussionist Jason Marsalis—wades into his own songbook and performs a few previously unrecorded works. The release continues a series of annual Newvelle album bundles, which have featured works by Jack DeJohnette, Jason Palmer and Noah Preminger, among others.

newvelle-records.com

NYC Grants: Three hundred New York performers are set to receive funds through a second round of grants from The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation. After dispensing \$1 million, The Louis Armstrong Emergency Fund for Jazz Musicians is set to allocate 300 grants for \$1,000. “Throughout our careers, we all have experienced down times, but never have we faced venue closures and canceled concerts in such a devastating way,” said Diana Krall, who contributed to the fund. The foundation continues to accept donations.

louisarmstronghouse.org

ASCAP Commission: New York-based composer Jihye Lee has been awarded \$5,000 as the winner of the 6th Annual ASCAP Foundation/Symphonic Jazz Orchestra Commissioning Prize. Lee is set to write a new piece of music for the 68-piece SJO.

ascap.com

Final Bar: Viola Smith, a pioneering big band-era drummer, died at her home in Costa Mesa, California, on Oct. 21. She was 107. ... Boston drummer Bobby Ward, who recorded with Ken McIntyre and Wallace Roney, died Oct. 20 at the age of 81. ... Buffalo broadcaster Joe Rico, a jazz devotee who started his radio career at age 10 alongside his father, died Oct. 10; he was 96.

Cline Singers Now a Sextet

HE'S PERHAPS BEST KNOWN AS A MEMBER of the band Wilco. But those with a fuller picture of Nels Cline's career know him as an avant-garde renegade who lives in the amorphous netherworld between rock and jazz. Indeed, it's in that gap that the guitarist locates his artistic roots.

“In high school in the early '70s, the records that changed my life were by Miles Davis, Tony Williams Lifetime, early Weather Report,” the 64-year-old guitarist recalled. “For me, those records formed this nondoctrine template, very free in terms of dynamics and compositional elements.”

In that spirit, Cline founded the Nels Cline Singers, his singerless trio, in 2001. While the band has gained cache in both free-jazz and indie-rock circles, to Cline its core always has been in that space between.

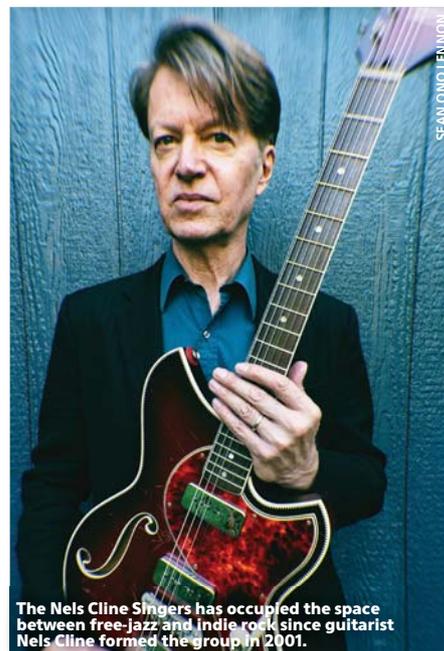
Never before, though, has the band reflected that lineage as it does on *Share The Wealth*, the six-piece Singers' new album. Though the sound and feel are unquestionably Cline's, it also has a direct and discernible connection to the groundbreaking early days of the fusion era.

Much of this connection comes from Cline's double-sizing the band, which had long been a “power trio.” Cline, drummer Scott Amendola and bassist Trevor Dunn were the core musicians on the group's 2014 album, *Macroscopic* (Mack Avenue). Cline had been itching to do something new with the Singers when the Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville in Quebec asked him to create a larger variation five years ago.

That concert was a one-off. But the idea of an expanded Singers lineup stuck with Cline, and another version soon began to take shape in his head. The first recruit was percussionist Cyro Baptista (a guest on *Macroscopic*), whose bossa-influenced funk rhythms reminded him of Airtio Moreira's work with Davis and early Return to Forever. Cline also knew Brian Marsella was a keeper: “Fender electric piano puts me right in the [fusion] zone, and Brian knows how to bring that.”

The final addition, however, surprised even Cline. He'd been feeling burned out on saxophones—“I probably had piccolo on my list before saxophone,” he said—when he found himself jamming with Skerik last year at a Phish after-show in New York. “It was amazing,” Cline said of the experience. “Skerik's palette is beyond mere saxophone. He's a one-man metal riff machine, and he has a lot of effects that he uses expertly. But he also showed an ability to rein in the virtuosity, so it wasn't just constant blather—there was all this melodic directness.”

Add in gobs of electronic processing for all involved and the Singers had a palette that fit right into the heady experiments of the early '70s.



The Nels Cline Singers has occupied the space between free-jazz and indie rock since guitarist Nels Cline formed the group in 2001.

With Cline's original concept, *Share The Wealth* would have gone even further in that direction. He arrived at The Bunker studio in Brooklyn with minimal written material. He intended for the band (which had never performed together before) to play lengthy improvised jams, which he would then slice up and extensively re-edit. It happened exactly as he had hoped, with some spontaneously created pieces to boot.

Yet when Cline went to edit what he'd recorded those two days in May 2019, he was floored at the raw material. “I was like, ‘Man, this is some really coherent improvising,’” he recalled. “None of it had to do with nonstop soloing. Some of the most fascinating and satisfying things were some of these transitions that sound like edits, but they aren't. We just sort of shifted gears as an ensemble in a very startling way.”

In the end, he edited the tapes only for clean-up and time compression, then fired it off to Blue Note as a potential release. Cline didn't expect label honcho Don Was to bite: “I thought he was gonna say, ‘Man, this is some cool stuff, but it's just not for Blue Note.’ But that's not what happened. What happened is he said, ‘Let's do this.’ And the next thing I know, I have a really wild electronic fusion record with some long improvs.”

Shaping the future through forging links to the past is an impressive (and peculiarly jazzy) artistic accomplishment. Yet, the sextet iteration of the Singers hasn't been able to seize that momentum: They've yet to play a concert. Cline blames the impracticality of booking a six-piece band with lots of gear, even before the pandemic did away with the whole notion of gigs.

Nevertheless, the guitarist hopes to keep it going. “I can't go back to the smaller version,” he said. “Plus, damn, we gotta at least play one gig eventually. We're really into something here. ... There's no going back.” —Michael J. West

Bildsten Delivers Sturdy 'Backbone'

TROMBONIST MARIEL BILDSTEN BEGAN developing ideas for her debut album in 2019, aiming to reflect different dimensions of her artistry, particularly her skills as an arranger. "I'm not super interested in just playing tunes for the tune's sake," said Bildsten, referencing the impetus for crafting *Backbone* (Outside In).

The New York-based trombonist left Santa Barbara nearly a decade ago to study at The New School. She quickly was captivated by the big band scene's creative repertoire and lush orchestration, and began playing regularly with leaders Arturo O'Farrill, Eyal Vilner and drummer Evan Sherman, who co-produced *Backbone* with her. Bildsten's vision for the album included replicating what she considers those "grand moments" in Duke Ellington's and Count Basie's big-band arrangements—but orchestrated for quintet.

"Arranging has been an important part of bringing together how I think about music," Bildsten said, "how these moments ascend or descend into something else, thinking about them as transitional points to get into the melodies of these songs."

Backbone showcases the quintet's irrepressible spontaneity. The program, which includes Ellington's "Mood Indigo," provides plenty of opportunities for the players to simmer and cook,

as Bildsten does alongside bassist Ben Wolfe on Harold Arlen's "The Man That Got Away." Other repertoire selections, and their subsequent arrangements, emerged from the hang.

When Bildsten first heard the late trumpeter Roy Hargrove play "The Lamp Is Low" after hours at Smalls, she didn't recognize it. But she was struck by the song's lingering beauty. So, she did what she'd always do when Hargrove was around: She listened and observed.

"After they played it, [Hargrove] sat down with a young pianist and taught them the changes," Bildsten recalled. "That's what he did, night after night. It was just such an amazing experience to be around him—interact with him, hear him play and [get] feedback. He was so real in his approach and he really brought people together."

Bildsten's quintet recorded *Backbone* in one night, between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m. "The vibe was great. I think the first hour or so, we hung in the green room and just talked," said pianist and long-time quintet member Sean Mason.

"Mariel is a very relaxed person," he continued. "She has another side that's very energetic, but she always remains calm. Some recording sessions can be very tight and everybody's all stressed—the bandleader's stressed and you have to calm everybody down. If I'm comping



Trombonist Mariel Bildsten aims to replicate epic big-band moments in her small ensemble arrangements.

for [Mariel], I can throw out a suggestion instead of just playing chords behind her. We can have a musical conversation. That translates to her bandleading style."

Bildsten credits her nature to a measure of self-acceptance. She lets the music be. Despite the inherent pressure of releasing an album amid the pandemic, she views the studio date the way many artists do: as merely a captured moment.

"The more you learn, you realize there's just so many possibilities," Bildsten said. "Making this album was helpful [in confronting insecurities] because it was like, 'You know what? This is just a snapshot in time—the music that I'm working on and the things that I love.' And that's enough."
—Stephanie Jones

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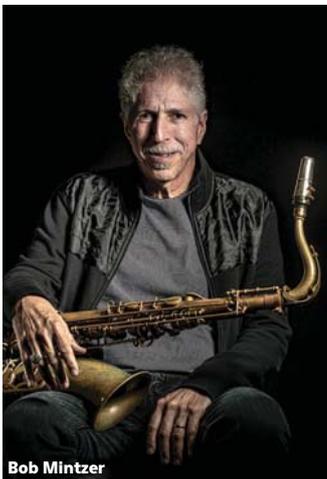
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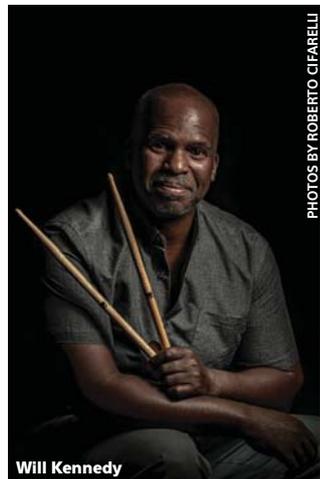
Bob Mintzer



Dane Alderson



Russell Ferrante



Will Kennedy

PHOTOS BY ROBERTO CIFARELLI

Yellowjackets Take Expansive Approach

FOR THE BELOVED QUARTET'S 25TH album, Yellowjackets decided to go big—as in, *really* big. The vibrant, robust *Jackets XL* (Mack Avenue) is a collaboration with one of the finest large ensembles in the world, the WDR Big Band, based in Cologne, Germany.

The common ingredient in the two groups is tenor saxophonist and EWI player Bob Mintzer, who has been in Yellowjackets since 1990 and has been the WDR Big Band's principal conductor since 2016. Mintzer conducted the big band and wrote or co-wrote eight of the arrangements on the new album.

The *Jackets XL* program offers a mixture of new compositions alongside fresh arrangements of material from the band's catalog, including "Mile High" (from the 1987 disc *Four Corners*) and "Even Song" (from 1994's *Run For Your Life*).

Mintzer and the other members of Yellowjackets—pianist and keyboardist Russell Ferrante (who cofounded the band in the late '70s), drummer Will Kennedy and electric bassist Dane Alderson—all deliver killer solos on the album, which was recorded in Cologne over the course of six days in November 2019.

Mintzer's arrangements also give members of the big band room to shine, as evidenced by guitarist Paul Shigihara's fluid fretwork on "Even Song."

All four members of Yellowjackets were in a jovial mood on a mid-October afternoon when they assembled for a Zoom chat with DownBeat. Mintzer and Ferrante were in the Los Angeles area, Kennedy was in Houston and Alderson was in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"I have two 'homes' right now," Mintzer said. "One is Yellowjackets, which I've been a member of for 30 years, and I've had a relationship with the WDR Big Band for 30 years, in one capacity or another. So, these were two very familiar entities, and I knew that they would fit together well, with the least amount of effort. I knew it was going to be great—and it was."

Alderson, the newest member of the band, considers himself a very lucky man. "It's like a dream come true, to be the bass player for Yellowjackets," he said. "But to have Yellowjackets [collaborate] with the WDR Big Band ... was just a mind-blowing experience. It's something I will never forget."

"It was very easy," Kennedy said about recording *Jackets XL*. "There's something about finding your home when you do a recording with your band. You need to find your space and your sound, and your voice. Bob really did a great job arranging the material around what we already do as a band. And that was enhanced by the WDR Big Band."

Two of the album's most intriguing tracks have Ferrante's fingerprints all over them. In addition to composing "Tokyo Tale," he wrote a new arrangement for his tune "Coherence," featuring wondrous orchestral elements, such as trombones and muted trumpets.

"Tokyo Tale" has a quirky origin story. "On the road, I always bring a keyboard with me that I have in my hotel room, to practice, write and work," Ferrante said. "Oftentimes, we're jet-lagged when we're traveling internationally. So, I remember being in Japan one night. I woke up at two o'clock in the morning. I was supine. I was on my back with my keyboard, and I just heard this little question and answer between the bass and the chords. So, I started working it out that night and subsequently I made a little memo of the idea."

Mintzer's arrangement of the complex "Tokyo Tale" provides space for WDR Big Band member Paul Heller's knotty tenor saxophone solo—illustrating the conductor's willingness to share the spotlight.

All the members of Yellowjackets have had previous experience working with big bands—but none more than Mintzer, who has led his own namesake large ensemble and written or arranged hundreds of charts for big-band instrumentation.

Ferrante jokingly contrasted his level of arranging experience with that of his bandmate.

"Bob writes the music in such a way that the band can really grasp it, and he knows what works for a big band," Ferrante explained. "That's like the opposite of me, because I don't have that much experience doing it. I remember the first big-band arrangement I ever wrote was for the GRP All-Star Big Band. This was, you know, more than 20 years ago. After rehearsing my tune, we were taking a break and [saxophonist] Tom Scott was walking out and just muttering, under his breath, 'These experimental arrangers are *murder* on the band.'"

That anecdote prompted an eruption of laughter during the Zoom chat, followed by a flurry of comments in which Ferrante's bandmates complimented him on his skills as an arranger.

Prior to the pandemic, Mintzer had planned to have Yellowjackets and the WDR Big Band perform some of the *Jackets XL* material together in concert. Such a production will have to wait until another day, when large gatherings are more feasible.

In the meantime, Mintzer is teaching classes online at USC's Thornton School of Music, which also boasts Ferrante and Kennedy as faculty members.

Mintzer described some benefits of having three bandmates teach at the same prestigious institution. "Will and Russ are fantastic musicians and wonderful teachers," he said. "And there's the opportunity for students to get a glimpse at a longstanding ensemble: What are the inner components for the success of this band? How is the music developed? What are the relationships like?"

"It's a huge window into the world that these students are aspiring to enter. We were supposed to start a band-in-residence [project at USC] this year, but COVID derailed that," he added. "Hopefully, once things clear up a little bit, we'll revisit that." —Bobby Reed

WINDS *of* CHANGE

Eastman's new Rue Saint-Georges family of next-generation saxophones is poised to redefine the category.

When the Belgian inventor and musician Adolphe Sax designed the first saxophone in 1846, he became one of the very few people in history to create a new musical instrument, as opposed to refine a primitive model already in use. It was an apt beginning for an instrument that would go on to be reinvented by American jazz musicians of the 20th century, whose love for the woodwind gave their genre its unforgettable sound.

Now, on the brink of the 175th anniversary of the saxophone's debut on the world stage, Eastman has reintroduced a new family of saxophones poised to redefine the category yet again.

Named Rue Saint-Georges, after the street in Paris where Sax maintained a workshop, the collection joins Eastman's popular 52nd St. saxophone family, which debuted in 2010 and, as its moniker would suggest, is best known for the vibrant music associated with the New York City jazz scene.

"From the very beginning, there was a desire to create two flagship models: one more oriented to classic American sound and one oriented toward classic French sound," says Ryan Richman, vice president of Eastman Music Company. "But we couldn't achieve the French sound until about three years ago, when we started investing in modeling and acoustic design for alto and tenor saxophones that would be the foundation for us to create both voices."

Unbeknownst to Richman, his dream of creating a new style of saxophone — one that is "beautiful, lyrical, centered and focused" — was taking shape just as another visionary maker within the Eastman family was considering his own love for the instrument.

David Schipani, a talented amateur saxophone player, began working at Wm. S. Haynes Co., America's oldest continuously operating flute making company, in 1986. At the time, the process by which the venerable Boston firm manufactured its flutes had been virtually unchanged since the company's founding nearly a century earlier.

"It was like walking back in time to a shop in the 1800s," says Schipani, the head of bodymaking and stringing at Haynes, which was acquired by Eastman in 2004. "No computer design, everything done by hand. It was a great way to learn flutemaking."

It didn't hurt that Schipani had a background in jewelry. Prior to apprenticing as an instrument maker, he'd studied sculpture and metalsmithing techniques such as raising and chasing at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Those

skills helped set him apart in the workshop and gave him the confidence to tackle some of the company's more challenging projects, such as sculpting prototypes from blocks of brass.

"With my background, I knew I could do anything I wanted," he says.

Schipani's talent for out-of-the-box thinking, along with his abiding love for playing the saxophone, collided one day in 2017 when he joined Eastman Music Com founder Qian Ni and director of operations Ralph Torres on a trip to Beijing to perform a routine factory visit.

"We were driving around," says Schipani, "and I mentioned to Ralph that I was a saxophone player and a technician. His ears perked up."

The conversation segued to an idea that Schipani has been noodling on for years: As a saxophone player who builds flutes for a living, he'd long wondered why the mechanism on a saxophone didn't feel as elegant nor as fluid as those on flutes.

"Essentially, David looked at the saxophone mechanism and found a weakness," says Richman. "The back feet where you have key lifters — the connection point was very narrow and thin and would come out of adjustment quite regularly."

With Ni's support and the help of Li Stone, the general manager of Eastman's wind instrument production — as well as a supply of keys, parts, and tubing — Schipani made the first Rue Saint-Georges prototype from scratch in his basement shop by adapting the flute-style back connectors to the saxophone.

"The geometry of the flute didn't work on the saxophone, so I had to make new parts," Schipani says. "The construction of that first prototype was just me in my basement soldering keys. When I finished, I said to myself, Whoa, this feels so much better than a traditional saxophone. And that was when we knew we had something."

By broadening the surface area of the back connectors on the saxophone, from 1/16th of an inch to half an inch, Schipani ensured that the force created upon contact between the lower kickers and upper plates was "now distributed over a larger area, which is more efficient, more stable, and holds an adjustment better," he says.

It was a classic example of form following function: Schipani's deep knowledge of the flute combined with his artistic sensibility helped him sculpt saxophone keys that made the instrument not only more beautiful, but also more ergonomic.

As a result, the Rue Saint-Georges saxophone feels better in a player's hands and is easier to regulate.

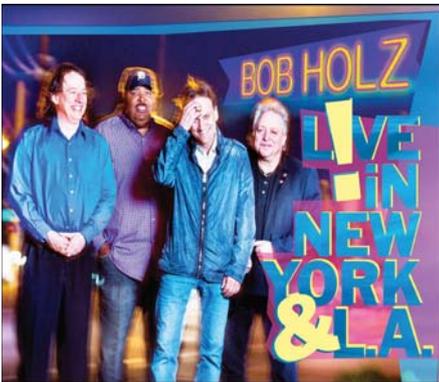
"We did a lot of testing here in the U.S. with a lot of prominent saxophonists who play on vintage instruments," Richman says. "We got an opportunity to look at their instruments and what made them great and so desirable, and were able to incorporate that into our design, finding enhancements in intonation, tonality and, with David's help, ergonomics."

While the collaborative spirit that defines Eastman's approach to product development was critical to the success of the project, so, too, was the company's culture of experimentation, and its willingness to cross-pollinate elements from across its family of instruments.

"We wanted to make a saxophone that took us back to why we fell in love with playing in the first place," says Richman. "But a lot of those older saxophones weren't comfortable under the fingers. So how do we learn from that?"

"The flutemaker was the key," he says. "Not just any flutemaker, but a flutemaker that's a saxophonist. We've created an instrument that has the elegance, the stability, the comfort and fluidity of a flute — and that's what gives the Rue Saint-Georges saxophone its precision and mark of excellence." ●





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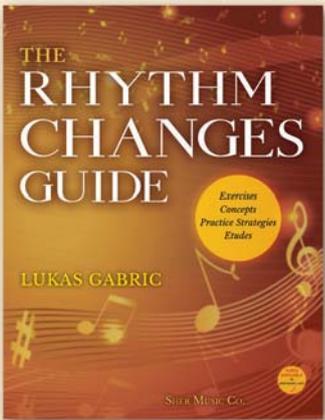
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Pianist Noah Haidu's new album, *Doctone*, features compositions by the late Kenny Kirkland.

Haidu Reverently Salutes Kirkland

PIANIST KENNY KIRKLAND (1955–'98) left us far too soon, succumbing to congestive heart failure. The versatile musician was at home across a wide range of music, from Western classical to bayou funk. He recorded with dozens of musicians, including titans such as Michael Brecker, Dizzy Gillespie and John Scofield. In the '80s and '90s, Kirkland was an essential member of bands led by Sting, Wynton Marsalis and Branford Marsalis, but his only leader date was an eponymous disc released in 1991.

Several years ago, pianist Noah Haidu, 48, wanted to find a way to honor Kirkland's legacy and unique compositional style. He had a few options: An album? A book? A documentary? Haidu's answer was an all-encompassing "yes." The result is the multimedia project *Doctone*, the title of which is a nod to Kirkland's nickname. Drummer Billy Hart, who worked with Kirkland, anchors the Sunnyside album.

Growing up, Haidu was lucky enough to see Kirkland perform in several venues, from Los Angeles' sprawling Greek Theatre to New York's intimate Sweet Basil club. While earning his master's degree, Haidu's thesis focused exclusively on Kirkland.

Calling from his Brooklyn home, Haidu described the origin of his latest project: "We did the album in two days and we had enough breathing time to chat on sessions. Within a month or two of that recording, we were able to start interviewing people. The book [is a compilation of] the interviews. The documentary has excerpts from the book. I managed to do the book and the documentary in one fell swoop."

While some artists might spend a lifetime producing a full-scale multimedia onslaught, Haidu managed to multitask all of these projects simultaneously, recording parts of the documentary during the pandemic. The brisk film, directed by Jeffrey Chuang, features Haidu's interviews with Kirkland collaborators, including Sting, who whispers in a vulnerable, seem-

ingly late-night Zoom chat, and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts, who lounges under darkening skies. Saxophonist Steve Wilson lent his voice to not only the documentary but also to the album.

"Noah brings a great insight," Wilson said. "He's really done his homework. It's been great to see him go beyond 'I'll just do a collection of Kenny Kirkland tunes.' He really wanted to get inside Kirkland's history and what inspired him and his roots."

Doctone includes five tunes from Kirkland's lone album, which featured Watts and Branford Marsalis, and bassist Christian McBride on one track—a roster of pugilistic Young Lions. Today, nearly 30 years after its release, Kirkland's leader album is a seldom-referenced gem.

Haidu assembled a stellar rhythm section for his sessions, with bassist Todd Coolman joining Hart. Reedists Jon Irabagon and Gary Thomas contribute to a rendition of Kirkland's "Fuchsia," which appeared on Wynton Marsalis' 1983 album *Think Of One*. Haidu sits in the pocket of respectful interpretation: He's not trying to match Kirkland's pounding technique, but rather highlight the flexibility of the compositions.

The accompanying book is a commuter train-friendly version of Chuang's documentary. Transcriptions of extended interviews are mixed with reflections from pianist Jason Moran, family members and Kirkland collaborators, including guitarist Rodney Jones and trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis. It's an easygoing read, focused squarely on its underappreciated subject. The entire *Doctone* project is a testament to Haidu's passion and determination to uphold the tradition.

"I think Kenny had a special rhythmic and harmonic concept," Haidu said. "I had to pick things for the album that were inspirational—that I wouldn't have to play like Kenny—to make it work. These tunes are hard, but once you get into them, it was easy to find my sound on them."
—Sean J. O'Connell

In Memoriam: Conga Master Cándido Camero Dies at 99

CÁNDIDO CAMERO, AN NEA JAZZ MASTER

who was regarded as the father of modern conga drumming, died Nov. 7 in New York. He was 99.

“Cándido,” as he was known by jazz aficionados, pioneered the use of multiple conga-type drums, first incorporating the slightly smaller *quinto* into his setup and finally settling on a three-drum arrangement that also included the larger *tumba*. He quickly mastered a technique of playing all three simultaneously and developed a method of tuning the drums to different pitches to create simple melodies and chords.

Born April 22, 1921, in Havana, Cándido began playing homemade bongos at age 4. He went on to learn flute, upright bass and *tres*, all of which he played while backing Cuban music stars in Havana nightclubs during the 1930s and 1940s, including the famous Cabaret Tropicana, where he performed with Mongo Santamaría. He made the switch to congas in the early 1940s.

Cándido first came to the United States in 1946 and settled in New York permanently starting in 1952. In addition to playing with American dance orchestras, he worked with jazz pianist Billy Taylor for a year at New York’s Downbeat club, where he devised methods to apply Cuban rhythms to American swing and bebop, helping to lay the groundwork for a historic crossover movement between American jazz artists and Cuban musicians that continues to this day.

