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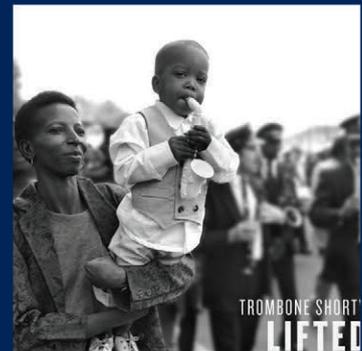
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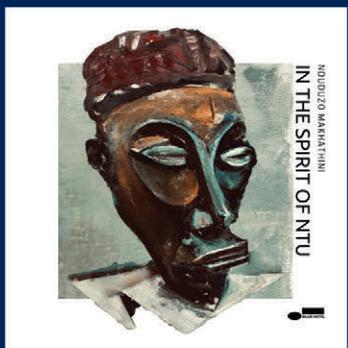
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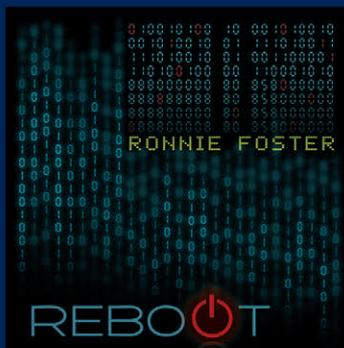
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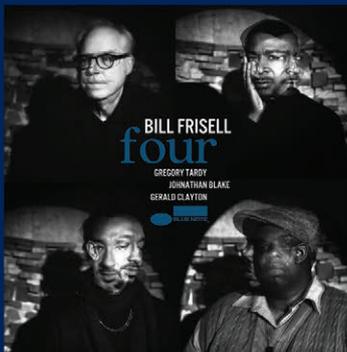
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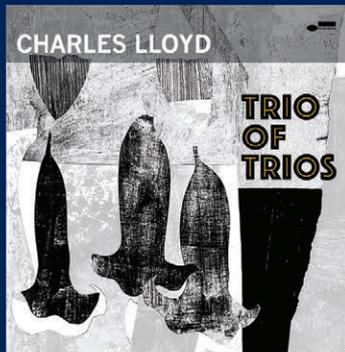
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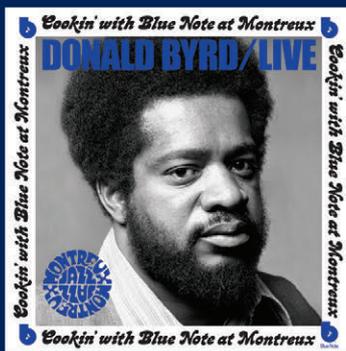
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**DECEMBER 2022**

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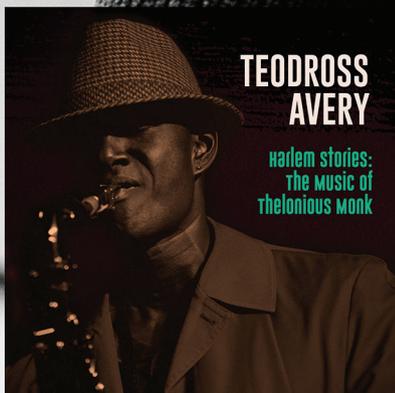
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# DECEMBER 2022

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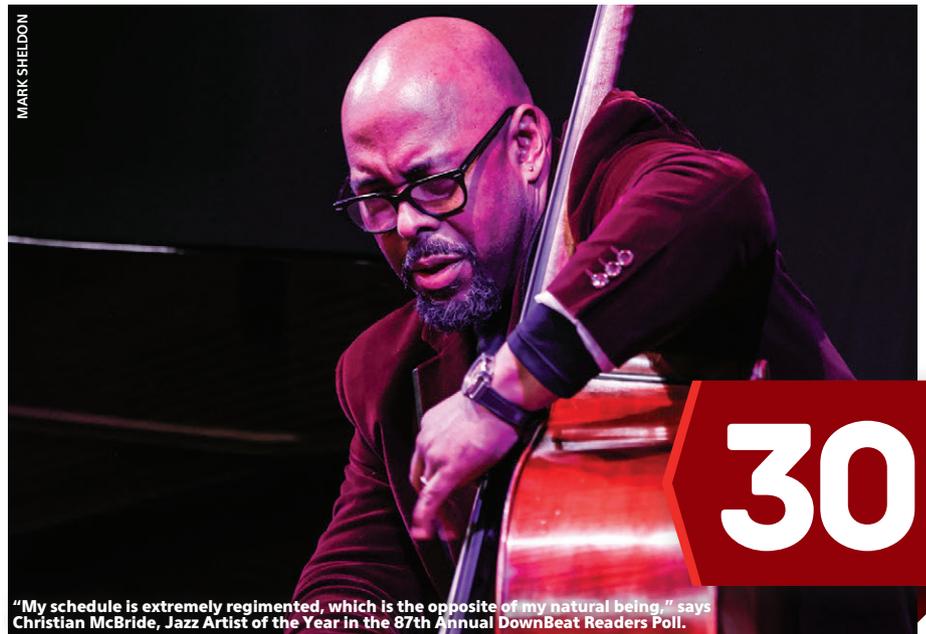
DownBeat Hall of Fame Honoree

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### *The Quiet Elegance of Kenny Barron*

BY PAUL DE BARROS

When Kenny Barron heard he had been elected to the DownBeat Jazz Hall of Fame, his immediate response was to deflect attention from himself. "There are so many great players," he said, "but I am honored." Such modesty is in keeping with the grace and elegance that have typified the celebrated pianist and composer.



"My schedule is extremely regimented, which is the opposite of my natural being," says Christian McBride, Jazz Artist of the Year in the 87th Annual DownBeat Readers Poll.

Cover photo by Jimmy and Dena Katz

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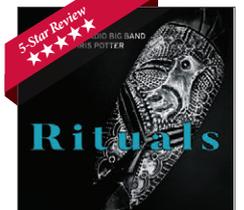
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# Chords & Discords >

## One Step To Disappointment

I read with interest but eventual disappointment John McDonough's article on the *One Step To Chicago* project [DownBeat September], music recorded in 1992 that was recently released for the first time. A salute to Chicago jazz of the 1920s and its legacy, it has a Dick Hyman-led group recreating six recordings from the late 1920s, a hot band headed by the late Kenny Davern jamming seven Dixieland standards, and all of the participants joining in on "Farewell Blues."

One cannot tell that from McDonough's article, which calls the music "a welcome little masterpiece in the art of reproduction," completely missing the point of the project, which was to show that, when played by top artists, the music is still fresh and exciting today.

McDonough states that Chicago jazz "flared briefly between 1927 and 1929 before being fluffed out by the Great Depression." Actually, the music became solidified as Dixieland in the mid-1930s and one of its key proponents, Eddie Condon, led all-star

**GEORGE AVAKIAN PRESENTS**  
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Saxophone: DAN BARRETT  
Bass: BOB HARGART, MAT HINTON  
Piano: KEN PERLOWSKI  
Clarinet: DICK HYMAN  
Drums: TONY DEMICOLA, ANNIE KINSELLA  
Tuba/Bass/Saxophone: VINCE GIORDANO  
Bass: MARY GROSZ, HOWARD ALDEN

groups for over 30 years. Chicago jazz has been played by a countless number of other musicians during the past 90 years. The music is still alive and well today if a bit underground in the U.S. It certainly did not die in 1929.

SCOTT YANOW  
LAKE HUGHES, CALIFORNIA

## Guilty Verdict?

I'd like to inquire as to why DownBeat has not reviewed or featured Albert Marques' *Freedom First* album. He has been featured on NPR, in the New York Times, Le Figaro (Paris), and been featured on television in Chile and Spain.

The history of jazz is tied to the Black struggle for recognition and justice. If your publication's legal team is steering clear of this album because Keith LaMar "could be guilty," then why was the NY Times able to not take sides and run an article on this album, but not DownBeat? I just had lunch with Albert. He did not ask me to write this email. I just want to know when I am going to take my DownBeat out of my mailbox and see his album featured or reviewed. I think you are missing out on a huge opportunity. We have been playing free outdoor big band concerts throughout the pandemic, with Keith calling in love from prison. He is an accomplished poet, speaker and painter, and credits Coltrane for keeping him alive all these years.

Whether or not your team thinks he's guilty or not should not prevent you from covering this album. The music stands on its own as a marriage of spoken word and high-level musicianship. Please do keep me posted on this issue, and thank you for your time.

DOMINIQUE GAGNE  
JAZZ FLUTIST AND EDUCATOR  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We gave serious consideration to this recording. But with all the

other great music coming out during the pandemic and shortly after, we simply never found a home for this project. We're sorry we couldn't. That said, the story is compelling! Those interested can check it out at [albertmarques.com](http://albertmarques.com).

## Relearning Martino

Concerning the widely disseminated belief that Pat Martino had to wholly relearn the guitar, as recollected in your obituary of Nov. 2, 2021, and elsewhere: the neurologist Paul Broks, who was close to Martino, debunks the idea [in an article posted at [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)].

ABBOTT KATZ  
VIA EMAIL

## Corrections & Clarifications

DownBeat regrets and attempts to correct all errors in the magazine.

- In the November issue:*
- We misspelled the title of Connie Han's great new recording several times in the terrific, full-length feature on the pianist. The correct title is Inanna.
  - The correct song title from Roxana Amed's new album Unánime is "Ontology." The editor's don't want to say what it was in print. It's just too embarrassing. Sorry, Roxana!

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CHRISTOPHER LEE



24-year-old Ye Huang guests with Jazz At Lincoln Center on Wynton Marsalis' *Shanghai Suite*.

## Wynton's *Shanghai Suite* Proves a Glorious Premiere

Several years ago, Wynton Marsalis, during an interview on CNN, was asked about the components of jazz. He said, "The main three components are the blues, improvisation ... and swing." At the recent opening of the 35th concert season of Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City, where Marsalis is the managing and artistic director, the orchestra premiered

his extended composition *Shanghai Suite*, which was first performed in 2019 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Shanghai, China, location.

All of the components that Marsalis named came into play at one time or another during the nine movements of the suite. It was swing that bracketed the two-hour performance at the center's Rose Theater, where an Eastern sound was pervasive, shifting from soft, mel-

ancholy tones to searing high notes. But in the opening movement, the orchestra was more interested in establishing a swing tempo after Ryan Kisor's blistering trumpet intro. Vincent Gardner's trombone accentuated the rhythmic pulse before surrendering it to the nimble pianistic runs of Dan Nimmer.

Marsalis served as a highly informed and ancholy narrator, between each movement pro-



Wynton Marsalis served as adroit narrator and performer during *Shanghai Suite*.

CHRISTOPHER LEE

viding the background material, particularly where Chinese culture and musical tradition required some interpretation. Marsalis proved a deft and amusing storyteller with an intuitive feel for Chinese folklore and myth as he related the journey of Sun Wukong in his quest for immortality. Wukong, legend has it, acquired this key after seven years of training. The journey took a musical form in the second movement, entitled “The Monkey King’s March.” Muted trombones and trumpets flowed behind Carlos Henriquez’s bowed bass, setting the stage for some soulful passages from trumpeter Kenny Rampton.

The blues component evolved in surges of piercing tonality when Marcus Printup was given space to demonstrate his ebullient brilliance. Flutist Ted Nash took his cue from the upper register of Printup’s horn and delighted the crowded theater with a fleeting series of trills and tremolos. Marsalis embellished the pretty sonority with an explosive burst that signaled the humorous blend of muted tones from the trombone section and the other three trumpeters.

Marsalis related that “White Yulan” (named for the first flower of spring) would be the third movement. The flower, a member of the magnolia family, presented Marsalis an opportunity to evoke Billie Holiday and her gardenia hairstyle, emblematic of her beauty and elegance. The tender blend of Victor Goines’ clarinet and alternating pitches of Nash’s flute were in stark contrast to Paul Nedzela’s baritone saxophone, but nonetheless a melodious mode.

Nicole Glover’s soprano swooped into the tune’s delicate beauty, which became all the more splendid with the addition of the muted measures from Marsalis.

Before the orchestra played “Hot Pot,” Marsalis cited the importance of music bringing people together, and this was Printup’s cue to join him in this snappy bounce of a tune featuring alto saxophonist Sherman Irby, Nimmer’s propulsive chords and the chorus of trombones from Vincent Gardner, Chris Crenshaw and Elliot Mason. What began with bassist Henriquez’s slaps ended with drummer Obed Calvaire’s beats on tambourine, which elicited spirited rounds of hand-claps from his cohort.

Marsalis next entertained the audience with a tale about “The Nine Dragons” that had to be summoned in order to complete the construction of a difficult bridge. The Chinese monk doing the conjuring morphed into a Thelonious Monk trope, a whimsical comment courtesy of Marsalis.

After Nedzela brought the dragons on, the trumpet section took charge and, like musical chairs, pushed each other to higher and faster notes until Crenshaw’s trombone entered with a solo that was reminiscent of a nursery rhyme. Then it was back to the trumpets with a fanfare of rippling exchanges that concluded with a collective blast.

“Li Bai’s Blues,” a movement chronicling the downfall of a banished poet, had an edge of lament, with Calvaire’s mallets softly rumbling in anticipation of a clash of cymbals. Sherman Irby’s alto saxophone served as a study in poetic nuance, as if to capture Li Bai’s metaphors. Crenshaw’s mournful trombone closed the tune; it was an airy, lyrical coda.

Contrastingly, there was no air in “The Five Elements” but that was hardly necessary for the guest performer Ye Huang, who is capable of producing a palette of colorful tonality on clarinet. The 24-year-old played

like a master of his horn — exuding an array of astonishing phrases that trombonist Elliot Mason answered with verve — and then released the melody for Nash’s flute to apply a delicate lace of fire. Goines added the final touch with robust textures from his tenor saxophone.

Marsalis recalled a memorable meeting with the great trumpeter Buck Clayton in 1982. “I was dressed in a lime green suit with white shoes,” Marsalis said. “And Buck said, ‘One day you’re gonna play as good as you look.’” There was much more to the story involving Clayton’s incident in Shanghai back in the ’30s, and to commemorate it, the orchestra stretched out on “From The Casanova To The Peace Hotel To Right Here Tonight.” A repetition of beats ended and then slowly settled into a unison of horns, providing Huang with a harmonic platform to launch a finely conceived solo, the notes literally leaping from under his fingers.

While it was a concert to celebrate the opening of JALC’s 35th season, there was no room for nostalgia, though there was space for the orchestra to fully test the limits of musical expression. The preceding movement was invested in a potpourri of styles, from China, to New Orleans, to the borough of Manhattan. And it was left to the final movement to bring it all home, much in the manner of the vigor that erupted at the very start of the evening. “The Shanghai Skyline” leaped from the charts, particularly when Glover delivered a breathtaking solo without seeming to take a breath. It was another unforgettable solo in an evening brimming with them. With speed and dexterity, she presented her version of the skyline, a mixture of jagged but lovely ruptures all carefully envisioned in a pleasant symmetry of invention. There were brief iterations of classical Dixieland, some bebop dollops and lots of modernity.

Serving as a call to arms (or fingers) and a challenge to her bandmates, the first responder was pianist Nimmer, who issued his own hard-driving exuberance, showering the room with clusters of tingling arpeggios. Then came Marsalis with all the finesse and power Clayton had predicted. As ever, it was vintage Marsalis, and the articulation on his horn matched the torrent of words on this occasion. It compared favorably with a video clip of him strolling the club in Shanghai back in 2019, his horn practically to the ear of a spectator.

If the coming season at JALC is anything like this evening’s affair, listeners can expect — like the lime green suit and white shoes — something wonderful, something as glorious and resplendent as the harbinger of *Shanghai Suite*.  
—Herb Boyd

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Artemis' Ingrid Jensen and Nicole Glover



Dianne Reeves and Joe Lovano



Vijay Iyer



Pianists Chucho Valdés and Emmett Cohen

# Resilient Detroit Jazz Festival Remains Lively, Pre-Eminent

**FEW FESTIVALS PROVED AS VALIANT AS** Detroit through the dark days of the pandemic. In both 2020 and 2021, the world's largest free jazz bonanza presented broadcast-only performances from purpose-built sound stages in a downtown hotel. It wasn't terribly exciting for the musicians, though, and several registered bemusement at the lack of audience participation, so important to the give-and-take of live performance. Festival foundation chair Gretchen Valade and Artistic Director Chris Collins maintained the prestigious profile for the 43rd edition, however, without missing a proverbial beat. Stellar saxophonists are always a feature (since Collins is one himself), and this year saw a return of Jerry Bergonzi throwing down at the behest of David Liebman, who convened (only for their second hit) The Lighthouse Project.

Despite the presence of Donny McCaslin, Joe Lovano, homeboy JD Allen, British up-and-comer Nubya Garcia and versatile new voice Rafeal Leafar, though, it was stellar pianists who ruled the roost. Regrettably missing Ethan Iverson's early set on Sunday, DownBeat did catch the punchy Vijay Iyer Trio at the Pyramid Stage the night before, followed by closer Abdullah Ibrahim at the picturesque downtown JP Morgan Chase

stage. The concrete cloister of the Pyramid Stage, free from the noise pollution of the Absopure Waterfront, is perhaps the best stage for piano trio (at least from the audience's point of view).

Though a comparative whippersnapper at 80, Chucho Valdés presided as the DJF's artist-in-residence and opened the fest with his Yoruban Orchestra's ambitious "Creation," featuring Hilario Duran and John Beasley. More off-the-cuff, he later duetted with Dianne Reeves on dyed-in-the-wool standard repertoire and carried that over to his closing quartet set Monday night in Cadillac Square, with such balladry as "It Never Entered My Mind." Peppering his selections with populist quips referencing Watermelon Man and Brubeck's 9/8 romp "Blue Rondo À La Turk," the big man then opted for a Mozart medley and had to keep vamping when the multipage sheet music blew away in the night breeze.

Valdés has revisited a concept he documented in 1972 with a group featuring the choppy Yoruban beats of the batá drum for his highly recommended Mack Avenue debut *Jazz Bata 2* and revived his coruscating solo on the augmented harmonies of the bolero "Luces," live on the DJF's main stage. Mack Avenue label-mate Emmet Cohen caught Valdés' climactic set after

his own high-velocity trio outing at the Pyramid with drummer Kyle Poole and bassist Yasushi Nakamura. Cohen's afro bounced in tandem with his mighty piano fingers that seem capable of anything, dancing through "Toast To Lo" (a tribute to the late drummer Lawrence Leathers), the rollocking, ambidextrous title track, to his excellent 2021 release "Future Stride" and a show-stopping blues dedicated to Joey De Francesco.

Perhaps the most impressive set at the Carhartt came courtesy of the latest incarnation of the all-female sextet Artemis, however: Renee Rosnes, Ingrid Jensen, Nicole Glover, Alexa Tarantino, Noriko Ueda and Allison Miller. The latter stoked the action with an authoritative polyrhythmic drum solo over the chameleonic "Galapagos" and kicked off her theme for the group, "Goddess Of The Hunt." Though musical director Rosnes' tempo-retarded take on Lee Morgan's "Sidewinder" (check their eponymous Blue Note debut) seemed almost sarcastic, it didn't want for burning solos from every participant, including the highly focussed Nicole Glover, who exhibited all the grit and rhythmic determination of Joe Henderson present on the 1963 original.

—Photos and article by Michael Jackson



“Roscoe Mitchell, Don Moye, Jason Moran, Amina Claudine Myers, Thomas Stanley, Nicole Mitchell — these people hugged me,” Moor Mother said about wanting to give back to those who were kind to her coming into the jazz scene.

# Moor Mother: The Futurism Is Now

AT THE 42ND ANNUAL FESTIVAL

International de Jazz de Montréal, Moor Mother gave one of her most soul rattling performances. As part of drummer and composer Terri Lyne Carrington’s Invitation Series, Moor Mother reimagined Frederick Douglass’ famous 1852 speech, “What To The Slave Is The Fourth Of July?,” by incorporating ritualistic small percussion and heavy electronic voice filters while Carrington underscored her oration with ferocious drum improvisation.

The séance-like performance was all the more spectacular given that it occurred on July 4, a day that gun violence had yet again ravished the U.S. And, more significantly, it was the first time Moor Mother had played with Carrington. The two had brief email exchanges, but no set plan. Yet it resulted in a collaborative improvisation of the highest order.

When asked when she decided to make Douglass’ speech into her own and how much time she needed to prepare, Moor Mother suc-

cinctly responded, “This is just the work that I do.”

She explained how she contextualized Douglass’ address to the United States in Canada’s history. “I was thinking of the broader context of Canada actually being [a part] of North America and how these [country] borders take place,” Moor Mother said. “It’s all based on different wars and coups.”

Even with Moor Mother’s scintillating recitation, she does not consider herself a spoken word artist. “I’m not so much into spoken word. But I’m really into poetry,” she said, before citing Maya Angelou, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, Gloria Naylor, Lucille Clifton, Amira Baraka and Henry Dumas as her favorites. She also mentioned Saul Williams, whose 1988 film *Slam*, she said, taught her how to write poetry faster.