Cándido toured and recorded with some of the biggest names in jazz and Latin music, including Tito Puente, Machito, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, Sonny Rollins, Wes Montgomery, Gerry Mulligan, Charles Mingus and Quincy Jones. He gained national exposure via TV appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *The Jackie Gleason Show*.

The conguero was known for clean living, a topic he liked to discuss in his old age. “I have never smoked, not even a Cuban cigar!” he said in the May 2017 issue of *DownBeat*. “I never drank alcohol, not even beer or wine, and I’ve never used stimulants for false inspirations. ... I may need help to get to my drums because of arthritis, and I may be approaching 100, but when I start to play, look out, because I feel like I’m 20 years old again!”

In addition to contributing to dozens of albums and film soundtracks, Cándido recorded multiple leader dates for various labels, including ABC-Paramount, Blue Note, Chesky, Tico and the dance-music record company Salsoul, which produced disco-era hits for him.

Cándido’s most recent release was 2014’s *The Master* (Chesky). He was the subject of Ivan Acosta’s acclaimed 2005 documentary, *Cándido: Hands of Fire*, and in 2009, he received a Latin

Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

During his *DownBeat* interview, Cándido took a long perspective on the music he had played since childhood. “The music never changes,” he observed. “It’s never going to change because tradition never changes. Since I was born and listened to music, the only thing that is different is the arrangement. The foundation never changes.”

DB



Cándido (1921–2020), shown performing in 2008

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On Lynchian Album, Weiss Combines Jazz, Metal Elements

FEW JAZZ ALBUMS ARE OVERTLY INSPIRED by TV series. Then again, few TV series are like *Twin Peaks*, and few jazz musicians are like Dan Weiss.

"It really got me," the drummer stressed, discussing David Lynch's legendary TV mystery (specifically, its third season, which premiered in 2017 after a two-decade hiatus). "I just found myself so caught up in that world, and so taken with it, that it was pervading everything that was going on during the day."

Weiss channeled his obsession into *Starebaby*, the self-titled 2018 album by his then-new quintet. He had hoped that the music, a hybrid of jazz and heavy metal, would capture some of the show's vibe, which he described as "the juxtaposition of the worlds that Lynch creates." Yet *Twin Peaks* carried too much inspiration for just one record. The band's follow-up—*Natural Selection* (Pi)—is a companion piece to the first. However, in keeping with the various aesthetics involved, the album relates to *Starebaby* in a unique way.

"I like thematic material: things that span," Weiss explained. "I think it was natural for me to see what would develop out of the material of the first record and what I could do with it." The Tibetan Buddhist concept of the tulpa—a willed-

to-life being that mimics, but is distinct from, an original—was a major theme of *Twin Peaks*' third season. That idea appealed to Weiss' penchant for conceptual continuity. So, for *Natural Selection*, he devised a set of tulpas based on the tunes from *Starebaby*'s debut.

This could have taken many forms: remixes, contrafacts, variations or the same songs with new improvisations. Weiss took a more abstract approach. "I thought about the process with which I went about composing certain tunes from the first record and tried to duplicate that process for the second record," he said.

The most obvious example is "Episode 18," whose title references not only a *Twin Peaks* episode (season three's finale), but the *Starebaby* track "Episode 8." Weiss had written the earlier tune entirely on electric bass, so he did the same thing for its tulpa. He also kept certain structural elements of "Episode 8" in "Episode 18." The songs aren't duplicates, but very loose analogs.

However, the new recording never was meant to map directly to the old. They are companion pieces—not twins. The sequencing of *Natural Selection*, for instance, is entirely unrelated to *Starebaby*'s. "I pride myself on that kind of architecture," Weiss said. "I just really wanted to



Dan Weiss' *Natural Selection* appeals to the drummer's penchant for conceptual continuity.

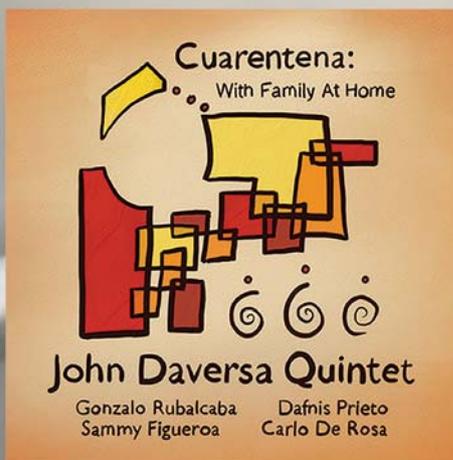
make the best sequence possible for this specific record, get a balance of the long tunes and medium-length tunes."

For that matter, he hopes that the album is strong enough that listeners who've never heard the first one—or seen the show—still can enjoy it. Weiss isn't even sure his whole band saw the show's most recent season—although he, keyboardist Matt Mitchell and their significant others did watch it together.

Regardless, Weiss now is writing new music (including a third *Starebaby* record with non-*Twin Peaks* material), rewatching *The Sopranos* and wishing that rumors of Lynch's development of a new season of *Twin Peaks* are true. "I hope that happens," he said. "Give me some more inspiration."
—Michael J. West

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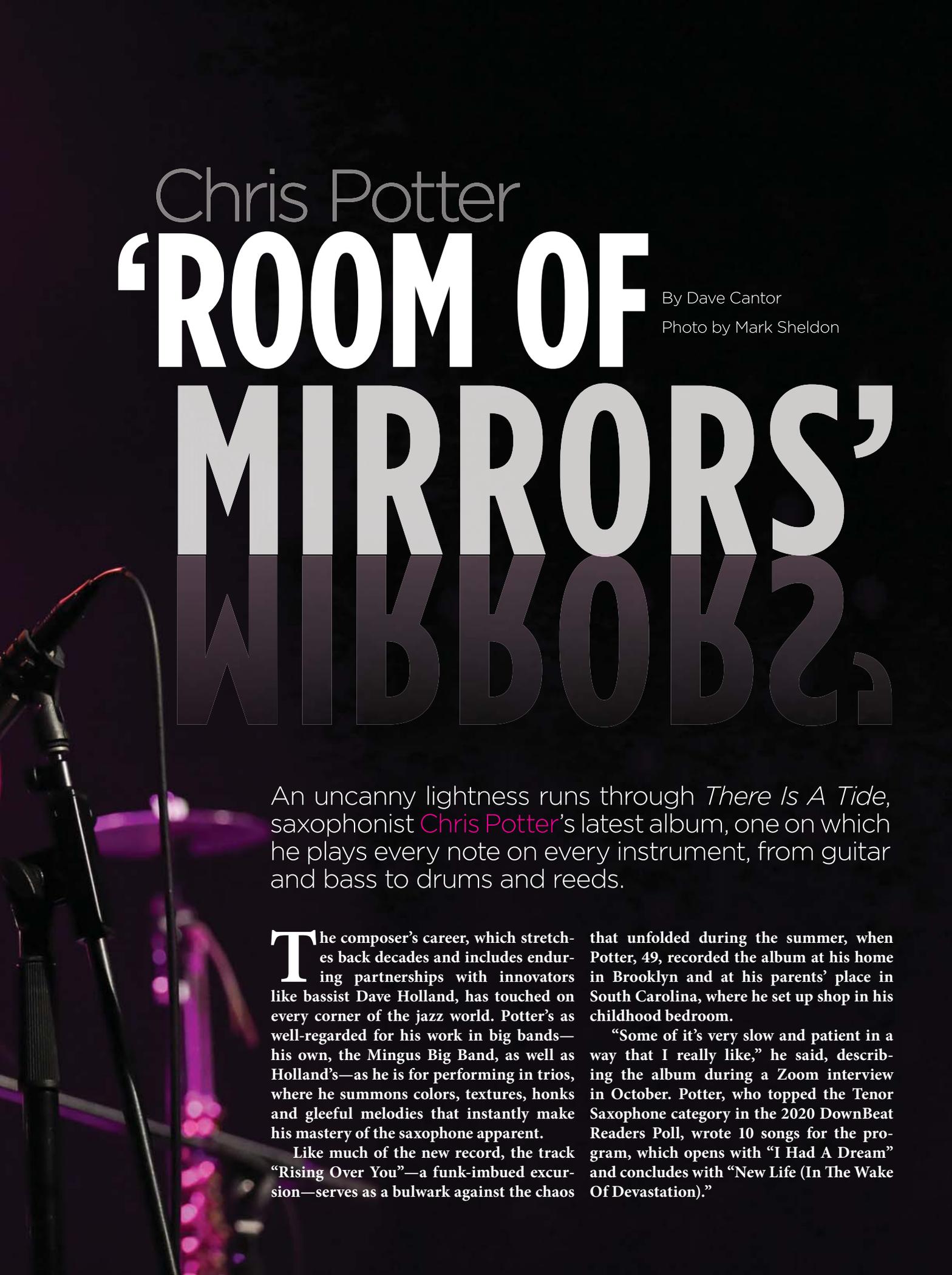
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Chris Potter

'ROOM OF MIRRORS'

By Dave Cantor
Photo by Mark Sheldon

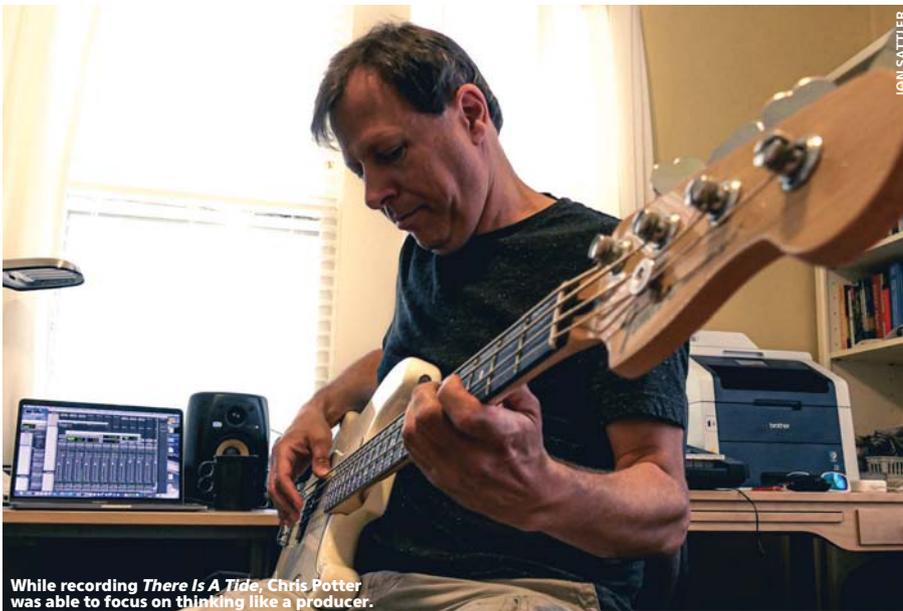
An uncanny lightness runs through *There Is A Tide*, saxophonist **Chris Potter**'s latest album, one on which he plays every note on every instrument, from guitar and bass to drums and reeds.

The composer's career, which stretches back decades and includes enduring partnerships with innovators like bassist Dave Holland, has touched on every corner of the jazz world. Potter's as well-regarded for his work in big bands—his own, the Mingus Big Band, as well as Holland's—as he is for performing in trios, where he summons colors, textures, honks and gleeful melodies that instantly make his mastery of the saxophone apparent.

Like much of the new record, the track “Rising Over You”—a funk-imbued excursion—serves as a bulwark against the chaos

that unfolded during the summer, when Potter, 49, recorded the album at his home in Brooklyn and at his parents' place in South Carolina, where he set up shop in his childhood bedroom.

“Some of it's very slow and patient in a way that I really like,” he said, describing the album during a Zoom interview in October. Potter, who topped the Tenor Saxophone category in the 2020 DownBeat Readers Poll, wrote 10 songs for the program, which opens with “I Had A Dream” and concludes with “New Life (In The Wake Of Devastation).”



While recording *There Is A Tide*, Chris Potter was able to focus on thinking like a producer.

JOHN SATTLER

There Is A Tide wasn't the only project he was working on for London-based Edition Records, though. As fall hues began to replace summer sun, Potter headed into the studio with keyboardist James Francies and drummer Eric Harland to record a follow-up to his 2019 album, *Circuits*. Due out in April, *Sunrise Reprise* reflects a tone dissimilar to *Tide*, offering what Potter called "a very, very different energy—long tunes, because we just couldn't stop playing; way more stuff than I can put on an album."

If *Tide* is the aural equivalent of a film actor playing multiple characters in a single scene, *Sunrise* is a document of interactive energy.

"Working with Chris and Eric both, they're just such masters of what they do," Francies recently told *DownBeat*. "[Playing with them] just felt like a puzzle piece fitting in. It just works. Between me and Eric, we already had a chemistry, and Eric and Chris have their chemistry. But Chris is always so into trying new stuff out—he just trusts who he plays with."

The following has been edited for length and clarity.

***There Is A Tide* clearly is a pandemic-era album. You had a lot of gear at your disposal, but was there something that you couldn't lay hands on? Were those restrictions and the availability of space part of what shaped the album?**

The main restriction was me and my abilities, because no one else is on the album. When I was a teenager, I had this little cassette recorder that you could record four tracks onto, and then you bounce the other tracks on. So, I used to do that, where I played every instrument in the band and just make tracks, and mess around in different styles. So, for me, it was kind of a return to that, and it was a chance to do something like that that I always wanted to do on a more professional level. But when would I ever have the time? Well,

now I have time.

I actually started it at my parents' house—there's more room down there in South Carolina—I could set up the drums. It was a little hard around here; probably most of the stuff that's on the record was recorded here in Brooklyn, but the basic tracks and the writing were all done down there. It was in the same room that I had as a teenager, so it kinda felt like I was going backwards.

I mean, everyone was freaking out—I think we're all still freaking out. And my reaction—I guess this is just what I do, anyway: I wanted to keep working and I felt like I had something to say. I didn't even know that I would put it out, to be honest. I wasn't really sure what I was going to do with it. I just started working on it, and then sent some of it to Dave [Stapleton, head of Edition Records].

So, it was an enormous learning experience for me. I've always played different instruments and felt that I learned a lot, even about how to approach the saxophone from my use of other instruments—like knowing what it feels like to play the drum part. I definitely work on piano a lot. But getting to where I felt like I could communicate something at the level I wanted to, it took a lot of work—and a very careful use of what my skill set is, and not going beyond it.

I found a quote by trumpeter Red Rodney, who you played with when you first got to New York, where he was complimentary of your piano skills. But was there something that you were reticent to record for the album?

Piano is definitely [what] I have the most experience with, besides saxophone.

You initially wrote everything on bass, though?

I started it on the bass, yeah. I kind of just

came up with some bass lines and wrote it. So, that was a restriction I put on myself. It was just what I heard that I wanted the record to be. I was like, "OK, it's going to be based in the groove." Some of that is because of the nature of the technology: It's really, really helpful to have a track that you can play to. Instruments are coming in and out, so how do you know how much time goes by? It's just much easier if everything is in a tempo, which is a restriction. Sometimes, things might be fairly amorphous, but that's a lot harder to do, if you're trying to catch every little move you made on the last pass and match it.

There was a self-chosen restriction that I wanted everything to be either in 4/4 or 3/4.

Was that just for ease of use?

There are different kinds of complexity; to make an artwork with any depth requires some complexity. But I had the feeling that in that moment in time, I didn't really want to hear the most difficult, challenging music. I wanted to hear something that would make me feel good.

It's sometimes hard to derive meaning from instrumental music, but in addition to the album's name, a few of the song titles reference water. How intentional was that?

The names of the tunes and the feelings that I got from the tunes kind of came after I'd started to make them—they kind of appear on their own. The names, I just [used] the first phrase that came to my head that kind of fit the melody of a song. And as I got into it, there was some kind of theme emerging—like water. So, I went with that.

It was kind of the same as the whole process—and it's how I like to make music, anyway. The magic of making music with other people and improvising with other people is that whatever story you had in mind is going to be changed by their reactions. You never end up with what it is you thought you had, because it gets changed in the process. But for me, that's the magic.

That's kind of how the titles appeared, and kind of how the music itself evolved: I'd add one layer of music and then realize, "Oh, I wasn't thinking of it, but now that I hear it, it needs this instrument to play this other kind of part." And then that might set me on another path, and it might be that I didn't even use the underlying thing that I'd first recorded.

There was a whole process of recording in this way that was kind of akin to improvisation, that was akin to not really having too well-formed of a plan ahead of time, but just kind of reacting to what I heard and adding something on top of that to keep it evolving. The meaning of it is like that.

You mentioned the fact that instrumental music, the meaning of it might not be apparent just from hearing it. There is something nice about having a title that does encapsulate some of that. If *A Love Supreme* wasn't called *A Love*

Supreme, it might not point you in the same direction. I think you would still get those feelings from the music, but it might not be quite so obvious. On the other hand, the great thing about music that doesn't have any words is that it is very, very open for interpretation, and whatever it means to you is what it means.

You open the album with "I Had A Dream," which seems connected to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speech. Is the title linked to the following cut, "Like A Memory"?

The way that it worked out, I kind of saw all the titles as a poem, really. And it was interesting that the order of the [songs on the] album is the order that I wrote the tunes in.

I've never done that; it's never worked out that way. But I think because I did it all in such a concentrated period of time, there was a narrative thread even through the writing. I came up with these bass lines one evening, then I wrote two tunes a day for five days, fleshed it out and then started to record. It evolved from there.

So, yes, the name of that obviously has a political meaning. Maybe, it also sort of has a personal meaning, in terms of what the poem of the titles are. I don't even really know how to describe what the meaning is.

You've worked with Manfred Eicher on your ECM releases, and there's a lot of discourse in jazz around the idea of collective interaction. Was it weird to not have a check on yourself for *Tide*?

[Eicher] definitely has ways of adding his input in; I didn't even think of that. The real difference is not because of a producer, but because of other musicians that you're working with. And the feeling that you get when you're playing. You can usually feel if it was a good take or a bad take or what's going on or what's needed. You can feel how that bounces off the people in the band—that's really the primary thing that I've always noticed.

It's funny. It's really hard to explain, but you can tell if things are working or not by the energy that comes from other people. So, if you don't have that, you're gonna end up chasing your tail. I think I was able to avoid that to a certain extent. But the way that I did it was just by many, many, many hours spent doing it: 12-hour days, three days just on the bass part, trying to get it to groove enough. Certain moments that might pass by that no one would even notice, I might have spent hours on, because I heard that the piano chord has to come in right at this exact moment: Now, that's too thick. Now, it's not thick enough.

While making *Tide*, did you think at all about being connected to the beginning of the music through folks like Red Rodney—or indirectly to Alla Rakha through playing with his son Zakir Hussain in the Crosscurrents Trio—and

how players from previous generations would have perceived the project?

That's maybe one more thing that makes it of its time.

The ability to do this at home, the ability that we have to communicate with one another, even though we can't [be in a room together], that's a big thing that's coloring our experience of this particular pandemic, this particular situation. ... Even as a musician unable to play for audiences, unable to play with people, which is the lifeblood of the kind of music that we make, we're still able

to create something and put it out there. There's a bit of a time lag—I did this in May, June, and it'll come out in December. You are going to put it out and people are going to hear it, and it is gonna be "music" in that sense.

A lot of people would say that the period you were recording this was the worst of what we've experienced so far in 2020. Was the tumult over social justice and the federal response to the pandemic part of what prompted you to record *Tide*?



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Potter (left), Joe Martin and Nasheet Waits perform Oct. 11 in Central Park during *Walk With The Wind*, a Giant Step Arts program honoring the late Rep. John Lewis.

JIMMY KATZ

I just kind of did one thing at a time. There was a piece I had written for classical saxophone and piano, and then there's the music I've been working on for a long time, anyway—with big band and vocals. I had kind of finished with those two projects and I said, "Well, let me have some fun and see if I can make a record playing everything."

What's the most important thing that you learned from making *Tide*, and is it transferable to post-pandemic work for you?

In this case, I was really able to think as a producer and spend the time on it that you never have making a jazz recording. The longest record dates that I've ever had were maybe three days, and so basically you're coming in and you're playing the music with people that you've played the music with before, hopefully. One of my keys to trying to make a good record is to have a chance to play the music with a band first, so that you get to know what the tune is, and what it wants to be and how you approach it and work out some of those kinks before you get into the studio. But that's a document of a performance, and this is clearly something else that I had to edit.

It gave me the opportunity to think about, "OK, it's going to start with this one texture, and how long is it going to be on that texture? And then something else should happen that's related"—all these things that are kind of more like making a good pop record come to the fore, along with the fact that I just don't have the virtuosity on all these instruments. Like, I can't just play a killing drum part that whips it up into a frenzy if I want.

I realized quickly that the thing that I could do that sounded the best was just make sure that it grooves all the time. Then if I wanted more activity in that way, I'd add percussion or something. Just like when you hear *Sgt. Pepper*: These choices about how things are done have an effect on the way that you listen to it. That's a whole other skill set that I've always been interested in. Virtually all of my working life has been focused

on being a saxophone player, playing with people and improvising with them. You don't get to focus on those details quite so much.

The second Circuits Trio album, *Sunrise Reprise*, is going to be the fourth project you'll have released through Edition. You also did the Crosscurrents Trio album with them. They've let you experiment. Obviously, you're a big get for the label, but is that freedom why you partnered with them?

Yeah, that's been the thing—just the artistic freedom and the kind of forward-thinking way that they're approaching it. The thing that's different about them, they started well after the whole recording-industry system had pretty much collapsed. Definitely when I moved to New York and all through the '90s, it was just a much different landscape.

They're operating from this premise—social media—of getting information out that doesn't necessarily cost a lot of money, but is going to reach some folks. I feel like I have complete freedom to do what I want—and complete trust from them. As I was saying, I wasn't even necessarily sure that I wanted to put [*Tide*] out or that it was at a level that I should put it out. But they were like, "Yeah, do it."

What did Stapleton say that convinced you?

Well, I think that was the first time anyone had really heard it. I felt like I was in a room of mirrors and I lost perspective: Is this good? So, [his wanting to release the album] was a bit of a vote of confidence, like, "It actually sounds good; I think it would be something people would be interested in, especially as it documents this particular time."

That's what I was hoping for; that was its function for me. It's therapy to deal with everything and that's kind of how it functions, anyway, I think. Musicians, we're making music for other people to hear, but we're also making music for ourselves—something that we feel we need to do to express what we don't know how to express

any other way. And if an audience finds value in that, that's an extremely gratifying thing. But I wasn't really sure about it.

I haven't listened to it now in a couple months, so it'll be interesting to let it go. I was just completely immersed in it. It'll be good to hear it someday from enough distance that I might be able to actually judge it.

Even with the freedom that Edition has offered you, big-band projects—especially after the pandemic—are going to be tough to record and tour.

Well, that's always been an issue. The ECM record—The Underground Orchestra, the *Imaginary Cities* record—I would have loved to have done a lot more concerts with that band. I hope we can still do more someday. That's like 11 people; it's a lot and it's hard to do. You can sometimes use [local musicians] from wherever you go for certain things, but it's not the same as the actual people that you call to be on the recording. We'll have to figure it out as we go along. All these kinds of things, the infrastructure of how that's gonna work, it's all a bit of a mystery.

Some of the larger ensemble things that I've been writing and that I've been thinking about doing could involve using an established group—using the radio bands that exist in Europe. That's an amazing resource that's still holding on.

Having revenue come in from your music, it's a problem for all of us—even to just fund recordings. I think there are different ways to do it: There are grants; there are other ways. I mean, musicians have always found a way to make what they need to make. But the financial situation, it clearly has a lot of impact on the scene. What would Duke Ellington be doing, you know? Would he still be able to keep his big band together? He kept it together through thick and thin—the same folks. And he did it, from what I can tell, with a lot of little gigs. He'd drive through Iowa and do dances. It wasn't all Carnegie Hall.

Would you ever want to do a project like *Tide* again?

I don't know—we'll have to see. I would prefer that the circumstances that led to it being made don't occur again. That's for sure.

I think some good things can come from [this moment], which is kind of the message of the [song titles] poem. There's all this intense stuff going on, but there's the possibility of change that comes from when people are so uprooted from what's comfortable for them—and when change is so obviously needed.

The whole thing, at the end of it for me, it's sort of an optimistic take on it. And it kind of moves in that way. The name of the first tune, "I Had A Dream," that's pretty pessimistic. It's almost saying, "There was this amazing thing—and maybe not." Then it moves through to a more optimistic frame of mind.

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Sonny Rollins performs at the Go-Go Club in Loosdrecht, The Netherlands, on May 5, 1967. (Photo provided by Resonance Records: Photographer Unknown/Courtesy Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid)

SONNY ROLLINS

WHEN 'NEWK' WENT DUTCH

BY ED ENRIGHT

SONNY ROLLINS LIVES FIRMLY IN THE PRESENT. THE ESTEEMED TENOR SAXOPHONIST—WHOSE VOICE AS A CUTTING-EDGE JAZZ ARTIST CAME INTO FULL BLOOM DURING THE 1950s AND '60s—RETIRED FROM PLAYING CONCERTS IN 2012 AND PUT DOWN HIS HORN FOR GOOD TWO YEARS LATER.