Poetry is just a sliver of Moor Mother’s artistry. She’s a polymath. In addition to playing guitar and sound sculpting, she’s a performance artist, photographer, college professor, socio-cultural activist and Afrofuturist philosopher.

Before she became Moor Mother, she was known as Camae Defstar as part of a Philadelphia-based punk band the Mighty Paradocs. She and one of her artistic co-conspirators, Rebecca Focus, also spearheaded the live music series *Rockers!* in 2007 that lasted some 15 years. As Defstar, she started making electronic avant-hip-hop beats, inspired, in part, by the late producer J Dilla. But her burgeoning beat-making hadn’t emerged on stage. During this period, she did create a solo project in 2015, *Moor Mother Goddess*, which gave birth to her nom de plume.

She started performing as a solo artist, releasing solo EPs such as *Fetish Bones* (2016) and *The Motionless Present* (2017). She complemented her albums with a self-published magazine of her poetry. On her latest album, *Jazz Codes* (Anti- Records), she pays homage to some of her jazz lodestars and mentors such as Mary Lou Williams, Woody Shaw, Billie Holiday, Joe McPhee and Amina Claudine Myers.

*Jazz Codes* features contributions from pianist Jason Moran, flutist Nicole Mitchell, singer and fellow sound sculptor Melanie Charles and poet, sound artist and educator Thomas Stanley. She also recruits help from the critically acclaimed free-jazz ensemble Irreversible Entanglements, of which she’s a member.

With its evocative usage of electronic textures, searching acoustic jazz accompaniments and transportive sonic pull, *Jazz Codes* highlights Moor Mother’s penetrating connection to the jazz lineage.

“When I first came onto this [jazz] scene, I didn’t know who was going to take me under their wings,” Moor Mother said. “A co-signage is really important for a musician to get any real success based at the DIY level. It was always these elder legendary jazz cats who co-signed me. So, I wanted to give a little gift back to them. Roscoe Mitchell, Don Moye, Jason Moran, Amina Claudine Myers, Thomas Stanley, Nicole Mitchell — these people hugged me. That meant a lot to me. I just wanted to give a little sweetness before I get back to this historical liberation work.”

That historical liberation work includes her ongoing efforts with the Black Quantum Futurism, a collective she launched with Rasheedah Phillips. The group explores, interrogates and deconstructs such heady topics as African philosophies and rituals, quantum physics and temporalities. “We released the book *Community Futurisms*, which deals with how we approach time and deal with housing and communities. We built grandmother clocks. We break down these linear aspects of time. We show how Greenwich Mean Time is oppressive in marginalized communities.”

Moor Mother is preparing to release her next album, *The Great Bailout*. “It’s a historical document,” she explained. “With *The Great Bailout*, I’m ready to gain new fans and lose some. I’m ready to do it all.”

—John Murphy



Karl Emil Knudsen, second from left, with members of Papa Bue's Viking Jazz Band, who recorded Storyville's first million-selling record.



Knudsen and Mona Granager, the label's current managing director, chat during Storyville's 50th anniversary.

# Storyville's Clock Strikes 70

**THE OLDEST AND LARGEST INDEPENDENT** jazz record label in Europe is currently celebrating its 70th anniversary, and chances are you may never have heard of it. But obscurity is part of the underground charm of any specialty label devoted to jazz — a credential of its authentic outlaw character standing against the tides of commercialism. In that spirit, Storyville Records was founded in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1952 by a young jazz fan named Karl Emil Knudsen, whose passion for the music was surpassed only by his entrepreneurial ambitions.

"Today we have between 600 and 700 items available digitally," said Mona Granager, Storyville's general manager. "About 400 are still in CD stock. We even have some of the more iconic issues on vinyl as well as recent issues from Michel Petrucciani and Clark Terry. Distribution is principally digital, but we have physical distribution through ArkivMusic [Naxos of America] and other another partners in Europe and Japan."

Storyville wasn't always so global. After World War II, Denmark had much to catch up on. Audiences were emotionally loyal to America's New Orleans legends. And Europe's most influential jazz pundit was Hughes Panassie, an arch traditionalist who believed that the real McCoy could only be found on records made before 1930. He cautioned young fans not to be fooled by the lure of virtuosity. "In music, primitive man generally has greater talent than civilized man," he argued. He explained all this at length in *The Real Jazz*, one of the earliest books on jazz to appear in Europe — and dangerously myopic in its nostalgia. Among contemporary musicians, Benny Goodman was "detestable," Lester Young "ugly" and Charlie Christian unmentioned. Its publication in 1942 came as Knudsen reached an impressionable adolescence. He, and others, would be deeply influenced by Panassie, who helped keep traditional jazz thriving in Europe well after it became passé in the U.S.

By the early 1950s Knudsen was part of a

small group of serious Danish collectors who would meet to revel in old Paramount and Gennett masters, then selectively reissue them in Western Europe. Knudsen decided there were opportunities in the post-war Danish jazz scene, first among them a record label dedicated to the music's fundamentals. And what better name to characterize its mission than Storyville, the mythic New Orleans cradle of the first jazz. Its first 78 rpm, issued near the end of 1952, was a 1924 Gennett by Louis Armstrong and the Red Onion Babies. Storyville was off to the races.

Knudsen was also eager to record new music for the growing New Orleans revival market, which was the rage everywhere, especially England. He became partner in a Copenhagen jazz club called Basin Street (another New Orleans reference), which presented Danish artists, but, more importantly, brought in musicians to record for Storyville. Among the first Knudsen recorded in 1953 was English trombonist Chris Barber, who would provide Storyville with its first money-maker. "Ice Cream," recorded in 1954 in Knudsen's home, it would sell more than 250,000 copies.

In 1956, Storyville signed Papa Bue's Viking Jazz Band, which swept onto the European charts with the label's first million-seller. "That was the start of it, really," said Granager. "With that, we became a company." Storyville gathered a procession of American blues and jazz giants: Champion Jack Dupree, George Lewis, Sidney Bechet, Edmond Hall and Albert Nicholas, most bearing the made-in-New Orleans sound, past and present.

Over its first 15 years, the Storyville catalog grew into the hundreds, branching into contemporary jazz by the mid-1960s. "We had a lot of Americans coming to Copenhagen then," said Granager, "so we would record Lee Konitz, Stan Getz and others, typically with Danish musicians." Much was newly recorded or licensed. More was archival concerts, radio broadcasts and studio outtakes — previously the cloak-and-dag-

ger domain of furtive collectors.

By the '60s, many small specialty labels treated such material as public domain and developed a bootleg empire. They rescued thousands of treasures, but provided no payments to musicians. It created an ethical controversy.

Knudsen made it Storyville's policy never to issue a broadcast or concert without first locating the musicians (or their estates) and arranging appropriate payments. He acquired a reputation for fairness and integrity unique in the industry.

Knudsen made agreements with the Duke Ellington estate that conferred fidelity and legitimacy on the famous 1940 Fargo concert, as well as the complete Ellington Treasury broadcast series from 1945. Similar arrangements brought volumes of wartime Jubilee programs, as well as the Eddie Condon Town Hall Concerts of the mid-'40s and other gems.

Knudsen died in September 2003 at 74. "There was a really unsteady period for Storyville after that," Granager said, "until we were acquired two years later by what is now the Wise Music Group, a family of international music publishing companies."

Today, Storyville is very different from its stomping Dixie days. "We still sell a little of that," Granager said, "but it's become old-fashioned to most people in Europe." So is the CD. Granager is not optimistic about its future, though new releases from Storyville still come out as physical product. "But the digital market is growing," she said, "and that is the future we're adapting to." More important, she adds, Storyville is still "basically jazz."

Storyville is often referred to as the European Blue Note, a comparison that may understate its scope. Like Blue Note, it began in traditional jazz and moved forward. But unlike Blue Note, Storyville moved in so many directions and in such depth that today, at 70, it offers perhaps the largest global menu of jazz artists and styles anywhere. The label's catalog is available online at [storyvillerecords.com](http://storyvillerecords.com). —John McDonough

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black long-sleeved top and large black headphones, is singing into a Samson Q9x dynamic microphone. The microphone is mounted on a stand and is positioned in front of her. The background is a blue and purple striped wall. The Samson logo is visible on the headphones.

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**Norah Jones, Podcaster:** Norah Jones adds just one more item to her arsenal of talent: podcaster. Jones launched *Norah Jones Is Playing Along* in late September with impromptu musical collaborations with some of her favorite musicians. Her first guest? Wilco's Jeff Tweedy.



**Finding Ron Carter:** With PBS airing *Finding The Right Notes*, a two-hour documentary on the life and times of bassist Ron Carter, IN+OUT Records has released the original soundtrack of the film.



**Ewart "McKnighted":** Douglas R. Ewart will be the recipient of the 2022 Distinguished Artist Award from the McKnight Foundation, a \$100,000 recognition that goes to a person who has contributed significantly to culture in Minnesota. Ewart is widely recognized as a musician, instrument maker, sound sculptor, painter, writer and teacher. His interdisciplinary work includes performance on a range of saxophones, flutes, woodwinds and percussion instruments of his own design and construction.



"I hope this album inspires people to read Vonnegut. And I also hope it gets Vonnegut fans interested in this music," says Jason Yeager.

## Jason Yeager's Valentine to Vonnegut

**KURT VONNEGUT, THE LATE, GREAT** American novelist and iconoclast, was many things: satirist, science fictional soothsayer, witty social commentator and friendly absurdist. He was also a fiendish fan of music, and, particularly jazz. Once he wrote, "Historians in the future, in my opinion, will congratulate us on very little other than our clowning and jazz."

Vonnegut's influence has been directly channeled by musicians before, but rarely with the depth, dedication and imagination of pianist-composer Jason Yeager's ambitious new album *Unstuck In Time: The Kurt Vonnegut Suite*. The album is being released on what would be the centennial birthday of Vonnegut (who passed in 2007). Live performances include a birthday-timed concert at the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library in the author's hometown of Indianapolis on Nov. 11.

As a teenager, Yeager started reading his father's Vonnegut novels and "couldn't put them down. They hit me viscerally, throwing me into fits of laughter, astounding me with how wildly imaginative they are, and inspiring me with their darkly funny social criticism and humanity." Fast-forward to 2022, and he has crafted his elaborate valentine to Vonnegut, in musical terms.

Yeager points out that there have been other Vonnegut tributes in the jazz sphere. British pianist John Taylor penned the tunes "Ice 9" and "So It Goes," and Indianapolis guitarist Charlie Ballantine released *Vonnegut*, an entire album in homage the author.

Yeager's grand design of a suite began back in 2013, when he wrote a piece riffing off of the novel *Slaughterhouse Five*. "I decided to write a blues inspired by the protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, and use Vonnegut's refrain of 'so it goes' for the opening motif." In time, Yeager composed other pieces, including the *Cat's Cradle*-inspired "Bokonon," and "Unk's Fate," triggered by *Sirens of Titan*.

Yeager explains that "slowly but surely, I amassed a collection of free-standing Vonnegut songs, but much to my delight they shared a cer-

tain spirit in common, and even some musical motifs. I didn't mean for it to become a suite, but it did. Blame it on the Tralfamadorians."

He's referring to the alien beings found in many Vonnegut books, cosmic puppeteers in charge of humanity's doings, alluded to with the album's finale, "Tralfamadorian Rhapsody."

Learning about the impending centennial supplied a necessary impetus to complete the suite. As he recalls, "I thought, 'I have to get moving, and finish this in time for KV's 100th.'"

Yeager opted to score the music for a septet, with two special cameos by alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón, whom Yeager has greatly respected and consulted with during the writing process. ("It was a dream come true for me to get to work with him," he commented).

Though *Unstuck In Time* is almost entirely instrumental, the spoken word interlude "So It Goes" — recorded in multiple overdubs — appears at midpoint, as if checking in directly with an iconic slice of Vonnegut vocabulary.

"I enjoyed exploring different techniques with this music — setting the rhythms or patterns of actual text to music, taking general character portraits through music, or evoking the feeling or ambience of a scene as I experienced it while reading, almost as though I were writing a film score for a book."

He makes a reasonable case for parallels between Vonnegut and another of Yeager's heroes. "Sometimes I do feel like his phrasing, his rhythm and his bucking convention is almost a literary parallel to Thelonious Monk," Yeager comments. "Both Monk and Vonnegut were rooted in profound artistic traditions yet weren't constrained by them. Finally, both artists were met with frustration and obscurity earlier on, only receiving critical and popular acclaim after a couple decades into their artistic careers."

On Yeager's goals for *Unstuck In Time*, he asserts, "I hope this album inspires people to read Vonnegut. And I also hope it gets Vonnegut fans interested in this music." —Josef Woodard



"I compensate by investing myself emotionally in every pluck of the strings, trying my best to encourage the character of each note to shine," Gutman Levitt says about his technique.

# Yosef Gutman Levitt: Guided by His Heart

**THERE IS SOMETHING SO LUMINOUS,** open-hearted and wholly unique about the music on Yosef Gutman Levitt's self-produced trio recording *Upside Down Mountain* that it begs the question: Where did this guy come from? The answer to that is a long and winding road.

Raised on a remote farm in South Africa, about an hour outside Johannesburg, Levitt picked up the electric bass at age 16, inspired by Jaco Pastorius and Weather Report. Two years later, he received a partial scholarship to attend the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied during the late 1990s alongside such budding talents as guitarist Lionel Loueke, drummers Ferenc Nemeth, Ziv Ravitz and Kendrick Scott, and saxophonists Dayna Stephens and Walter Smith III. After moving to New York in the early 2000s, Levitt began gigging on the scene with the likes of Loueke, Ben Monder and Robert Stillman at places like Smalls and Zinc Bar. But by 2007, he had become disillusioned.

"The New York jazz scene was hard for me," he said. "I was feeling a little lost. I thought that to succeed I needed to be a hard-swinging upright player or a bass guitar pocket player. At that point, the world didn't need an impatient student version of either. So I said goodbye

to jazz, farewell to my bass guitar."

Teaching himself how to code, Levitt founded a technology startup. Then, in 2009, he moved to Jerusalem, where here he lives today with his wife and eight children. He sold his thriving business to GoDaddy in 2014 and continued in the technology sector until 2018. He returned to music full-time in 2019 with the release of his debut recording, *Chabad Al Hazam*, a collection of nigunim (Hassidic melodies). "Those 10 years of not touching the bass were powerful years for me," he said, "because they helped me un-learn music, detach from the common musical traps that ensnare and get in touch with who I really am, without being shy of feeling inadequate about playing my music, with all its vulnerability."

On *Upside Down Mountain*, his seventh recording as a leader, Levitt is joined by pianist Omri More and drummer Ofri Nehemya on 12 tunes the bassist wrote in a single sitting. Levitt described his process as "whatever flowed freely from my heart."

He added, "Channeling for me in the studio is sort of like a person in a garden where everything grows really quickly and your job is to get rid of weeds and prune, trim, move stones away and make sure plants don't overtake one another. The music that happens is analogous to

the plants that grow. Their beauty doesn't quite belong to me, nor is it something I can control. But what I can do is try to clear away obstacles."

While pianist Mor provides radiant accompaniment and Nehemya supplies hypersensitive instincts on the kit, alternately playing with brushes, sticks and hands, the prominent voice throughout is Levitt's high-register five-string acoustic bass lines. "I've been searching for my sound for a long time, 20 years or so," he said. "Most of my musical life I had owned only one instrument and every day I went to war with it, to try and squeeze out of it what I'd describe as an acoustic, articulate and shimmering timbre. It didn't quite work for me on the electric bass guitar, although it came close. I chose to upgrade to something properly acoustic and noticed one of my favorite musicians, Steve Swallow, playing an acoustic instrument. That led me to make contact with Harvey Citron, the New York-based luthier who helped me design the bass guitar I currently play, based on the instruments he built for Swallow over the years.

"I don't play a lot of notes," he continued, "and I don't think I have superb technical ability, certainly not speed. That's something I've always struggled with, maybe because I'm left-handed, and I play the bass right-handed. I compensate by investing myself emotionally in every pluck of the strings, trying my best to encourage the character of each note to shine."

One other tune from the new album, "Family (Folk Vibe)," was inspired by Levitt's mentor, Mozambican bassist Gito Baloi. "He was a gentle soul who I loved watching when he performed in South Africa," he recalled. "I approached him when I was about 17, a year or two before I came to Berklee. When you take lessons in Africa with a mentor, you don't just show up once a week for an hour and go home; you become a full-time apprentice — going with him to gigs, schlepping equipment, picking up strange people from strange places at strange hours of the night on their behalf. My apprenticeship with Gito was bright and sunny, kind and full of warmth. He gave me direction and introduced me experientially to South African jazz. And he taught me about playing in the high register and using the bass guitar as an orchestra — taking advantage of low and high register playing at the same time."

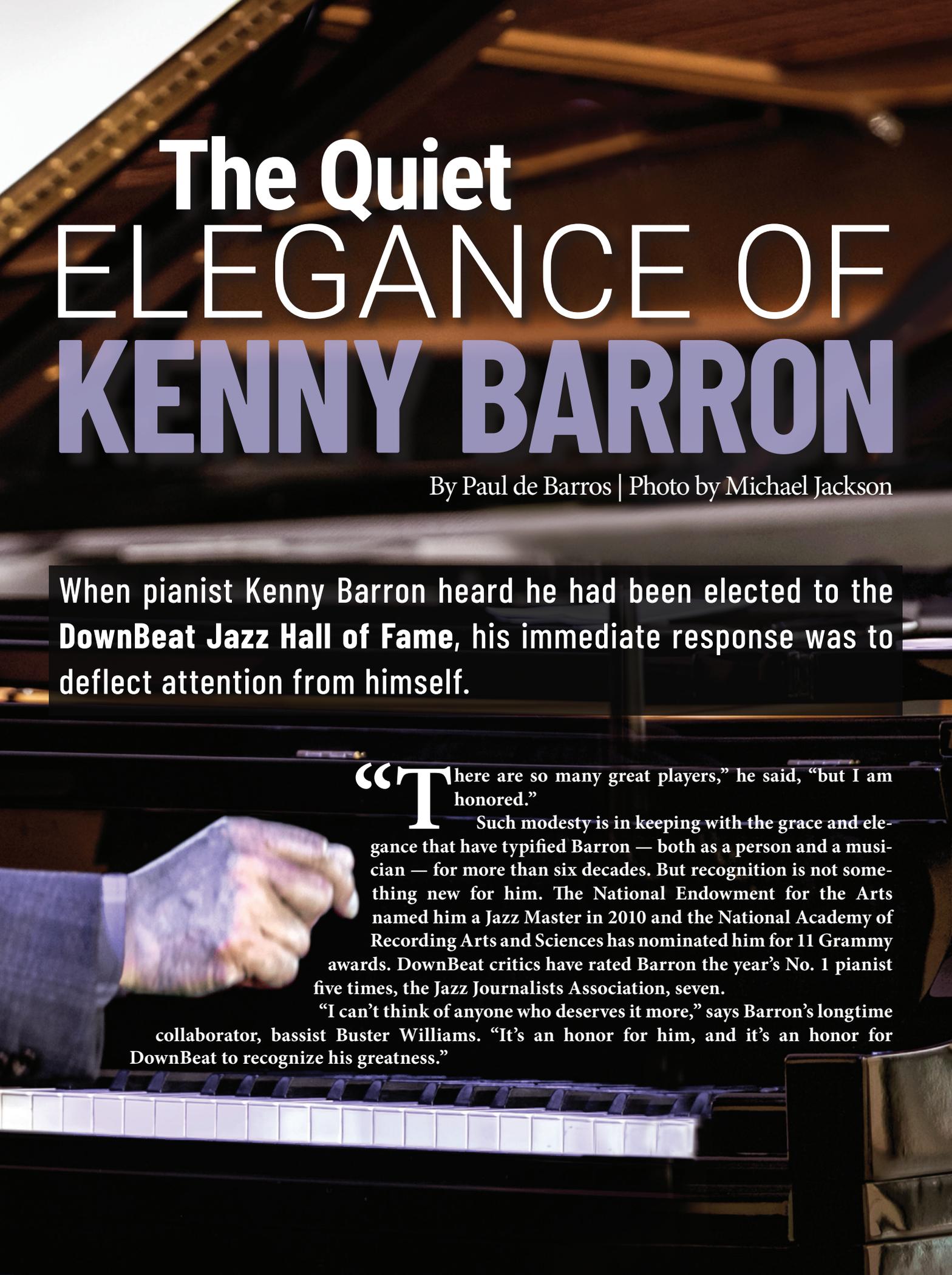
While tender, uplifting, heartlandish melodies like "The Great River," "Twelve Stones" and the Moroccan-flavored "Early Before The Journey" may be slightly reminiscent of early Pat Metheny (circa *Watercolors*) or even Keith Jarrett's *The Köln Concert*, pieces like the joyful "Wedding Song" and "Hodu Lashem" — or the understated simplicity of "Time With Abba," written for one of his daughters — are all the highly personal expressions of a very unique talent who has found his voice and is guided by his heart.

—Bill Milkowski

**87<sup>th</sup>**  
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HALL OF FAME





# The Quiet ELEGANCE OF KENNY BARRON

By Paul de Barros | Photo by Michael Jackson

When pianist Kenny Barron heard he had been elected to the **DownBeat Jazz Hall of Fame**, his immediate response was to deflect attention from himself.

“**T**here are so many great players,” he said, “but I am honored.”

Such modesty is in keeping with the grace and elegance that have typified Barron — both as a person and a musician — for more than six decades. But recognition is not something new for him. The National Endowment for the Arts named him a Jazz Master in 2010 and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences has nominated him for 11 Grammy awards. DownBeat critics have rated Barron the year’s No. 1 pianist five times, the Jazz Journalists Association, seven.

“I can’t think of anyone who deserves it more,” says Barron’s longtime collaborator, bassist Buster Williams. “It’s an honor for him, and it’s an honor for DownBeat to recognize his greatness.”



"There are so many great players," Barron said of the Hall of Fame, "but I am honored."

Barron, 79 and going strong, has produced an extraordinary body of work — more than 40 recordings as a leader, in excess of 500 as a sideman and more than 50 original compositions. Though primarily known as a mainstream player, his oeuvre has impressive stylistic breadth. There are, of course, the hard-swinging albums such as the Grammy-nominated *Spirit Song* (Verve, 1999), *Live At Bradley's* (Universal, 1996), *Concentric Circles* (Blue Note, 2018) and his exquisite duet recordings made with Stan Getz in 1991. But then there are Brazilian gems such as *Canta Brasil* (Sunnyside, 2002); the creative funk cult classic with Mino Cinelu, *Swamp Sally* (Verve, 1995); hybrids like *The Classical Jazz Quartet Plays Bach* (Vertical, 2002); an album with avant-garde saxophonist Marion Brown, *Soul Eyes* (Baystate, 1979); and a streak of unusual records with Yusef Lateef.

Barron's more recent, "inside-outside" duo collaborations with bassist Dave Holland, *The Art Of Conversation* (Impulse, 2014) and *Without Deception* (Dare2, 2020) highlight Barron's willingness to stretch out in new situations.

"If left to my own devices, I may have a ten-

dency to play it a little safe," he admits. "But sometimes when there's another player in the group, that's a new opportunity to go somewhere else."

"It's a two-way street," Holland hastens to add. "Kenny's also inspiring to play with. He has his own personal take on what he's learned and he's advanced it, as well. He's made his own contribution to the great tradition of jazz piano."

Born in Philadelphia in 1943, the youngest of five siblings, Barron studied as a kid with Vera Bryant, pianist Ray Bryant's sister, who later raised two jazz children of her own, Kevin and Robin Eubanks. But it was Barron's older brother Bill, the well-known tenor saxophonist, who took the young musician under his wing, hooking Kenny up as a teenager with a local cabaret band. Though Philly was rich with jazz, Detroit pianists Hank Jones and Tommy Flanagan caught Barron's ear.

"It was their touch, both Tommy and Hank, and their lyricism, and the way they phrased," explained Barron. "It was like a rubber band, their phrasing, it was very loose, it wasn't rigid. An ebb-and-flow kind of thing. I loved that."

Touch, tone, lyricism and phrasing. That pretty much sums it up when Barron's solos spill out in cascades of speedy, single-note lines ornamented with bluesy turns, sudden splash-chords, arpeggios or pairs of notes that "climb the ladder," top note first — a rare combination of romantic warmth, logical development and classical clarity.

Bassist Rufus Reid, a frequent Barron collaborator (check out *The Moment* from 1991 on Reservoir) says that clarity emanates in part from Barron's rooted chords, which many younger players have abandoned.

"If I didn't know a song, Kenny could play it once, and I could hear it," Reid affirms. "When you play with Kenny, it feels like the grand piano is twice the size. With his beautiful touch and dynamics, he could actually make the piano levitate."

When Barron came up through the ranks, Horace Silver and Wynton Kelly were also in the air, which no doubt helped shape his brand of rhythmic propulsion, or, as Williams puts it, "He swings his butt off."

It didn't take long for older players in Philadelphia to notice. Barron was just 17 when Philly Joe Jones hired him on the recommendation of Bill Barron. When Yusef Lateef came down from Detroit, he hired Barron, too.

"That was just a matinee at the Showboat Lounge," Barron recalled, "but about two months later, I got a call (from Lateef) to play at the Minor Key in Detroit. I had just graduated from high school. I had to ask my mother if I could go. It was my first trip on a plane."

Barron wrote arrangements for Lateef's next album, *The Centaur And The Phoenix* (Riverside, 1960), and not long after attending the session at Radio City Music Hall, he moved to New York. That was 1961. He has been there ever since. Within a year, he was on the road with Dizzy Gillespie. Four years later, Freddie Hubbard, Stanley Turrentine, Milt Jackson and Buddy Rich all came calling, and so did Lateef, whose unconventional instrumentation (oboe, bassoon, wooden flutes, chennai), unusual scales and non-traditional improvising offered Barron a wider horizon than he might have gained in a more traditional environment.

During this period, in 1973, Barron made his first album as a leader, *Sunset To Dawn* (Muse), an electric piano outing with creamy chords and bits of exotica that reflect the counterculture vibe of the times. Since then, Barron has covered far more ground than any one article could hope to include, but some of the highlights have been the cooperative quartet Sphere, devoted to the music of Thelonious Monk; Barron's time with Getz; the pianist's exquisite trios during the heralded era of Bradley's nightclub in New York; and his various excursions into Brazilian territory.

The goal of Sphere was to highlight the

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Pianist John Medeski pays homage to Barron at the 2020 PDX Jazz Festival in Portland, Oregon. Barron has served as a teacher, mentor and inspiration to generations of pianists.

brilliance of Monk's compositions, but Barron also hoped the project might encourage the then-reclusive pianist to come back out and play. Sadly, in 1982, as the band was driving home from its first recording session, they heard on the radio that Monk had died. The albums nevertheless captured the public's imagination and brought Monk's repertoire firmly into Barron's book. "Usually I'll play some Monk every night, and there's at least one Monk song on every record, too," he said.

Williams, who played in that band, notes that Barron put his own stamp on the music: "I never played with Monk, but if it was anything like playing with Kenny when he played Monk's music, it would have been great."

When Getz called Barron to replace Chick Corea in 1986, they would sometimes end a set with a duet on the tune "People Time," which prompted the album of duos by that name, recorded live at Copenhagen's Jazzhus Montmartre. It's a breathtaking matchup of two of the most lyrical musicians in the history of jazz. *People Time* netted Barron his first Grammy nomination. In 2010, Sunnyside released a seven-CD set of the sessions.

Getz gave Barron space as a songwriter, notably on the title tune of their first album, *Voyage*, the pianist's most widely covered tune. Barron showcased nine of his original tunes on *The Traveler* (Sunnyside, 2007) with Gretchen Parlato, Ann Hampton Callaway and Grady Tate singing lyrics by Janice Jarrett.

From 1969 to 1996, the intimate Greenwich Village bar Bradley's was like a clubhouse for Manhattan jazz, with Barron as one of the star-

ring members. He recorded two live albums there with drummer Ben Riley and bassist Ray Drummond.

"If I was working somewhere else in New York, I would make sure I got to Bradley's for the last set, and if not for the last set, the last drink," said Barron. "Even if I was working in Philadelphia, I would leave while the last note was still ringing and drive back to New York. And the place would be packed. I remember one night Tommy [Flanagan] was playing, and Carmen McRae was playing at the Blue Note, and she came by after she was finished and played almost the entire last set, playing piano and singing. Where else would you see that?"

Barron played his first bossa nova when he was with Gillespie, which began his passionate love affair with Brazilian music. Especially notable are his collaborations with Trio Da Paz. Their album, *Canta Brasil* (Sunnyside, 2002) is a delight, as is the somewhat lesser-known 2012 outing *Kenny Barron And The Brazilian Knights* (Sunnyside), which features a lovely, yearning tune named for the famous Brazilian movie star Sonia Braga.

"I saw her in three movies and was captivated by this beautiful woman," Barron said. "Unbeknownst to me, the guy I was playing with at [the Greenwich Village jazz venue] Sweet Basil knew her and invited her down to the club. Just as I was playing the introduction to that song, she walked in the door. Turns out she's a very lovely person, very down-to-earth."

Along with his full calendar as a player, for four decades starting in 1973, Barron pursued a parallel career as a teacher, first at Rutgers University, then at the Manhattan School of

Music and Juilliard. Former students include Aaron Parks, Jon Batiste, Terence Blanchard, Anthony Brown and David Sánchez. Barron had two pianos in his studio, Parks remembers, and his method was more about playing together than telling his students what to do.

"For months, we would just play and he wouldn't say much of anything," Parks said. "Then maybe three or months into me studying with him, I was on my way out, and he said, 'Oh, hey, one thing I wanted to mention. You should think about your touch.' There's something really beautiful about that."

The art of jazz is such a demanding pursuit, players sometimes forget to take time to enjoy the art of living. Not Barron, who loves to cook and scout out gourmet meals. He counts chef Eric Gestel of the famed New York restaurant Le Bernardin as a "very good friend" and depends on his European promoter Jordi Suñol to recommend new spots when he's abroad.

"During the pandemic I got to do a lot more cooking," Barron said. "As long as you can read, you can cook. Baking is the hardest because it's very precise. You can improvise when you're cooking meat — a little of this, a dash of that."

Barron is also an avid reader and can still quote lines from *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. He also recalls enjoying the poetry of Allen Ginsberg when he first moved to New York, as well as the flowering of Black poetry of that era and a best-selling book of passionate love poems by Walter Benton, *This Is My Beloved* (issued in oral form by Atlantic Records), whose message must have stuck. Barron has been married for 60 years. Though he follows no regular spiritual practice, Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* has also been an important text since his youth.

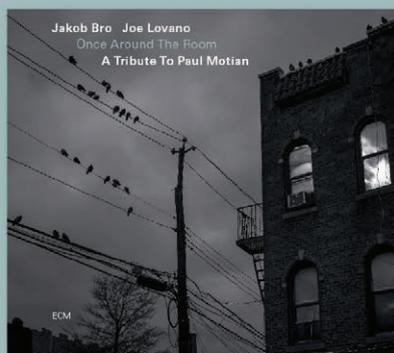
"One of things he talks about is how music doesn't come from you, music comes *through* you," Barron said. "Music is not yours, you know? I try to bear that in mind when I get on my high horse. That's not you. That's the creator. You're just a vessel."

Now that the pandemic's grip has loosened, Barron is back on the road and in the studio. He recently recorded a solo album, *The Source*, due in January from ArtWork Records. He'll be back out with his Concentric Circles quintet at the Village Vanguard in December and out West in 2023. March brings him back to New York with the Brazilian singer Rosa Passos, and he reunites with Holland in Chicago in May.

When asked what he thought his legacy might be, Barron politely, but unsurprisingly, demurred. "I've learned over the years not to take myself too seriously," he said. "I'm just doing what I do. And what I like to do is reach people on emotional level. I don't want them to think too much about what I'm playing. If you had to put your hand up to your cheek and say 'hmmm...' — it might be too complicated." **DB**



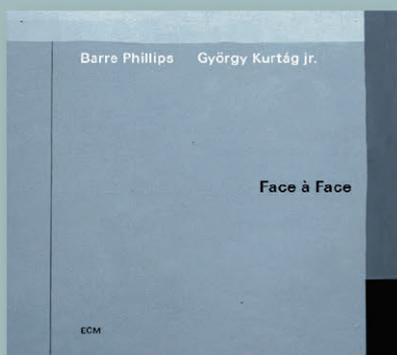
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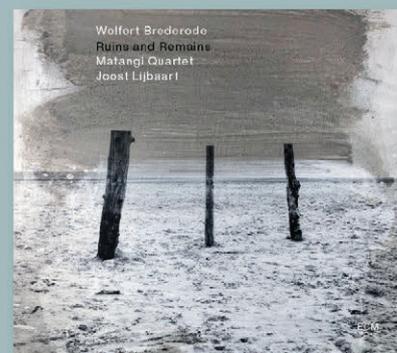
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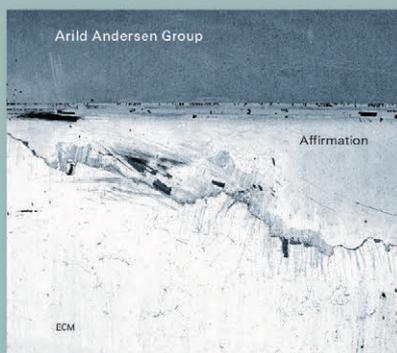
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ARTIST OF THE YEAR  
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PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

# Christian McBride, BASS ON TOP

By Suzanne Lorge | Photos by Michael Jackson

Christian McBride never strays too far from his bass, not even when he's offstage. Not when he's producing an international jazz festival, or running an intensive workshop, or broadcasting a radio show.

**H**is bass informs just about every aspect of his professional life. "The primary role of a bass player is to support, and it's the same in anything else that I do," McBride said in a video call from Los Angeles, where he was on tour with the Joshua Redman MoodSwing Quartet. "I don't necessarily like the spotlight. I like making things comfortable for the person who has the spotlight. I like being the person no one notices until I'm not doing my job well."

This year, DownBeat readers shine a spotlight on McBride precisely because he does his job so well. In the 87th Annual DownBeat Readers Poll, fans voted

McBride Artist of the Year, Bassist of the Year and Producer of the Year.

McBride wears each of these titles, along with a few others, quite easily. So easily that it's hard to grasp how such a prolific musician can give as much as he does to each and every project. It all comes back to playing, he says.

"[Managing everything] is not that much different from my role in the band, from what I do as a bass player," he explained. "It's like, 'Hey, what are the chords? Give me the music, and I'll improvise.' I look at the chart and play accordingly, inside of that framework. And most of the time, what I play is kind of OK."





The Tip City Trio with pianist Emmet Cohen and guitarist Dan Wilson

That McBride's musical abilities are magnitudes beyond OK was apparent early on. After he moved to New York from his native Philadelphia in 1989 — he had a partial scholarship to Juilliard — news of his talent spread quickly among established players, who started hiring him for club dates. A year in, McBride left the prestigious conservatory to go on tour with trumpeter Roy Hargrove, another gifted newcomer. Prominent sideman gigs followed with legends like Freddie Hubbard, Pat Metheny, Sonny Rollins and Chick Corea.

At the same time that McBride was gaining valuable experience on high-profile bandstands, he was strengthening his connections with peers like Hargrove and Redman — the young torchbearers who would carry modern jazz into the new millennium. It was in 1994 that McBride debuted as a leader on Verve (*Gettin' To It*), just a few months after Redman released *MoodSwing* (Warner Brothers), the first album from the saxophonist's once-in-a-generation quartet featuring McBride, pianist Brad Mehldau and drummer Brian Blade. The quartet's second album wouldn't come around until 26 years later.

Doubtless the onrush of success is to blame for the belatedness: Over the last three decades, McBride and his cohort have reached the peak of jazz celebrity, with the constant crush of obligations that such notoriety entails. Even by celebrity's demanding measures, however, McBride's accomplishments as a player are dizzying in scope, comprising hundreds of record-

ings, inveterate touring and countless appearances with elite musicians in the jazz, R&B, pop/rock, soul and classical worlds.

Remarkably, the ensembles under his leadership, each with its own musical ethos, have remained stable over the years. Of these, the longest-running is the Christian McBride Band (with saxophonist Ron Blake, keyboardist Geoffrey Keezer and drummer Terreon Gully), formed more than 20 years ago. The most traditionally oriented group is his quintet *Inside Straight* (with drummer Carl Allen, saxophonist Steve Wilson, pianists Eric Reed or Peter Martin and vibraphonist Warren Wolf), began in 2007 as a live performance band only. They've since released three albums. The largest ensemble is the 17-piece Christian McBride Big Band, which landed a Grammy in 2012 for *The Good Feeling* (Mack Avenue).

Then there's his eponymous trio with pianist Christian Sands and drummer Ulysses Owens Jr., nominated for a 2014 Grammy for *Out Here* (Mack Avenue). The harmonically sophisticated Tip City Trio, formed in 2017 with pianist Emmett Cohen and guitarist Dan Wilson, contrasts with his piano-less quartet *New Jawn* with saxophonist Marcus Strickland, trumpeter Josh Evans and drummer Nasheet Waits from 2018. And finally there's *Situation*, a funk-driven sextet with saxophonist Blake, pianist Patrice Rushen, singer Alyson Williams and turntablists Jahi Sundance and DJ Logic, which came along a year later. (McBride sometimes spins vinyl himself, under the moniker

DJ Brother Mister.)

This September, McBride presented his eighth ensemble, unnamed as of this writing, at the Blue Note in New York for a six-day residency. The wildly improvisatory quintet (with saxophonist Nicole Glover, guitarist Ely Perlman, pianist Mike King and drummer Savannah Harris) claims new territory for McBride.

"It's my first band of all Gen Z's," he said. "And it's been very interesting to be the senior spokesperson for this particular band. That's the one thing I love most about being involved in jazz education, that I get the heads-up on a lot of incredible younger players before they really hit the scene."

For McBride — as much a visionary as a traditionalist — bringing up new players is part of the gig. Players learn by playing, so what better way to teach than by giving emerging jazz artists the chance to play at a professional level?

McBride's interest in jazz education developed in parallel to his burgeoning career. In 2000, a decade after he left Juilliard to become a touring musician, McBride agreed to serve as artistic director of the Jazz Aspen Snowmass Academy, an all-scholarship summer program for up-and-coming musicians. The quality of the students blew him away.

"[JAS Academy] is like a farm team for the Yankees," McBride said, now more than two decades into his tenure with the Colorado-based not-for-profit. "Everybody who has come through there has been just a high-level, top-notch musician."

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Closer to home, McBride saw, firsthand, how music education not only benefits exceptional students but fills a community need. In 2003, singer Melissa Walker — McBride's wife since 2005 — launched Jazz House Kids, then a fledgling after-school program for communities in and around Montclair, New Jersey, where they live. At the time, music curricula in area schools were diminishing at an alarming rate, and Jazz House Kids helped to fill the void left behind. McBride helped on as creative director.

Today, Jazz House Kids occupies a 40,000-square-foot space in downtown

Montclair and serves about 2,000 students a year. Young musicians in the ensemble-based program get to perform at places like Jazz at Lincoln Center and City Winery in Manhattan, and as part of the Montclair Jazz Festival.

As dedicated to jazz education as McBride is, it's likely that much of his insight into what works derives from his own formative experiences. Growing up in Philadelphia, he participated in the Settlement Music School's afternoon jazz program, along with fellow students Kurt Rosenwinkel and Joey DeFrancesco. He credits this kind of early specialized training

with much of his professional success.

"I believe that every major musician that's in our jazz community came through some sort of program like that," McBride said.

With barely a pause, he rattles off the names — Shabaka Hutchings and Nubya Garcia through Tomorrow's Warriors. The Marsalis brothers, Nicholas Payton, Sullivan Fortner and Jon Batiste through New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. Roy Hargrove, Erykah Badu and Norah Jones through Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas. Robert Glasper, Jason Moran, Eric Harlan, Kendrick Scott, Walter Smith and James Francies through the Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston.

Some even arose under his direct purview: Isaiah J. Thompson, Julian Lee, Coleman Hughes and Ben Cohen studied at Jazz House Kids. And Warren Wolf, Ulysses Owens Jr., Charenée Wade, Christian Sands and the Strickland brothers, E.J. and Marcus, attended JAS Academy.

"You can't point to one significant musician who didn't come through some program," he continued. "It didn't have to be a huge program. Just a program that cared, you know? And still, today, you've got to spend so much time trying to convince the powers-that-be that the arts are important."

McBride goes on to assert that the "front liners" in jazz education — those who work tirelessly to sustain the art form — are part of a valuable cultural ecosystem. The students, with their fresh takes on jazz, are part of that ecosystem, too.

"As [the young musicians] get playing opportunities, the scene stays alive, and the creative circulation keeps going," he said. "It keeps it interesting for them, and when I play with them, they make me excited. They keep me getting better as a bass player. All of this stuff — education, playing, curating, broadcasting, whatever it is — it's all one body of life. It's one body that we all, collectively, keep alive."

McBride brings this same holistic view to his curatorial endeavors. An avowed "musicology nerd," he currently serves as artistic director at two of the most historically important jazz organizations in the world: the National Jazz Museum in Harlem (since 2005) and the Newport Jazz Festival (since 2016). For the last 10 years, he's also worked as artistic advisor for jazz programming at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), where he oversees the annual TD James Moody Jazz Festival. And as host and producer of two jazz-themed radio shows — NPR's *Jazz Night in America* and Sirius XM's *The Lowdown: Conversations with Christian* — McBride's influence as a champion of the art form now extends to a multitude of listeners.