Now, instead of practicing and preparing for gigs and tours, he spends his days at his home in upstate New York reading up on Eastern religions and immersing himself in the mental and spiritual aspects of yoga, a discipline Rollins has practiced continuously since the mid-'50s. During a phone interview in October, the 90-year-old NEA Jazz Master and DownBeat Hall of Famer came across as an enlightened guru of good vibes who's perfectly at peace with his circumstances—and with the world at large.

Lately, though, he has been revisiting the past, giving his blessing to the release of *Rollins In Holland*, a collection of live and studio recordings documenting a 1967 Netherlands tour. Rollins is pleased by what he hears: a powerhouse jazz trio consisting of himself and the Dutch rhythm tandem of bassist Ruud Jacobs (1938–2019) and drummer Han Bennink, playing with attitude, energy and deftness over the course of two club performances and one studio session.

When Rollins arrived in Holland in May of that year, he was no stranger to the jazz trio format. Some of his strongest work already was documented on the 1957 Contemporary album *Way Out West* (with bassist Ray Brown and drummer Shelly Manne), the 1958

Riverside LP *Freedom Suite* (with bassist Oscar Pettiford and drummer Max Roach) and the 1958 Blue Note release *A Night At The Village Vanguard* (from sets with bassist Wilbur Ware and drummer Elvin Jones and with another tandem, bassist Donald Bailey and drummer Pete LaRoca).

Prior to the Netherlands tour, Rollins, then 36, had never before performed with Jacobs or Bennink, two local players in their 20s who represented vastly different styles on the jazz spectrum. Previously, the pair had backed up Johnny Griffin, Ben Webster, Wes Montgomery and other American jazz stars. But Rollins was their hero, and they were extremely well versed in the saxophonist's substantial oeuvre.

"Ruud Jacobs was the bass player of choice for anybody that came through Holland," Rollins recalled. "I found out later that Ruud played with Louis Armstrong. He had one of these great contrabasses made in Europe. The sound was so rich and full. I loved Ruud's playing, and I loved his sound.

"Han Bennink was known as the more avant-garde guy," Rollins continued. "I was told they had distinct styles, but I didn't think about that at all, because I could play with both of them. And they both knew something about

me. So, it was wonderful to have them play together. I was very happy to have them there as my backup trio."

It was a big job—heavy lifting, to say the least—to back up Rollins in that context.

"If I would go on stage with just a drummer and a bass player, those guys have to be very proficient," the saxophonist said. "The drummer has to be excellent, and the bass player has to be excellent, because they're playing everybody else's part that's not there. That's what I need to play with a trio. I need to have a bass player that really is a *bass* player—somebody like Oscar Pettiford or Ray Brown, or Niels-Henning [Ørsted Pedersen] in Europe.

"And the drummer had to be not only good with just plain rhythm; he had to accompany everything. He had to fill in where he should be and not be where he *shouldn't* be. He had to have plenty of moves, and use plenty of space with just him, the bass player and myself. He didn't have to fill in every inch of the music, so he could be very, very careful about what he played. But he had to be good enough to really know to play when you're supposed to play, and not play when you're *not* supposed to play."

Bennink fit the profile perfectly.

"The complete ambiance was so relaxed and at ease," the drummer, now 78, wrote in

Han Bennink (left), Sonny Rollins and Ruud Jacobs in concert at the Academie voor Beeldende Kunst in Arnhem, The Netherlands, the evening of May 3, 1967



TOON FEY

an email. “We never had a rehearsal and just played together, having so much fun, as if we had been playing together for ages. It was a natural fit.

“My favorite album still is Sonny’s *A Night At The Village Vanguard* from 1958. That album brought me so much joy and still does. So, imagine playing with my hero himself nine years later—it was more than wonderful.”

Bennink, who released four albums this year—including a recording with the Instant Composers Pool, which he helped found in 1967—put his experience with the saxophonist into perspective: “What a great time in my life: Now, after 53 years, the recordings made in the Netherlands in 1967 will be released. Wow, what a milestone! Playing with Sonny was a fulfillment of a dream and so very special. It is still unbelievable that it happened. It is a pity that Ruud is not with us anymore to enjoy the release. He played wonderfully.”

The newly discovered recordings were brought to Rollins’ attention via Resonance Records, which is releasing the collection this fall. *Rollins In Holland: The 1967 Studio & Live Recordings* was made available as a three-LP exclusive set for Record Store Day’s Black Friday event (Nov. 27), with a two-CD version arriving on Dec. 4.

Collectors and disciples of “Newk,” as Rollins commonly is known in jazz circles, will take special interest in these freshly revealed gems, as they represent a period in the saxophonist’s career that largely has gone undoc-

umented until now. Low-fidelity tapes of one of the 1967 Holland shows, a May 3 concert at Arnhem Academy of Visual Arts, have been shared informally by Dutch jazz listeners over the years. But the majority of the material on *Rollins In Holland*—including a four-song May 5 morning session at the VARA Studio in Hilversum and two live tracks from the group’s gig that night on a TV show presented from the Go-Go Club in Loosdrecht—was only recently unearthed.

Throughout the *Rollins In Holland* recordings, Bennink and Jacobs deftly follow the saxophonist’s every turn, matching his energy levels over the course of long, take-no-prisoners improvisations on the live tracks and providing subtle yet essential textures during the studio session.

The repertoire on the album consists of straightahead tunes that Rollins had been playing for years as a sideman and leader. At VARA Studio, the group recorded Rogers and Hart’s “Blue Room,” Miles Davis’ “Four,” the Gershwins’ “Love Walked In” and Davis’ “Tune Up.” The live tracks, which have been meticulously restored by George Klabin and Fran Gala at Resonance, include “Four,” “Love Walked In,” Rollins’ “Sonnymoon For Two,” the Gershwins’ “They Can’t Take That Away From Me” and the standards “Three little Words” and “On Green Dolphin Street.” Rollins is in top form, the studio recordings revealing his majestic tone, and the live cuts burning with raucous improvisational excitement.

The *Rollins in Holland* packages include a thick booklet—24 pages in the LP version, and 100 pages in the CD version—that immerses the listener in the environment of the 1967 tour. It includes a new interview with Rollins, a warm 2019 conversation reuniting Bennink and Jacobs, comprehensive notes by Aidan Levy (who’s writing a Rollins biography), an essay by researcher Frank Jochemsen and plenty of previously unseen black-and-white photos from the tour—including shots taken during the trio’s May 6 performance at the Persepolis (a small club in Utrecht), which was not recorded.

Rollins In Holland helps to fill what was previously a gap in the timeline of recordings by the saxophone colossus. After the Impulse label released *East Broadway Run Down* in 1966, Rollins, who’d grown tired of commercial pressures from the business side of jazz, didn’t make another studio recording until 1972’s *Next Album* (Milestone). He was eager, though, to tour Europe, where he felt audiences were more attuned to the artistic and progressive aspects of jazz.

“I had first come to Europe in 1959, and it was really wonderful, because the European people had a different idea about music,” Rollins said. “The American idea of live music is more like, it has to have a commercial value to it. And that’s OK. But in Europe, they know all about Bach and Brahms ... They don’t know the history [here] in the United States. [That’s] not a putdown of the United States, but the people in Europe love jazz and recognize the value

of jazz. They seem to have a deep understanding of music, plus they treated Black musicians much better than we were treated here in the United States. All of that made Europe a wonderful place.”

In spring of 1967, Holland held particular appeal for Rollins, whose first European stop in '59 was Amsterdam. “I loved Holland,” he said. “The people in many parts of Europe are very nice, but there’s something about Holland. I’m glad that we were able to make this record. It brings back some good memories.

“In listening to it, it made me feel happy. It made me relive the excitement of the moment. It was hard to remember the exact performances, but listening to them, I felt the excitement. And it was a lot of fun. I liked both my sidemen, who I got together just for those engagements. And it was good.”

Rollins, whose playing has been sidelined by respiratory illness for the last eight years, continues to pursue his love for all things spiritual.

“That’s my thing, since I can’t play my horn anymore,” he said. “I have a better chance now to immerse myself in my Eastern allegiance. I read my books and do my studying of these principles every day. I think I’m still playing in my head. I’m thinking about musical patterns and ideas and stuff like that. Every now and then I write down some little idea of a tune

or something, but I quickly forget it because I can’t pursue it. So, I don’t want to get that into it, because I get too frustrated. But I’m very happy because I’ve learned so much about life. I’ve learned so much about Buddhism and Christianity, all of the religions. I’ve learned about Jesus Christ and all these people that lived the kind of exemplary life that I want to live. So, I’m a happy camper.

“That’s what I do. And now I’m very happy and watching the world when I can look at the world and not feel, ‘Oh, no, look at what’s happening, look at this terrible thing.’ But the world has always been terrible. There’s nothing in the world today that wasn’t always there. The world has always been filled with ignorance and hate. One group hates another group, this group hates this group, Christians hate Muslims and Muslims hate Buddhists—this kind of stuff. That’s the world. So, I have a perspective on what this world is. I’m not all shook up and saying, ‘Oh, gee, we have problems.’ I’m not there anymore. Because I know what it all is.”

Yoga continues to play a big part in Rollins’ daily routine—but in a way that goes beyond stretching and holding poses.

“Lying down on the floor doing exercises, that’s only one part of yoga,” he noted. “I started out doing that many years ago. But I can’t do all those things anymore. I don’t have to. There are so many different forms of yoga which

apply to what we’re talking about, everyday living. There’s much more to it. There are so many facets of yoga, and they’re all about enlightenment, trying to get an idea of what’s going on in the world.

“It’s a learning experience. I’m trying to get more information about the way to live and the way to go through this life. I’m a big proponent of the Golden Rule, which is something which has been preached in all the religions that we know of, every one of them. They each teach something about how to treat your fellow man. Some say, ‘When your neighbor is happy, be happy with him. When your neighbor is sad, be sad with him.’ This is what life is about, man. We’ve got to look at it in a positive way.

“I also have deep intuition about incarnation. That means that I will be back. Am I gonna be back as some guy playing saxophone? No. But my soul will be back. The body will turn into dust just like anything else on this planet. But the soul will be going through eternity, getting better, learning things, getting enlightenment, going forever. So, I don’t have to be afraid of ending up in hell where guys in red suits are sticking spears in me. Whatever we don’t get right in this life, we’ll have another chance to get it right. Not as this person called Sonny Rollins, or whoever—that’s small potatoes.

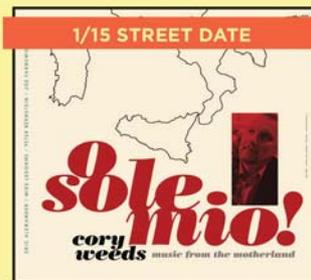
“We’re talking about your *soul*. That lasts forever, man.”

DB



DAVE BRUBECK QUARTET
Time Outtakes

Previously Unreleased Takes from the Original 1959 Sessions master tapes. Never before released!
BRUBECK EDITIONS



CORY WEEDS

O Sole Mio!
Music From The Motherland
Delivering a blistering set of Italian themed tunes backed up by one of the best organ bands in Jazz today!
CELLAR LIVE



DAVID RESTIVO
Arancina

...simply one of the most exceptional jazz pianists of his generation that Canada can boast of... Edmonton Journal
CHRONOGRAPH RECORDS



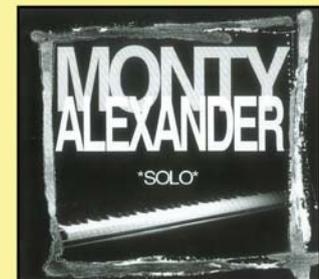
DIEGO FIGUEIREDO
Antartica

Grammy nominated guitarist's collection of all original "Top Tier" compositions!
ARBORS RECORDS



ROSSANO SPORTIELLO
That's It

Solo piano pieces by a master pianist. A combination of originals & standards!
ARBORS RECORDS



MONTY ALEXANDER
Solo

"...a memorable demonstration of what Alexander is capable of doing by himself."
AllMusic Review by Alex Henderson
KINGSTON

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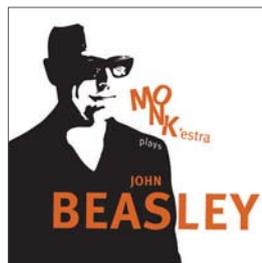
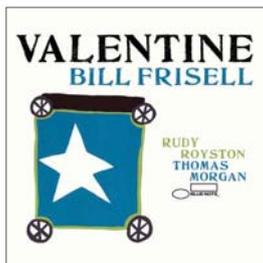
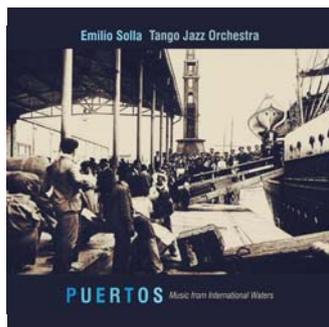


BEYOND THE NOTES

Streaming LIVE from the Galt House Hotel, Louisville, KY

BEST ALBUMS OF 2020

MASTERPIECES ★★★★★



CHRISTIAN SCOTT ATUNDE ADJUAH

AXIOM
Ropeadope.....Dec.

"Ofentimes when we come into environments like this to play creative improvised music, someone uses the word 'jazz,' and then everyone in the room becomes a fuckin' Fulbright scholar," trumpeter Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah told the audience at New York's Blue Note Jazz Club at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. "And that's cool, but that has nothing to do with where this music's power rests." *AXIOM*, which was recorded that night, is a testament to that power.

JOHN BEASLEY
MONK'estra Plays John Beasley
Mack Ave.....Sept.

John Beasley has arranged the brass brighter and brasher, the low horns to be more growly and his tasty keyboard parts to be artfully highlighted on his third album with the acclaimed MONK'estra. Extending neatly synchronized section motifs—those indelibly quirky Monk phrases—into swelling backdrops that balance freely impassioned soloists, Beasley as a pianist and composer draws out even more melodic, harmonic and rhythmic

implications in music by Monk, Bird and Duke.

CARLA BLEY/ANDY SHEPPARD/STEVE SWALLOW

Life Goes On
ECMApril

Life Goes On is a brilliant expression of the camaraderie developed by Carla Bley's longtime trio with bassist Steve Swallow and saxophonist Andy Sheppard. It offers three suites highlighting Bley's deft sense of dramatic development, her gifts as a soloist (often overshadowed by her composing) and the trio's deadpan minimalism and subtly organic interplay. During Bley's long career, there have been times when her work has merely seemed smart, but not emotionally resonant. Here, it's both.

BILL FRISELL
Valentine
Blue NoteAug.

"Playing together" is a phrase so commonplace it's easy to forget what it signifies. Of course, there's the obvious: making music with others, performing as an ensemble, being creative in a group. But the music guitarist Bill Frisell, bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Rudy Royston offer here suggests a specific spin on the idea, one that emphasizes

the togetherness of the playing. Even though the selections on *Valentine* hail from a range of styles, the performances represent jazz playing at its most sublime. And music seldom gets more "together" than that.

GUILLERMO KLEIN Y LOS GUACHOS
Cristal
Sunnyside.....Jan.

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. 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.

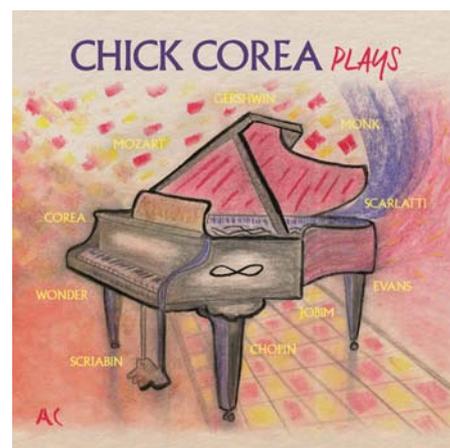
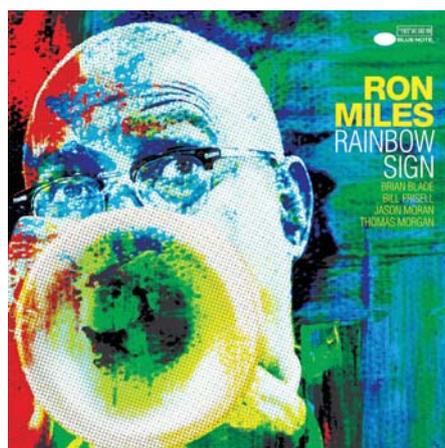
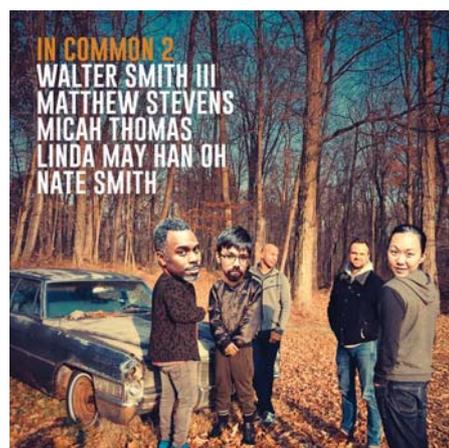
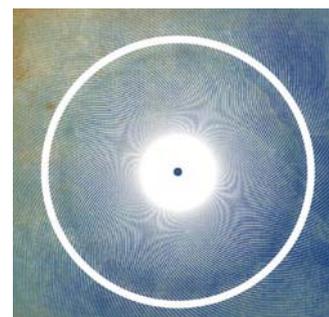
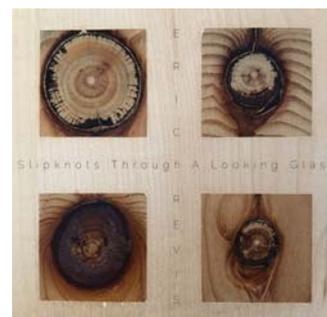
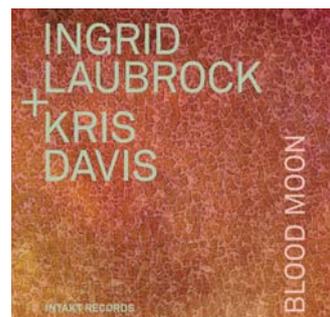
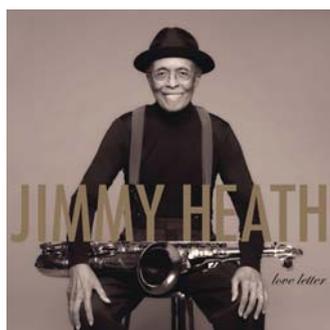
KURT ROSENWINKEL BANDIT 65
Searching The Continuum
HeartcoreFeb.

Because jazz remains a mostly acoustic music, the striking thing about guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel's *Bandit 65* is how overwhelmingly electronic it sounds. Rosenwinkel, fellow guitarist Tim Motzer and

drummer Gintas Janusonis all are credited with "electronics." The range of tones and textures are so deep and beguiling that it's easy to get lost in the sheer lushness of the sound. Doing so, however, would be a bit like missing the forest for the trees, because the real genius of *Searching The Continuum* is that each of these tracks was spontaneously conceived of and recorded live.

EMILIO SOLLA TANGO JAZZ ORCHESTRA
Puertos: Music From International Waters
AvantangoMarch

The high concept that drives *Puertos: Music From International Waters* has no right to work. Dedicating each song to a different port seems like a hokey idea lifted out of the era of stereo demonstration LPs. But what moves *Puertos* beyond a simple pastiche is that Emilio Solla has invested heavily in each of the pieces here. It's the difference between seeing each city from the deck of a ship and exploring the back alleys of each place. The thread running through the various ports is how imperialist conquests, the slave trade and immigration mixed with native traditions to create distinctive yet linked music from Cadiz to Buenos Aires and New York.



JONATHAN BARBER & VISION AHEAD

Legacy Holder
Vision Ahead Music Aug.

MARC COPLAND

And I Love Her
[Illusions] Mirage Jan.

CHICK COREA

Plays
Stretch Oct.

FRISELL/LAGE/RILEY

John Zorn: Virtue
Tzadik July

JIMMY HEATH

Love Letter
Verve Sept.

SIGURD HOLE

Lys/Mørke
Elvesang May

LAUBROCK/DAVIS

Blood Moon
Intakt Sept.

WYNTON MARSALIS

The Ever Funky Lowdown
Blue Engine Dec.

RON MILES

Rainbow Sign
Blue Note Nov.

HEDVIG MOLLESTAD

Ekhidna
Rune Grammofon Sept.

NOUS

Nous II
Our Silent Canvas Feb.

AARON PARKS

Little Big II: Dreams Of A Mechanical Man
Ropeadope July

REDMAN/MEHLDAU/MCBRIDE/BLADE

Round Again
Nonesuch Sept.

ERIC REVIS

Slipknots Through A Looking Glass
Pyroclastic Oct.

MICHELE ROSEWOMAN'S NEW YOR-UBA

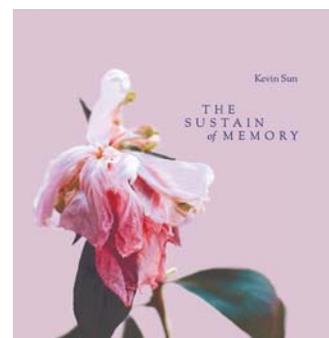
Hallowed
Advance Dance Disques ... Feb.

FELIPE SALLES INTERCONNECTIONS ENSEMBLE

The New Immigrant Experience
Tapestry April

SARA SERPA

Recognition
Biophilia July



WALTER SMITH III & MATTHEW STEVENS

In Common 2
Whirlwind July

KEVIN SUN

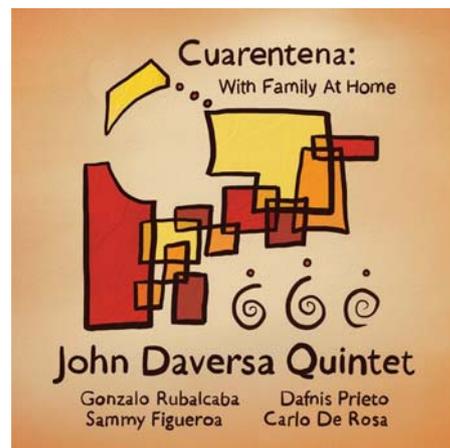
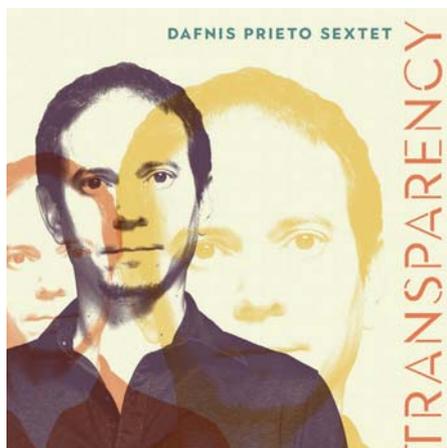
The Sustain Of Memory
Endectomorph Jan.

HISTORICAL ★★★★★ ½



KEITH JARRETT
Munich 2016
 ECM Feb.

NEW ★★★★★



3D JAZZ TRIO
I Love To See You Smile
 Diva Jazz Aug.

11 GUYS QUARTET
Small Blues And Grooves
 VizzTone Feb.

REZ ABBASI
Djanto-shift
 Whirlwind Sept.

IDRIS ACKAMOOR & THE PYRAMIDS
Shaman!
 Strut Oct.

RYOKO AKAMA
Dial
 Another Timbre Jan.

JD ALLEN
Toys/Die Dreaming
 Savant Oct.

ANTIBALAS
Fu Chronicles
 Daptone Aug.

LYNNE ARRIALE TRIO
Chimes Of Freedom
 Challenge June

GREGG AUGUST
Dialogues On Race, Volume One
 lacuessa April

OMER AVITAL QANTAR
New York Paradox
 jazz&people/Zamzama Aug.

JOHN BAILEY
Can You Imagine?
 Freedom Road April

MARC BENHAM
Biotope
 SteepleChase April

FRANK BEY
All My Dues Are Paid
 Nola Blue April

TIM BERNE'S SNAKEOIL
The Fantastic Mrs. 10
 Intakt May

PETER BERNSTEIN
What Comes Next
 Smoke Sessions Dec.

LAILA BIALI
Out Of Dust
 Chronograph/ACT June

JIM BLACK TRIO
Reckon
 Intakt March

BLACK ART JAZZ COLLECTIVE
Ascension
 HighNote Sept.

BLAER
Yellow
 Ronin Rhythm July

BOHREN & DER CLUB OF GORE
Patchouli Blue
 Ipecac Feb.

MOSES BOYD
Dark Matter
 Exodus April

GEOF BRADFIELD BEN GOLDBERG/DANA HALL
General Semantics
 Delmark Nov.

PETER BRÖTZMANN
I Surrender Dear
 Trost Feb.

THE DARIUS BRUBECK QUARTET
Live In Poland
 Ubuntu May

BRODY BUSTER'S ONE MAN BAND
Damn! I Spilled The Blues
 Booga Jan.