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New Jawn performing at Constellation in Chicago. From left, trumpeter Josh Evans, saxophonist Marcus Strickland, McBride and drummer Nasheet Waits

“I don’t do all of this managing on my own, obviously. It helps to have a really good team,” McBride said with a laugh. “[My schedule] is extremely regimented, which is the opposite of my natural being. I love being in the moment, and I don’t like the fact that I can’t be in the moment anymore. There are so many things going on, I have to watch my calendar every minute of the day. But there’s a really good group of people around who help me not get lost in the sauce.”

To appreciate just how tricky organizing McBride’s commitments must be, consider this grinding schedule: In mid-November, the bassist returns from the European leg of the long-awaited MoodSwing tour, the quartet’s first run of concerts together since the mid-1990s and a follow-up to its recent studio releases for Nonesuch — the Grammy-nominated *Round Again* (2020) and *Long Gone* (2022).

In late November, just a few days back Stateside, he joins the James Moody Jazz Fest

on stage at NJPAC in *Represent! A Night of Jazz, Hip-Hop and Spoken Word*. The next night, he closes out the festival as a judge for the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, one of the world’s foremost contests for jazz singers.

Early December sees his annual two-week residency at Village Vanguard, the first with Inside Straight and the second, perhaps, with the new, unnamed band. Then, he starts 2023 with two weeks headlining on the Blue Note Jazz cruise to the Caribbean. Soon thereafter, he departs for several non-consecutive weeks of touring throughout the U.S. with New Jawn. And then, if all goes as usual, it’s the JAS Academy in July, the Jazz House Summer Workshop and the Newport Jazz Festival in August, and the Montclair Jazz Festival in September. Plus everything else in between.

But McBride remains unfazed when reviewing this crowded itinerary. Again, it all comes back to playing.

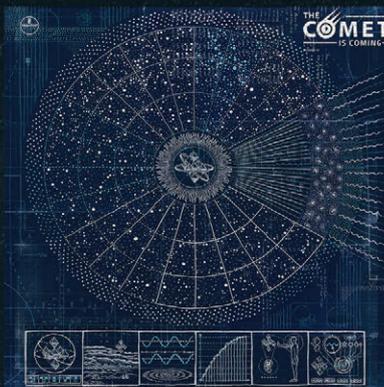
“With all of the things that are going on, the most important thing for me remains being the best bass player I can possibly be,” he said. “I’ve noticed that when certain responsibilities start to take shape, it’s easy to get away from your instrument. But I make sure that I always play the bass to the best of my abilities, because that’s what brought me to this dance.” **DB**

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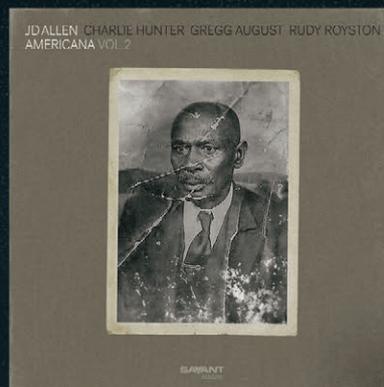
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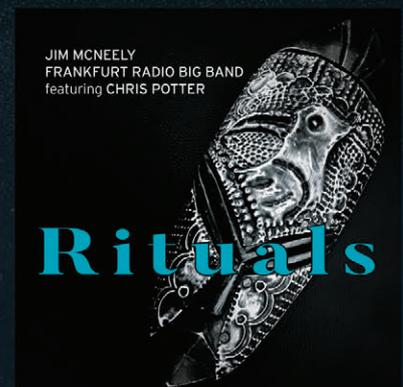
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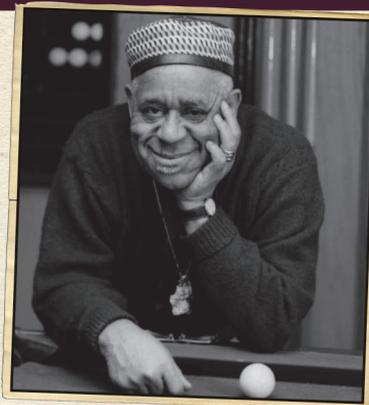
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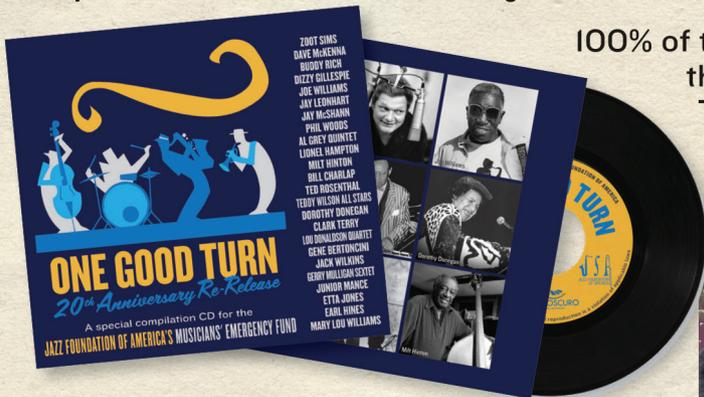


All photos © Hank O'Neal

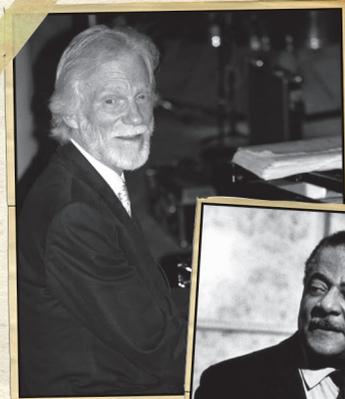
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**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**  
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# Pat Metheny GETS LOST IN TRANSLATION

By Phillip Lutz | Photo by Jimmy Katz

For someone named **Guitarist of the Year in the 2022 DownBeat Readers Poll**, Pat Metheny has a complicated relationship with his instrument.



“I don’t necessarily think of myself as a guitar player,” he said in a September Zoom call from his hotel room in Baltimore, where he was playing to overflow crowds at the Keystone Korner before the final leg of a jam-packed makeup tour after the pandemic that would take him to South America. “Maybe it’s sixth or seventh on the list. It’s in there, but it’s nowhere near the top.”

Metheny, who has also won Album of the Year for *Side-Eye NYC (VI.IV)* (Modern), said that, up until about a decade ago, he thought of his instrument as a “translation device” useful in strictly utilitarian terms. “I never gave a shit about gui-

tars. To me, they were just screwdrivers. Like, ‘A screwdriver does this, and a screwdriver does that.’ An analogy I always made was that if you look at a house, do you think, ‘Did the guy use an electric screwdriver when he did that or did he use a regular screwdriver?’ It doesn’t matter, the only thing that matters is the house.”

So what changed? It started, he said, with a “delayed mid-life crisis,” one spurred by a conversation with fellow guitarist Miles Okazaki, who turned him on to single-coil pickups like those pioneered by Charlie Christian. Spending time trying out the devices at Gruhn Guitars in Nashville, Metheny became a convert and something of a hardware obsessive.

“They got this so right in 1936. I wondered, ‘What have we been doing for the last 70 years?’ I went down the rabbit hole.”

The extent to which his playing reflects his newfound attention to equipment may be debatable. What is not, he said, is that his playing has improved: “I don’t know why, but suddenly I could play, like, way better. It just is kind

Burton’s band in 1977 until about 1994, he was in constant gig mode, in some years playing nearly 300 dates a year.

“That was a huge thing for me,” he explained. “I was constantly filling in blanks

— always,” he said, adding that he often writes music and only later realizes that there is no real place for his guitar in it. “I’m like, ‘Oh, yeah, I’m supposed to be known as a good guitar player; I’d better find a hip guitar part in this.’ And sometimes I don’t.”

Metheny professed to more than occasional detachment on the bandstand — “A lot of times I feel like I’m just standing there” — though that might come as a surprise to the members of his band at the Keystone Korner, pianist Gwilym Simcock, bassist Linda May Han Oh and drummer Antonio Sánchez. Though they had not played together since their tour was put on hold in February 2020 because of the pandemic, Metheny said, “We took right up where we left off.”

That band, which by default became known as the Evening With Band — a moniker that, after playing nearly 300 live dates and producing an acclaimed album, *From This Place*, he thinks was too casually bestowed on it — is one made up of musicians in mid-career who all have established ensembles of their own.

But Metheny’s most recent project, Side-Eye — so named because of the sideways glance with which he views today’s “bizarre” social and political climate — is geared toward nurturing young musicians. The project, he said, has morphed at least three times, which he

**‘Recently I’m able to hear inside it in a different way that’s allowed me to get to some really different kinds of stuff where, when I get back to the room, I can say, “Yeah, that was good.”’**

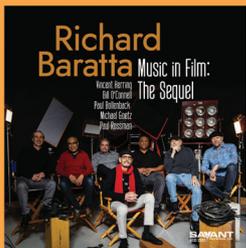
of happening. I’ve always had this thing where it’s more about the listening than the playing. Recently I’m able to hear inside it in a different way that’s allowed me to get to some really different kinds of stuff where, when I get back to the room, I can say, ‘Yeah, that was good.’”

The last time he perceived a quantum leap in the quality of his playing, he said, was in the period starting in the late 1970s. In that instance, he attributed the improvement in no small measure to the concentration of work. From the time he joined vibraphonist Gary

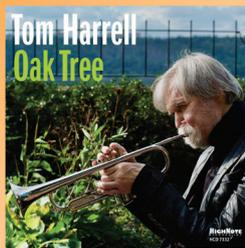
that needed to get filled in.”

While the roots of his current improvement may be unclear, he allowed that maturing as a person hasn’t hurt: “A lot of it is that thing of just being around and hanging out and being on the planet for a long time and having a lot of experiences. It just adds up to something in a way that I honestly did not necessarily anticipate, but it’s really been gratifying.”

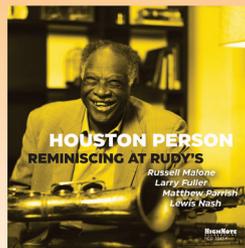
As gratifying as the change in his playing is, that Metheny remains first and foremost a conceptualist. “The idea is before the instrument



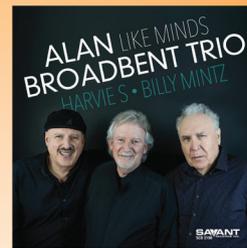
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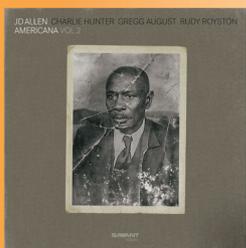
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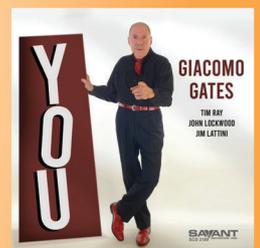
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had anticipated and hoped for. It has also been active: About 140 of the 160 gigs he has done this year have been with the Side-Eye Trio.

The trio's keys and drums chairs, held by James Francies and Marcus Gilmore on the album, are now occupied by Chris Fishman and Joe Dyson. As before, the group represents what Metheny called a "21st century organ trio," with Fishman's left hand working the equivalent of the organ pedals. The three personalities have melded so well that Metheny is considering taking the group to the Beacon Theater in New York and festivals in Europe next summer.

"The record was nice," he said, "but it's gotten to a much different, cool level right now."

As the Side-Eye concept evolves, he plans to expand on it with another album. That one will enlist what he described as "every musician I might ever want to have in Side-Eye." He's constantly scouting young musicians, asking those he feels have promise to come to his home and jam. The new album, he said, will include about 30 of those players. All are younger than 30, and most are well versed in Metheny classics like "Bright Size Life," which appears on *Side-Eye NYC (VI.IV)* and was the title track of his first album, released 41 years ago. Still in his twenties when he made that album, Metheny was nonetheless able to convince record executives that he should use an unknown bassist named Jaco Pastorius on it. With Side-Eye, the impulse to promote new talent continues.

"My thing now," he said, "is that there are so many excellent musicians around and much to my astonishment — and it's really interesting to me — many of them have, as a part of their diet growing up as musicians, listened to records I've made. So they all kind of know how to do it."

Though he is one of the great collaborators, his every iteration of the solo format has held something fresh. That will be the case with another planned record, a solo one he said will revolve around "quiet electric guitar." By definition, it will depart from the quiet-guitar model that typically employs the acoustic version of the instrument. Playing electric guitar quietly is not in itself new for him, but he saw appeal in documenting those efforts in a formal way.

As he put it: "In addition to playing really loud, really slow, really fast, really free, really in the changes — all the other things I hope to be as a modern musician — the thing of playing really quiet on an electric guitar was something I thought would be an interesting place to go."

With Metheny, of course, precisely how the concept is executed remains to be seen. His solo albums have been as mixed a bag as one could imagine and still fit under the solo rubric. They have ranged from the brilliantly eccentric, electro-acoustic one-man band that yielded 2010's *Orchestrion* — "the record," he joked, "that proved once and for all just how weird I actual-

ly am" — to the follow-up, *What's It All About*, a collection of pop tunes notable for its use of baritone guitar. Along with the upcoming album, he plans some solo concerts, in which he promised to appear alone onstage — in his world, perhaps, a technicality, given his predilection for conjuring phantom voices.

Long-term, he is planning performances on a wholly different scale from that of the solo affairs. About two years ago, a conglomerate of European orchestras proposed a package of concerts. He hired a student at the Juilliard School to place his oeuvre — from film scores to extended works for classical guitar — on the

music-writing program Sibelius in preparation for rearranging in such a way that these orchestras could manage it. He is lining up bassist Darek Oles and drummer Jonathan Barber for that project, tentatively slated for 2024.

Meanwhile, he was looking toward the end of the COVID-makeup tour in October, after which he planned to take a break to mix the new records. After a few years that have elicited more than their share of sideways glances, he hoped to recenter before heading back on the road in May.

"So many things about this period of time have been weird for all of us," he said. **DB**



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# SNARKY PUPPY: A DIFFERENT KIND

If you ask Michael League, founder, chief composer and cat-herder of the 19-member jazz-funk-rock-world juggernaut known as Snarky Puppy, to recall the largest crowds for which the group has ever played, he answers immediately.

“As a headliner? About 6,000 at the Royal Albert Hall, 2019,” he said via Zoom from Barcelona, near his home in the tiny village of Prats Del Rei, Spain.

And the smallest?

“On my birthday, April 24, in 2012 or 2013. Right after our first European tour, which gave us this enormous boost of confidence, because our crowds were actually decent. We started thinking that something had changed. We flew

back from Europe, and the second gig we did was in Arcata, California. There were two people. And one of them was the bartender.”

Snarky Puppy had already been together for eight years at that point. They have come a long way since then, playing thousands of shows all over the world, making 14 albums and winning four Grammys, most recently for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album in 2021.

League, the driving force behind Snarky

Puppy and the architect of their rise to worldwide popularity, seems constantly surprised by their success. He shakes his head in wonder at the band’s third win in the 2022 DownBeat Readers Poll.

“We spent so many years being a totally unknown band, I don’t know that I’ll ever start to think of it as something that people care about. ... I’m flattered that a publication like DownBeat would even want to write



# OF BIG BAND

By Allen Morrison  
Photo by Michael Jackson

about us.”

Their win is particularly impressive for a group that is more jazz adjacent than jazz.

Snarky Puppy is a big band with a difference. The 19 musicians are configured atypically, to say the least. Any given song might include three electric guitars, three or four keyboard players, two trumpets/flugelhorns, two saxophones/flutes, a violin, three drummers, three percussionists and League’s prominent, ever-funky bass.

They’re a sleek Lamborghini of a group, a fine-tuned, elite machine that has certain things in common with the best big bands of former eras: ingenious arrangements, an ability to breathe as one and high entertainment value that requires no degree of musical literacy to appreciate.

But they’re distinguished from those former paragons by their grounding in guitar and synth-driven rock, funk and blues, hooky riffs combined with sophisticated harmonies that point to the band’s roots at the University of North Texas’ esteemed jazz studies program.

“Even though Snarky Puppy isn’t playing jazz, per se, everyone in the band is a jazz musician,” League said. “So we have the feeling of liberation that you get with jazz: flexibility, freedom and, above all, vocabulary. We are dealing with that vocabulary, but we’re packaging it in a way that doesn’t have the esthetic of what one would call straightahead jazz.”

The band’s success might seem inevitable now, but it was anything but for its first decade. The band built its loyal international fan base

painstakingly, League says, one fan at a time, at first in tiny bars.

“During our first few years of touring, everybody in the audience was a family member or a friend. That mentality continued as we started gaining fans. There was always a feeling of a close personal relationship. ... We’re not doing anything different than we were doing 18 years ago. Hopefully, we’re just playing less badly.”

League possesses “the rare combination of knowing how to be an inspiring bandleader as well as understanding the intricate ‘business of music,’” said Michael Leonhart, composer, arranger and Steely Dan trumpeter, a friend since 2015. “He’s an incredibly gifted multi-instrumentalist/composer/producer, and he’s had the foresight to continually surround him-



The Snarky Puppy family

self with equally talented musicians.”

They recently worked together almost daily when Steely Dan picked the group to open 20 dates on the Dan’s recent national tour.

“I’ve always had the utmost respect for the members of Snarky Puppy, especially Chris Bullock (flute and tenor saxophone), who has been a key part of my Michael Leonhart Orchestra family in recent years,” Leonhart said. “Most of the members are notable band-

leaders, composers and producers in their own right.”

Leonhart said Snarky Puppy “crushed it” night after night. “The audience seemed to find the Steely Dan/Snarky duo a very elegant match.”

For his part, League said that touring with Donald Fagen and company was “a dream. God, that’s probably the band that has had the biggest single influence on Snarky Puppy ever.

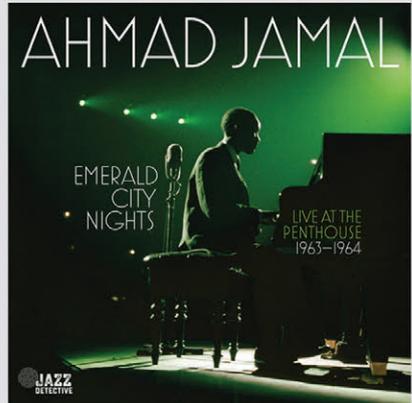
So, to be able to play before them every night, to be able to meet Donald and, above all, to hear those songs every single night, sounding amazing, the band playing amazing ... I mean, I’m a fan. I was in the audience every night singing along.”

League mused about Steely Dan’s influence on his own group: “When you think about them,” League added, “you think about how they packed so much musical depth, color and information into a box that everyone can understand, groove to and dig. That’s the most influential element of them on us: the ability to not sacrifice any musical depth in the pursuit of making music that reaches people.

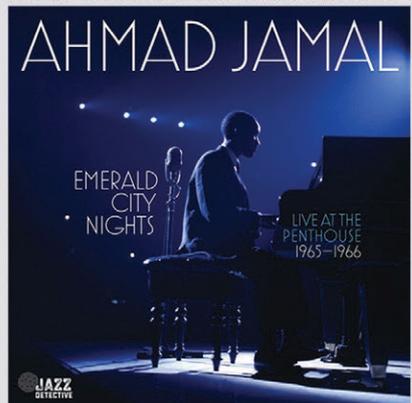
“I think there’s a common mentality among musicians that’s like, ‘Well, OK, we can play the shit that we wanna play and that we love ... or we can play the stuff that people will like.’ And that’s not just cool — that’s ridiculous! People are smart enough to understand deep and beautiful things. I’m not saying Snarky Puppy creates deep and beautiful things; I’m saying Steely Dan does. The fact that they proved it can be done was very inspiring for me. I wanted to do that too — just without lyrics.”

Snarky Puppy, League concludes, is “basically like Steely Dan plus (Herbie Hancock’s) Headhunters,” plus a few other things like the impact of the Black American music scene in Dallas and Roy Hargrove’s RH Factor. “But

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**Emerald City Nights: Live at the Penthouse (1963-1964) and (1965-1966)** brings forth a collection of previously unissued recordings of the iconic pianist **Ahmad Jamal** captured live at the hallowed Penthouse jazz club in Seattle, WA between 1963-1968 with trios featuring bassists **Richard Evans** and **Jamil Nasser**, and drummers **Chuck Lampkin**, **Vernel Fournier** and **Frank Gant**. Produced for release by “Jazz Detective” **Zev Feldman** and supervised by Ahmad Jamal himself, all these recordings were transferred from the original tape reels and mastered for vinyl by the legendary engineer **Bernie Grundman**. These first two individual limited-edition 180-gram 2-LP and deluxe 2-CD sets (1963-1965 and 1965-1966) are being released at the same time, with a third 2-LP and 2-CD volume (1966-1968) to come in 2023. The deluxe packages include extensive booklets with rare photos by **Don Bronstein**, **Chuck Stewart** and others; liner notes by the acclaimed journalist **Eugene Holley, Jr.**, plus statements from radio DJ & original recording engineer **Jim Wilke**, and the son of the Penthouse owner, **Charlie Puzzo Jr.**; new interviews with **Ramsey Lewis** and **Hiromi** (1963-64 release), **Jon Batiste**, **Kenny Barron** and **Aaron Diehl** (1965-1966 release), plus producer **Marshall Chess** of Chess and Argo Records, and others. These will mark the first 2 releases from producer Zev Feldman’s new label venture **Deep Digs Music Group / Jazz Detective**, in partnership with **Elemental Music**.



**Deep Digs Music Group** is a new joint venture from the Grammy-nominated producer Zev Feldman in partnership with **Elemental Music**, which was co-founded in 2012 by Feldman and Spanish producer Jordi Soley. The new **Jazz Detective** imprint is focused on releasing previously unissued treasures from jazz greats and unsung heroes.

**The New York Times**  
 “. . . packed with combusive overlays of rhythm – and a connection to musical history so deep and expansive that, in fact, it foresaw the future.” – Giovanni Russonello

I think (the first two) are our biggest influences. Both of them did an incredible job of making stuff that musicians love to play accessible to the common listener."

League holds those listeners in high esteem. "Probably a lot of bands say this, but I really think we have the best audience in the world. Our fan base holds us to a high standard. We have conditioned them to expect a different thing every night. We're not the band that always plays the hit for the encore.

"We play a different set every night. Sometimes we pull out very old songs. On this last tour we were playing 95 percent new songs that no one had ever heard. With most audiences, that would not go over well. People would be pissed off that they didn't hear the song that they came to hear.

"We're lucky ... because our audience genuinely wants us to surprise even ourselves onstage. I can't think of a more fortunate position for a band to be in. All we're being asked to do every night is to go onstage and push ourselves to do something new and fresh, to explore and play and grow. ... Our audience encourages us to do that, even to the point where, if things aren't going well onstage, you can tell the audience knows. And I love that."

The group's latest album, *Empire Central* (GroundUP) is, like Snarky Puppy's 13 previous albums, a showcase for engaging, fresh compositions, but this time League and company up the funk and R&B quotient considerably.

"It's about Dallas, and Dallas is an incredibly funky and soulful city," League explained. He mentions Erykah Badu, Roy Hargrove, Kirk Franklin, and Jason Moran, among others, as Dallas musicians who "revolutionized the way we think about Black American music."

League wrote four of the album's 16 songs; for the rest, he asked his bandmates to write about what Dallas meant to them. When they did, "I think they all thought about bass, so the music ended up being funkier. There's a lot more bass playing on *Empire* than on most Snarky Puppy records because that's what the songs asked for, and I was happy to oblige."

The album reflects the band's musical evolution since its North Texas days. While they learned the catechism in the school's famed jazz studies program, League has said that the majority of his musical education came from playing in Black churches in Dallas.

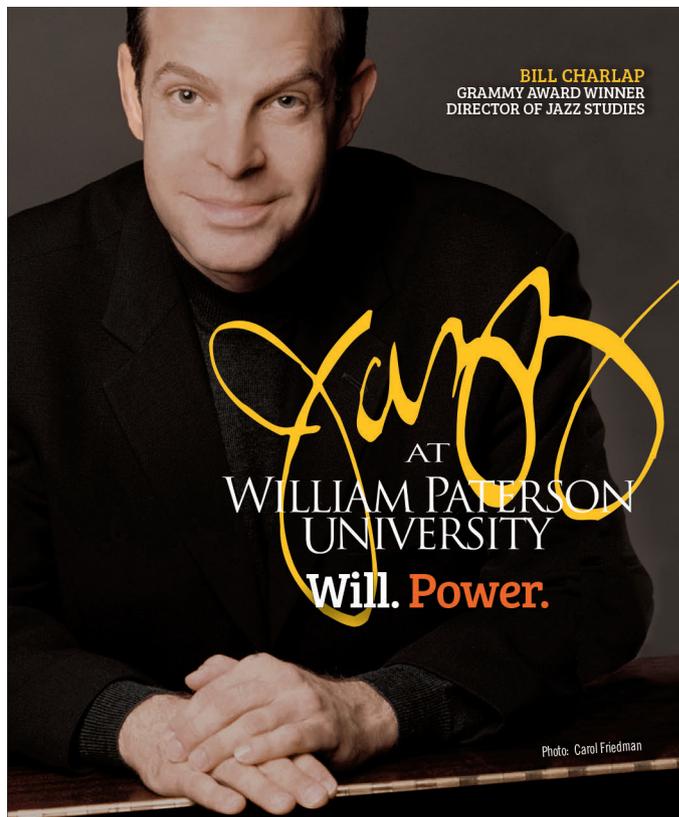
"Jazz school was great, because when I arrived at North Texas, I lacked all the fundamentals; I didn't know what I was doing. North Texas got me on top of my technique, scales, jazz history, playing and practicing all day. But when I dropped out, moved to Dallas, and started playing 80 percent of my gigs in churches and 20 percent in Black clubs, that's when I learned how to make music. Not just as a theory, but that's where I developed a much deeper relationship with the spiritual, emotional and communicative side of music making."

League's bandmate at those church gigs was '80s funk star and Dallas musical mainstay Bernard Wright, whom League identifies as the group's mentor.

Wright died tragically this year in Dallas at age 58, as a result of a motorist-pedestrian accident, not long after recording a synth track on "Take It!," a song from *Empire Central*.

"He took me under his wing," League recalled. "When we'd finish playing a service, I'd drive him to jam sessions. That's where Bernard introduced me to a lot of people that ended up playing in Snarky Puppy. I would also play gigs with his band. ... We played together between three and six times a week for several years.

"He shared so much wisdom with me. He taught me ... how to tell stories with your phrasing. He taught me about reasons to take a gig — whether to grow as a musician, to help a friend, to make money — all good reasons, but if you have all three it's perfect. Above all, he proved to me that being musical is number one, always. It always trumps hype, energy, swag, all these things. Your real power is in being musical." **DB**



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ORGANIST OF THE YEAR

# Saying JOEY Goodbye to DeFRANCESCO

By Yoshi Kato | Photo by Mark Sheldon

The world of Hammond B-3 jazz organ will now be measured in terms of pre- and post-Joey DeFrancesco. The influential keyboardist and multi-instrumentalist died on Aug. 25 at age 51 from a massive heart attack.





**‘Mind, body and soul,  
he’s probably one of the  
most gifted musicians  
we’ll ever see.’**

His passing gave DownBeat readers one last opportunity to honor him as Organist of the Year.

A generational talent, DeFrancesco was born in Springfield, Pennsylvania, on April 10, 1971, to “Papa” John and Laurene DeFrancesco. Papa, a railroad electrician by day and organist/vocalist by night, started his son early on the Hammond B-3. Young Joey began playing organ when he was four years old. Six months later, he had already memorized Jimmy Smith’s classic tune “The Sermon.”

After studying classical music from 10 to 14 at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, he enrolled in the City of Brotherly Love’s High School for the Creative and Performing Arts. His classmates there included bassist/jazz personality Christian McBride, drummer/The Roots co-founder Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson and guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel. “I came into school one day at 8 a.m. to find Joey and Christian McBride burning through ‘Giant Steps’ at an impossibly fast tempo, rollicking and laughing the whole way,” Rosenwinkel wrote on his Facebook page in memoriam.

In 1987, DeFrancesco placed fourth in the inaugural Thelonious Monk Piano Competition. He toured Europe as a member of Miles Davis’ band at 17, and also recorded *All Of Me*, his first of five albums for Columbia, with Houston Person guesting on two tracks.

“There was an announcement at school that Joey needed to go to the principal’s office, and we all got quiet thinking there was a death in his family,” Thompson recounted in a 2004 interview. “That’s when he found out that Miles wanted him on tour in Europe.”

DeFrancesco’s final side for Columbia, 1993’s *Live At The Five Spot*, featured Person again, as well as fellow tenor men Illinois Jacquet, Grover Washington Jr. and Kirk Whalum. A year later, he was playing trumpet, and by his mid-twenties he was drumming and singing, too. He’d sometimes play two instruments at once in concert.

“I’ve never had a problem saying that Joey DeFrancesco was hands-down the most creative and influential organist since Jimmy Smith,” McBride wrote in an official statement. “In terms of taking the organ to the next level and making it popular again for a younger generation, no one did it like Joey. He truly set a new bar and his legacy will live on as such.”

The public agreed with McBride’s assessment. DeFrancesco won every DownBeat Readers Poll since 2008 and every Critics Poll save three since 2012.

Like McBride, DeFrancesco was both immensely respected by his elders and encouraging to the next generation of jazz organists. “McDuff loved him, and he loved Mac,” said Pete Fallico, a Northern California-based

jazz organ evangelist who met DeFrancesco in the early ’90s and worked with him off and on ever since. “And he obviously knew the people from Philadelphia — Trudy Pitts, Shirley Scott, Jimmy McGriff, Charlie Earland. He was very, very friendly with all of them.”

“Joey always joked that we were his disciples, and we really were,” said 45-year-old organist Brian Ho. “If you’re part of the jazz organ idiom, at some point you study what he did.

“He was always very encouraging, too. He was checking out the new players and wanting to hear what they were doing,” Ho continued. “Joey had a show [on Sirius XM Satellite Radio’s Real Jazz Channel] called *Organized* where he would feature organists. And, he would always play albums from young or undiscovered players.”

Subsequent recordings on labels such as HighNote and Big Mo Records, Concord Jazz and Mack Avenue established him as the most notable organist of his generation. He also did high-profile recordings with Van Morrison, Bette Midler and Joe Pesci (a.k.a. Joe Doggs) and was a member of guitarist John McLaughlin’s The Free Spirits trio with drummer Dennis Chambers in the mid-’90s.

Highlights from his recorded career include *Incredible!* (Concord, 2000), which was recorded at live at Bimbo’s 365 Club in San Francisco and features two medleys with his mentor Smith; guitarist Pat Martino’s *Live At Yoshi’s* (Blue Note, 2001) with drummer Billy Hart; vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson’s *Enjoy The View* (Blue Note, 2014) with Hart and alto saxophonist David Sanborn; and *For Jimmy, Wes And Oliver* (Mack Avenue, 2020), the Christian McBride Big Band album which reunites the “best friends,” according to the bandleader.

As much as he advanced the conceptual development of the jazz organ, DeFrancesco was also involved in technological innovations to keep the instrument a viable option for future generations. “While it is important to play the B-3, the well-maintained ones are just few and far between,” Ho pointed out. “So he helped develop the Viscount (Legend Joey DeFrancesco signature organ by KeyB). I think that will be part of his legacy.”

Late in his career, DeFrancesco added saxophone to his arsenal. “You know, my grandfather was a saxophone player, and played with the Dorsey Brothers,” he explained in a November 2021 DownBeat cover article by J.D. Considine. “Joseph, who I’m named after. So there was always some saxophone history in the family. My father kept his horns, and thank goodness he did, because those were there when I wanted to dabble with the instrument.”

“I always used to say God gave Joey enough talent for 10 musicians,” Fallico remarked, in a phone interview three days after DeFrancesco’s passing. “Mind, body and soul, he’s probably one of the most gifted musicians we’ll ever see.” **DB**

# Joey DeFrancesco

1971 – 2022

## Music • Love • Kindness

“Joey DeFrancesco was one of the sweetest people I’ve ever met. He was one of the very few musicians who were able to achieve true mastery of more than one instrument and his passion for the saxophone was infectious. We spoke often about the sound of the saxophone. Joey was pure music and love and he made the world a better place for all of us who heard him and knew him. On Earth, we miss Joey terribly, but ‘The Great Jam Session’ in the sky just got a whole lot better.”

Jody Espina





NINE  
NINE  
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FOR THE  
AGES

## *Legend Soul*

### THE FIRST DIGITAL TONEWHEEL ORGAN WITH 9 CONTACTS

Legend Soul excels for its powerful technology able to reproduce the iconic 9 contacts mechanic in digital way. Its innovative technology, combined with the improved keyclick simulation, gives to Legend Soul a unique richness of the harmonic components and a realistic taste to the sounds. Its appealing style, mixed with its advanced technology, makes Legend Soul one-of-a-kind.



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# COMPLETE RESULTS



FRANK STEWART

Wynton Marsalis



CHUCK STEWART PHOTOGRAPHY, LLC./FIREBALL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

John Coltrane



GREG HELGESON

Maria Schneider

## HALL OF FAME

### Kenny Barron .....1,589

Jack DeJohnette.....	1,587
Charles Lloyd.....	1,141
John McLaughlin.....	1,008
Pharoah Sanders.....	1,005
Ellis Marsalis.....	1,004
Oliver Nelson.....	1,004
Kenny Burrell.....	1,003
Tito Puente.....	819
Grant Green.....	817
Alice Coltrane.....	763
Bob Brookmeyer.....	686
Dr. Lonnie Smith.....	684
Anthony Braxton.....	560
Buddy Guy.....	559
Bill Frisell.....	558
Shirley Horn.....	556
Dave Holland.....	555

Randy Brecker.....	483
Dr. John.....	482
Ramsey Lewis.....	480
Billy Higgins.....	479
Billy Cobham.....	476
Maria Schneider.....	476
Bobby Hutchinson.....	441
Dee Dee Bridgewater.....	440
Paul Bley.....	438
Abdullah Ibrahim.....	437
John Scofield.....	406
Dianne Reeves.....	405
Joe Lovano.....	403
John Zorn.....	403
Cassandra Wilson.....	402
Illinois Jacquet.....	401

## ARTIST OF THE YEAR

<b>Christian McBride.....</b>	<b>1,442</b>
Jon Batiste.....	1,330

Charles Lloyd.....	1,029
Pat Metheny.....	945
Bill Frisell.....	733
Wynton Marsalis.....	731
Wayne Shorter.....	728
Kenny Garrett.....	637
Kenny Barron.....	603
Maria Schneider.....	602
Trombone Shorty.....	561
Mary Halvorson.....	560
John McLaughlin.....	455
Cécile McLorin Salvant.....	441
Terence Blanchard.....	427
Chris Potter.....	385
John Scofield.....	385
Esperanza Spalding.....	361
Brad Mehldau.....	360
Joey DeFrancesco (PASSED AUG 25).....	359
Ambrose Akinmusire.....	357
Robert Glasper.....	357

Jack DeJohnette.....	319
Terri Lyne Carrington.....	317
Tom Harrell.....	315
Stanley Clarke.....	286
Gregory Porter.....	284
Anat Cohen.....	281
Wadada Leo Smith.....	280

## GROUP

<b>Snarky Puppy.....</b>	<b>1,746</b>
Charles Lloyd & the Marvels.....	1,400
Pat Metheny Side-Eye.....	1,393
Bill Frisell Trio.....	1,044
Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade: A MoodSwing Reunion ...	1,043
Yellowjackets.....	876
Artemis.....	872
Branford Marsalis Quartet.....	870
Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue.....	868



Herbie Hancock

CLAY BAKER

Chris Potter



DAVE STAPLETON

Jon Batiste & Stay Human ..... 712  
 The Cookers..... 697  
 Vijay Iyer Trio..... 495  
 SFJAZZ Collective..... 488  
 Fred Hersch Trio ..... 485  
 Terri Lyne Carrington + Social Science ..... 417  
 Jeff Hamilton Trio ..... 416  
 Sons of Kemet..... 201  
 Julian Lage Trio ..... 197  
 Terence Blanchard & The E-Collective ..... 195  
 Joe Lovano & Dave Douglas' Sound Prints Quintet..... 194  
 Mary Halvorson's Code Girl ..... 192  
 Tom Harrell Quartet..... 191  
 Nate Smith Kinfolk..... 190

**LARGE ENSEMBLE**

**Maria Schneider Orchestra... 1,749**  
 Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra .... 2,457  
 Christian McBride Big Band..... 2,453  
 Mingus Big Band..... 1,403  
 WDR Big Band Cologne..... 1,390  
 Sun Ra Arkestra..... 1,235  
 Count Basie Orchestra ..... 1,047  
 Arturo O'Farrill: The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra..... 867  
 Anat Cohen Tentet ..... 866  
 Vanguard Jazz Orchestra ..... 707  
 Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band... 627  
 John Beasley's MONK'estra ..... 563  
 Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra... 488  
 Ed Palermo Big Band..... 487  
 Chicago Jazz Orchestra ..... 422  
 NDR Big Band ..... 421  
 DIVA Jazz Orchestra ..... 418  
 Ulysses Owens Jr. Big Band..... 416

Darcy James Argue's Secret Society ..... 410

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

**Pat Metheny, *Side-Eye NYC [VI.IV] (MODERN) ..... 1,398***  
 Kenny Garrett, *Sounds From The Ancestors* (MACK AVENUE) ..... 1,391  
 Christian McBride & Inside Straight, *Live At The Village Vanguard* (MACK AVENUE) ..... 1,218  
 Melissa Aldana, *12 Stars* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 713  
 Bill Charlap, *Street Of Dreams* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 635  
 Bob Mintzer & WDR Big Band Cologne, *Soundscapes* (MCG JAZZ)..... 563  
 Mary Halvorson, *Amaryllis & Belladonna* (NONESUCH) ..... 557  
 John Scofield, *John Scofield* (ECM) ..... 487

The Cookers, *Look Out!* (GEARBOX) ..... 485  
 Brad Mehldau, *Jacob's Ladder* (NONESUCH) ..... 485  
 Esperanza Spalding, *Songwrights Apothecary Lab* (CONCORD)..... 484  
 Cécile McLorin Salvant, *Ghost* (NONESUCH) ..... 483  
 Immanuel Wilkins, *The 7th Hand* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 482  
 Eliane Elias, *Mirror Mirror* (CANDID)..... 419  
 Jazzmeia Horn and Her Noble Force, *Dear Love* (EMPRESS LEGACY)..... 283  
 Steve Davis, *Bluesthetic* (SMOKE SESSIONS) ..... 282  
 Bob James, *I Feel Like Making LIVE!* (EVOLUTION) ..... 282  
 Nicholas Payton, *Smoke Sessions* (SMOKE SESSIONS) ..... 282  
 Avishai Cohen, *Naked Truth* (ECM) ..... 278

Gerald Clayton, *Bells On Sand* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 275  
 Peter Erskine/Alan Pasqua/Darek Oles, *Live In Italy* (FUZZY) ..... 272  
 Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble, *...dreaming in lions...* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 272  
 Johnathan Blake, *Homeward Bound* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 272  
 Tigran Hamasyan, *StandArt* (NONESUCH) ..... 271  
 Carlos Henriquez, *The South Bronx Story* (TIGER TURN) ..... 271  
 Abdullah Ibrahim, *Solitude* (GEARBOX) ..... 271  
 Dave Stryker, *As We Are* (STRYKEZONE) ..... 271

**HISTORICAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

**John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme: Live In Seattle* (IMPULSE)..... 3,158**  
 Frank Zappa, *The Mothers 1971* (ZAPPA/UME) ..... 1,234  
 Roy Hargrove/Mulgrew Miller, *In Harmony* (RESONANCE) ..... 1,220  
 Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, *First Flight To Tokyo: The Lost 1961 Recordings* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 1,216  
 Lee Morgan, *The Complete Live At The Lighthouse, Hermosa Beach, California* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 1,057  
 Chet Baker Trio, *Live In Paris: The Radio France Recordings 1983-1984* (INA/ELEMENTAL) ..... 714  
 Charles Mingus, *Mingus: The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's* (RESONANCE) ..... 707  
 Lyle Mays, *Eberhard* (LYLE MAYS MUSIC)..... 627  
 Miles Davis, *Miles Davis Live: What It Is Montreal 7/7/83* (LEGACY/SONY)..... 625

Dave Brubeck Trio, *Live From Vienna 1967* (BRUBECK EDITIONS) ..... 623  
 Keith Jarrett, *Facing You* (ECM) ..... 556  
 Dexter Gordon, *One Flight Up* (BLUE NOTE) ..... 553  
 Pepper Adams with the Tommy Banks Trio, *Live At Room At The Top* (REEL TO REAL) ..... 552  
 Oscar Peterson, *A Time For Love* (TWO LIONS/MACK AVENUE) ..... 550  
 Albert Ayler: *Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings* (INA/ELEMENTAL) ..... 416  
 Duke Ellington & His Orchestra, *Berlin 1959* (STORYVILLE) ..... 416  
 Charlie Parker, *Bird LA* (VERVE) ..... 416  
 Charles Mingus, *Mingus Presents Mingus* (CANDID) ..... 350  
 Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, *In My Prime* (TIDAL WAVES) ..... 347  
 Ray Charles, *Genius Loves Company* (TANGERINE) ..... 344  
 Yusef Lateef, *Eastern Sounds* (CRAFT SMALL BATCH)..... 344  
 Max Roach, *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite* (CANDID)..... 344  
 Roy Ayers, *Virgo Vibes* (BMG)..... 42  
 Bill Evans, *On A Friday Evening* (CRAFT) ..... 342  
 John McLaughlin, *The Montreux Years* (BMG)..... 340

**TRUMPET**

**Wynton Marsalis..... 2,450**  
 Ambrose Akinmusire ..... 2,269  
 Terence Blanchard..... 1,225  
 Randy Brecker..... 1,215  
 Arturo Sandoval ..... 1,060  
 Ingrid Jensen ..... 1,051  
 Tom Harrell..... 1,046  
 Ron Miles (PASSED MARCH 8, 2022)..... 1,038