GARY BRUNTON/SIMON GOUBERT/BOJAN Z
Night Bus
 Juste Une Trace April

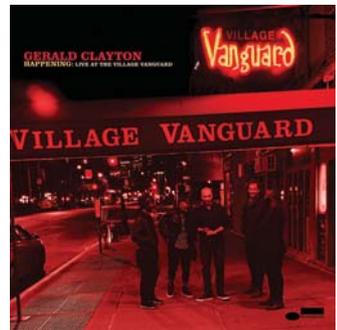
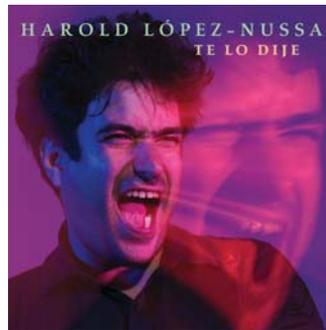
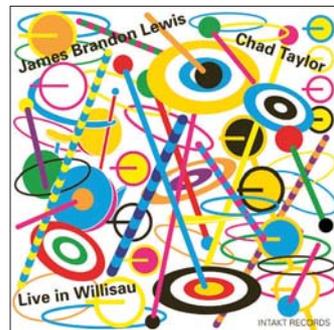
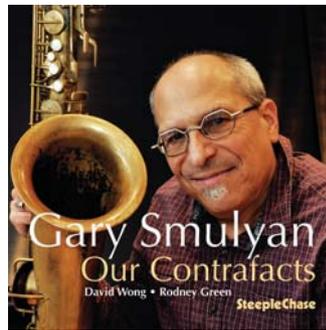
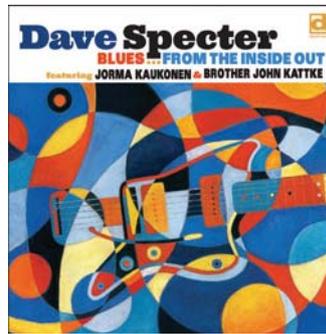
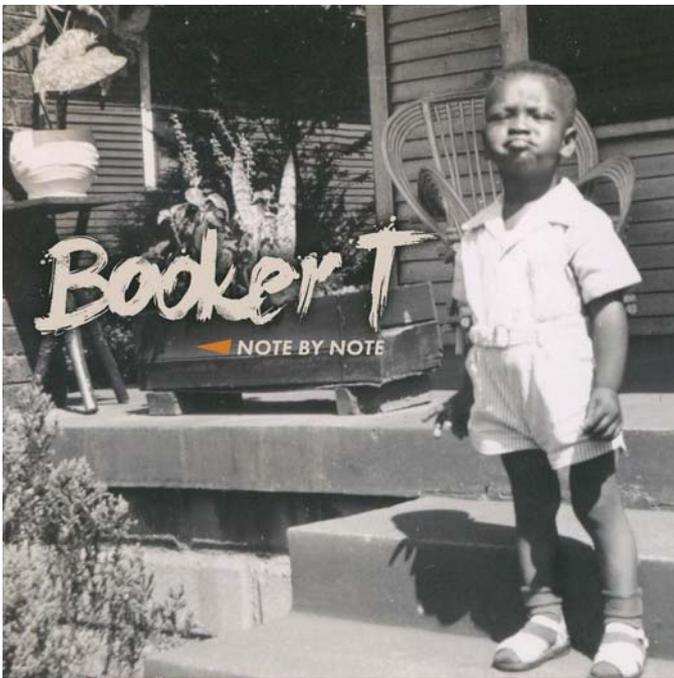
ERNESTO CERVINI
Tetrahedron
 Anzic April

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND QUARTET
Good Days
 Astral Spirits April

GERALD CLAYTON
Happening: Live At The Village Vanguard
 Blue Note Aug.

ROB CLUTTON WITH TONY MALABY
Offering
 Snailbongbong March

HARRY CONNICK JR.
True Love: A Celebration Of Cole Porter
 Verve Jan.



SYLVIE COURVOISIER TRIO
Free Hoops
Intakt..... Nov.

EDDIE DANIELS
Night Kisses: A Tribute To Ivan Lins
Resonance Oct.

JOHN DAVERSA QUINTET
Cuarentena: With Family At Home
Tiger Turn..... Dec.

MICHAEL DEASE
Never More Here
Posi-Tone Jan.

CHANO DOMINGUEZ & HADAR NOIBERG
Paramus
Sunnyside..... Jan.

MICHAEL DOUCET
Lâcher Prise
Compass..... April

DAVE DOUGLAS
Dizzy Atmosphere: Dizzy Gillespie At Zero Gravity
Greenleaf Music July

DAVE DOUGLAS
ENGAGE
Greenleaf Music Feb.

NICK DUNSTON
Atlantic Extractions: Live At Threes
Out Of Your Head..... Nov.

SINNE EEG & THE DANISH RADIO BIG BAND
We've Just Begun
BFM Jazz May

WAYNE ESCOFFERY
The Humble Warrior
Smoke Sessions..... June

MARIA FAUST
SACRUM FACERE
Organ
Stunt..... Sept.

JOHN FEDCHOCK NY SEXTET
Into The Shadows
Summit..... Aug.

NUPHAR FEY
Serenity Island
Hypnote..... May

JOE FIEDLER'S BIG SACKBUT
Live In Graz
Multiphonics..... Aug.

AMINA FIGAROVA
EDITION 113
Persistence
Amfi..... May

FIRE! ORCHESTRA
Actions
Rune Grammofon..... June

SATOKO FUJII/JOE FONDA
Four
Long Song March

SATOKO FUJII ORCHESTRA
NEW YORK
Entropy
Libra April

FUTUREBIRDS
Teamwork
Easy Sound..... March

HAL GALPER
The Zone: Live At The Yardbird Suite
Origin March

JAN GARBAREK/ THE HILLIARD ENSEMBLE
Remember Me, My Dear
ECM Jan.

MARSHALL GILKES TRIO
Waiting To Continue
Alternate Side..... Dec.

YURI GOLOUBEV
Two Chevrons Apart
Basho..... May

WOLFGANG HAFFNER
Kind Of Tango
ACT..... May

TIGRAN HAMASYAN
The Call Within
Nonesuch Dec.

JEFF HAMILTON TRIO
Catch Me If You Can
Capri..... Sept.

JOEL HARRISON +18
America At War
Sunnyside..... July

EDDIE HENDERSON
Shuffle And Deal
Smoke Sessions..... Sept.

FRED HERSCH
Songs From Home
Palmetto..... Dec.

FRANÇOIS HOULE 4
Recorder
Songlines..... Dec.

JASPER HØIBY
Planet B
Edition..... June

JULIA HÜLSMANN QUARTET
Not Far From Here
ECM Feb.

PETER HUM

Ordinary Heroes
Self Release June

JASON KAO HWANG

Human Rights Trio
True Sound Nov.

IRREVERSIBLE ENTANGLEMENTS

Who Sent You?
International Anthem/
Don Giovanni May

JACK MACK & THE HEART ATTACK

*Live From Centennial Park—
Atlanta 1996*
Free Roll March

TERESA JAMES & THE RHYTHM TRAMPS

Live!
Jesi-lu Feb.

TOMAS JANZON

130th & Lenox
Changes March

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA

*The Music Of Wayne
Shorter*
Blue Engine April

THE JIMMYS

Gotta Have It
Brown Cow March

JIMMY JOHNSON

Every Day Of Your Life
Delmark April

BOOKER T. JONES

Note By Note
Edith Street Feb.

ANDREA KELLER

Transients: Volume 2
Self Release March

EVA KESS

*Sternschnuppen:
Falling Stars*
Neuklang Dec.

**AMIRTHA KIDAMBI/
LEA BERTUCCI**

Phase Eclipse
Astral Spirits/Monofonus
Press Feb.

QUIN KIRCHNER

The Shadows And The Light
Astral Spirits Oct.

MARK KNOOP

*Tim Parkinson: Piano Music
2015-2016*
All That Dust Jan.

KIRK KNUFFKE

*Brightness: Live In
Amsterdam*
Royal Potato Family May

DIANA KRALL

This Dream Of You
Verve Dec.

JOACHIM KÜHN & MATEUSZ SMOCZYNSKI

Speaking Sound
ACT March

KUZU

Purple Dark Opal
Aerophonics April

MIRANDA LAMBERT

Wildcard
RCA Nashville March

**NILS LANDGREN/
JAN LUNDGREN**

Kristallen
ACT March

BRIAN LANDRUS

For Now
Blueland Aug.

INGRID LAUBROCK

*Dreamt Twice,
Twice Dreamt*
Intakt Dec.

JIMIN LEE

Strange Flower
Mirrorball March

LAUREN LEE

Windowsill
eyes&ears Jan.

**JAMES BRANDON LEWIS/
CHAD TAYLOR**

Live In Willisau
Intakt July

HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA

Te Lo Dije
Mack Avenue Sept.

HAROLD MABERN

Mabern Plays Mabern
Smoke Sessions April

RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA

Hero Trio
Whirlwind Aug.

NDUZO MAKHATHINI

*Modes Of Communication:
Letters From The Underworlds*
Blue Note June

JASON MARSALIS

Jason Marsalis Live
Basin Street Aug.

BRIAN MARSELLA

Gatos Do Sul
Tzadik May

**WOJTEK MAZOLEWSKI
QUINTET**

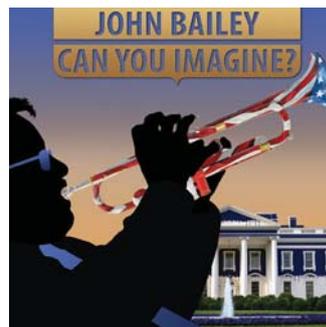
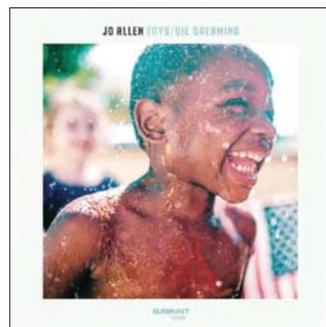
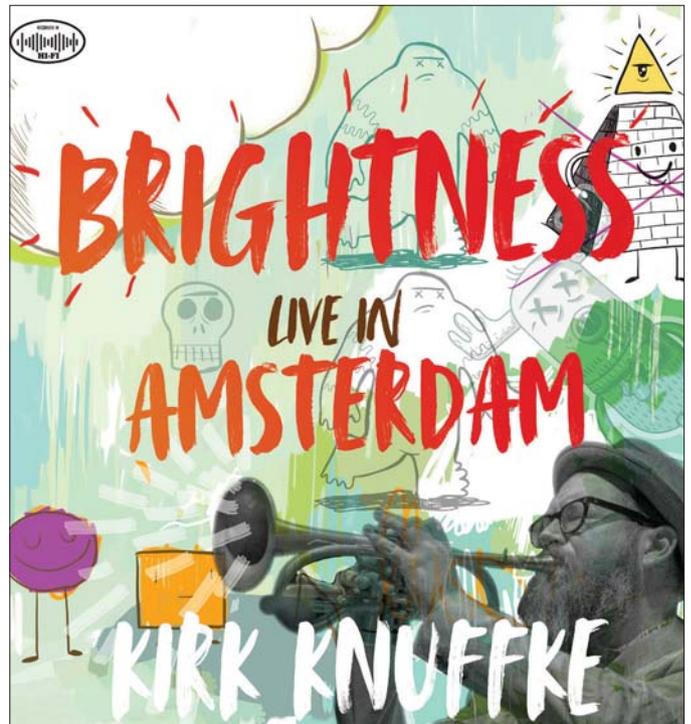
When Angels Fall
Whirlwind April

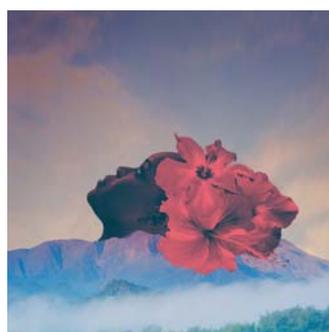
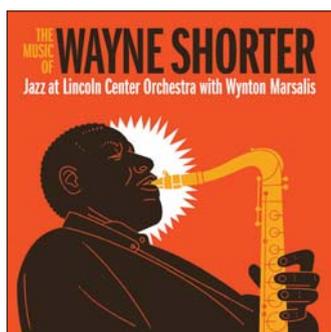
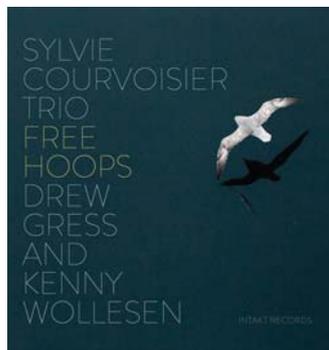
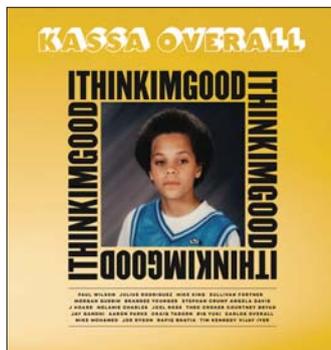
**CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE BIG
BAND**

For Jimmy, Wes And Oliver
Mack Ave Oct.

ZARA MCFARLANE

*Songs Of An Unknown
Tongue*
Brownswood Oct.





ROSS MCHENRY
Nothing Remains
Unchanged
First Word.....June

**JOHN MCLAUGHLIN/
SHANKAR MAHADEVAN/
ZAKIR HUSSAIN**
Is That So?
Abstract LogixFeb.

CHARLES MCPHERSON
Jazz Dance Suites
Chazz MackOct.

BRAD MEHLDAU
Suite: April 2020
NonesuchOct.

MARIA MENDES
Close To Me
Justin TimeFeb.

**ANNE METTE IVERSEN
QUARTET +1**
Racing A Butterfly
Brooklyn Jazz Underground
.....July

**NICOLE MITCHELL &
LISA E. HARRIS**
EarthSeed
FPEAug.

MUTE
Mute
Fresh Sound New Talen.... March

THE NECKS
Three
Northern SpyMay

MARIUS NESET
Tributes
ACT.....Dec.

MARIUS NESET
Viaduct
ACT.....Feb.

MACIEJ OBARA QUARTET
Three Crowns
ECMJan.

**ARTURO O'FARRILL/
THE AFRO LATIN JAZZ
ORCHESTRA**
Four Questions
ZohoAug.

KASSA OVERALL
I Think I'm Good
Brownswood.....March

KEITH OXMAN
Two Cigarettes In The Dark
Capri.....June

JUNIUS PAUL
Ism
International Anthem.....Feb.

**RALPH PETERSON & THE
MESSENGER LEGACY**
Onward & Upward
Onyx.....Oct.

CHARLIE PORTER
Immigration Nation
OA2March

**RYAN PORTER & THE WEST
COAST GET DOWN**
Live In Paris At New Morning
World Galaxy/Alpha Pup....Sept.

ILYA PORTNOV
3
Self ReleaseJan.

TINEKE POSTMA
Freya
EditionMay

DAFNIS PRIETO SEXTET
Transparency
Dafnison.....Nov.

RAVA/HERBERT/GUIDI
For Mario (Live)
Accidental.....Sept.

TOMEKA REID QUARTET
Old New
CuneiformFeb.

REVERSO
The Melodic Line
Out Note.....April

STEPH RICHARDS
SUPERSENSE
Northern SpyNov.

JASON ROBINSON
Harmonic Constituent
PlayscapeDec.

ROOMFUL OF BLUES
A Roomful Of Blues
AlligatorMay

CHARLES RUMBACK
June Holiday
Astral Spirits.....July

**JEFF RUPERT/
GEORGE GARZONE**
The Ripple
Rupe Media.....May

**ANGELICA SÁNCHEZ/
MARILYN CRISPELL**
How To Turn The Moon
PyroclasticNov.

MARTA SÁNCHEZ QUINTET
El Rayo De Luz
Fresh Sound New Talent...Jan.

JOHN SCOFIELD
Swallow Tales
ECMAug.

MATTHEW SHIPP
The Piano Equation
Tao Forms.....July

LISA MARIE SIMMONS
*NoteSpeak (Amori E Tragedie
In Musica)*
RopeadopeMay

SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE
Companion Rises
Drag CityMay

SONAR WITH DAVID TORN
Tranceportation (Volume 1)
RareNoise.....March



DAVE SPECTER
Blues From The Inside Out
Delmark..... Jan.

ANDERS SVANOE
Solo Flight: State Of The Baritone, Vol. 4
Irabbagast.....Feb.

SHABAKA AND THE ANCESTORS
We Are Sent Here By History
Impulse.....April

GARY SMULYAN
Our Contrafacts
SteepleChase.....Aug.

SON OF GOLDFINGER (DAVID TORN/CHESS SMITH/TIM BERNE)
(Congratulations To You)
9 Donkeys.....Oct.

TYSHAWN SOREY AND MARILYN CRISPELL
The Adornment Of Time
Pi..... Jan.

LUCIANA SOUZA
Storytellers
Sunnyside.....May

KANDACE SPRINGS
The Woman Who Raised Me
Blue Note.....April



LENI STERN
4
LSR.....Aug.

CECILIE STRANGE
Blue
April.....Sept.

SWAMP DOGG
Sorry You Couldn't Make It
Joyful Noise.....May

RACHEL THERRIEN
Vena
Bonsai.....June

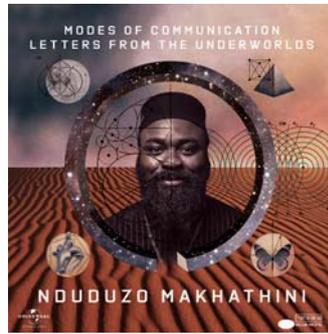
BRIANNA THOMAS
Everybody Knows
Breathline..... Dec.

THUMBSCREW
The Anthony Braxton Project
Cuneiform.....Oct.

THUNDERCAT
It Is What It Is
Brainfeeder.....May

DAVID TRANCHINA LARGE-ISH ENSEMBLE
The Ogre
Big Ego..... July

REBECCA TRESCHER
Where We Go
Enja.....June



TRIO GRANDE
Trio Grande
Whirlwind..... Dec.

MANUEL VALERA NEW CUBAN EXPRESS BIG BAND
José Martí En Nuevo York
Greenleaf Music.....Oct.

GARY VERSACE
All For Now
SteepleChase.....June

WILL VINSON
Four Forty One
Whirlwind..... March

ALEXANDER VON SCHLIPPENBACH
Slow Pieces For Aki—Piano Solo
Intakt..... Dec.

MARCIN WASILEWSKI TRIO/JOE LOVANO
Arctic Riff
ECM.....Aug.

WATERLESS HILLS
The Great Mountain
Cardinal Fuzz/Feeding Tube.....May

BOBBY WATSON
Keepin' It Real
Smoke Sessions.....Aug.



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Rectangles
Out Of Your Head..... Dec.

BEN WENDEL
High Heart
Edition..... Nov.

LUCINDA WILLIAMS
Good Souls Better Angels
Thirty Tigers/Highway 20.....July

NORMA WINSTONE & JOHN TAYLOR
In Concert
Sunnyside.....April

WARREN WOLF
Reincarnation
Mack Avenue.....May

STEPHANE WREMBEL
Django L'Impressionniste
Water Is Life..... Jan.

ERI YAMAMOTO TRIO & CHORAL CHAMELEON
Goshu Ondo Suite
AUM Fidelity..... Jan.

ALICE ZAWADZKI
Within You Is A World Of Spring
Whirlwind..... Jan.

HISTORICAL ★★ ★★

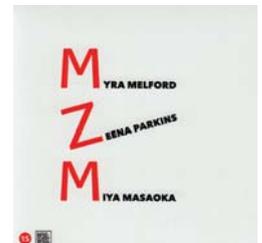
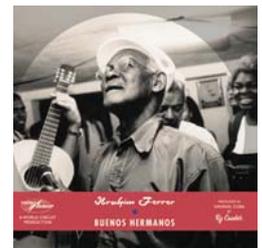
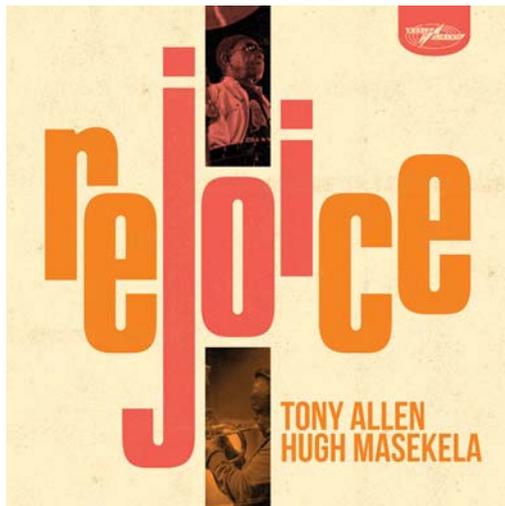
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Rejoice
World Circuit.....June

DR. JOHN & THE WDR BIG BAND
Big Band Voodoo
Orange Music.....Feb.

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Buenos Hermanos
World Circuit.....May

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Art Baden of Berklee College of Music was a co-winner in the Jazz Instrumental Soloist category (Undergraduate College Division) in the 2020 DownBeat Student Music Awards. (Photo: ©Yossi Zwecker)

Inside >

48 / Historical

REVIEWS >



VERYL OAKLAND

On an unearthed Thelonious Monk concert recording from 1968, the pianist is bold, iconoclastic and warmly inviting.

Thelonious Monk *Palo Alto*

IMPULSE 0711284

★★★★½

Thanks to an anonymous custodian with a tape recorder, today we have *Palo Alto*, the live recording of an unscheduled, off-tour concert that Thelonious Monk and his road band played in the fall of 1968. The concert's backstory unspools like a modern feel-good movie: The jazz titan agreed to play a high school auditorium at the behest of eager student and future concert promoter Danny Scher, who, for one afternoon, managed to unite the racially divided California communities of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto through music. Monk's playing that day was transcendent, and, more than 50 years on, it still conjures feelings of goodwill.

The complete set, six tunes from Monk's regular touring repertoire, lasted for only a little over three-quarters of an hour. But during these few tunes, Monk and his quartet—longtime sidemen Charlie Rouse (tenor saxophone), Larry

Gales (bass) and Ben Riley (drums)—exhibited the composer's artistry at its most essential: bold, iconoclastic and warmly inviting.

The ensemble opened with "Ruby, My Dear," Monk's standard-form ballad and a ready platform for his chunky comping and quirky soloing. While an earnest Rouse expounded on the cheery head, Monk experimented with luscious chordal voicings underneath, only to step away from the tonal center during his own solo—haphazardly, rather than strategically. Or so it seems, at first listen.

As the set progressed, Monk introduced more innovation to his performance, and, increasingly, the band began to take greater liberties in their solos. For "Well, You Needn't," the album's second track, Rouse spun Monk's jangly, tongue-in-cheek melody off into multiple directions; Riley generated the galloping tempo, sustaining it through a multitextured solo; Gales bowed the bass while tossing off a vocalese; and Monk alternately picked on the harmony, sped through some scales or dropped out completely.

By the time the band hit two of Monk's live

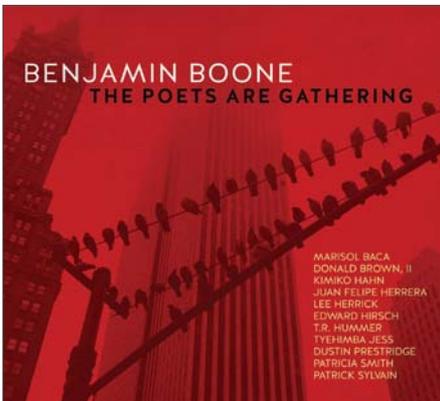
mainstays—"Blue Monk," the longest track on the album, and "Epistrophy," an eleventh-hour triumph—their improvisations had reached an apogee of creativity and intensity. Relentlessly repeated blues choruses, breathless shifts in dynamics, irregular percussive accents, solidly swinging straightahead bits, weirdly out phrases—these two tracks contain some of the best soloing on the record.

Monk played alone on two pop tunes that day in Palo Alto: "Don't Blame Me" and "I Love You (Sweetheart Of All My Dreams)." He had recorded these for *Criss-Cross* and *Monk*, respectively, during his early-'60s honeymoon with Columbia. On the versions here, the pianist dug deep into their pop idioms, only to upend each with clever reharmonizations—not a contradiction so much as a road map to deeper musical understanding. —Suzanne Lorge

Palo Alto: Ruby, My Dear; Well, You Needn't; Don't Blame Me; Blue Monk; Epistrophy; I Love You (Sweetheart Of All My Dreams). (47:19)

Personnel: Thelonious Monk, piano; Charlie Rouse, tenor saxophone; Larry Gales, bass; Ben Riley, drums.

Ordering info: impulserrecords.com



Benjamin Boone *The Poets Are Gathering*

ORIGIN 82808

★★★½

The Poets Are Gathering is Benjamin Boone's most ambitious recording yet, one where he recruits a superb arsenal of poets who unravel their works with razor-sharp conviction and clarity. The marriage of jazz and poetry can invite as much scorn as it does celebration, perhaps stemming from spoken-word recitations overpowering middling music or accompaniment overcompensating for lackluster verses. But when deployed by Boone, the bond can be wondrous.

The saxophonist already proved his mettle through a pair of *The Poetry Of Jazz* albums

Melody Gardot *Sunset In The Blue*

DECCA 3139641

★★★★

Of all the inspiring messages sent out by musicians during the pandemic, Melody Gardot's touching video collaboration with players and well-wishers from around the world, "From Paris With Love," struck home, especially the line, "Maybe one day, I'll see you soon." Gardot's quietly passionate, finely wrought new album, *Sunset In The Blue*, includes that timely song while lingering in its register of loss, hope and moody desire, which we all know so well these days.