Trombone Short

Nicholas Payton.....	1,030
Avishai Cohen.....	708
Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah.....	706
Dave Douglas.....	697
Sean Jones.....	692
Wadada Leo Smith.....	565
Jeremy Pelt.....	560
Jon Faddis.....	495
Terell Stafford.....	495
Marquis Hill.....	492
Brian Lynch.....	359
Theo Croker.....	354
Eddie Henderson.....	344
Paolo Fresu.....	285
Alex Sipiagin.....	283
Enrico Rava.....	282

**TROMBONE**

<b>Trombone Shorty.....</b>	<b>2,969</b>
Steve Turre.....	1,734
Wycliffe Gordon.....	1,576
Steve Davis.....	1,058
Curtis Fuller.....	1,043
Robin Eubanks.....	867
Delfeayo Marsalis.....	699
Michael Dease.....	629
Tom "Bones" Malone.....	559
Conrad Herwig.....	558
Jennifer Wharton.....	487
Slide Hampton.....	486
Nils Landgren.....	485
Marshall Gilkes.....	356
John Fedchock.....	354
Natalie Cressman.....	352

Ryan Keberle.....	348
Ray Anderson.....	346
Gianluca Petrella.....	343
Alan Ferber.....	280
Hal Crook.....	280

**SOPRANO SAXOPHONE**

<b>Branford Marsalis.....</b>	<b>3,480</b>
Dave Liebman.....	2,085
Kenny Garrett.....	1,420
Chris Potter.....	1,392
Joshua Redman.....	1,056
Ravi Coltrane.....	1,039
Jan Garbarek.....	1,036
Joe Lovano.....	1,033
Jane Ira Bloom.....	1,032
Tia Fuller.....	492
James Carter.....	490
Steve Wilson.....	489
Jane Bunnett.....	423
Evan Parker.....	422
Roscoe Mitchell.....	422
Roxy Coss.....	347
Donny McCaslin.....	346
Sam Newsome.....	342
Ted Nash.....	284
Ingrid Laubrock.....	282
Walter Smith III.....	280

**ALTO SAXOPHONE**

<b>Kenny Garrett.....</b>	<b>2,796</b>
Grace Kelly.....	2,091
Greg Abate.....	1,057
Immanuel Wilkins.....	1,057

Chris Potter.....	1,055
David Sanborn.....	1,044
Paquito D'Rivera.....	713
Miguel Zenón.....	708
Rudresh Mahanthappa.....	697
Gary Bartz.....	560
Tia Fuller.....	559
Charles McPherson.....	557
Anthony Braxton.....	556
Bobby Watson.....	555
John Zorn.....	426
Henry Threadgill.....	421
Ted Nash.....	420
Antonio Hart.....	416
Lakecia Benjamin.....	416
Vincent Herring.....	414
Steve Coleman.....	352
Donald Harrison.....	250
Steve Wilson.....	249
Jeff Coffin.....	245

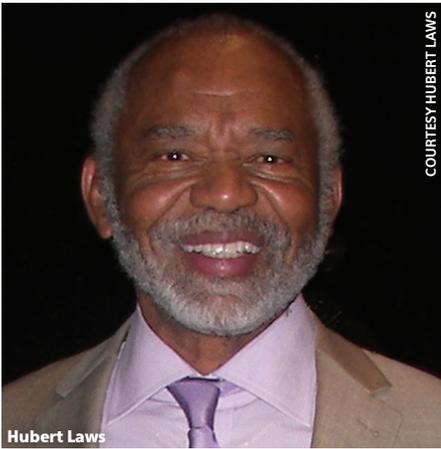
**TENOR SAXOPHONE**

<b>Chris Potter.....</b>	<b>1,759</b>
Charles Lloyd.....	1,583
Branford Marsalis.....	1,241
Joshua Redman.....	1,239
Joe Lovano.....	1,238
Melissa Aldana.....	891
Kamasi Washington.....	890
Pharoah Sanders.....	700
Eric Alexander.....	627
Houston Person.....	494
Archie Shepp.....	490
James Brandon Lewis.....	357

James Carter.....	353
Jan Garbarek.....	353
Ernie Watts.....	353
Shabaka Hutchings.....	352
Nubya Garcia.....	351
Donny McCaslin.....	351
Mark Turner.....	351
Jeff Coffin.....	350
Camille Thurman.....	347
David Sánchez.....	343
JD Allen.....	342
Billy Harper.....	342
Scott Robinson.....	342
Walter Smith III.....	342

**BARITONE SAXOPHONE**

<b>Leo P.....</b>	<b>3,500</b>
Gary Smulyan.....	2,626
James Carter.....	2,453
John Surman.....	1,057
Ronnie Cuber.....	1,040
Scott Robinson.....	987
Claire Daly.....	870
Tim Berne.....	626
Mats Gustafsson.....	625
Lauren Sevian.....	495
Stephen "Doc" Kupka.....	490
Ken Vandermark.....	421
Paula Henderson.....	417
Lisa Parrott.....	417
Dave McMurray.....	416
Charles Evans.....	349
Alex Harding.....	349
Chris Cheek.....	284



COURTESY HUBERT LAWS



COURTESY BRANFORD MARSALIS



GABRIELE IUGLI

Patience Higgins ..... 282  
 Brian Landrus ..... 282  
 Frank Basile ..... 281

**CLARINET**

**Anat Cohen ..... 5,803**  
 Paquito D’Rivera ..... 1,745  
 Don Byron ..... 1,232  
 Eddie Daniels ..... 1,222  
 Ken Peplowski ..... 1,052  
 Victor Goines ..... 629  
 Shabaka Hutchings ..... 629  
 Ted Nash ..... 426  
 Ben Goldberg ..... 424  
 Chris Speed ..... 350  
 Anna Webber ..... 349  
 Gabriele Mirabassi ..... 284  
 Louis Sclavis ..... 281  
 Gianluigi Trovesi ..... 281

**FLUTE**

**Hubert Laws ..... 2,632**  
 Charles Lloyd ..... 2,468  
 Nicole Mitchell ..... 1,575  
 Lew Tabackin ..... 885  
 Elena Pinderhughes ..... 878  
 Tia Fuller ..... 713  
 Dave Liebman ..... 699  
 Henry Threadgill ..... 697  
 Ted Nash ..... 693  
 Ali Ryerson ..... 563  
 Jane Bunnett ..... 561  
 James Newton ..... 420  
 Anna Webber ..... 418

Shabaka Hutchings ..... 356  
 Erica von Kleist ..... 354  
 Anne Drummond ..... 350  
 Steve Wilson ..... 350  
 Jeff Coffin ..... 349  
 Holly Hofmann ..... 347  
 James Spaulding ..... 282

**PIANO**

**Herbie Hancock ..... 1,573**  
 Brad Mehldau ..... 1,064  
 Emmet Cohen ..... 1,052  
 Kenny Barron ..... 1,046  
 Keith Jarrett ..... 875  
 Ahmad Jamal ..... 702  
 Jon Batiste ..... 701  
 Bill Charlap ..... 633  
 Fred Hersch ..... 633  
 Hiromi ..... 631  
 Vijay Iyer ..... 630  
 Gerald Clayton ..... 491  
 Renee Rosnes ..... 358  
 Helen Sung ..... 355  
 Monty Alexander ..... 354  
 Aaron Parks ..... 353  
 Christian Sands ..... 352  
 Abdullah Ibrahim ..... 347  
 Eliane Elias ..... 287  
 George Cables ..... 286  
 Tigran Hamasyan ..... 285  
 Benny Green ..... 284  
 Craig Taborn ..... 284  
 Robert Glasper ..... 282

**KEYBOARDS**

**Herbie Hancock ..... 4,914**  
 Robert Glasper ..... 1,384  
 Craig Taborn ..... 890  
 Hiromi ..... 878  
 Larry Goldings ..... 874  
 Gary Husband ..... 873  
 Cory Henry ..... 868  
 James Francies ..... 635  
 Eddie Palmieri ..... 635  
 John Medeski ..... 576  
 Danilo Pérez ..... 559  
 Gary Versace ..... 495  
 Jeff Lorber ..... 493  
 Patrice Rushen ..... 356  
 John Beasley ..... 355  
 Geoffrey Keezer ..... 353  
 Nik Bärtsch ..... 217  
 Kit Downes ..... 217  
 Marc Cary ..... 216  
 Denny Zeitlin ..... 216  
 Uri Caine ..... 215  
 Jamie Saft ..... 215  
 Matthew Shipp ..... 215

**ORGAN**

**Joey DeFrancesco (PASSED AUG. 25, 2022) ..... 4,921**  
 Dr. Lonnie Smith (PASSED SEPT. 28, 2021) ..... 2,653  
 Larry Goldings ..... 1,596  
 Cory Henry ..... 1,001  
 Carla Bley ..... 945  
 Booker T. Jones ..... 882

Brian Auger ..... 772  
 John Medeski ..... 735  
 Delvon Lamarr ..... 672  
 Mike LeDonne ..... 588  
 Akiko Tsuruga ..... 532  
 Craig Taborn ..... 455  
 Barbara Dennerlein ..... 448  
 Gary Versace ..... 399  
 Pat Bianchi ..... 374  
 Tony Monaco ..... 367  
 Rhoda Scott ..... 345  
 Kit Downes ..... 336  
 Amina Claudine Myers ..... 303

**GUITAR**

**Pat Metheny ..... 2,632**  
 Bill Frisell ..... 2,086  
 John Scofield ..... 1,218  
 John McLaughlin ..... 1,078  
 Pat Martino (PASSED NOV. 1, 2021) ..... 957  
 Mary Halvorson ..... 945  
 Julian Lage ..... 914  
 John Pizzarelli ..... 728  
 Al Di Meola ..... 672  
 Peter Bernstein ..... 630  
 Dave Stryker ..... 574  
 Kurt Rosenwinkel ..... 485  
 Pasquale Grasso ..... 448  
 Mike Stern ..... 441  
 Mark Whitfield ..... 385  
 Kevin Eubanks ..... 364  
 Lionel Loueke ..... 356  
 Gilad Hekselman ..... 308  
 Charlie Hunter ..... 301



COURTESY MARCUS MILLER

Marcus Miller



ENREST GREGORY

Regina Carter



LAUREN DESBERG

Joel Ross

## BASS

**Christian McBride** ..... 4,137

Ron Carter	2,240
Esperanza Spalding	1,253
Dave Holland	1,232
Linda May Han Oh	840
John Patitucci	785
Stanley Clarke	665
Victor Wooten	560
William Parker	532
Charnett Moffett (PASSED APRIL 11, 2022)	497
John Clayton	455
Avishai Cohen	448
Carlos Henriquez	399
Marc Johnson	336
Reggie Workman	315
Peter Washington	294

## ELECTRIC BASS

**Marcus Miller** ..... 2,097

Steve Swallow	1,535
Christian McBride	1,498
Esperanza Spalding	1,442
Victor Wooten	1,400
Tony Levin	1,309
Stanley Clarke	1,283
John Patitucci	1,239
Thundercat	735
Linda May Han Oh	700
Charnett Moffett (PASSED APRIL 11, 2022)	595
Brian Bromberg	399

James Genus	392
Richard Bona	385
Pino Palladino	378
Avishai Cohen	373
Tal Wilkenfeld	357
Derrick Hodge	343
Felix Pastorius	343
Meshell Ndegeocello	303

## VIOLIN

**Regina Carter** ..... 5,187

Jean-Luc Ponty	3,101
Jenny Scheinman	1,008
Sara Caswell	833
Mark O'Connor	748
Mark Feldman	728
Jerry Goodman	679
Zach Brock	514
Tomoko Omura	448
Michal Urbaniak	392
Mat Maneri	350
Nils Økland	341
Mads Tolling	301
Karen Briggs	287
Jason Kao Hwang	287
Aaron Weinstein	287

## DRUMS

**Brian Blade** ..... 1,800

Jack DeJohnette	1,687
Terri Lyne Carrington	985
Billy Cobham	980
Steve Gadd	810

Antonio Sánchez	770
Billy Hart	574
Roy Haynes	574
Allison Miller	567
Jeff Hamilton	537
Johnathan Blake	508
Jeff "Tain" Watts	497
Peter Erskine	476
Joe Farnsworth	462
Tyshawn Sorey	411
Kenny Washington	392
Albert "Tootie" Heath	384
Nate Smith	371
Matt Wilson	371
Eric Harland	343
Bill Stewart	343
Cindy Blackman Santana	315
Lewis Nash	294

## PERCUSSION

**Airto Moreira** ..... 1,890

Poncho Sanchez	1,687
Sheila E.	1,491
Zakir Hussain	1,476
Bobby Sanabria	833
Pedrito Martinez	833
Trilok Gurtu	728
Marilyn Mazur	727
Hamid Drake	595
Mino Cinelu	497
Cyro Baptista	490
Kahil El'Zabar	455
John Santos	399

Pete Escovedo	399
Ches Smith	392
Giovanni Hidalgo	385
Manolo Badrena	350
Famoudou Don Moye	342
Susie Ibarra	335
Leon Parker	328

## VIBRAPHONE

**Joel Ross** ..... 2,338

Warren Wolf	2,128
Stefon Harris	1,967
Joe Locke	1,610
Jason Marsalis	1,190
Mike Mainieri	1,170
Steve Nelson	1,155
Joe Chambers	497
Patricia Brennan	490
Sasha Berliner	462
Celia Smith	420
Warren Smith	378
Kenny Wollesen	378
Jason Adasiewicz	343
Khan Jamal	322
Hendrik Meurkens	308
Tomas Fujiwara	287

## MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUMENT

**Béla Fleck (BANJO)** ..... 1,918

Chris Potter (BASS CLARINET)	1,095
Brandee Younger (HARP)	1,084
Jon Batiste (MELODICA/HARMONABOARD)	1,071





John Zorn.....	809
Robert Glasper.....	735
Dave Holland.....	665
Zev Feldman.....	539
Bill Laswell.....	539
Vince Mendoza.....	539
Michael Cuscuna.....	469
John Beasley.....	448
Willie Jones III.....	420
Dave Douglas.....	378
Ambrose Akinmusire.....	350
Flying Lotus.....	329
Aaron Parks.....	329
Makaya McCraven.....	308
Miguel Zenón.....	273
Tyshawn Sorey.....	259

### BLUES ARTIST OF THE YEAR

<b>Buddy Guy.....</b>	<b>2,646</b>
Christone "Kingfish" Ingram.....	1,127
Keb' Mo'.....	910
Taj Mahal.....	882
Joe Bonamassa.....	784
Gary Clark Jr.....	655
John Mayall.....	623
James Blood Ulmer.....	553
Robert Cray.....	546
Robben Ford.....	546
Shemekia Copeland.....	497
Gov't Mule.....	469
Jimmy Johnson (PASSED JAN. 31, 2022).....	371
Charlie Musselwhite.....	301
Billy F. Gibbons.....	266
Duke Robillard.....	252

Samantha Fish.....	231
Beth Hart.....	224
Eric Bibb.....	210
Eric Gales.....	210

### BLUES ALBUM

<b>Keb' Mo', <i>Good To Be ...</i> (CONCORD).....</b>	<b>1,981</b>
John Mayall, <i>The Sun Is Shining Down</i> (FORTY BELOW).....	1,575
Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, <i>662</i> (ALLIGATOR).....	1,379
Gov't Mule, <i>Heavy Load Blues</i> (FANTASY/CONCORD).....	1,085
Charlie Musselwhite, <i>Mississippi Son</i> (ALLIGATOR).....	987
Eric Gales, <i>Crown</i> (PROLOGUE).....	826
Samantha Fish, <i>Faster</i> (ROUNDER).....	735
Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters, <i>Mercy Me</i> (STONY PLAIN).....	616
Duke Robillard, <i>They Called It Rhythm &amp; Blues</i> (STONY PLAIN).....	588
Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, <i>Blues From Chicago To Paris</i> (STONY PLAIN).....	539
Corey Harris, <i>Insurrection Blues</i> (M.C.).....	441
Sue Foley, <i>Pinky's Blues</i> (STONY PLAIN).....	399
Eric Bibb, <i>Dear America</i> (PROVOGUE).....	392
Carolyn Wonderland, <i>Tempting Fate</i> (ALLIGATOR).....	392
North Mississippi Allstars, <i>Set Sail</i> (NEW WEST).....	371
Poppa Chubby, <i>Emotional Gangster</i> (DIXIEFROG).....	350

Memphis Sounds, <i>Memphis Sounds</i> (LITTLE VILLAGE).....	294
Tinsley Ellis, <i>Devil May Care</i> (ALLIGATOR).....	287
Bernard Allison, <i>Highs &amp; Lows</i> (RUF).....	231
Larry McCray, <i>Blues Without You</i> (KTBA).....	210

### BEYOND ARTIST

<b>Jon Batiste.....</b>	<b>2,352</b>
Pat Metheny.....	1,839
Rhiannon Giddens.....	966
Bob Dylan.....	945
Tower of Power.....	907
Gregory Porter.....	889
Robert Glasper.....	763
Trombone Shorty.....	665
Anderson .Paak.....	553
Van Morrison.....	546
Billie Eilish.....	455
Melody Gardot.....	455
Thundercat.....	455
Neil Young.....	399
Booker T. Jones.....	371
Nick Cave & Warren Ellis.....	357
Lake Street Dive.....	343
Silk Sonic.....	329
John Legend.....	308
Lucinda Williams.....	294
Bettye LaVette.....	280
Bebel Gilberto.....	241
Leo Pellegrino.....	230
Fiona Apple.....	217
Khruangbin & Leon Bridges.....	217

### BEYOND ALBUM

<b>Robert Glasper, <i>Black Radio III</i> (LOMA VISTA).....</b>	<b>2,135</b>
Bonnie Raitt, <i>Just Like That</i> (REDWING).....	1,932
Trombone Shorty, <i>Lifted</i> (BLUE NOTE).....	1,890
Flora Purim, <i>If You Will</i> (STRUT).....	1,330
Eric Clapton, <i>The Lady In The Balcony: Lockdown Sessions</i> (MERCURY).....	1,190
Kendrick Lamar, <i>Mr. Morale &amp; The Big Steppers</i> (PGLANG/TOP DAWG).....	959
Ledisi, <i>Ledisi Sings Nina</i> (BMG).....	714
Wilco, <i>Cruel Country</i> (DBPM).....	707
Adele, <i>30</i> (BFB).....	700
Black Keys, <i>Dropout Boogie</i> (EASY EYE).....	574
Mary J. Blige, <i>Good Morning Gorgeous</i> (300 ENTERTAINMENT).....	441
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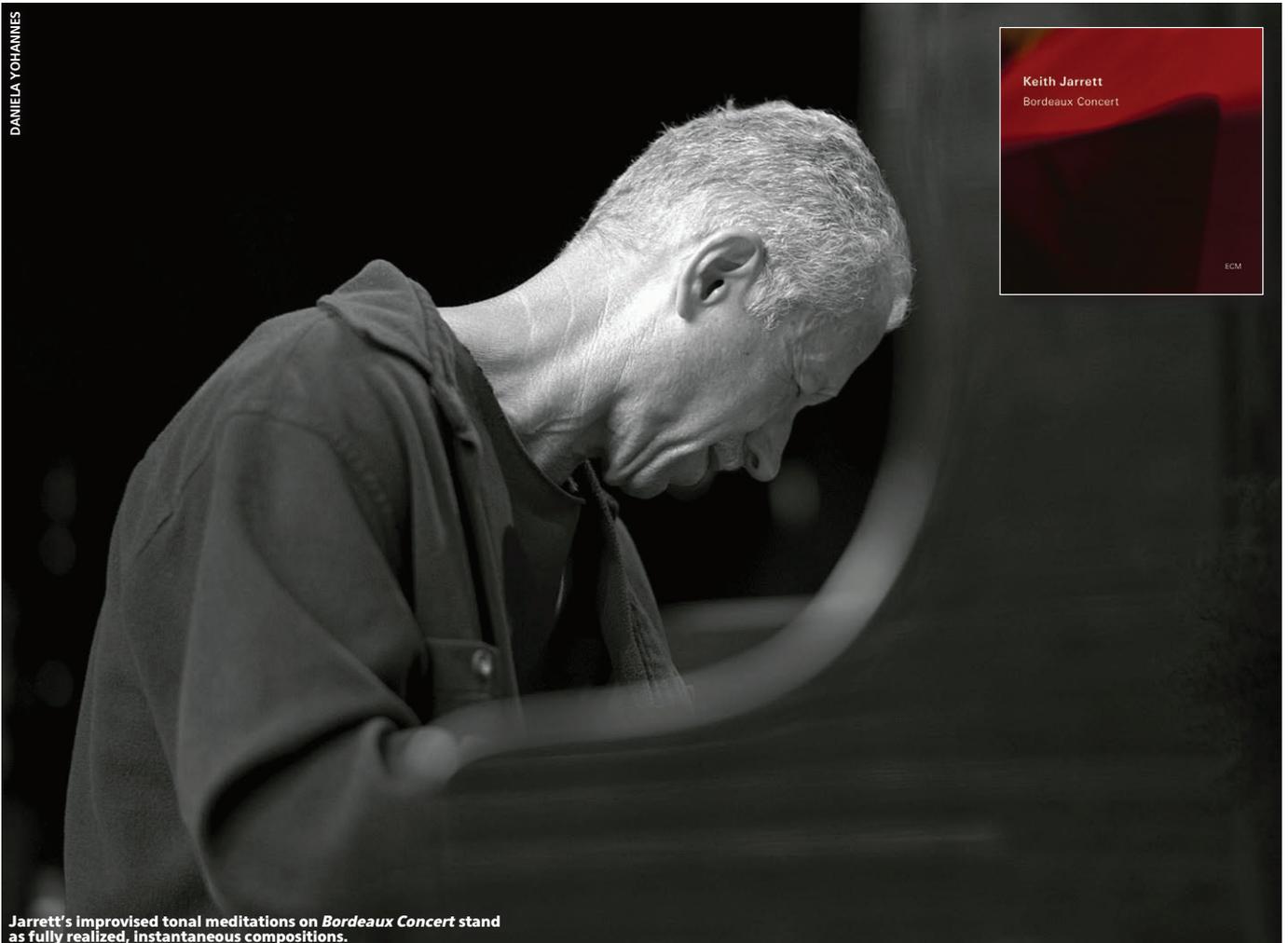


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# Reviews

Masterpiece ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★ Good ★★★ Fair ★★ Poor ★

DANIELA YOHANNES



Jarrett's improvised tonal meditations on *Bordeaux Concert* stand as fully realized, instantaneous compositions.

## Keith Jarrett *Bordeaux Concert*

ECM

★★★★★

About 18 minutes into what would be his final solo concert in France, Keith Jarrett pauses after a tuneful yet tension-filled improvisation and downshifts into a gentle series of spare, chordal combinations. It's a recognizable approach for those familiar with his well-documented, 46-year series of improvised solo performances. Yet, while this type of chordal bagatelle has often served as a building block or transition, here it continues to evolve into a simple, structured entity.

If Jarrett's earlier improvised recitals used three- or four-minute tonal meditations like this as peaceful interludes within wider-ranging pieces, here they stand as fully realized, instantaneous compositions.

Recorded in July 2016, about 18 months before the first of his two devastating strokes, *Bordeaux Concert* has several hymn-like meditations that seem so complete they would be construed as through-composed if performed by anyone else. The most compelling of these is "Part VII," a seven-minute étude that has such a rich harmonic structure and logical path that it might be mistaken for a wistful ballad by Beach Boys songwriter Brian Wilson.

But, taken as a whole, this recital lacks the long-line logic of his marathon improvisational flights. Instead, he shifts into short explorations like "VI," which balances gorgeous harmony against spiky atonality, and somewhat longer improvisations like "V," filled with so much thorny interaction and opposing movement that it sounds like it was inspired by Glenn Gould. Balancing those types of complex constructions are his extended, rough-hewn blues meditations on "VIII," which grow a bit tiresome, and the

slight, lushly harmonic piece that is "X."

In lesser hands, Jarrett's approach might seem like an attempt to shoehorn the highlights of epic solo recordings like *Sun Bear Concerts* into a single recital. Rather, it seems that he has succeeded in parsing the most compelling of his musical ideas. As such, at just 5:35, "Part XII," presumably an encore, sounds as fully realized as some of the named compositions on 1972's *Facing You* — a rich, wistful ballad.

While it's a challenge to not delve into nostalgic rumination, knowing Jarrett will likely never perform again, his compulsion to throw himself into the unknown and trust his muse remains as enthralling a concept as it always did.

—James Hale

**Bordeaux Concert:** Part I; Part II; Part III; Part IV; Part V; Part VI; Part VII; Part VIII; Part IX; Part X; Part XI; Part XII; Part XIII. (77:36)

**Personnel:** Keith Jarrett, piano.

**Ordering info:** [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)



## Bobby Watson *Back Home In Kansas City*

SMOKE SESSIONS

★★★★★

Titles can be misleading. If you expect *Back Home In Kansas City* to be a sentimental toast to the town of Moten, McShann, Basie and Bird, that it isn't. Though Bobby Watson was raised there and headed the jazz studies program at the University of Missouri conservatory for 20 years, he doesn't seem homesick for the old 12th and Vine neighborhood of legend. The title track is a coy and clever contrafact of "Indiana," which is a jazz standard in any city, and particularly Kansas City via Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee." But aside from John

## JD Allen *Americana Vol. 2*

SAVANT

★★★★★

Tenor saxophonist JD Allen has spent the best part of the last decade delving into the heart-felt yearning of the blues. Through 2016's *Americana* and 2019's *Barracoon*, Allen has honed his gutsy, hard-blowing sound, playing through the changes without embellishment to let the simplicity of his melodies sing.

On the second volume of his *Americana* series, Allen opens up his usual trio format to include guitarist Charlie Hunter. The result is a beguiling 11 tracks displaying confidence in the band's choice of clarity over complexity and an unrivalled capacity to convey emotion through instrumentation.

Aside from a hand-clapping, hard-swinging version of the folk tune "The World Is A Mean World" and the romantic balladry of the Walker-Arnold standard "You Don't Know Me," *Americana Vol. 2* consists of original compositions. Bookending tracks "Up South" and "Down South" demonstrate Hunter and Allen's effortless melodic interweaving, skipping over an earthy groove from drummer Rudy Royston and the metronomic solidity of Gregg August.

The quartet format works so well that on the clutch of trio tracks that make up the center

Coltrane's "Dear Lord" and "I'm Glad There Is You," both played in a brooding sobriety, this album consists of originals by Watson and his colleagues, some leading into distant reflective destinations.

In a sense, it's a missed opportunity. It might have been interesting to hear Watson's men tackle "Swingmatism," or even "Moten Swing" and "Prince Of Wales." Perhaps another day. That isn't the record he chose to make. Though it may mislead, it doesn't disappoint.

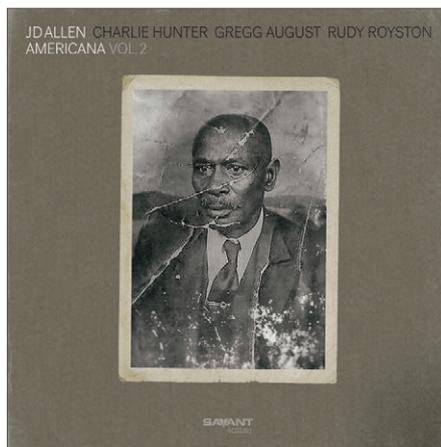
One is a reunion with guest singer Carman Lundy, with whom he first recorded in 1986. The piece is "Our Love Remains." It's not a well-known song. There have only been two recordings, both by Watson. The first was in 1986 as a nine-minute instrumental. Some regard it as his singular high-mark. Here it becomes an intimate duet with Lundy. This version finds his sound slightly harder and more astringent. But the mood is unchanged, and the tension between Watson and Lundy is effectively sung. Another worthwhile stop is "Red Bank Heist," a sticky blues coated with honey.

—John McDonough

**Back Home In Kansas City:** Back Home In Kansas City; Red Bank Heist; Our Love Remains; Bon Voyage; The Star In The East; Mind Wine; Celestial; Dear Lord; Side Steps; I'm Glad There Is You; Blues For Alto. (65:55)

**Personnel:** Bobby Watson, alto saxophone; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Curtis Lundy, bass; Victor Jones, drums; Carman Lundy, vocal.

**Ordering info:** [smokesessionsrecords.bandcamp.com](https://smokesessionsrecords.bandcamp.com)



of the record — "Jackie And Johnny," "Mickey And Mallory" and "A Mouthful Of Forever's" — the sound feels sparse, too textural in its cymbal washes and lacking the dialogue of Hunter's guitar with Allen's saxophone.

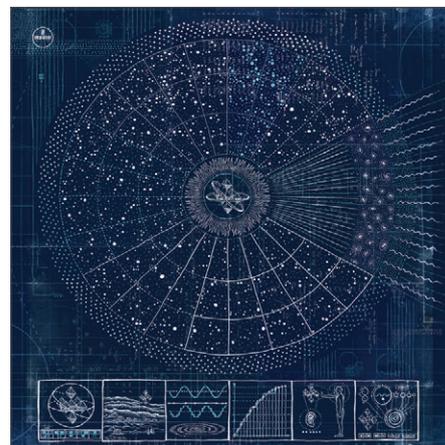
Overall, though, *Americana Vol. 2* is a triumph, allowing Allen's gorgeous, full-bodied tone to speak to us over an expanded and newly expressive format.

—Ammar Kalia

**Americana Vol. 2:** Up South; This World Is A Mean World; The Werk Song; Hammer And Hoe; You Don't Know Me; Jackie and Johnny; Mickey And Mallory; A Mouthful Of Forever's; The Battle Of Blair Mountain; Irene (Mother); Down South. (48:04)

**Personnel:** JD Allen, tenor saxophone; Charlie Hunter, guitar; Gregg August, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](https://jazzdepot.com)



## The Comet Is Coming *Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam*

IMPULSE!

★★★★★

The Comet Is Coming has never professed to be jazz trio. Its propensity for instrumental improvisation, however, positions the trio in a jazz adjacent realm, where other genres percolate and mutate into something that's contemporary, if not futuristic. Since emerging onto the improv music scene, The Comet Is Coming has relied as much on British dance underground music such as grime, garage, drum-n-bass and ska as it has the sonic explorations associated with 1960s free-jazz and spiritual jazz movements and dub reggae.

Those components commingle and explode into some transportive sonic universes again on *Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam*. The album sounds like a soundtrack for some retro-futuristic immersive meta-gaming platform designed by Ridley Scott. Dan Leavers (a.k.a. Danalogue) creates wondrous electro-evocative textures and kaleidoscopic harmonic colors with his array of keyboards, while Max Hallett (a.k.a. Betamax) propels the music with unrelenting kinetic energy via ebullient ska-informed rhythms, skittering drum-n-bass-laced patterns or pulverizing grimy beats.

Shabaka Hutchings functions as the focal point with his astringent tenor saxophone tone and jagged-edged riffs, which often morph into multiphonic shrieks and searing wails. If delving into immersive gaming is an ideal analogy for listening to *Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam*, Hutchings amounts to being the perfect avatar exploring new foreboding worlds with all their beauty and imperilment.

—John Murph

**Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam:** Code, Technicolour, Lucid Dreamer, Tokyo Nights, Pyramids, Frequency Of Feeling Expansion, Angel Of Darkness, Aftermath, Atomic Wave Dance, The Hammer, Mystic. (43:32)

**Personnel:** Danalogue, synthesizers, keyboards, field recordings; Betamax, drums, percussion, synthesizers; King Shabaka, tenor saxophone.

**Ordering info:** [impulserecords.com](https://impulserecords.com)

# The Hot Box

Critics	James Hale	John McDonough	Ammar Kalia	John Murph
<b>Keith Jarrett</b> <i>Bordeaux Concert</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½
<b>Bobby Watson</b> <i>Back Home In Kansas City</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½
<b>JD Allen</b> <i>Americana Vol. 2</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½
<b>The Comet Is Coming</b> <i>Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam</i>	★★★	★	★★★	★★★

## Critics' Comments

### Keith Jarrett, *Bordeaux Concert*

Because Jarrett's improvs have numbers, not names, he denies them the recognition of identity — like Holly Golightly's no-name cat. But each of these 13 is remarkably distinct: gothic (I), bluesy (III), politely Bachian (X). They may melt together quickly, but in the moment each displays an absorbing logic and form. —John McDonough

Jarrett reaches a pure flow state for this final solo performance in France in 2016. Developing lyrically from a tender, meditative opening into an often fractal and dazzling array of notes and unexpected choices, *Bordeaux Concert* is a master at work, playing through decades of experience. —Ammar Kalia

Astonishing spontaneous composition through unfettered improvisation and imagination at its finest. —John Murph

### Bobby Watson, *Back Home In Kansas City*

Crisp and hard swinging, Watson's tribute to KC sounds so timeless it might've been cut any time in the past six decades. That's a good thing. —James Hale

Watson is in fine form here. Sophisticated and soulful, he swings effortlessly while providing a dynamism that often pushes his horn to squeak and squeal under pressure. Ample support is provided by his backing quartet, bolstering a standout vocal from Carmen Lundy on "Our Love Remains." —Ammar Kalia

The veteran alto saxophonist and composer hits all the high watermarks on his poignant tribute to his Midwestern roots. —John Murph

### JD Allen, *Americana Vol. 2*

This is most effective when Allen and Charlie Hunter grease it up, but even the less-gritty tunes keep this simmering like the stew of soulful ideas it is. —James Hale

Allen's compositions consist mostly of simple ostinatos on which he hangs his commanding fanfares and roulades. But without chord shifts, the music seems to stand in place racing its engine. Hunter adds a nice spice and sting. —John McDonough

By tiling the blues with judicious assistance from guitarist Charlie Hunter, the tenor saxophonist has unearthed his most treasured piece of work yet. —John Murph

### The Comet Is Coming, *Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam*

As much texture as music, more gesture than composition, at points this turns so repetitive it almost seems to vanish. —James Hale

In these prickly days of identity politics, when one tribe disrespects another it can become a crisis of offense. So let's concede this pool of high-viscosity voltage our "respect" — just not our time, attention or cash. Let it remain in the caverns of London's underground. —John McDonough

The psychedelic-inflected trio project produces another epic set of soundscapes for its latest album. Danalogue provides ample synth wizardry to back Hutchings' breathless saxophone assaults, yet the overall effect is relentless in its bombast, leaving little space for softer moments of exploration. —Ammar Kalia

**ANGELICA SANCHEZ TRIO**

**SPARKLE BEINGS**

SSC 1674  
released 9/23/2022

**ANGELICA SANCHEZ** piano  
**MICHAEL FORMANEK** bass **BILLY HART** drums

"In her piano playing as well as her compositions Angelica Sanchez seeks out the lyrical heartbeat within any avant-garde storm." —The New York Times/Nate Chinen

**RUFUS REID TRIO**  
with the **SIRIUS QUARTET**

**CELEBRATION**

SSC 1676  
released 10/7/2022

**RUFUS REID** bass  
**STEVE ALLEE** piano **DUDUKA DA FONSECA** drums  
**KENNETH SALTERS** drums **SIRIUS QUARTET** strings

"Rufus Reid, one of the most magnificent jazz bassists in history." —George G. Nastos / All Music Guide

**DIERK PETERS**

**SPRING**

SSC 1670  
released 10/14/2022

**DIERK PETERS** vibraphone  
**ADAM O'FARRILL** trumpet  
**CALEB WHEELER CURTIS** alto sax  
**WALTER STINSON** bass **BUZ DONALD** drums

The pandemic of 2020 and 2021 challenged everybody. Dierk Peters looked to find new beginnings through his music. He studied and applied himself to create something better than he ever had. A proof of Peters's growth unfolds on his fantastic new *Spring*.

**DUDUKA DA FONSECA & QUARTETO UNIVERSAL**

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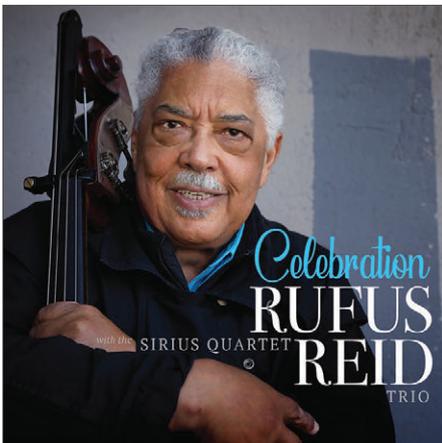
SSC 1671  
Released 10/21/2022

**DUDUKA DA FONSECA** drums  
**HELIO ALVES** piano **VINICIUS GOMES** guitars  
**GILI LOPES** bass

In Gomes, Lopes, and Alves Duduka has found kindred spirits, resulting in the first recording by the group. "YES!!!"

Sunnyside

sunnysiderecords.com



## Rufus Reid Trio/ Sirius Quartet *Celebration*

SUNNYSIDE

★★★★

Whenever an ensemble, or in this case a trio, is surrounded by strings there's always a question of balance, how they share the sound space. At the very start of *Celebration*, Rufus Reid's formidable bass provides guidance and coaxes a Far Eastern mood from the Sirius Quartet. Reid not only establishes the deep tonality of the track, where the swift, intermittent swoops of violins flutter, his spirited resolve echoes in pianist Sam

Allee's powerful solo. This give and take between Sirius and the trio is particularly engrossing on "This I Ask Of You" and "Celestial Dance." But those who prefer their jazz upbeat and punctuated with frissons of funk will love "Cedar's Blues," an obvious salute to the great pianist Cedar Walton, and while there's an ample supply of Walton in Allee's passionate foray, a tad bit of Monk slips between notes.

And speaking of funk, especially when it sparkles, their version of "You Make Me Smile" is a showcase for the trio, and drummer Duduka da Fonseca demonstrates just how exceptional he is behind the percussive arsenal. "Falling In Love" is a lovely mesh of violins and Reid's bass, and he continues his walking, talking lines right into the rhythmic heart of "One For Amos." On this track, the trio again settles into a pleasant gait, evincing the harmonic symmetry that's the beauty of an association.

The overall creativity of Reid's trio and The Sirius Quartet is a fusion of talented musicians with a mutual understanding of what it takes to give Reid a special occasion. —Herb Boyd

**Celebration:** Celebration; Cedar's Blues; This I Ask Of You; It's Time To Shout It Out; Celestial Dance; Transcape; Tippin'; You Make Me Smile; Falling In Love; One For Amos; The Rise Of The Row. (61:90)

**Personnel:** Rufus Reid, bass; Sam Allee, piano; Duduka da Fonseca, drums (2-10); drums Kenneth Salters (1, 11); Fung Chern Hwei, violin; Gregor Huebner, violin; Ron Lawrence, viola; Jeremy Harmon, cello.

Ordering info: [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)

## Enrico Rava/Fred Hersch *The Song Is You*

ECM

★★★★

This isn't perhaps the most obvious musical partnerships, but the concerts the duo gave before recording suggested a closeness and commonality of vision that few expected. The delights it brings are, of course, precisely from the moments when the two flavors — Italian bitters, American sweetness — come together and then find the opposite characteristic in the other player as well. Hersch's melancholy romanticism often touches on quite dark sonorities and dissonances, while Rava, who can seem a troubled, even tortured soul, has the ability, which he shared with the late Tomasz Stańko, to invest a single note with acres of experience, travel and emotion.

The title track is lovingly done, but appears to arise spontaneously out of just a few piano trills and some warm-up sounds on the flugelhorn. Did they agree on it in advance, or happen across it in real time? It doesn't matter in the least, but the fact that the question is asked is a good indication of how relaxed but also how note-perfect the record is. Even the "Improvisation," which we have to accept is just that, seems to have a



logical direction and purpose.

These are ideal duo partners, not because they have a lifetime of experience in common, congruent resumes and shared credits, nor because they take a blandly conversational approach to the music (one of the duller of all premises for improvisation), but because they are content to work seemingly parallel paths and see where they converge. There are few things more exciting and satisfying in jazz than that. —Brian Morton

**The Song Is You:** Retrato em Branco e Preto; Improvisation; I'm Getting Sentimental Over You; The Song Is You; Child's Song; The Trial; Misterioso; Round Midnight. (56:30)

**Personnel:** Enrico Rava, flugelhorn; Fred Hersch, piano.

Ordering info: [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)



## Tom Harrell *Oak Tree*

HIGHNOTE

★★★★

Another exemplary and original musical hour from trumpeter Tom Harrell, who has recorded more than 30 albums over 50 years. Here he revels in jazz's upbeat-even-when-blues-based tradition, offers a ska tune as well as bright post-hop, and ventures into collective rubato improvisation. Somehow it holds together as a continuous listening experience.

Recording during pandemic shutdowns with longtime accompanists Ugonna Okegwo and Adam Cruz, and (for the first time) sparkling pianist Luis Perdomo, Harrell, at 80, proves sophistication is eternally accessible, and creativity within familiar forms can be ever fresh. Melodic lyricism is his forte, delivered typically in concise, finely tuned, often intricate figures and phrases that have a coolness but aching depth. The brassman seems pleased to set up flowing grooves and accomplish thoughtful solos (he also overdubs second parts a couple of times), leading always to satisfying ends. The tracks are mostly medium-tempo, but the rhythm team is active, never rote. Indeed, all the performances on *Oak Tree* are sturdy and scrupulously crafted, notwithstanding a surface naturalness.

Not that the quartet's contentment and secure power is smug. Sincerity and commitment reign throughout the entire program, like the humility of the character "Zatoichi," the blind monk of Japanese cinema, enabled by his devastating swordsmanship. The band is simply a team, laying out "Improv" and other of Harrell's tunes in manners making it clear they're ripe for adoption by other players, for other bands. Tom Harrell's quartet is a fine model. —Howard Mandel

**Oak Tree:** Evoorg; Improv; Fivin'; Zatoichi; Oak Tree; Tribute; Sun Up; Improv; Shadows; Archaeopteryx; Robot Etude; Love Tide. (58:46)

**Personnel:** Tom Harrell, trumpet (1-3, 5-7, 9-11), flugelhorn (4, 5, 8); Luis Perdomo piano, Fender Rhodes (2, 4, 6); Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Adam Cruz, drums.