Working with lush strings in a gauzy pop-jazz territory pioneered by Norah Jones (but with a sultry alto and slo-mo pace that is more like Shirley Horn), Gardot displays her muted sound, nuanced phrasing, technical clarity and estimable songwriting on a rich combination of originals and covers. The title track was co-written by longtime Jones collaborator Jesse Harris, and its lyric, "another dream begins to fray," is typical of the crossed-up love affairs that saturate the album. Shades of Dinah Washington's gravity and Edith Piaf's quick vibrato seep into "If You Love Me," showcasing Gardot's subtle stretching of a vowel sound for emotional punch. Brazilian flavors abound: Gardot's "C'est Magnifique" and

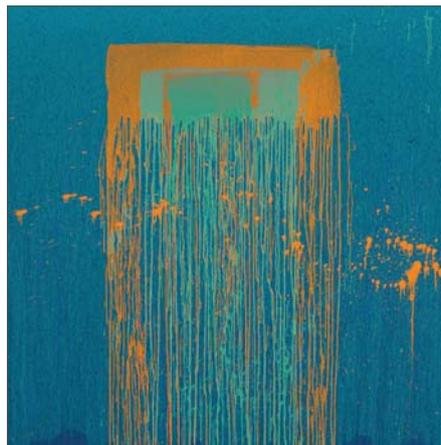
alongside the late writer Philip Levine, where the bandleader's compositions underscored the poetry's emotional intent without competing for the spotlight.

The bulk of this latest album centers on the States' legacy of racism. Following worldwide Black Lives Matter protests, one could argue that Patricia Smith's "That's My Son There" is critic-proof in the sense that her socially minded purpose forbids negative assessment. The works here, however, excel beyond didactic agitprop, bringing forth singular human elements that often get lost in aspirational universality. "That's My Son There" stirs the soul as Smith gives voice to mothers who have seen their children slaughtered in sanctioned police violence. Other pieces—which address the plight of immigrants, homelessness and compassion fatigue—unfold like engrossing short films, all of which demand concentrated engagement. —John Murph

The Poets Are Gathering: That's My Son There; Marooning; Against Silence; Poem By Poem; Deconstruction Of Idols; Truths; The Poets Are Gathering; Song; Spiral; The Sun One (Homage To Sun Ra); Your Man; Impervious Blue; Black Man; Ports Of Sorrow; Branch Library; These Current Events. (60:11)

Personnel: Benjamin Boone, Hashem Assadullahi, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone; Atticus Boone, tenor saxophone; Asher Boone, trumpet; Kenny Werner, David Aus, Craig Vonberg, piano; Ben Monder, Eyal Maoz, guitar; Donald Brown II, vocals, programming; Donald Brown, Alberto Diaz Castillo, keyboards; Stefan Poetzsch, violin, viola; Richard Juarez, percussion; Patrick Olvera, Corcoran Holt, Peter Brendler, bass; Ari Hoening, Ray Moore, Nathan Guzman, John Bishop, drums; Patricia Smith, Patrick Sylvain, Tyehimba Jess, Juan Felipe Herrera, Dustin Prestridge, Lee Herrick, Edward Hirsch, Marisol Baca, T.R. Hummer, Kimiko Hahn, vocals.

Ordering info: originarts.com



"There Where He Lives In Me" percolate as quiet bossas; "Um Beijo" and "Niguém, Niguém" exult in exuberance. Though Gardot's take on "Moon River" is just OK, and the strings of "Ave Maria" might prompt a shrug, the album offers welcome comfort in a time of need. —Paul de Barros

Sunset In The Blue: If You Love Me; C'est Magnifique; There Where He Lives In Me; Love Song; You Won't Forget Me; Sunset In The Blue; Um Beijo; Ninguém, Ninguém; From Paris With Love; Ave Maria; Moon River; I Fall In Love Too Easily; Little Something. (56:27)

Personnel: Melody Gardot, António Zambujo, vocals; Till Brönner, trumpet; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; Anthony Wilson, Nando Duarte, guitar; Larry Klein, guitar, bass; Philippe Baden Powell, piano; Sam Minaie, John Leftwich, Chuck Berghofer, bass; Chuck Staab, Winnie Colaiuta, drums; Paulinho Da Costa, percussion; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ordering info: decca.com



Rob Mazurek Exploding Star Orchestra *Dimensional Stardust*

INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM/NONESUCH

★★★★

Through more than a decade and a handful of albums, Rob Mazurek's large ensemble has explored ways to expand a motif—refracting its essence, creating its kin, heeding the path that unfolds. That's probably someone's definition of trad composition, but at its best, the troupe of savvy improvisers in the Exploding Star Orchestra makes it seem like a novel tack—and never more so than on the 10 exquisite pieces of the suite-like *Dimensional Stardust*.

Mazurek has insights into calibrating scale. His work with drummer Chad Taylor in the Chicago Underground Duo can sound surprisingly grand, and previous ESO outings have found myriad ways to project intimacy. Here, "The Careening Prism Within (Parable 43)" bows to roiling expressionism, but wraps itself in delicate passages. It's followed by "Abstract Dark Energy (Parable 9)," which opens gently but adds enough tension and texture to close on a swell of anxiety. Thirteen musicians comprise the outfit this time, and solos are benched—they're seldom central to the ESO's designs, anyway, but here, singularity is subsumed. More Reich than Ra, several pieces deploy a hyper-counterpoint to blend the clout of a symphonic endeavor with the focus of a minimalist experiment, as if Anthony Davis' *Epistēmē* had been informed by Pedro Santos' *Krishmanda*. It all works because Mazurek's arranging skills equal his vision. Like that of a simmering gamelan group, this music pulses with enough panache to actually swirl through the air. —Jim Macnie

Dimensional Stardust: Sun Core Tet (Parable 99); A Wrinkle In Time Sets Concentric Circles Reeling; Galaxy 1000; The Careening Prism Within (Parable 43); Abstract Dark Energy (Parable 9); Parable Of Inclusion; Dimensional Stardust (Parable 33); Minerals Bionic Stereo; Parable 3000 (We All Come From Somewhere Else); Autumn Pleiades. (43:14)

Personnel: Rob Mazurek, piccolo trumpet, synthesizer, electronics; Damon Locks, vocals, electronics; Nicole Mitchell, flute; Jaimie Branch, trumpet; Tomeka Reid, cello; Macie Stewart, violin; Joel Ross, vibraphone; Jeff Parker, guitar; Angelica Sanchez, keyboards; Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, bass; Chad Taylor, Mikel Patrick Avery, drums, percussion; John Herndon, drum machine.

Ordering info: intlanthem.bandcamp.com

The Hot Box

	Critics	Paul de Barros	Suzanne Lorge	Jim Macnie	John Murph
Thelonious Monk <i>Palo Alto</i>		★★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★
Benjamin Boone <i>The Poets Are Gathering</i>		★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★½
Melody Gardot <i>Sunset In The Blue</i>		★★★★	★★★½	★★★★	★★★½
Rob Mazurek <i>Dimensional Stardust</i>		★★½	★★★	★★★★	★★★½

Critics' Comments

Thelonious Monk, *Palo Alto*

Everyone in the classic quartet is on his game for this unlikely 1968 high school auditorium show. Monk sounds delighted, executing classics like "Blue Monk" and "Well, You Needn't" with dazzling alacrity. Yes, the sound is brittle, but surprisingly balanced and clear, considering.

—Paul de Barros

Unexpected manna that has the added attraction of being captured with the crackle of a truly animated group performance.

—Jim Macnie

A marvelous time capsule of Monk emitting joy during one of America's most turbulent years in one of the most unlikely performance spaces.

—John Murph

Benjamin Boone, *The Poets Are Gathering*

These messages of protest are welcome and well-put, especially those by Herrera, Baca and Smith. But the music often feels incidentally integrated with the words.

—Paul de Barros

Outrage over broken social contracts feeds the raw creative expression that Boone commands so masterfully on this recording. Jazz and poetry—natural helpmates—carry Boone's weighty messages: one of mesmeric spontaneous composition, the other meticulous word-craft. A forceful dialectic.

—Suzanne Lorge

One of the more compelling poetry/jazz outings I've ever come across. The drama of the readings equals or surpasses the invention of the improv behind it. Several sections are electric.

—Jim Macnie

Melody Gardot, *Sunset In The Blue*

On Gardot's latest release, her gauzy, upfront vocals invoke a retro romanticism: Pastel moods, whispered endearments and unabashed intimacy drive all of the songs' narratives. Beyond such seductions, however, Gardot retains an independent will that informs each dizzying phrase. Listeners, beware your hearts.

—Suzanne Lorge

Languid moments waft through the ballad-heavy program, but Brazilian rhythms and vocal panache inventively bolster the production's luminous haze. Beauty triumphs.

—Jim Macnie

In these times of insurmountable fear and heartache, Gardot offers an exquisite respite that gently tugs our heartstrings.

—John Murph

Rob Mazurek, *Dimensional Stardust*

Churning relentlessly with clanking vibes and an eerie, distorted voice, this quasi-minimalist odyssey is well-made, to be sure, but carries precious little emotional freight.

—Paul de Barros

Mazurek's imaginative writing explores a shifting maze of orchestral ideas. Pan-like flute, resounding brass, electronic underscores and enhanced spoken word propel these compositions forward without compromise, reaching, it seems, for something that rests just beyond the fingertips. In this quest lies the satisfaction.

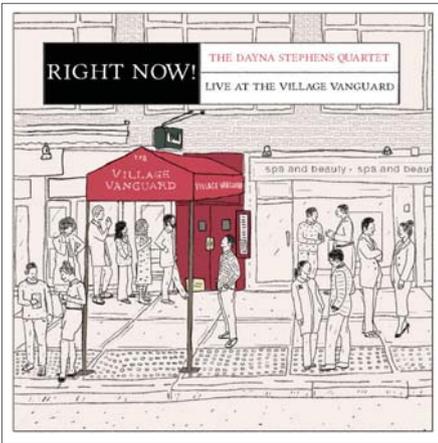
—Suzanne Lorge

Listening to this prismatic music is like watching someone concoct astounding geometrical shapes with colorful Lego blocks.

—John Murph

THE SOUND OF SMOKE





The Dayna Stephens Quartet

Right Now! Live At The Village Vanguard

CONTAGIOUS 005

★★★★½

Saxophonist Dayna Stephens has responded with a number of triumphs since recovering from a rare kidney disease, including the release of *Gratitude* in 2017 and topping the Rising Star Tenor Saxophone category in the 2019 DownBeat Critics Poll. But *Right Now! Live At The Village Vanguard*, an ambitious two-disc live set, is his crowning achievement. Along with expanded

versions of originals from the 2020 album *Liberty* and the 2007 album *The Timeless Now*, Stephens contributes several new pieces here.

Demonstrating a warm, wistful tone on tenor during the medium-tempo swinger “Ran,” turning to alto for the breezy, harmonically shifting “Faith Leap,” Stephens also soars on soprano during the hypnotic “Tarifa,” underscored by Gregory Hutchinson’s crisp polyrhythms. No one since Michael Brecker has explored as much on the EWI as Stephens demonstrates during the adventurous “Blakonian Groove” (dedicated to drummer Johnathan Blake) and the atmospheric “Radio-Active Earworm.” The band hits an easy, interactive chemistry on the kinetic opener “Smoking Gun” (based on Thelonious Monk’s “Evidence”) and maintains that allegiance to swinging on other bop-fueled vehicles like “Contagious,” “You Are Me Blues” and “Loosy Goosy.” Recorded in a packed, pre-pandemic Village Vanguard during January 2019—replete with exuberant cheers from the audience—*Right Now!* reminds us of just how much we all miss the experience of live music. —Bill Milkowski

Right Now! Live At The Village Vanguard: Smoking Gun; Tarifa; Ran; Contagious; Radio-Active Earworm; Faith Leap; Lesson One; Loosy Goosy; Planting Flowers; JFK International; You Are Me Blues; The Beginning Of An Endless Happy Monday; Blakonian Groove. (49:24/50:43)

Personnel: Dayna Stephens, tenor saxophone, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, EWI; Aaron Parks, piano; Ben Street, bass; Gregory Hutchinson, drums.

Ordering info: daynastephens.net

Marshall Allen/Roscoe Mitchell/Milford Graves/Scott Robinson

Flow States

SCIENSONIC 13

★★★★

Flow States brings together avant-garde pioneers to deliver a compact yet unrelenting set of expansive improvisations. The record represents reedist Scott Robinson and drummer Milford Graves’ first endeavor together, and multi-instrumentalist Roscoe Mitchell’s first collaboration with both Graves and reedist Marshall Allen. It’s clear from the start, though, that these four have been vibrating on the same wavelength for a long time.

Recorded at Robinson’s ScienSonic Laboratories, *Flow States* finds the quartet oscillating between forceful explorations and sparse, meditative musings, while seamlessly weaving in bebop, funk and more avant-garde concepts. On “Vortex State,” Mitchell’s blustery notes and Robinson’s acrobatic lines merge with Allen’s meandering reeds for a vibrant amelodic exchange. On “Dream State,” the reeds fall back, spotlighting Graves’ dynamic polyrhythms. The band’s collaboration throughout feels organic and well-balanced, with each musician afforded the proper space to explore fringe concepts.

Graves is a tenacious force, painting rich tex-



tures and spiritual rhythms with high-octane authority. His backbeat provides the anchor for Allen’s playful electric whirls and Robinson’s guttural reeds on “Transition State,” and his playing grows even more frantic under Mitchell’s soprano lines on “Steady State.” Inspired by bebop melodies and funky rhythms, the quartet converges on a more accessible groove for the latter half of *Flow States*. By its conclusion, the band reaches a full-on flow state of boundless improvisation and unbridled creative energy. —Ivana Ng

Flow States: Vortex State; Dream State; Transition State; Steady State; Plasma State; Altered State; Variable State; Flow State. (68:24)

Personnel: Marshall Allen, alto saxophone, EVI; Roscoe Mitchell, soprano saxophone, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, bass saxophone; Scott Robinson, tenor saxophone, contrabass saxophone, bass saxophone; Milford Graves, drums.

Ordering info: sciensonic.net



Django Bates

Tenacity

LOST MARBLE 009

★★★★★

Django Bates’ most recent project marks the convergence of two birthdays—the pianist’s 60th and Charlie Parker’s centennial. The late saxophonist perennially has been on Bates’ mind, a source of inspiration worthy of inventive rethinking.

Tenacity also explores a confluence of the bandleader’s deep-diving, iconoclastic work in both large ensembles and the intimate piano-trio setting, combining his Belovèd trio (bassist Petter Eldh, drummer Peter Bruun) with the Swedish Norrbotten Big Band.

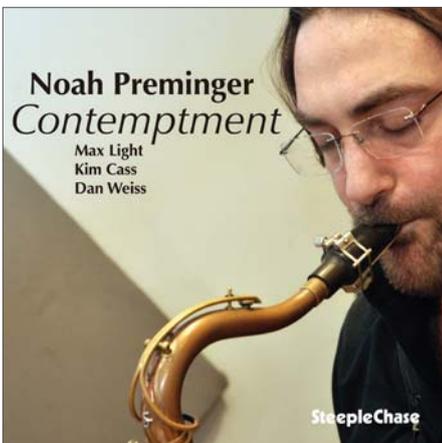
Bates has been cooking up fascinating, irreverent and virtuosic big-band music since his work with Loose Tubes in the ’80s, and on *Tenacity*, he creates a wild but deeply musical tapestry. Such classic Bird bop tongue-twisters as “Donna Lee,” “Ah Leu Cha” and “Confirmation” are put through Bates’ deconstructionist blender to thrilling ends. On tunes associated with the saxophonist—“Laura” and “Star Eyes”—Bates evades static renderings, offering up mercurial changes, whimsical sonics and shifting dynamics. But Bates’ own original compositional voice also is vital to the album, ranging from the elastic, free-meets-fixed “We Are Not Lost, We Are Simply Finding Our Way” to his luminous “The Study Of Touch.” Contrasting the introspective version from his 2017 ECM album, the big-band “Touch” is juiced up with some ensemble gymnastics, but returns to the lyrical head. A tranquil denouement.

Another graceful resolution arrives in the form of the closer, “Tenacity,” following all the intellectual, witty and ecstatic energies on one of the ever-tenacious bandleader’s finest works to date. —Josef Woodard

Tenacity: Cordial; Ah Leu Cha; Donna Lee; Laura; Confirmation; We Are Not Lost, We Are Simply Finding Our Way; The Study Of Touch; My Little Suede Shoes; Star Eyes; Tenacity. (53:10)

Personnel: Django Bates, piano, vocals; Petter Eldh, bass, vocals; Peter Bruun, drums, vocals; Norrbotten Big Band.

Ordering info: djangobates.co.uk



Noah Preminger *Contemptment*

STEEPLECHASE 31906

★★½

Tenor saxophonist Noah Preminger's *Contemptment* is far and away his most composerly album, its seven originals full of byzantine structures, oddly shaped sections and more plot twists than *General Hospital*. Look no further than the many sections, tempos and meters of "Hygge," its second track, for orientation. Try to settle into the groove and listen as the rug flies out from under you with a single bar of 7/4, played in half-time. Similar switcheroos come in the opening "The Late 90s" and "Hey J."

Sophisticated as Preminger's pieces are, it's also the album's major obstacle. The tunes just aren't very memorable, in large part because they don't sit still long enough to appreciate. "Hamburg" has a leitmotif—a chromatic descent—that might be the only enduring bit on the record, and that includes the stuff that surrounds it in the song. For the listener, it's a lot of work.

There are payoffs, though. The quartet's delicate take of the Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Porcelain" has great beauty, with Preminger, guitarist Max Light and bassist Kim Cass showing uncommon sensitivity, and drummer Dan Weiss stunning with his concept of space. Ditto the more upbeat closer, "Promises Kept," where even Preminger and Weiss pouring gas on the fire can't crowd out the tune's plainspoken lyricism and serenity. For that matter, even on the abstruse pieces, the players burn. Light (more a single-note-line player than a chordist) takes tour-de-force turns on "The Late 90s" and "Contemptment"; Cass has a startling, fleet-fingered feature on "Hamburg"; and both Preminger and Weiss address everything they encounter with prowess and passion. Alas, the territory they so deftly explore just isn't friendly.

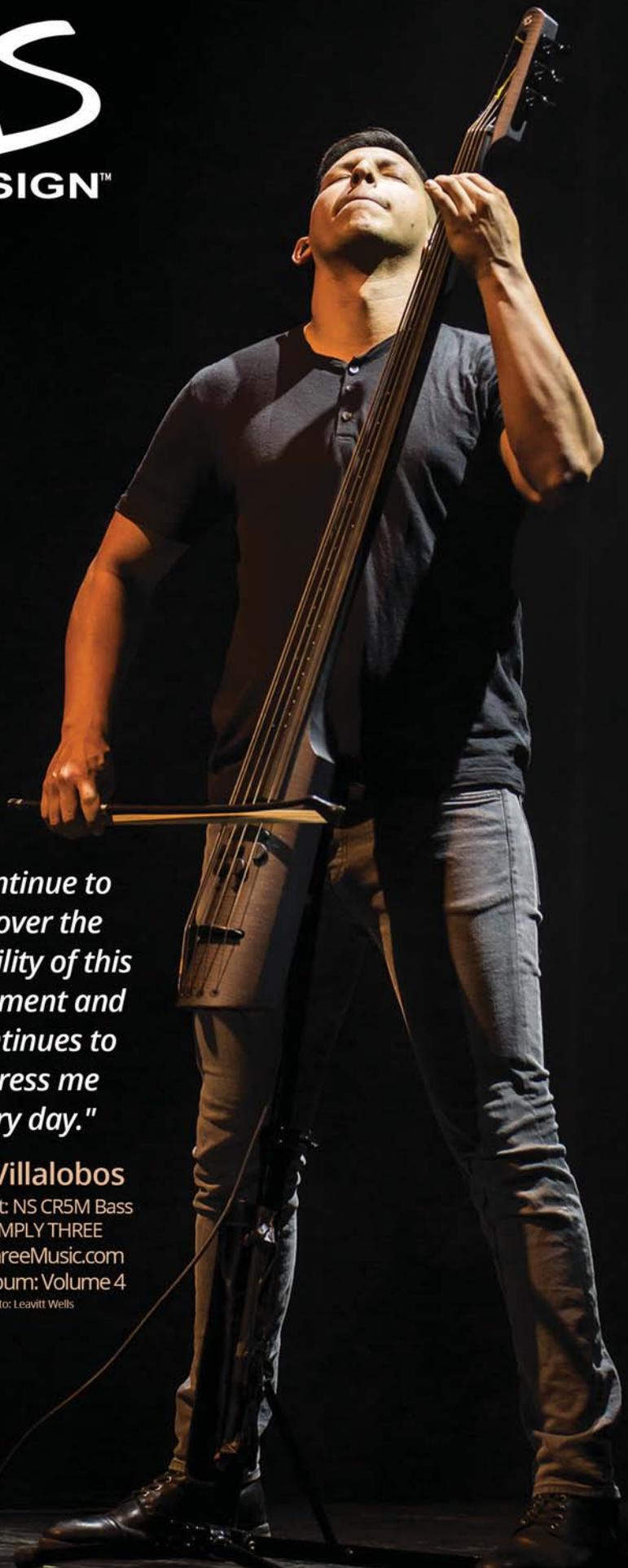
—Michael J. West

Contemptment: The Late 90s; Hygge; Kamaguchi; Hamburg; Porcelain; Hey J; Contemptment; Promises Kept. (62:50)

Personnel: Noah Preminger, tenor saxophone; Max Light, guitar; Kim Cass, bass; Dan Weiss, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

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Encores, Alternates and Valedictories

Berlin was **Ella Fitzgerald**'s kind of town. One of her greatest successes was *Ella In Berlin*, issued in 1960. Decades later, tapes of a 1961 Berlin concert became *Ella Returns To Berlin*. And now, after another three decades, ***The Lost Berlin Tapes* (Verve B0032590; 65:06 ★★★)** is upon us, a hitherto undocumented encore from March 1962. What was it about Berlin?

All myths originate in a confluence of circumstances. The Ella-Berlin link appeared when she was 43 and at the summit of her powers. Her live performances were consistently fresh and astounding, but her recordings held a lot of that freshness in reserve. Producer Norman Granz had focused her early Verve albums on studio dates that produced the songbook albums, the Louis Armstrong duets and various orchestra collaborations. Her only live album was drawn from a 1957 Jazz at the Philharmonic concert; Granz had recorded, but not bothered to release, many concert dates with her working quartet. He reserved albums for unique collaborations, not working gigs. They weren't "special" enough, so they hid in plain sight.

Then, in 1960, Fitzgerald went behind the Iron Curtain for the first time. If Ella was at her peak, so was Berlin—then the crossroads of the Cold War. It was also where Ella broke "Mack The Knife" into her sets. Convergence! Granz recognized a diplomatic-artistic doubleheader when he heard it. *Ella In Berlin* was released in May and became a minor milestone in Cold War rapprochement, as well as a critical and commercial triumph for the vocalist. There might have been other live albums, as Granz began recording more of her shows. One, *Ella In Hollywood*, came out in October 1961. But by then Granz had sold Verve to MGM, and although he continued producing her records, his new bosses had the final say on what was released.

Meanwhile, unissued concert tapes piled up in the vaults. Over the years, they have produced a succession of "new" Ella albums, some on Verve, others elsewhere. But *The Lost Berlin Tapes* is a genuine find, unlisted in any discography. Ella occupies her songs as a musician, not an actress. Laments like "Angel Eyes" and "Good Morning Heartache" emit far more glow than gloom in their intimacy. "Mack The Knife," the only tune included on all Berlin three recordings, is slimmer by 75 seconds here, but intensifies in rolling waves of modulations. Is this the best of the Berlin concerts? No, just a another one. But that's good enough.

Ordering info: ververecords.com



Ella Fitzgerald

ROLF AMBOR/CTSI/IMAGES

DownBeat was decidedly unreceptive to **Dave Brubeck's** groundbreaking *Time Out* when it arrived in 1959. It made use of "crashing-bore" devices, according to a distinctly unprophecy two-star review by Ira Gitler in the April 28, 1960, edition of the magazine. Time has been kinder to Brubeck than to us on that one, which makes ***Time Out Takes* (Brubeck Editions 20200901; 41:50 ★★★½)** an occasion for atonement in the year of the pianist's centennial. With Brubeck's Columbia archive now in family hands, this album recasts *Time Out* in a series of alternate takes, which gives us an intimate glimpse into the creative processes of jazz. For many, the unorthodox fluidity of the original has hardened over time into an immovable monument, every twist and turn now inviolate. For the compositions, this is an unexpected tour of small roads not taken, with detailed notes as a road map.

Ordering info: davebrubeck.com

Finally, Verve marks Brubeck's centennial with ***Lullabies* (Verve 3513980; 46:45 ★★★)**, a tranquil valedictory of 10 classic lullabies and five originals. These are his final solo recordings, and with experimentation behind him, Brubeck caresses the melodies with a lyrical modesty. "Over The Rainbow" is an old friend that goes back to his Fantasy label days. Other songs—like "Brahms Lullaby"—were used to conclude his final concerts with the serenity of someone who is ready for sleep but still eager to play one more. A placid farewell to a panoramic career.

Ordering info: ververecords.com

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Simon Moullier

Spirit Song

OUTSIDE IN 2032

★★★★½

The title track of vibraphonist Simon Moullier's debut, *Spirit Song*, offers a meaningful first impression—and summarizes the album's intent. The melodic theme initially sounds unsettled; a steady sequence of notes played in unison by the bandleader and saxophonist Morgan Guerin incorporates raised and diminished pitches. But rather than being off-putting, the tonal curves play into the ethereal feel sewn into all of Moullier's originals.

"Wind Chaser" further aligns timbres with the album's sonic theme. Moullier's finesse on vibraphone and synth is fully apparent, instilling the music with elegance. Though not in unison this time, the bold-toned vibraphone dances with the smooth touch of the synthesizer. The melody is clear enough to recognize, but the synth's distorted sustain keeps it feeling unconfined, just like the wind. The inclusion of Jongkuk Kim's nimble stick and cymbal taps don't disrupt an imagined landscape, as images of leaves tumbling in the wind are evoked. Meanwhile, "Bala"—and its solo balafon—is a notable work, not just for its uncommon instrumental presentation, but also for highlighting Moullier's broad cognizance of global connectivity and social impact.

—Kira Grunenber

Spirit Song: Spirit Song; Acceptance; Wind Chaser; I'll Remember April; Beings Of Light; Prophecy; What If; Kenyalang; Bala. (47:31)

Personnel: Simon Moullier, vibraphone, synth, percussion; Morgan Guerin (1, 3, 5), Dayna Stephens (2, 7), saxophone; Isaac Wilson, (1, 3, 5), Simon Chivallon, piano (2, 4, 7, 8); Luca Alemanno, bass; Jongkuk Kim, drums.

Ordering info: outsideinmusic.com



The Royal Bopsters

Party Of Four

MOTÉMA 0372

★★★★

No jazz vocal group in the 20th century cast a longer shadow than Lambert, Hendricks & Ross. But all their qualities are echoed in the work of The Royal Bopsters. The group's first album in 2015 included guest appearances by all-time jazz vocal greats and conveyed the sense of a torch being passed. Now, the Bopsters are back, and their sophomore release is an entertaining gem.

Party Of Four is a touchstone for jazz arrangers and vocalists, with bass Dylan Pramuk and tenor Pete McGuinness steering the artful arrangements, while soprano Amy London, alto Holli Ross and Pramuk contribute clever lyrics. The album is dedicated to the memory of bandmate Ross, whose life was cut short in May after a three-year battle with cancer.

Among several extraordinary tracks here, Pramuk's arrangement of Tadd Dameron's "On A Misty Night" is a standout. Ross' version of Tito Puente's hit "Cuando Te Vea" is another highlight, featuring guest bassist Christian McBride's compelling *tumbao* and an uncanny mouth-trombone solo by McGuinness. But they don't overshadow Ross' impassioned vocal, a fitting valediction for a terrific singer gone too soon.

—Allen Morrison

Party Of Four: But Not For Me; On A Misty Night/Gipsy; How I Love You (Let Me Count The Reasons); Lucky To Be Me; Why'd You Do Me The Way You Did?; Day Dream; Cuando Te Vea; Baby, You Should Know It; Our Spring Song; Rusty Dusty Blues; Infant Eyes; My Shining Hour. (58:42)

Personnel: Amy London, Holli Ross, Pete McGuinness, Dylan Pramuk, Sheila Jordan (4), Bob Dorough (8), vocals; Steve Schmidt, piano; Cameron Brown, Christian McBride (2, 7), bass; Steve Williams, drums; Steven Kroon, percussion (7, 11).

Ordering info: motema.com



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Luba Mason

Triangle

BLUE CANOE 1418

★★★★

Her debut was *Collage*. The last album was *Mixtura*. This one might have been called *Alchemy*, because far from being merely eclectic—that weaselly word—it takes wildly various material and transforms it into something deeply personal and musically unique. How many artists could take songs by The Beatles, Paul Simon, Monk, System Of A Down, folk and Latin tunes, and make a coherent and utterly satisfying sound-picture? Mason apparently sees music as a unifying human construct, rather than a pastiche of genres and niches.

The album actually is called *Triangle*, of course, and the unique instrumentation (percussionist Samuel Torres is in for just three tracks) was the brainwave of producer Renato Neto, a sometime Prince collaborator with a touch for the unexpected. Vibraphonist Joe Locke is a brilliant and underrated accompanist, and along with bassist James Genus, makes “Ceresne,” a tough-tender folk line, one of the album highlights. But so, too, in a very different way, is “Toxicity,” which doesn’t have the crunch of the SOD original. Just all of its emotional power. Only a fine actor and singer could pull off such a thing. Her voice is great and left confidently plain. Mason doesn’t need acrobatics. She’s there.

—Brian Morton

Triangle: Bach, Stevie Wonder And Janelle Monae; Haled’s Song About Love; Ticket To Ride; Waters Of March; Ceresne (Cherries); In Walked Bud; Invidable (Unforgettable); Toxicity; Say It; 50 Ways To Leave Your Lover. (45:23)

Personnel: Luba Mason, vocals; Joe Locke, vibraphone; James Genus, bass, electric bass; Samuel Torres, percussion.

Ordering info: bluecanoerecords.com



Josh Johnson

Freedom Exercise

NORTHERN SPY 133

★★★½

Freedom Exercise features the distinctive underpinnings of vintage synthesizers and electric pianos, the sort that generally do a terrible job of replicating notes in the same way each time they’re deployed. However, they do a wonderful job of imparting texture on saxophonist Josh Johnson’s leader debut. Whether Wurliitzer, Mellotron Prophet 6, Johnson pulled from a selection of iconic keyboards to impart just the right color, like a painter might reach for just the right ochre.

Each of the tracks burst with sound, even “856,” which features Johnson alone, employing a namesake 856 sampler/sequencer. Layers of synthesizer lines billow like smoke, coiling serpentine around his saxophone. “Western Ave” feels like a lost CTI/Kudu track, merged with the edge of classic Return To Forever. But to be clear, this is not a Grover Washington Jr. album. It’s a patchwork quilt of Johnson’s experiences: the art-rock and hip-hop that shaped him, the jazz he’s played with Makaya McCraven and Jeremy Cunningham (both drummers in his native Chicago), and even the soulful sounds he’s helped craft as Leon Bridges’ touring musical director.

A sense of economy is clear on this lean set of tracks that never come off as overwrought, just always full of wonder.

—Ayana Contreras

Freedom Exercise: Nerf Day; 856; Western Ave; Bowed; Eclipsing; New July; False Choice; Punk; Simple Song; Return Recoil. (36:54)

Personnel: Josh Johnson, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, keyboards, flute, bass clarinet; Aaron Steele, drums, percussion; Anna Butters, electric bass; Gregory Uhlmann, guitar.

Ordering info: northernspyrecs.com



Tani Tabbal Trio

Now Then

TAO FORMS 03

★★★★

The title of Tani Tabbal’s latest album reads like an artistic prescription: Draw upon the past, but create in the present. It’s a fitting stance for someone who gigged with Sun Ra, went on to become an essential participant in Detroit’s avant-garde community and forged relationships with James Carter, Geri Allen and, most enduringly, Roscoe Mitchell. Now based in New York State, he’s self-released five albums, including two previous efforts featuring the trio on *Now Then*.

Adam Siegel’s alto saxophone is at the center of the kinetic title track, alternating high, overblown cries with low, punchy rhythmic statements while bass and drums blur past him. Bassist Michael Bisio’s “Oh See OC Revisited,” on the other hand, is a springy, graceful homage to the sound of Ornette Coleman’s mid-1960s trio. “Khusenaton,” which Tabbal named for a saxophonist he met through Sun Ra, offers a joyous melody and tumultuous rhythms recalling Arkestral chestnuts like “Watusi.” In a more direct salute to Saturn’s finest, Bisio carries the brooding theme of “Sun History Ra Mystery,” while Siegel contributes darting elaborations and Tabbal sustains a running commentary of swirling tom-tom patterns. Here and elsewhere, the musicians shift between leading and supporting with an ease that testifies to chemistry honed on the bandstand.

—Bill Meyer

Now Then: Arrested Confusion; Just Woke Up; Khusenaton; Sun History Ra Mystery; Now Then; Midway Open; Oh See OC Revisited; Scrunch; r. henri; Inky Bud. (67:39)

Personnel: Adam Siegel, alto saxophone; Michael Bisio, bass; Tani Tabbal, drums.

Ordering info: aumfidelity.com/taoforms.htm



Emi Makabe

Anniversary

GREENLEAF MUSIC 1081

★★★★

A love of jazz led Emi Makabe to leave her native Japan for New York. But the singer and composer didn’t shake the folk music she’d learned from her mother, nor the music of The Beatles and Joni Mitchell she listened to once she arrived in the States back in 2008.

Those foundations collide with other styles on her breezy second album that immediately grabs the listener with the brittle twang of the shamisen, a three-string lute, for the opener “Treeing.” That instrument’s timbre provides an unexpected jolt to the elastic piano trio that percolates behind her crystalline, deeply melodic Japanese-language singing. She only plays shamisen on three of the album’s 11 tracks, but her understanding of how its spiky tone adds complexity to an otherwise airy sound reveals Makabe’s deft handling of disparate components. The album’s title piece is both a celebration of her first decade in New York—the recording was made in 2018—and a salve she composed for bassist Thomas Morgan on their wedding anniversary, given the lengthy separations coupled working musicians endure while one or the other is on the road. Morgan, one of the most versatile and subtle bassists of his generation, is the band’s anchor, complemented here by drummer Kenny Wollesen and keyboardist Vitor Gonçalves.

—Peter Margasak

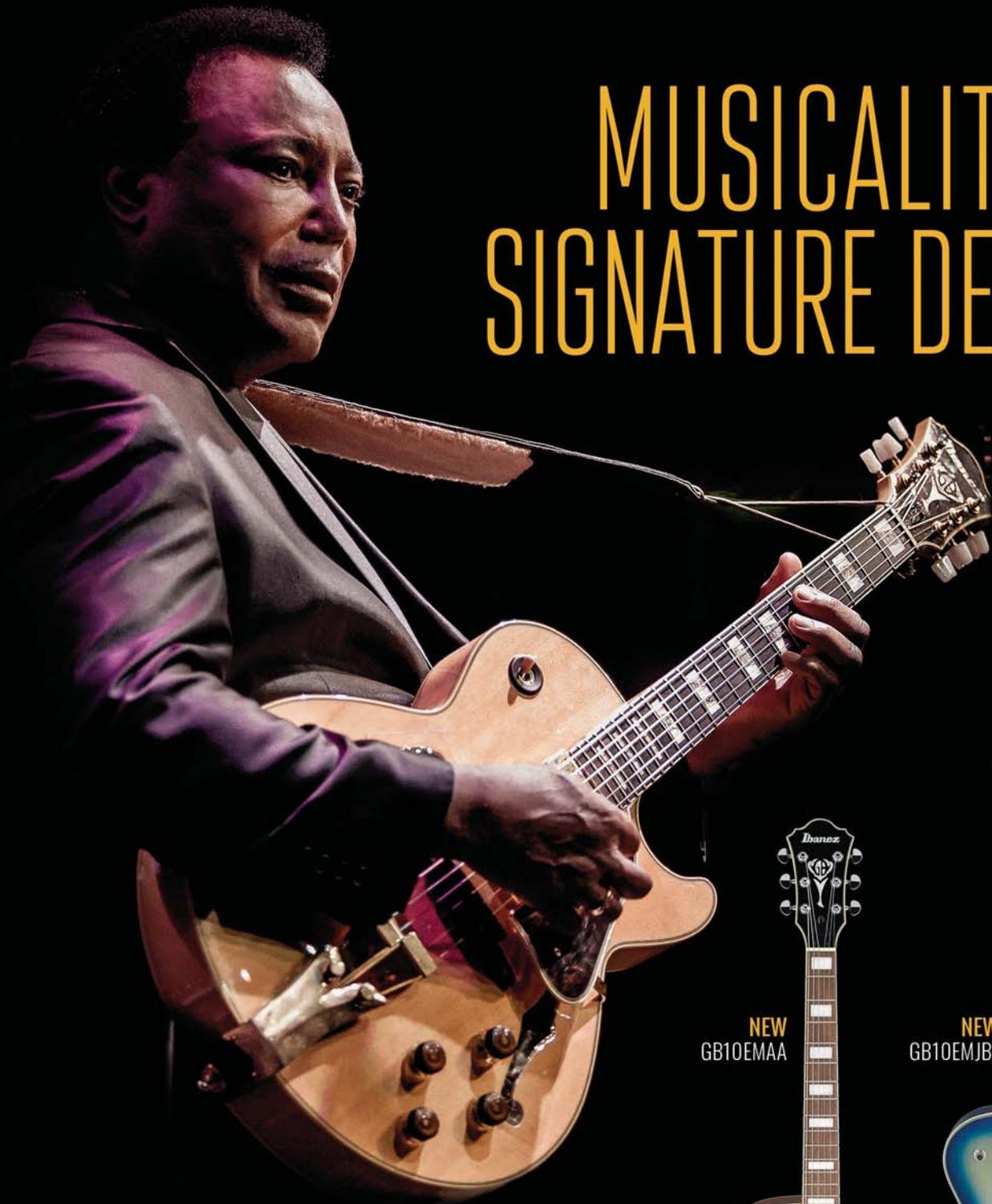
Anniversary: Treeing; Joy; Chimney Sweeper; Moon & I; Something Love; Flash; I Saw The Light; Mielcke; O Street; Rino; Anniversary. (48:28)

Personnel: Emi Makabe, vocals, shamisen; Vitor Gonçalves, piano, accordion; Thomas Morgan, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums, vibraphone.

Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com



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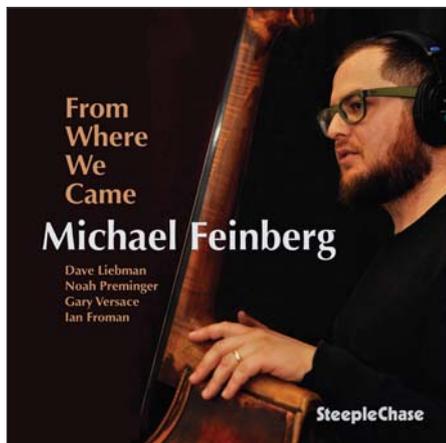


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George's latest release, "Weekend In London" is out now and available for streaming or purchase.





Michael Feinberg *From Where We Came*

STEEPLECHASE 31902

★★★★½

Michael Feinberg tackles the concept of place on *From Where We Came*, the bassist's originals taking their titles from the names of cities that fostered groundbreaking talents—a device that suggests more than a passing interest in the formative conditions begetting greatness.

Feinberg opens the album with an unaccompanied bass solo, a teasing set up for his quintet's thunderous entrance on "Louisville." In honor of Kentucky-born boxing champ Muhammad Ali,

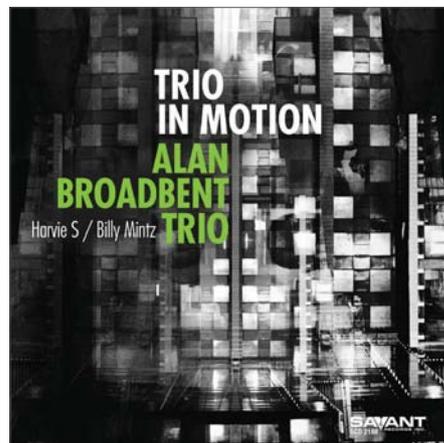
the tune's jouncing head gives saxophonist Dave Liebman—a heavyweight in his own right—space to scale skyward on soprano, while Noah Preminger soars on tenor. The adventuresome playing of the reedists lends the right amount of effervescence to the group's hefty sound; throughout the recording, the rhythm section—which also includes pianist Gary Versace and drummer Ian Froman—bears the amplitude of the ensemble. The drummer's sophistication with a coolheaded bop groove animates "Pontiac," for drummer Elvin Jones; Versace's fleet, intervallic solos brighten "Cairo," for baseball legend Jackie Robinson; and Liebman and Preminger finesse the spry melody of "East St. Louis," for Illinois native Miles Davis. Not all of the tunes are so locomotive, however. Feeling, more than energy, invigorates the languid "Tryon," an homage to singer Nina Simone, and a slow swing undergirds the John Coltrane tribute "Hamlet."

The album closes with "Nogales," a gamboling uptempo track inspired by Charles Mingus; on its lone-bass intro, you can hear Feinberg keenly lean into each curve of the solo. Such prowess suggests Atlanta, Feinberg's hometown, is a good place to be from. —*Suzanne Lorge*

From Where We Came: Louisville; Cairo; Tryon; Pontiac; Hamlet; East St. Louis; Tokyo; Nogales. (56:40)

Personnel: Michael Feinberg, bass; Dave Liebman, soprano saxophone; Noah Preminger, tenor saxophone; Gary Versace, piano; Ian Froman, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk



Alan Broadbent Trio *Trio In Motion*

SAVANT 2188

★★★★

Presiding with a kind of cultured-gent authority, Alan Broadbent has been a creative force to reckon with since the 1970s. His discography is loaded with gems, including work with bassist Charlie Haden and vocalist Irene Kral, and this latest album, *Trio In Motion*, continues a long winning streak.

As his self-confidence and creative thought has deepened, Broadbent's style has gained great personality, while remaining indebted to his inspirers—Bill Evans, Red Garland, Bud Powell and Lennie Tristano. Supported here by two models of consistency, bassist Harvie S and drummer Billy Mintz, the New Zealand-born pianist, who possesses a special touch with a melody, holds an equilibrium between handsomely crafted prose and assertiveness. The dozen tracks also show how unselfconscious and remarkable his sense of tempo and note placement are.

Broadbent typically avoids the stock of commonplace material; instead, he digs up less obvious historical fare. Tadd Dameron's "Lady Bird" is elevated by the sound of pure delight in his playing, while Cole Porter's "I Love You" and Hoagy Carmichael's "One Morning In May" are purged of nostalgia via crisp in-the-moment emotional clarity. Tristano's "Lennie's Pennies" and John Coltrane's "Like Sonny" seem indisputably fresh. So does the slow-moving "Late Lament," from Paul Desmond, a vignette of sensitive emotional shading. Revivals of more familiar fare, like Lil Hardin's "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," now Latinized, and Charlie Parker's "Relaxin' At Camarillo" (Bird's his ultimate hero) are appealing, too. Telepathy among trio members appears particularly keen on their luxuriant song "Moonstones." —*Frank-John Hadley*

Trio In Motion: Wonder Why; I Hear You; Lennie's Pennies; Struttin' With Some Barbecue; Late Lament; Relaxin' At Camarillo; One Morning In May; I Love You; Lady Bird; Like Sonny; The Hymn; Moonstones. (56:03)

Personnel: Alan Broadbent, piano; Harvie S, bass; Billy Mintz, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



Jeff Williams
Live At London Jazz Festival: Road Tales
 WHIRLWIND 4768

★★★★½

Live At London Jazz Festival: Road Tales highlights how drummer Jeff Williams' sharp compositions and his tricky and assertive swing feel should be just as appreciated today as his work with Stan Getz and Dave Liebman was in the '70s.

Tenorist Josh Arcoleo and altoist John O'Gallagher carry "New And Old" through a series of twists before the quartet turns its energy around during the coda. Williams also includes a few reinventions of recent works, such as "Scrunge," a highlight of his 2019 disc, *Bloom*. What previously was a piano-trio vehicle gets a jolt of new energy; the horns add heft, but retain the piece's disjointed flow and momentum. Williams focuses his own solos on guiding the band, the exchanges sometimes resulting in the kind of charge that must have won over the festival audience: Williams' rumble pushes Arcoleo across a wide range on "Search Me." Other times, the effect is subtly delivered. As he leads with the cymbals before shifting emphasis among the toms on "Under The Radar," Williams' approach mirrors the front line's phrases. But he also says a lot quickly on "Double Life," when the bandleader leaves himself to his own devices.

—Aaron Cohen



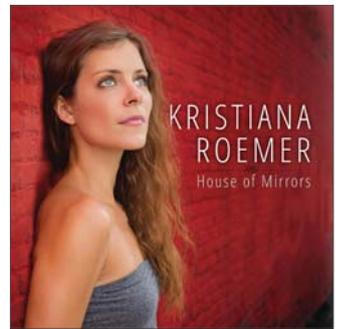
Kristiana Roemer
House Of Mirrors
 SUNNYSIDE 1597

★★★★

Vocalist Kristiana Roemer wants us to reflect on "the possibilities of ourselves." Her own life to date has been rich with prospects.

Raised in a bilingual Frankfurt household, Roemer spent summers with her mother's family in North Dakota, where she began singing in church choirs. As a teen, she segued from classical lessons into jazz standards, and studied music at Concordia College before returning home. Roemer eventually headed for Paris, formed her own quartet and began singing originals before moving to New York. She reflects on all those changes during this personal coming-of-age album, drawing on everything from St. John of the Cross to her own poetic meditations. Her light-as-a-feather voice delivers those weighty lyrics with an intimate tone so confiding it demands attention. Gilad Hekselman's shimmering guitar refracts kaleidoscopic light on the title track, while Roemer's "Beauty Is A Wound," a tribute to her late mother, is driven by Rogerio Boccato's emotionally charged percussion. But the bandleader lightens up a bit: She's positively coy, vamping on Stanley Turrentine's "Sugar," and brings a honeyed tone to Charles Mingus' "Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love" that does justice to the masters who inspired her.

—Cree McCree



Live At London Jazz Festival: Road Tales: New And Old; The Interloper; Borderline; Oddity; Under The Radar; Scrunge; Search Me; She Can't Be A Spy; Double Life. (62:50)
Personnel: Jeff Williams, drums; John O'Gallagher, alto saxophone; Josh Arcoleo, tenor saxophone; Sam Lasserson, bass.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com

House Of Mirrors: House Of Mirrors; Beauty Is A Wound; Virgin Soil; Deine Hände; Dark Night Of The Soul; Manchmal; Lullaby For N.; Sugar; Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love. (36:52)

Personnel: Kristiana Roemer, vocals; Addison Frei, piano; Alex Claffy, bass; Adam Arruda, drums; Gilad Hekselman (1), Ben Monder (5, 6, 7), guitar; Dayna Stephens, saxophone (3, 8); Rogerio Boccato (2), percussion.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



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Isaiah J. Thompson Plays The Music Of Buddy Montgomery

WJ3 31025

★★★★½

Vibraphonist and pianist Charles “Buddy” Montgomery—the youngest brother of Wes Montgomery—had his own notable career on the West Coast, recording original material prior to his 2009 death and providing a rear-window view of the post-bop era.

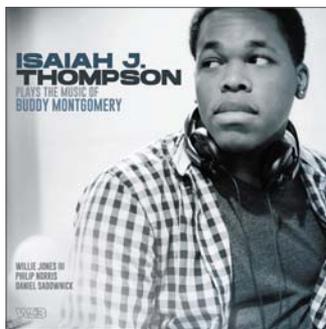
Montgomery’s discography is the quarry from which pianist Isaiah J. Thompson drew a trove of rare gems for his debut. Thompson, still in his early 20s, displays a serious understanding of past masters, with a hard-swinging rhythmic approach and a harmonic palette informed by jazz, gospel and blues. The album charges out of the gate with “Budini,” a complex head winding around a rapid series of chords, unspooling into a straight-ahead modal romp. “1,000 Rainbows,” recorded in 1977 with a tinge of funk, is given the ‘60s Blue Note treatment: a loping bass/piano figure beneath Thompson’s evocative voicings. Bassist Philip Norris and drummer Willie Jones III execute these complex arrangements with an ease generally heard from established working bands. However, kudos to Montgomery, whose work gets a new turn in the public eye.

—Gary Fukushima

Plays The Music Of Buddy Montgomery: Introduction (Irregardless); Budini; Hob Nob With Brother Bob; Muchisimo; Ruffin It; What If?; Here Again; 1,000 Rainbows; Aki’s Blues; My Sentiments Exactly. (44:13)

Personnel: Isaiah J. Thompson, piano; Philip Norris, bass; Willie Jones III, drums; Daniel Sadownick, percussion (1, 4).

Ordering info: wj3records.com



Marius Neset Tributes

ACT 9051

★★★★

Norwegian saxophonist Marius Neset originally played drums and has since developed a rhythmic style both as a player and an arranger-composer. His most recent release, *Tributes*, was the last work that Neset did in Copenhagen, where he was based for more than 15 years before moving back to Norway in late 2019. For this project, the saxophonist utilized the 19-piece Danish Radio Big Band, conducted by Miho Hazama.

The program, dedicated to the city he left behind, easily can be divided into three sections. The two-part “Bicycle Town” begins with Neset’s unaccompanied tenor emulating a bike with a catchy rhythmic pattern for the first two minutes. The other instrumentalists gradually join in, summoning a pretty wild ride that includes a fine trombone solo from Peter Dahlgren and, through its joyfully dense interplay, builds to a furious level. The next three pieces make up an informal suite and convey similarly thoughtful moods. But Neset’s use of repetition and the ensemble’s off-beat phrasing on “Children’s Day Pt. I” are reminiscent of a playful, sophisticated Ornette Coleman. “Pt. II” arrives as a peaceful ballad, while “Pt. III” offers stirring interplay between the leader and the ensemble, bringing both this final portion of the album and the set as a whole to a colorful end.

—Scott Yanow

Tributes: Bicycle Town Pt. I-II; Tribute; Farewell; Leaving The Dock; Children’s Day Pt. I-III. (48:46)

Personnel: Marius Neset, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Danish Radio Big Band.

Ordering info: actmusic.com





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Maria Chiara Argirò + Jamie Leeming Flow

CAVALO CRMCJDIG01

★★★★½

Nurtured in the creative cauldron of London’s vibrant jazz scene, pianist Maria Chiara Argirò and guitarist Jamie Leeming hit a collaborative sweet spot the first time they jammed, and their natural affinity shines through on the duo’s debut. Dreamy and intimate, *Flow* also is an about-face for Argirò, whose 2019 album *Hidden Seas*, recorded with a full band, was as expansive as the ocean itself. Working with a much smaller palette on *Flow*, she and Leeming paint a pointillist study that shimmers with luminescence and electronic flourishes.

Flow clocks in at fewer than 40 minutes and brief tracks like “Interlude” are just playful sketches; others create surprisingly cinematic soundscapes. “Retrograde,” penned by the iconoclastic James Blake, thrums with syncopated beats beneath Argirò and Leeming’s lyrical flights, evoking a mythical beast emerging from hibernation in a Sergio Leone landscape. Befittingly, “Rubik’s” interlocks guitar and piano like pieces of a puzzle; when Leeming waxes flamenco, Argirò coyly dances off until both come to an abrupt stop. Though too fleeting an exercise to qualify as a major statement, *Flow* whets the appetite for an Argirò-Leeming rematch.

—Cree McCree

Flow: Opening; Kosetsu; Flow; Retrograde; Fables Intro; Fables; Rubik’s; Interlude; Tune No. 1; Boo’s Lullaby. (36:57)

Personnel: Maria Chiara Argirò, piano; Jamie Leeming, guitar.

Ordering info: cavalorecords.com



Greg Osby & Florian Arbenz *Reflections Of The Eternal Line*

HAMMER/INNER CIRCLE

★★★★½

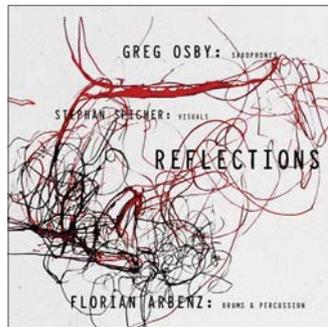
Reflections Of The Eternal Line is more than an absorbing summit between saxophonist Greg Osby and drummer Florian Arbenz. It's the result of a multidisciplinary work, one involving Stephan Spicher, known for his poignant, often abstract paintings and drawings.

Recorded at Spicher's studio, the disc opens with "Wooden Lines," Arbenz summoning evocative rhythms with a conventional kit, thumb piano, gong and other assorted percussion. Spicher responded (one of the results from that day serve as the album cover) to Arbenz's protean rhythmic passages as Osby joins in, lending writhing improvisational lines that often originate from barbed melodic cells. Because of Arbenz's dexterity and spatial awareness, *Reflections* forges a wider sonic scape that one might initially imagine. He knows how to build momentum, and imply funk and drum-and-bass grooves, as well as how to craft metallic textures. Osby's unmistakable voice on alto drives much of the music's narrative flow, moving among corkscrew passages, soaring cries and jabbing motifs. Indeed, *Reflections* consistently titillates listeners, only possibly shorting those who wished to take in a full multisensory collaboration. —John Murph

Reflections Of The Eternal Line: Wooden Lines; Chant; Truth; Homenaje; Groove Conductor; The Passage Of Light; Please Stand By. (43:52)

Personnel: Florian Arbenz, drums, percussion; Greg Osby, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone.

Ordering info: florianarbenz.bandcamp.com



Marshall Gilkes Trio *Waiting To Continue*

ALTERNATE SIDE

★★★★

Waiting To Continue, the latest release from trombonist and composer Marshall Gilkes and his trio, almost didn't happen. In fact, much of it had to be rethought when the pandemic hit, thwarting their original plans to record in April.

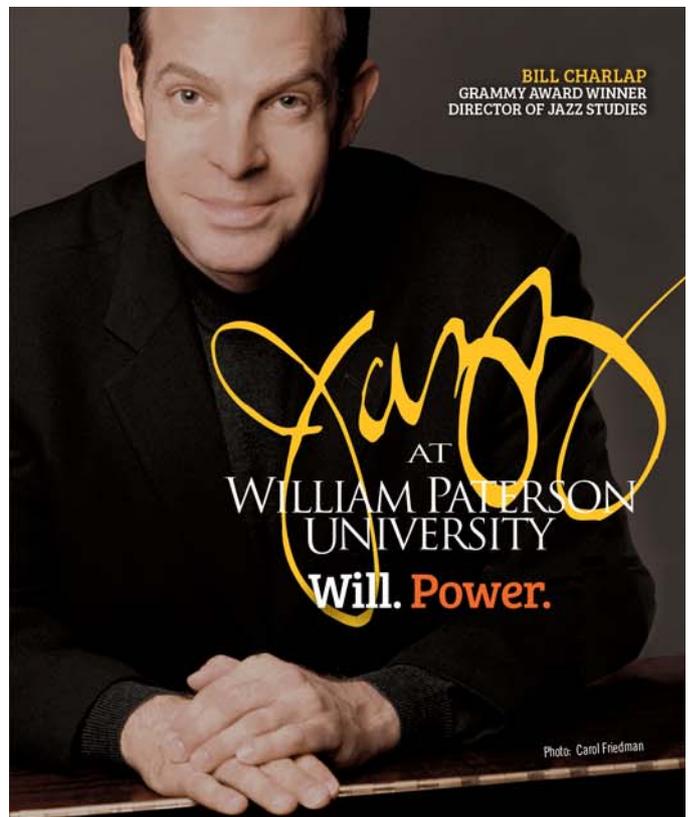
Being delayed by a few months might have been a happy accident, though. These extenuating circumstances give *Waiting To Continue* urgency and excitement in an era of excruciating pause. From track one, Gilkes, bassist Yasushi Nakamura and drummer Clarence Penn effuse joy and determination. The title track opens with a somber multipart trombone chorale, which Gilkes recorded at home during the pandemic and brought into the studio. Then, like a feather on the wind, his improvisation is buoyed by textural brushes and bass. Meanwhile, "New Normal," the other pandemic-era song the bandleader wrote, captures a foreboding and hypervigilant time, as the group aggressively interacts atop the beat. Penned when Gilkes's wife was pregnant with their youngest son, "Archie's Theme" is a quick, rangy melody that pours out of Gilkes' trombone. In the end, the name "Waiting To Continue" sidesteps the stubborn resilience of this trio, and of Gilkes's playing—which soars exuberantly and without hesitation in the face of uncertain times. —Alexa Peters



Waiting To Continue: Waiting To Continue; Archie's Theme; Longing For Home; Taconic Turns; Ha Mam; The Nod; Anya's Tune; Play Date; Cora's Tune; The Usual; New Normal. (60:04)

Personnel: Marshall Gilkes, trombone; Yasushi Nakamura, bass; Clarence Penn, drums.

Ordering info: alternatesiderecords.weebly.com



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JAZZ SCHOOL»

Singing with the Band

By Dominique Eade

Page 58

Dominique Eade performs at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall in October 2017. (Photo: Andrew Hurlbut/NEC)

- 62 | EVERYONE SHOULD COMPOSE
- 64 | PUTTING RHYTHM FIRST
- 66 | MATT WILSON TRANSCRIPTION
- 68 | TOOLSHED



ANDREW HURLBUT/NEC

of its features. Like every instrument, the singing voice has complex technical aspects. Here are some basics to consider.

Vocal Range

Instrumentalists in ensembles with singers should learn the singer's full range, as well as the normally smaller area they are comfortable singing with words as a soloist in a given style. Ranges might fall into classifications, such as soprano, mezzo, alto, tenor, baritone and bass, but individual voices aren't always useful, especially in other genres that use different sound qualities or registration.

Awareness of specific range and registers is not only crucial to writing successfully for a singer, it's also important for anyone playing with singers. Often, instrumentalists have not stopped to identify what octave the singer is singing in, where that falls on their instrument, and how that might affect what they choose to play. The octave being sung will not necessarily be accurately represented on a lead sheet. Tenor voice, conventionally written in treble clef, sounds an octave lower. A higher voice might sing an octave below the written part to avoid excessive ledger lines. Or, the singer might choose to deviate from the written music.

Singers should be challenged to extend their range and registral facility as their technique and musicianship develop, but some basic awareness of what is reasonable to expect in an educational setting makes that development less hit or miss.

Lyrics & Language

Unlike any other instrument, the voice can combine words with pitch. We all use words every day, so it's easy to take their contribution to the musical soundscape for granted. Words not only impart meaning, both literal and evocative, but they create textures of varied tone colors, rhythm and dynamics that should be considered in arranging, and listened for in musical interaction. While singing any given pitch, singers constantly modify the shape of the "bell" of their instrument (lips, jaw, tongue, soft palette and pharynx) to create the sounds of language. Paying attention to the sonic properties of language and the shifting tonal palette of the voice is like hearing how the different parts of the drum kit sound, recognizing tongued versus legato saxophone articulation or distinguishing trumpet mutes.

Vocal pitch begins with the breath's vibration of the vocal folds in the larynx. To form

Integrating Singing into Jazz Ensembles

The human voice has been integral to jazz from its prehistory to present day. From ring shouts, to every era of Duke Ellington, to Jen Shyu with Miles Okazaki, the resourceful and creative use of the voice, and its symbiotic relationship with other instruments, has fed the jazz tradition. In pre-jazz Black American music, the voice often carried the musical traditions when the contributions of other instruments were prohibited. At other times, instrumentalists relayed the message when those words were suppressed. We need only to think of Lester Young and Billie Holiday, Norma Winstone and Kenny Wheeler, or Louis Armstrong, who, as a trumpeter, interpreter of lyrics and wordless vocal

improviser, embodied it all, to appreciate the rich interaction and creative expression of the interwoven vocal and instrumental traditions.

Yet I sometimes encounter jazz educators who are uncertain how to incorporate singers into their programs without relying solely on vocal jazz groups or the conventions of more traditional settings for a solo vocalist. In this article, I will suggest ways to expand the role of singing in ensembles in jazz education. Applying these approaches can provide the vocal student, and everyone in the ensemble, with a richer learning experience that connects to the history of the music itself.

Before we explore how to employ the voice with more variety, let's open our ears to some

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vowels, the shape of the vocal tract above the larynx is modified to amplify certain resonant frequencies or formants. Vowels are sometimes labeled bright to dark or high to low. As an experiment, whisper “ee,” “eh,” “ah,” “o” and “oo” to hear the (second) formant’s pitch descend from high to low. But a “bright” vowel can be sung “darkly,” or vice versa, to impart another layer of musical and emotional nuance.

Consonants, too, have different features to consider. For instance, which consonants are phonated (have pitch made by the vocal folds vibrating) and which are not? Which consonants have pitch that can be sustained? What consonants can sound more than one way?

It’s good to remember that words don’t always sound the way they look on the written or musical page. For example, the word “fire” could be assigned a single rhythmic articulation in music, but the word is not just one sound, but four in succession: the fricative “f,” the vowel “ah,” followed by “ee” and then “er.”

Just as you can sing a multisyllable word on one note, you can also extend one syllable over many notes, called a melisma. Melismas can be a stylistic choice in interpretation or composed. A stream of notes on one syllable, often improvised, is called a riff or a run. Melismas affect the lilt of the melodic line.

Compare “Happy Birthday” to “Silent Night.”

Instrumentalists who play effectively with singers usually listen to singers and know lyrics. Memorizing lyrics to a few standards, even a poem, is a good place to begin. The rhythmic content of speech is complex, undulating with odd groupings and accents. Unfolding these contours in the context of meter is part of the singer’s interpretive skill and something a collaborator can learn to perceive and react to.

With a better awareness of range, register, tone color and the nuances of meaning and sound in language, it is possible to include the voice more effectively in an ensemble setting, allowing both the vocalists and instrumentalists to gain valuable musical skills. Here are some suggestions.

Written Music & Learning Parts

- If individual parts are being given to other instrumentalists, singers should also be given their own notated part.
- Singers’ written charts should include some other pitch references such as chord changes or instrumental cues.
- Singers should do their best to sight-read according to level, but getting music in advance and/or taking the music home helps.
- Encourage the entire ensemble to learn some music by ear and sing their parts in the

ensemble, so there is—at least occasionally—more emphasis on aural transmission skills.

Arranging & Composing

Vocalists can participate in ensembles in many ways. They can sing with lyrics and wordlessly, but they shouldn’t be limited to only singing the head in and out with everyone else soloing in between or, when singing wordlessly, always doubling the melody with another instrument.

Here are some other possibilities:

- An instrumentalist plays the melody in the original key, after which the chart modulates and the song is sung in a new key (like old big-band arrangements). This gives the lead instrumentalist an opportunity to improve their melodic interpretation and the band to practice playing in different keys.
- Singer is featured “instrumentally” on the intro, then interprets the melody with lyrics (e.g., Ivie Anderson on “It Don’t Mean A Thing”).
- Singer is given a harmony part, rather than always doubling or singing the lead line.
- Singer is given a background line while someone else is playing a melody or soloing.
- Singer sings obbligato (written or improvised) lines while someone else plays the melody. (This is great ear training and other instru-

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it all happens here.

mentalists could try to sing like this as well.)

- Singer sings obbligato lines with the lyrics of the song, answering an instrumentalist that is playing the melody. For example, the horn plays the first three notes of “All Of Me,” and the voice answers, “all of me,” altering the melody and rhythm to adapt to the delayed placement.

- Singer sings the melody with lyrics, but the arrangement modulates within the form. Bill Evans’ “Days Of Wine And Roses” is an instrumental example.

- Singer, or other, writes lyrics to a piece that has no lyrics or new lyrics to a song that does.

- Singer writes lyrics to an existing instrumental solo or composes a solo-like line and adds lyrics.

- Arrangement features horns and voice alone in chorale-like harmony.

- Singer doubles an unusual instrument such as bass, or bass and piano left hand, in a melody, background or shout chorus.

- Singer uses spoken word.

- Singer sings repeated lyrics in a looped section.

- Singer sings an ostinato or another accompanying figure.

- Singer is given a percussive role.

- Singer sings some portion of the arrangement rubato with one or more instruments.

- Accompaniment features different subgroups of instruments. For example, the bass and the voice could double a melody with only drums accompanying.

Improvisation

As with any student, a vocalist’s level of familiarity with improvising will vary. Whether the student is accomplished or just beginning, they should be given every opportunity to practice within an appropriate set of parameters.

Here are some suggestions on musical ways to give vocalists more experience with improvisation, beyond simply scatting over the form:

- Singer improvises over a vamp as an intro, interlude or coda, rather than the entire form.

- Singer improvises using the lyrics but changing the melody, often done as a second chorus.

- Singer is given a guide-tone line to embellish as a solo or a background line for another soloist.

- Singer trades with other soloists or solos on only one section of the tune and sings backgrounds for another. Trading doesn’t always have to be a set number of bars or a back and forth between soloists, but can be a call-and-response structure where everyone plays a short figure together and the vocalist impro-

vises in the “response” section.

- Singer is given a fixed rhythmic figure, but improvises the pitches or vice versa.

- Singer participates in a group solo, over a form or “free.”

- Singer solos percussively with drums.

- Singers should be able to take the music home to practice.

I’m sure there are many more possibilities for integrating singing into jazz ensembles than I have listed here. It’s my hope that these ideas will stimulate the imagination, helping educators give vocalists and instrumentalists

the opportunity to develop their musicianship in an informed and creative environment. **DB**

Dominique Eade is a vocalist, improviser and composer known for wide-ranging work with artists from Ran Blake and Stanley Cowell to Dave Holland and Anthony Braxton. She has recorded seven albums under her name, including two for RCA Victor. Her most recent release, *Town And Country* (Sunnyside), garnered 4½ stars from DownBeat. Eade is the featured vocalist on the brand new album *If There Are Mountains* (Newvelle) with Dave Douglas and Eian Mehler. A member of the faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music since 1984, where she has developed a renowned vocal program, Eade has taught some of the most established and up-and-coming vocal artists today, including Luciana Souza, Roberta Gambarini, Rachael Price, Sara Serpa, Jo Lawry, Richard Saunders, Akenya Seymour, Sofia Rei, Michael Mayo, Aoife O’Donovan, Sara Jarosz, Darynn Dean and many others.

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The Wise Man Knows You Should Compose

A few months before I turned 17, I won a generous scholarship from the Monterey Jazz Festival to study with the legendary Joe Henderson for a full year. The lessons—more like freewheeling musical intensives—lasted up to five hours. Though we worked on saxophone technique and sound production, the main focus was elsewhere. He'd play unreleased recordings for me and asked me to discuss what I heard, analyze classical saxophone pieces as I learned each section, teach me cool and obscure tunes by ear—all the good stuff. During the first lesson, he asked me to play the melody of something I'd written on piano. Then he asked me to play it again as a three-horn arrangement incorporating the melody. The mission was clear: to think and play compositionally. This changed my life.

A year later, I sold my first big band chart to Ray Charles. During the next 40 years, I supported my jazz habit, in part, by writing, arranging and licensing all kinds of music. My inspirations include the fabulous Benny Carter and the amazing Quincy Jones.

The first advice I'd give to any young musician is to start composing. You'll stand a much better chance of making a good living in the music business if you add "composer" and "arranger" to your résumé.

There are numerous potential benefits to knowing how to write and arrange music. You will become a better musician. You will enhance your marketability. You can boost your current and future income by writing songs, jingles, TV themes, video-game music and film scores. You can create a repertoire that best showcases your playing strengths. You can make a lasting contribution to the genre of music you love the most. You can express yourself beautifully without using words. If you also happen to be a skilled lyricist, you'll be unstoppable. Music composition is one of the highest art forms and has been an integral force in vibrant cultures throughout history. Join the party.

And a heck of a party it is. From Tin Pan Alley to Jazz at Lincoln Center to Ed Sheeran, musicians who compose rule. If you had opened the door to one of the cubicles in the Brill building in New York in the late '50s and early '60s, you would have seen one of the great young singer/songwriters of the day pounding out the hits. Then there were the prolific teams of musician/composers at Motown and Stax, in Hollywood and Nashville, and on Broadway. And, of course, while all that was happening, great bandleaders like Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck earned big publishing bucks. It's the same today—even with the advent of streaming: You're better off if you own your own material, regardless of the musical genre.

Though there are plenty of stories about songwriters whose first songs were hits, and quite a few untrained composers who have achieved spectacular commercial success, you should assume that you'll have to use more elbow grease than those anointed folks.

Writing solid, original and memorable music has never been easy, and getting your music heard often depends upon who you know; writing effective lyrics is really tough; and hit songs are the exception to the rule. But who said you need to write a hit song? As I mentioned, there are many reasons to write and ways to generate income in the process. Learn the craft. Once you find your compositional voice, the rest will fall into place.

My fans often ask how I "come up with" my compositions. I explain that when I'm lucky, the music writes itself: I "hear" a song in a dream, wake



Dan Wilensky

up and furiously scribble it down or record it. Other ideas are born while I'm improvising or during rehearsal and soundcheck jams. Sometimes, I'll start a song, put it away and combine it with other snippets years later. When I'm writing for hire, I let the project inspire me (like Cole Porter). It doesn't really matter what device or technique you use; whatever works. And no matter how (or how well) you write, it's unlikely that you'll create something truly unique: Most music is a patchwork of musical ideas accumulated over a lifetime. Just try to avoid overt plagiarism.

Whether or not you've ever tried to write music, you should jump in with both feet. Get something down on paper or on a recording device. I've experienced both prolific spells and drought years, so I won't advise you to write every day, but write as much as you can. You should explore the many excellent books, periodicals and websites devoted to songwriting; take a composition and arranging class in college; find a mentor; find a writing partner who's at or above your level; analyze songs and scores; discover what makes your favorite music sound so good; write something for your high school band. You can get a great deal of inspiration directly from your vinyl or MP3 collection, radio, Spotify and YouTube. A wealth of information can be found on the websites of ASCAP and BMI.

Then, expect rejection—especially from your family and friends. The human ear is an extraordinarily subjective instrument: Play a song for 10 people and you might get 11 radically different opinions of it. Most people—including most music industry people—don't even hear the way you do, let alone have the same taste. In other words, when you're ready to shop your wares, pick your targets carefully and possess a teflon ego. Eventually someone will hear things the way you do or at least appreciate your sonic alchemy. Keep growing and keep knocking on those doors. **DB**

Dan Wilensky has toured and recorded with hundreds of artists, including Ray Charles, Jack McDuff, Slickaphonics, Steve Winwood, Joan Baez, Cornell Dupree, Mark Murphy, Santana, Rory Block, Faith No More, James Brown, The Roches and David Bowie. He has played on and composed and arranged for numerous film soundtracks and TV themes, and can be heard on more than 250 records. His popular book *Musician!* and his seven albums as a leader are available at danwilensky.com and iTunes. His latest release, *All In All*, features Clay Giberson, Bill Athens and Micah Hummel.



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Develop Rhythmic Vocabulary by 'Playing' with Isorhythms

During an interview with music critic Ralph J. Gleason, Dizzy Gillespie once said, "I think up a rhythm first and then I put notes to it." This idea of starting with the rhythm and dealing with notes, scales and chords afterward will be a novel concept for many, but rhythm is in some sense the most important aspect of music. Think of it: There's percussion music that has rhythm but no chords or scales, but no music has scales and chords without rhythm—even if it's an implied rhythm. I'm going to give you one method of putting the rhythm first.

We'll be using isorhythms. An isorhythm is a repeated figure in which the rhythm remains constant but the notes change. As a bassist, I've often used this technique as a means of keeping a groove while interacting with a soloist (and it was decades before I found out there was a cool word for it). But it's also a means of creating continuity in a solo or just developing your rhythmic vocabulary, which is reason enough. I've often had students come to me after they've spent years of studying scales, arpeggios, chord substitutions and chromatic concepts with the complaint that everything they play still sounds the same. Upon examination it often comes out that they only play a few rhythmic ideas over and over again.

Of course, the way to develop a strong and diverse rhythmic vocabulary is by thoroughly learning a few rhythms, and expanding from there. Doing this, you'll find your ability to work with rhythm will become more refined, and it will become easier to create and learn new rhythms. Don't believe me? Let me walk you through some steps on how to do this.

We'll start with a simple rhythm, four eighth notes starting on the downbeat (Example 1). The first step is to play the isorhythm without pitches or on one pitch, just to get familiar with it. (I often do this with a metronome at a slow tempo and then increase the tempo, until I get to the point where I'm just hearing the rhythm, no longer counting it.)

Next, create lines using this rhythm. If we play chromatically from D to F (Example 2), we have the main motif for Thelonious Monk's "Blue Monk."

For Example 3, I've created some lines for the first three bars of a B \flat blues. This can be a wonderful means of having your solo sound connected to the song. If you use the rhythms of the melody and improvise with them, your solo naturally will evoke the song. (I was on a gig years ago and the bandleader called a song I'd never heard before, so when it came time for my solo, I just improvised around the rhythms of the melody. Afterward everyone in the band complimented me on that specific solo.)

The next step is to develop the ability to improvise with these rhythms. When I work with an isorhythm, once I'm comfortable with playing it, I'll improvise on a mode, then on a blues, and then maybe on other progressions and forms. I'll solo over an entire track exclusively with the isorhythm, and then play along with it again using the isorhythm in conjunction with other rhythms, to make sure this new rhythmic pattern becomes a natural part of my vocabulary. A curious thing often happens: When I've got the rhythm set, I often find I know what notes to play, and I've seen this with students as well. Those who complain that they can't improvise or can't think of what to play, when given a rhythm they discover that the notes almost take care of themselves. It's just like Dizzy said.

When doing anything with rhythm, it's important to observe yourself and make sure you're playing the rhythm you intend. If you're not careful, you might morph the rhythm into a simpler one or just one you know



better. I suggest precise counting, until you've got the rhythm together. You might even want to record yourself playing the rhythm and count along on playback to determine if you're producing it accurately. This is only necessary in the beginning stages. As you get comfortable with isorhythms, you'll know when you're playing the indicated rhythm or not.

Over time, you'll want to do this process with more than one rhythm. A simple way of creating other rhythms is through rhythmic displacement, which is exactly what it says: moving a rhythm over. So, if we displace our motif a half beat, we get Example 4. With most eighth-note rhythms, you'll have eight variations (in 4/4), since there are eight points in the measure you can start the rhythm on. That's a lot of variety just in the permutations of a few rhythms. And if you're the kind of musician who enjoys taking things further, you can take any two rhythms you've created and combine them to create a two-bar isorhythm.

Example 5 combines Example 4 with Example 1. Taking the blues line of Example 3 and applying it to this rhythm, we get Example 6. Notice the subtle but effective alteration in mood this small alteration makes.

So, how do you create the initial isorhythm? A few ways come to mind. One is to do what we did above, and take the rhythm from somewhere else. It could come from a melody, a bass line, an improvisation, a drum beat, your imagination or wherever you hear a rhythm you think you'd like to appropriate. I suggest writing them on index cards and putting them on your practice stand, so every practice you have some rhythmic material to work on.

Another manner of generating isorhythms is to do it systematically: Create all the possible permutations of notes in the bar. Example 7 starts you off with the first group of permutations of our four-note motif. From all of them at the front of the bar, you can just move the last note to every subsequent point in the bar, then move the penultimate note over one and move the final note around again. If you want to continue, just move the penultimate note over once again and repeat. When you've finished all of those, then move the second note over and start again, until you've

exhausted those possibilities, and then move the first note over and continue the process. That's quite a lot of rhythms.

Rather than do so much thinking, I often would just come up with them randomly. I'd write out the points in the measure (like this: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +) and just pick some. The more points you pick, the denser the rhythm; the fewer, the more sparse.

Besides being incredibly useful for expanding your rhythmic vocabulary, isorhythms are a powerful method for any rhythmic issues. Have problems with 16th-note syncopations? Create some isorhythms. (Isorhythms don't have to be eighth notes and can be a great way of developing proficiency with other subdivisions). Suck at odd meters? Make and practice some isorhythms in those time signatures. Issues with polyrhythms? Once again: isorhythms. It's also a fantastic way of developing the ability to comfortably play over the bar line.

If you can approach learning isorhythms with a sense of discovery, you'll likely pick up on it faster. Find the method that is most enjoyable for you. This shouldn't be a chore—make it more of a *game*. **DB**

Jim Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at jimidurso.com.

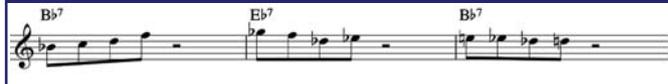
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



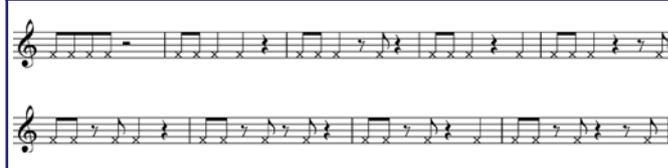
Example 5



Example 6



Example 7



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JOHN ABBOTT

Matt Wilson

Matt Wilson's Drum Solo on 'Jabaloni'

In a year marked with endless challenges, drummer Matt Wilson reminds us all to smile and remain hopeful with his new release, *Hug!* Representing his 13th album on the Palmetto label, *Hug!* assembles a piano-less quartet with frequent collaborators Kirk Knuffke (cornet, soprano cornet), Jeff Lederer (woodwinds) and Chris Lightcap (bass), as they explore an eclectic array of covers and original compositions. Wilson, who is equally at home playing straight-ahead and free, blends his unique style of musical drumming throughout each track on the album. A highlight can be found in his solo work on Abdullah Ibrahim's joyful composition "Jabaloni."

To fully appreciate Wilson's solo, it is important to first understand the melody of Ibrahim's composition. Heavily influenced by his upbringing in Cape Town, South Africa, and his admiration of fellow pianist Thelonious Monk, Ibrahim focuses his attention on rhythm to drive the overall theme of his composition.

More specifically, he leverages the relationship between downbeats, upbeats and the space between, as he playfully "flips" the emphasis of the downbeat on the listener. Like the standard "Evidence," a similar composition by Monk, "Jabaloni" creates a playful landscape of rhythmic unpredictability. This is an important factor to note in this instance, because Wilson leans heavily upon this concept and motif throughout his solo.

The most obvious example of this motif occurs between measures 9 and 12. Like the melody, the rhythmic displacement serves as a call-and-response every two measures of the "A" section. In this example, measures 9–10 establish a heavy emphasis on the downbeat, alternating between floor tom and high tom on beats 1 and 3, respectively. Subsequently, the response to this statement is first heard in the pickups to measure 11, mimicking the same motif but this time from the perspective of the upbeats.

Wilson takes this concept one step further

in measure 12 when he yet again flips the perspective by dropping the floor tom note on beat 4, instead of on 1. To trained ears, this sounds like a brief bar of 3, but it is just a rhythmic illusion expertly crafted by Wilson. The tension is ultimately resolved in measures 15 and 16, ending with Wilson dropping beat 1 back on the floor tom in measure 17.

One unique aspect of this solo is that Wilson never strikes a cymbal during the entirety of the improvisation. This artistic choice to focus on just the drums might be in tribute to the African influence of this composition, but it makes the solo unique in that the drums are exposed dynamically without the wash of the cymbals. Coming out of the bass solo, Wilson maintains the mezzo forte sound on the snare as he weaves through syncopated bebop lines, slowly integrating the toms in measures 1–7. Up to this point, the hi-hat foot has remained silent, but in measure 8 he strategically places it as a solo voice landing on beat 4 to set up the next section.

From this point forward, Wilson begins to explore the full range of dynamics. Aside from the obvious sharp tom attacks and quiet responses featured in measures 9–14, Wilson uses exaggerated dynamic shifts as rhythmic anchors from which to improvise around. This is seen in measure 25, which compositionally represents a shift to the "B" section when Wilson drops two accented double-stops between the snare and high tom on beats 1 and 2. Like an ostinato, this sets up a structure from which to improvise around, as can be seen in measures 27, 33, 35, 37 and 39.

Texturally, Wilson employs a range of strokes on the drums to evoke the intensity and color he seeks. In general, the first half of the solo has a strong focus on single strokes, while the second half of the solo moves more into a combination of double-stops and flams.

Measures 37–44 are a particularly rich example of this conversation between the two techniques. The hi-hat, as it has appeared throughout the solo, plays an important linear role as it breaks up phrases across the drum set. A good example of this in action occurs in measures 43–44 as the hi-hat and the snare/floor tom alternate and grow dynamically into measure 45. To do this cleanly requires substantial technical ability, something Wilson is never short on.

The solo ends with a restatement of its original motif in measures 53 and 54 and decrescendos back into the ensemble's free-form rubato section to close the tune.

DB

Jeff Lien is a drummer, writer and educator residing in Nashville.

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♩ = 256

(Solo starts at 4:15)

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Ibanez George Benson GB10-BS Hollowbody

Four Decades of Quality, Versatility & Classic Jazz Tone

In 1974, Ibanez offered its first original design, the AR series, and its success inspired the company to produce its very first artist signature model, the George Benson GB10, in 1977. Sporting pro-level workmanship, tone and playability, this flagship of the Ibanez signature line remains a solid choice among guitarists who appreciate its quality and versatility.

Today, Ibanez offers a rich catalog of artist signature models in addition to the Benson line, which now contains three models. The GB10, manufactured in Japan, is the top of the line and a true collaboration between manufacturer and musician. According to Scott Miller, communications and marketing specialist at Ibanez, Benson was focused on several key areas in designing his guitar. He wanted something comfortable to play, resistant to feedback on stage and easily adjustable on the road without the need for special tools.

The GB10 is one of those guitars that simply exudes quality the instant you open the case. The body features a comfortable 14¾-inch bout and a slim 3⅝-inch depth. The five-ply binding is nicely yellowed, and the gold hardware along with bound f-holes really set off the deep tobacco sunburst. The three-piece neck has an ebony board highlighted by abalone/acrylic block inlays and topped off by the Benson torch logo on the headstock. This hollowbody features the standard spruce top and maple back and sides with a floating ebony bridge and two floating GB special humbucker pickups custom wound by Ibanez.

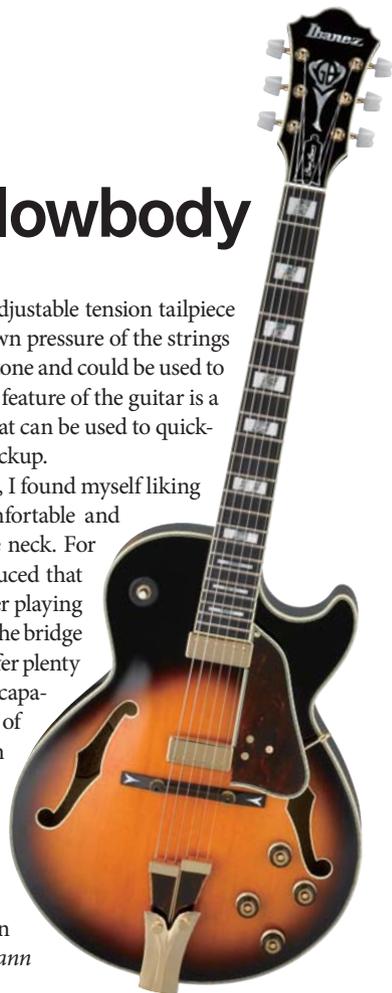
With separate volume and tone pots for each pickup, dialing in your sound is straightforward, with lots of possibilities to work with. One of

the GB10's signature elements is an adjustable tension tailpiece that offers the ability to tweak the down pressure of the strings behind the bridge, which will impact tone and could be used to control feedback issues. Another cool feature of the guitar is a threaded post under the pickguard that can be used to quickly fine-tune the height of the bridge pickup.

After many hours of playing time, I found myself liking this guitar more and more. It's comfortable and easy to play, with a great slim-profile neck. For jazz, using just the neck pickup produced that creamy yet clear archtop tone, whether playing with a pick or bare fingers. Dialing in the bridge pickup expands the palette and can offer plenty of bite and grit. Overall, the GB10 is capable of an extremely broad variety of sounds, but without compromising on that classic "jazz tone" that is really what this guitar is all about. Ibanez offers the GB10 for \$3,599, including a rugged thermoplastic molded case, and for a no-compromise professional-level instrument, that's more than reasonable.

—Keith Baumann

ibanez.com



Yamaha Revamps Baritone Saxes

New Custom Model Tops the Line

With the YBS-82, YBS-62II and YBS-480, Yamaha has scored a baritone saxophone trifecta. The three new horns represent a complete revamp of the company's bari lineup, which until now included the always reliable YBS-52 student model and the versatile YBS-62 professional model.

A Custom-level Yamaha instrument, the YBS-82 (MSRP: \$16,323) is the new top-of-the-line bari, appropriate for use in jazz, classical and contemporary settings. Like the Custom alto and tenor, it comes in a variety of customizable configurations involving the handmade neck, which is available in three bore tapers: V1 (large), E1 (medium) and C1 (small). The C1 neck is standard, and the E1 and V1 can be purchased separately (starting at \$366). The new necks will fit any Yamaha bari, in fact, including original YBS-62 and YBS-52 models that cats have been playing for years. Having a choice of neck bores is a major advantage when it comes to getting that juicy, ripe tone and quick response you need on bari.

Players can choose from six different finishes for their neck: lacquered, silver-plated, sterling silver, gold-plated, unlacquered and black lacquer. The main body of the YBS-82 comes in gold-lacquer, silver-plated and unlacquered options, and features elegant hand-engraving throughout.

The YBS-82 (pictured) has that familiar Custom sound, a manifestation of advanced bore design and Yamaha's proprietary brass recipe. Intonation was superb during play-testing, and the revised key layout felt compact and comfortable in my hands. This instrument is clearly built

for speed. The low end responded magnificently, with plenty of power and a touch of cello-like tonal sweetness. The bell of the instrument was shortened to accommodate improved tonehole placement, a design change that also makes the low register sound more uniform with the rest of the horn.

Many of these design enhancements are incorporated into the new YBS-62II (MSRP: \$13,997) professional model, which replaces the YBS-62, and the already-popular YBS-480 (MSRP: \$8,641) intermediate model, which builds upon the success and reputation of the YBS-52.

The YBS-62II has the same integrated keypost setup as the YBS-82, where multiple keys connect to a single plate, helping to bring a moderate level of resistance while delivering a solid tonal core.

The YBS-480 features a redesigned bore and neck modeled after Yamaha's original 62 series saxophones to improve intonation.

All three new Yamaha baris are outfitted with a special socket attachment at the bottom bow to accommodate an optional detachable peg.

—Ed Enright

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1. FM Rhythm

Roland has released a firmware update for its flagship drum machine in the Aria series. The free version 2.0 firmware update of the TR-8S Rhythm Performer offers major enhancements like an FM synthesis engine with MORPH parameter: an ultra-expressive macro control that lets you sweep through an array of tonal variations, manipulating FM depth, ratio and feedback with a twist of a knob. Version 2.0 also offers expanded performance effects and helpful reload functions to speed up workflow. Roland has added more Instrument FX, as well, including Saturator, Spread, Frequency Shifter and Ring Modulator.

More info: roland.com

2. Vocal Freakout

With the MicroFreak Vocoder Edition, Arturia gives keyboard players the option to sing along with dynamic textures and harmonies provided by a paraphonic synth with 16-band vocoder engine. The vocoder comes with an easily adjustable and removable gooseneck microphone. Combine the Vocoder mode with MicroFreak's wild features and manipulate your sound like never before. Sequence vocal melodies or modulate voice parameters with the low-frequency oscillation. Connect an external sound source like a drum machine or synth via the headphone socket for glitchy sound processing.

More info: arturia.com

3. Mouthpiece Case

The Great Leather Trumpet Mouthpiece Case fits up to five trumpet, cornet or flugelhorn mouthpieces. Each premium, handcrafted leather case is fastened with Velcro strips, sewn into special 3M backing that helps the case hold its form. Protective dividers separate the mouthpieces and hold them snugly in place. The Great Leather Trumpet Mouthpiece Case comes in seven colors: wine, forest green, British tan, black, red, palomino and brown.

More info: mouthpiececase.com

4. Guitar Hang

On-Stage has introduced the DT8000 Guitar Stool with Hanger, an all-in-one setup that allows guitarists to conveniently store their instruments right behind the backrest of a comfortable perch. Suitable for practice or performance, the DT8000 has an extra-thick padded cushion and four nonslip rubber feet to ensure that the stool sits firmly on the floor or stage without moving. A folding design makes this stool especially easy to transport and store.

More info: on-stage.com

5. 360-Degree Sound

Hong Kong-based developer miniDSP has created the ambiMIK-1 Ambisonic USB microphone, featuring 3D audio software from Swedish sound pioneer Dirac. The ambiMIK-1 plugs directly into a standard USB port to capture lifelike 360-degree sound for applications ranging from recording music to producing augmented virtual reality content.

More info: minidsp.com



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Havana Jazz Festival
JVC New York City Jazz Festival
MCP New York City
JEN National Conference
ACDA National Conference
NAfME National Conference
Kansas Music Education Association
Southwestern ACDA Divisional Conference
Opening act for Take 6 and New York Voices

NOTABLE ALUMNI

Bobby Watson

Internationally-renowned saxophonist, Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City

Lisa Henry

Winner of the 1994 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition, toured with Herbie Hancock

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Jazz educators John Stafford II (left), Jim Mair and Justin Binek of Kansas City Kansas Community College

KCKCC Educators Devise Safeguards

BEING A MUSIC EDUCATOR DURING THE pandemic requires a deep commitment to public health. Teachers who conduct in-person instruction have dual responsibilities: They should help students develop their musical chops while also following protocols to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 on campus.

With fall classes in session, educators at Kansas City Kansas Community College are striving to protect the health of students, faculty, staff and local residents.

When DownBeat sent an email to John Stafford II—the coordinator of KCKCC’s music department—regarding steps the school is taking for safe on-campus instruction, his reply was extensive. Stafford’s email described the mandatory use of face coverings and maintaining social distance; the use of air purifiers in music classrooms; a facility’s new HVAC system with HEPA filters; a cleaning regimen for classrooms; assigning microphones to individual students, who are required to clean them after every use; conducting rehearsals outdoors whenever possible; the use of mutes and covers for brass instruments; and safety procedures for emptying instruments’ spit valves.

In mid-October, DownBeat conducted videoconference interviews with Stafford and his fellow music educators Justin Binek and Jim Mair—as well as KCKCC Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs Jerry Pope—to gain insights about safe in-person instruction.

These interviews revealed other steps the school has taken, including reducing the number of students on campus at any given time,

holding classes in larger rooms, and creating signs to direct the flow of foot traffic.

“Our college came up with a really detailed COVID plan for the summer and for the fall,” Stafford said. “Another reason why things have gone well here is that 70 percent of our classes throughout the whole college are either virtual or online, whereas only 30 percent of the classes are [in-person] on campus.

“So, you notice the difference when you drive up to the parking lot, with [fewer] cars. When we walk the halls, there’s less people. I feel very safe coming here because you can distance yourself from people quite easily because of the rules in place.”

Binek echoed that sentiment: “I feel safer at school than I do at the grocery store.”

“I haven’t had one student complain about wearing the mask,” Mair added. “[Students understand that] these are the rules, this is what we gotta do, and we’re going to make it work. The buy-in is good.”

Getting a high-quality music education is crucially important for students, whether they plan to enter the workforce right away, or whether they intend to earn an associate in arts degree at KCKCC and then pursue a bachelor’s degree at another school. KCKCC alumni have gone on to enroll at such prestigious institutions as the University of Missouri–Kansas City, the University of Kansas and the University of North Texas.

Binek, Mair and Stafford all marveled at how well their music students have been playing this fall.

“Part of the reason why our ensembles are doing amazing work so far in this semester is that our students are really focused,” Binek explained. “They appreciate the fact that they actually have the opportunity to be together—because they know that there are schools where this *isn’t* the case. We’re [mainly] a commuter campus. As a community college, we don’t have fraternity houses. We don’t have big dorms that could potentially lead to certain issues that other schools have encountered.”

KCKCC has a main campus, plus seven other education centers or locations. On the school’s website, at press time, the COVID-19 Case Notifications chart indicated only six cases identified for the period of Nov. 3–11.

“One thing we’ve learned is that our protocols work,” Pope said. “We tasked our campus police with going around and monitoring [behavior], and they report what we call mask violations. And those have decreased [over time]. In fact, the [report] I got this week had no violations whatsoever.”

KCKCC’s Spring 2021 classes are scheduled to begin on Jan. 19.

In addition to learning about music theory and developing skills in areas such as musical performance and audio engineering, KCKCC students are learning important life lessons, according to Mair.

“I often tell [students], ‘Success in life is how you respond to Plan B, because Plan A doesn’t always pan out.’ So, this is about life lessons and responsibility: We’re all trying to keep each other safe.”
—Bobby Reed

Ryan Keberle

Trombonist Ryan Keberle has cultivated one of the more diverse careers in modern jazz. A fixture of the Grammy-winning Maria Schneider Orchestra, he leads the genre-busting ensemble Catharsis, and in 2018, Reverso—his band with pianist Frank Woeste—released *Suite Ravel*, inspired by the classical masterpiece *Le Tombeau De Couperin*. Earlier this year, a trio version of Reverso released *The Melodic Line*.

DownBeat met with Keberle via videoconference, as he commented on tracks from his home in New York's Catskill Mountains.

Al Grey and the Basie Wing

"Open Wider, Please" (*The Last Of The Big Plungers*, Argo, 1960) Grey, Benny Powell, trombones; Joe Newman, trumpet; Billy Mitchell, tenor saxophone; Charlie Fowlkes, baritone saxophone; Floyd Morris, piano; Ed Jones, bass; Sonny Payne, drums.

I love this track so much. I love the writing; I love the rhythm section, so swinging. If I had to guess, I might say Benny Powell or Jimmy Cleveland? I'm totally stumped. 5 stars, though. Phenomenal track. [after] I should have thought Al when I heard the double-timing. He was the one with the mute. Usually the dead giveaway was the sound—he had the biggest and most rotund sound there ever was in trombone history.

Alan Ferber

"Magnolia" (*Chamber Songs: Music For Nonet And Strings*, Sunnyside, 2010) Ferber, trombone; Scott Wendholt, trumpet; Jon Gordon, alto saxophone; John Ellis, tenor saxophone; Douglas Yates, bass clarinet; Nate Radley, guitar; Bryn Roberts, piano; Matt Clohesy, bass; Mark Ferber, drums; Zach Brock, Sara Caswell, Olivia De Prato, Leena Waite, violin; Corrina Albright, Victor Lowrie, viola; Jody Redhage Ferber, Maria Jeffers, cello; Ike Sturm, bass; JC Sanford, string orchestra conductor.

I know who it is based on the drummer—and the violinist, too. Alan Ferber—it only takes a couple of measures to recognize him. When I first heard the guitar and piano carry the melody—it's such a unique sound—I was immediately thinking [Bob] Brookmeyer, especially with the harmony. Alan is obviously a master composer and arranger, in addition to being a master trombonist.

That tune is absolutely perfect jazz harmony. I wasn't 100 percent certain, but then I heard Sara Caswell take the solo, and she's unmistakable. And then, of course, Mark Ferber, Alan's brother, on drums.

Mark is such an unsung hero of the New York jazz scene. ... I've been lucky enough to have him play my large ensemble music a couple of times recently, and he always plays things I love. 5 stars.

Urbie Green

"How About You?" (*East Coast Jazz Series No. 6*, Bethlehem, 1955) Green, trombone; Al Cohn (aka Ike Horowitz), bass clarinet; Danny Bank, clarinet; Doug Mettome, trumpet; Jimmy Lyon, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Jimmy Campbell, drums.

Wow, that's perfect jazz. The arrangement speaks so directly of the West Coast tradition from the '50s and '60s. On the trombone, I want to say Urbie Green, but Urbie was more of an East Coast guy for most of his career ... [after] Urbie passed away recently, but shortly before he left us, we were very fortunate to throw a big party in his honor. It was a special time, the only time I got to meet him in person. Such a touching tribute for someone who left a profound legacy. You hear him play the melody there: It's so smooth, so clean, so swinging, so expressive—it's mastery.

Michael Dease

"Mirror Image" (*Never More Here*, Posi-Tone, 2019) Dease, trombone; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone; Renee Rosnes, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

I know who it is, but I want to keep listening. That's undoubtedly Mike Dease. Unmistakable. A handful of trombonists of my generation are



Ryan Keberle

AMANDA GENTILE

really pushing the trombone to new places, especially from a technical standpoint, just doing things on the instrument that no one thought was possible. Mike releases like two albums every year, so it's hard to keep up, but I really dug that tune. 5 stars. We went to college together at Juilliard; we overlapped by a year.

The Pugh-Taylor Project

"747" (*The Pugh-Taylor Project*, DMP, 1984) Jim Pugh, trombone; Dave Taylor, bass trombone; Dave Ratajczak, drum programming.

Didn't see that coming. Wow. I have to give that 5 stars, because I've never heard anything like that; I don't say that often anymore. My initial thoughts would be West Coast cats, like Bill Reichenbach, Phil Teele or perhaps East Coast cats like Dave Taylor ... The tenor trombone playing was just extraordinary, which makes me think West Coast. Whoever wrote it obviously knows the way two trombones can resonate with each other in different ways, exploring the slide and the glissando.

[after] I should have guessed [Pugh], one of the all-time greats on our instrument, and Dave Taylor is one of the all-time greats of any instrument. He is also someone who is very much an inspiration to me and a bit of a mentor to me over the years.

Jon Hatamiya

"The Little Island (*Dreamscape #2*)" (*More Than Anything*, Orenda, 2020) Hatamiya, trombone; Albert Baliwas, alto saxophone; Colin Cook, Yunus Iyriboz, guitar; Jacob Mann, piano; Logan Kane, electric bass; Colin McDaniel, drums.

I have no idea. Very few instruments rock out as good as the trombone. The trombonist at times sounded a bit like Jacob Garchik, but I don't think it's him. Definitely of the moment, in terms of the way they play. I love hearing the trombone rock out and not be afraid to use the slide and make some sounds that aren't perfectly round and centered. 5 stars, for sure.

Wayne Coniglio/Scott Whitfield

"2nd Avenue Stroll" (*Fast Friends*, Summit, 2014) Coniglio, bass trombone; Whitfield, trombone; Ken Kehner, piano; Eric Warren, bass; Kevin Gianino, drums.

I don't know who these [trombonists] are, but they're both super badass. There are not too many bass trombonists out there who can play like that. This definitely sounds more West Coast to me, just the sonic attributes.

It sounds relatively recent, like in the last 40 years. Is it Andy Martin? Mark Nightingale? [after] Ah, of course, Scott Whitfield. He is an incredible trombonist, a freak on the instrument. He's referencing everybody, in all genres, of all geographical scenes, throughout history. There are very few people who can play like that.

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.

DEREK BROWN

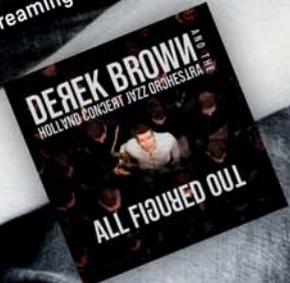
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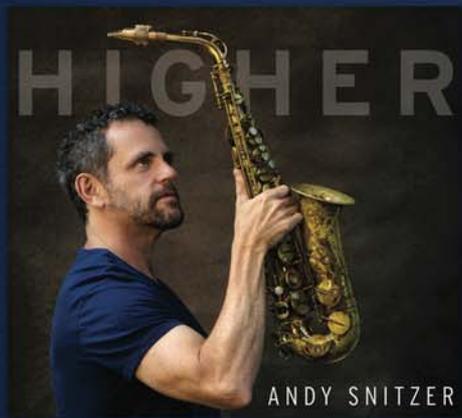
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