Ordering info: [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)



## Terri Lyne Carrington New Standards Vol. 1

CANDID

★★★★½

The Grammy-winning drummer-composer-producer, as well as founder and artistic director of the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice, oversees a program of all women composers on this ambitious outing. Backed by a flexible crew of pianist Kris Davis, guitarist Matthew Stevens, trumpeter Nicholas Payton

and bassist Linda May Han Oh, and featuring a variety of guests, including Ravi Coltrane, Julian Lage and Ambrose Akinmusire, Terri Lyne Carrington presides over a stylistically diverse collection of tunes with crackling results.

From Sara Cassey's modernist, swinging "Wind Flower," with spirited solos from flutist Elena Pinderhughes, trumpeter Payton and guitarist Lage, to the buoyant R&B/pop groove of Gretchen Parlato's "Circling," sung with Stevie Wonder-esque elan by Michael Mayo, to

Shamie Royston's affecting, African-influenced "Uplifted Hearts," Carrington deftly guides the proceedings with a firm but unobtrusive hand. Her alluring brushwork gently underscores Eliane Elias' romantic ballad "Moments," sung radiantly by Dianne Reeves, and she cuts the intricate stop-time cadence of Patricia Perez's "Continental Cliff" with aplomb while swinging in the loose, interactive fashion of her role model Tony Williams behind extended solos from Payton and Davis.

Other highlights include a stirring rendition of Abbey Lincoln's sage-like "Throw It Away" (sung beautifully by Melanie Charles), a moving rendition of Carla Bley's serene "Lawns" (sung with transcendent soul and grace by Samara Joy) and Marilyn Crispell's adventurous "Rounds," a frisky bit of group exploration by pianist Davis, trumpeter Akinmusire, bassist Oh and the leader.

—Bill Milkowski

**New Standards Vol. 1:** Wind Flower; Circling; Uplifted Heart; Moments; Continental Cliff; Throw It Away; Respected Destroyer; Two Hearts (Lawns); Unchanged; Ima; Rounds. (59:53)

**Personnel:** Terri Lyne Carrington, drums, percussion; Kris Davis, piano; Linda May Han Oh, bass; Nicholas Payton, trumpet; Matthew Stevens, guitar; Ambrose Akinmusire, trumpet (11); Melanie Charles, vocal (6); Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone (3, 4, 7, 8); Val Jeanty, electronics (3); Samara Joy, vocal (8); Julian Lage, guitar (1, 2, 10); Michael Mayo, vocal (2); Elena Pinderhughes, flute (1, 3, 7); Dianne Reeves, voice (4); Negah Santos, percussion (2, 3, 6, 10); Somi, vocal (6); Milena Casado Fauquet, flugelhorn (5, 8, 10); Anabel Gil Diaz, flute (5, 8, 10); Veronica Leahy, bass clarinet (5, 8, 10); Shamrock Oppong, spoken word (3).

**Ordering info:** [candidrecords.com](http://candidrecords.com)

South African-born, Jerusalem-based **YOSEF GUTMAN LEVITT** releases his first trio recording, featuring a warm, singing, bell-like high-register sound of his own, with a focus on simple, direct, endlessly expressive melodies.

*J*

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# Good Things Come in 3s

The piano-bass-drums trio has been a major part of jazz ever since pianist Jess Stacy in 1935 became the first to record in that format, cutting two songs with bassist Israel Crosby and drummer Gene Krupa. Three of the five releases covered in this column feature that instrumentation.

Dodo Marmarosa (1925–2002) was one of the top bop pianists of the 1945–50 period before mental problems forced him into semi-retirement. While acclaimed for his playing, one does not think of Marmarosa as being a major composer; none of the songs that he wrote for his record dates ever caught on or were even published. However, pianist **Craig Davis** on *Tone Paintings* (MCG Jazz, 50:50 ★★★★★½), with the notable assistance of bassist John Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton, successfully revives 10 of Marmarosa's obscure songs while contributing his own ballad "A Ditty For Dodo." Davis, who like the older pianist is from Pittsburgh and toured with the Artie Shaw Orchestra (a ghost version in which he played some parts originally written for Marmarosa), has a complementary boppish style and displays obvious affection for the material, much of which he had to transcribe.

Ordering info: [manchesterbidwell.org/mcg-jazz](http://manchesterbidwell.org/mcg-jazz)

Pianist **Cliff Korman** has long had an affinity toward Brazilian jazz, creating the Brazilian Jazz Ensemble at the Manhattan School of Music back in the late 1970s and producing Brazilian-based albums for the Chesky label. Despite that, one should not expect the digital-only release *Brasilified* (Tiger Turn; 69:58 ★★★★★) to be a set of bossa novas for the music is less Brazilian than it is post-bop jazz despite its sources. Joined by bassist Augusto Mattoso and drummer Rafael Barata, Korman digs into such pieces as clarinetist Paulo Moura's "Guadeloupe" (which borders on avant-garde jazz and is heard twice), a soul-jazz version of Milton Nascimento's "Viola Violar," a harmonically modernized "Triste," the group's high-powered rendition of "Speak No Evil" (one of two songs with guest altoist Paulo Levi), a few melancholy ballads and the joyful title cut. Ignore the *Brasilified* name and simply enjoy the high-quality trio explorations.

Ordering info: [cliffkorman.com](http://cliffkorman.com)

Veteran pianist **Matthew Fries** displays his own harmonically rich voicings during eight of his originals on *Lost Time* (Xcappa; 55:42 ★★★★★), a 2021 recording with bassist John Hébert and drummer Keith Hall. While he does not introduce any melodies that will stick in one's mind, Fries explores a variety of moods on his modern mainstream set, including an energetic jazz waltz ("The



John Clayton (left), Craig Davis and Jeff Hamilton

Fog"), the dreamlike "Insomnia" and a surprisingly cheerful and swinging "Quarantine." He dedicates "Heroes" to Chick Corea, dedicates a heartfelt "Lost Time" to his late mother, leaves a generous amount of solo space for Hébert (who is outstanding throughout) and intuitively interacts with his sidemen in a manner reminiscent (but not derivative) of Bill Evans.

Ordering info: [xcappa.com](http://xcappa.com)

Departing from the piano-bass-drums format, **Trio Xolo's** *In Flower In Song* (577 Records; 43:07 ★★★★★) features bassist Zachary Swanson, tenor-saxophonist Derrick Michaels and drummer Dalius Naujo performing very freely on nine of the bassist's originals. While this instrumentation immediately reminds one of Sonny Rollins, Michaels' large sound and free-flowing style is closer to that of Albert Ayler, with Swanson's assertive playing and Naujo's constant musical comments providing plenty of supportive fire. There are quieter moments and a fair amount of mood variation but the most memorable moments are when the three musicians cut loose without restraint and rely entirely on their spontaneous instincts.

Ordering info: [577records.com](http://577records.com)

**Reverso** is a different type of trio. Consisting of trombonist Ryan Keberle, pianist Frank Voeste and cellist Vincent Courtois, the musicians' main goal is to blend together jazz with the impressionism of French classical composers. On *Harmonic Alchemy* (Outnote; 56:45 ★★★★★½), Reverso includes many references to the music of Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924). All three members of the group contribute compositions and the improvised sections in the music are logical outgrowths of the themes. The first few selections are mostly pretty somber, but things get more interesting with a pair of heated performances ("Into Me You See" and "Léon") and the haunting melodies of "Florice" and "Courbes." **DB**

Ordering info: [outhere-music.com](http://outhere-music.com)



DAVE DOUGLAS QUINTET  
SONGS OF ASCENT  
Book 1 – Degrees

## Dave Douglas Quintet *Songs Of Ascent* Books 1 & 2 GREENLEAF

★★★★½

Prolific trumpeter Dave Douglas reconvenes one of his key quintets to present his Psalms-inspired *Songs Of Ascent* in two volumes of eight tracks apiece. The first, *Degrees*, is available through conventional channels. The second, *Steps*, is only available to listeners with a Greenleaf Music membership that gives them access to otherwise unavailable material.

All tracks were recorded remotely. All sound organic and natural.

While each "book" stands on its own, the second ends better: "Lift Up Your Hands," splashy and stately, rounds out the whole project more richly than "Mouths Of Joy" capped the first.

The music is largely captivating, alternating tunes that begin with unison lines featuring Douglas and multi-reedist Jon Irabagon and more group-oriented, leisurely efforts.

"Never Let Me Go," the first track, reaffirms the virtuosity and muscularity of a band Douglas first led 10 years ago. The other memorable cuts on the first disc are "Lift Up My Eyes," "Enthroned" and "Mouths Full Of Joy."

"Lift Up" starts with ascending scales and showcases Irabagon, a saxman of penetrating conception. Sparked by Douglas' dry trumpet, it toggles between abstraction and lyricism. In the elegiac "Enthroned," Douglas and Irabagon turn in fine solos, but pianist Matt Mitchell's is the most dramatic. "Mouths Full Of Joy" features Douglas at his most assertive.

The one dud on *Steps* is "Let Your Ears Be Attentive." It's prickly and showy.

—Carlo Wolff

**Songs Of Ascent Book 1—Degrees:** Never Let Me Go; Deceitful Tongues; Lift Up My Eyes; Peace Within Your Walls; Enthroned; A Fowler's Snare; Scepter; Mouth Full Of Joy. (44:06)

**Songs Of Ascent Book 2—Steps:** Quiver; Olive Shoots; Grass On The Roof; Let Your Ears Be Attentive; A Weaned Child; Make A Horn Grow; Dwelling Of Brothers; Lift Up Your Hands. (45:20)

**Personnel:** Dave Douglas, trumpet; Jon Irabagon, tenor and soprano saxophone, clarinet; Matt Mitchell, piano; Linda May Han Oh, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

Ordering info: [greenleafmusic.com](http://greenleafmusic.com)



## Esbjörn Svensson

*HOME.S.*

ACT

★★★★

We grieve for the loss of those we know, for the inability to connect with them ever again, nor they with us. So, imagine what it must have felt like for Eva Svensson to discover, 10 years after her husband's premature death in 2008, a recording of solo piano pieces he recorded just weeks before that fateful tragedy.

"When the solo piano recordings were found at our home, it felt like getting a message smuggled over the border," she said. Death

is that uncrossable boundary between our lives and whatever follows, yet Esbjörn Svensson's parting gift to his loved ones and to lovers of his music is this encore performance from beyond the veil, in a touching requiem.

This recording also now stands as the only documented performance of Svensson alone at the piano, removed from his longtime companions in the acclaimed trio E.S.T., the first European band to grace the cover of *DownBeat*. His playing here is of the same essence as the trio: introspective clarity, moments of incandescent velocity, a spacious mystique — only now the pianist is free to move in a rhythm all his own.

The specter of Keith Jarrett hovers not far from Svensson's core of inspiration, and à la Jarrett, these pieces seem to be wholly conceived in the moment. Yet this music sounds unequivocally personal to Svensson, and poignantly culminating — as if somehow one can know upon hearing that this is perhaps the last thing he ever played.

It's a fitting coda to a musician's life well lived, to be cherished one more time.

—Gary Fukushima

**HOME.S.:** Alpha; Beta; Gamma; Delta; Epsilon; Zeta; Eta; Theta; Iota. (36:32)

**Personnel:** Esbjörn Svensson, piano.

**Ordering info:** [actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

## Taurey Butler

*One Of The Others*

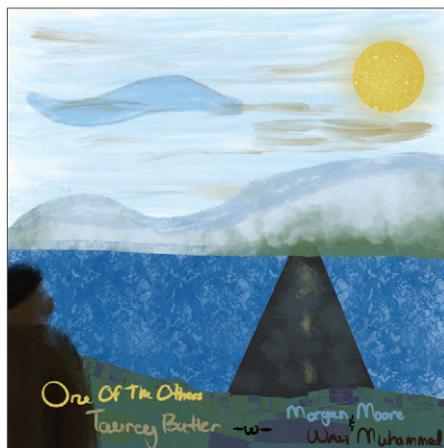
JUSTIN TIME

★★★★½

Pianist Taurey Butler's trio of bassist Morgan Moore and drummer Wali Muhammad aren't just swingin' on *One Of The Others*, they're swangin'. There is both stank and funk on that there thang. Butler's originals and arrangements of standards honor the swing approach of the genre as a purist while still feeling entirely contemporary.

The album's title track opens things up with a pure swingin' tune that sounds so rooted in tradition it feels like it's been around for decades. Butler, Moore and Muhammad seem to have inhabited this arrangement long ago and are just as delighted to bring it to us this time around. "Artis' Truth" is a pure ballad that could stand the test of time if it makes all the proper rounds.

Everyone gets their moment to shine on that old chestnut "Smile," with Moore's particularly moving bass solo, though one wishes Muhammad had a few more bars on his solo — it leaves one really wanting more, but it's rather nice to have one's appetite whet so well. Their take on "What Is This Thing Called Love" finds the long way around the tune and seems to find



its bearings mid-air to barrel-roll to even more dizzying heights.

So much of *One Of The Others* feels familiar without being rote. It's the piano-bass-drums trio album that could have arrived on the scene at any point in jazz history and still feels fresh and new.

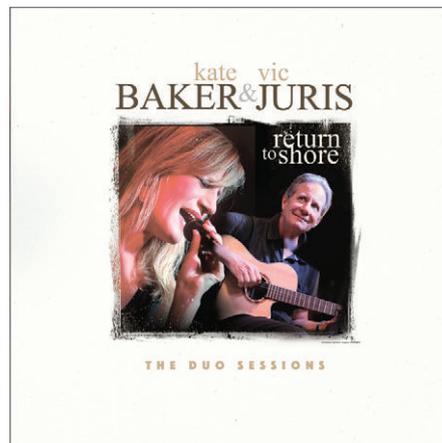
Thankfully, Taurey Butler brought it to our present time.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

**One Of The Others:** One Of The Others; Artis' Truth; Swappin' Lies; On The Natch; Smile; Nut Fog; Sisyphian Task; What Is This Thing Called Love; Can't Buy Me Love; Laini's Love; I Can Only Be Me. (56:39)

**Personnel:** Taurey Butler, piano; Morgan Moore, bass; Wali Muhammad, drums.

**Ordering info:** [justin-time.com](http://justin-time.com)



## Kate Baker & Vic Juris

*Return To Shore: The Duo Sessions*

STRIKEZONE

★★★★½

Knowing that singer Kate Baker's debut album was also guitarist Vic Juris' last makes *The Duo Sessions* particularly poignant. Given the obvious chemistry the married couple once shared on the bandstand, tunes like Brian Wilson's "God Only Knows," "I've Grown Accustomed to His Face" and Alec Wilder's "Blackberry Winter" now take on profoundly deeper meaning here, turning them into heart-wrenching odes to a lost love.

Other gems on this intimate recording produced by guitarist and longtime friend Dave Stryker include an energized version of Joni Mitchell's "Black Crow" that has Juris strumming furiously on acoustic guitar, the waltz-time title track, which has Vic overdubbing tight unisons with Kate's scatting lines, a minor key "Moonscape" (title track of Juris' 1997 SteepleChase album, which his wife wrote new lyrics for) and a stirring take on Mitchell's "Both Sides Now."

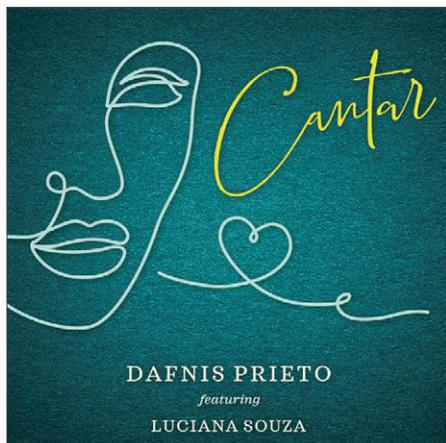
That Juris, who died of cancer on Dec. 31, 2019, was an all-world guitarist is a long-ago established fact. His 20-year tenure in Dave Liebman's band, along with 18 albums as a leader for the SteepleChase, firmly cemented his position as a guitarist's guitarist whose sheer command of the fretboard was undeniable. He holds back none of his vaunted facility here — playing rich fingerstyle chord melodies, intricate contrapuntal patterns and crisp arpeggios while picking lyrical single note lines and tapping out bell-like false harmonics — but it's always in service of the tunes, his wife's gorgeous voice and her clearly articulated lyrics.

—Bill Milkowski

**Return To Shore—The Duo Sessions:** God Only Knows; Return To Shore; I've Grown Accustomed To His Face; Black Crow; The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress; Moonscape; Madalena; Both Sides Now; Blackberry Winter; Are You Kind. (54:30)

**Personnel:** Kate Baker, vocals; Vic Juris, acoustic and electric guitars; Arta Jakobson, background vocals. (10)

**Ordering info:** [katebakervicjuris.bandcamp.com](http://katebakervicjuris.bandcamp.com)



**Dafnis Prieto featuring  
Luciana Souza**  
*Cantar*  
DAFNISON  
★★★★

In this artful collaboration, Cuban-born drummer Dafnis Prieto gifts us with honest lyrical flourishes that are clearly meant to help all feel the love.

So ably expressed in the vocals of Luciana Souza, it is Prieto as a composer and lyricist

**Sun Ra Arkestra**  
*Living Sky*  
OMNI SOUND  
★★★★½

“Music that is accessible and healing in the COVID era” — that’s what Omni Sound requested when they commissioned Sun Ra Arkestra to record *Living Sky*. Layered with sumptuous melodies, richly textured instrumentation and spiritual introspection, this newest recording from the legendary Afrofuturist big band beckons us to envision new worlds and possibilities. This isn’t new territory for the band, though. They have been making music to inspire visionary perspectives since the mid-’50s. On this latest album, they explore astral jazz, bebop, big band swing and blues rhythms to great effect.

There’s a sense of whimsy in how the band crosses genres to reinvent classics like Chopin’s “Prelude In A Major” and the Disney song “When You Wish Upon A Star.” Their renditions of these familiar standards serve as bookends, providing a tinge of nostalgia to complement the spiritual motifs, bluesy grooves and big band vibes on the rest of the album.

Originally recorded in 1955 with the Arkestra’s long-time lead vocalist June Tyson, “Somebody Else’s Idea” appears on *Living Sky* as an instrumental rendition. Without her fiery, throaty vocals, the song instead builds heat through measured horn trills and lush per-

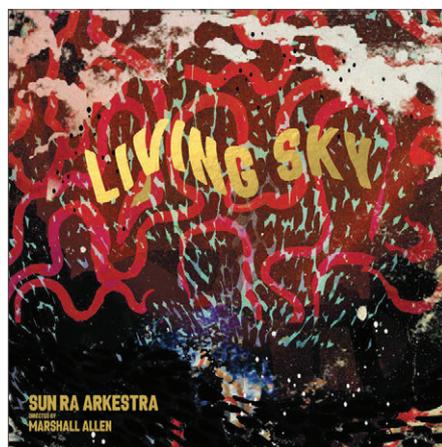
who creates the musical foundation for something transformative. A great example can be gleaned from “Sueño de Amor,” where Souza sings Prieto’s words (translated into English): “It rains, even when I don’t pretend/ To see tears in your eyes/ I laugh and an intense void/ Takes over me/ And I feel you by my side/ Hugging each other at the eden of this song/ I didn’t want to believe, but you came, to me.”

These are words buoyed by the sound, by the occasional improvisations and steady rhythm section of Peter Apfelbaum, Martin Bejerano and Matt Brewer. These are words made real through sound, for, as Prieto writes in the liner notes, there is a “precious” entanglement and “connection” between the melodic and the poetic.

It is not often that these two worlds come together seamlessly. With *Cantar*, we experience the beauty of “cheerfulness, intimacy and imagination.” But at the center is also a subtle experiment with form. —Joshua Myers

**Cantar:** Guajira en Sol; When I Miss You; Houve Um Tempo; Sueño de Amor; To The Concert; Brisa; Amanhecer Contigo; Unknown Man; The Muse; Guajira en Lu. (48:55)  
**Personnel:** Dafnis Prieto, drums, percussion, vocals; Luciana Souza, vocals, percussion; Peter Apfelbaum, woodwinds, melodica, percussion, keys; Martin Bejerano, piano; Matt Brewer, acoustic and electric bass.

Ordering info: [dafnisonmusic.com](http://dafnisonmusic.com)



cussions that culminate in simmering sheets of sound. “Day Of The Living Sky” offers a reprieve with its sparse and ethereal melody, led by bandleader Marshall Allen’s meandering flurries on kora and Tara Middleton’s delicate trills on flute. As their first recording since the pandemic, it strikes a delicate balance between mourning for the past and yearning for a greater yet still unknown future. —Ivana Ng

**Living Sky:** Chopin; Somebody Else’s Idea; Day Of The Living Sky; Marshall’s Groove; Night Of The Living Sky; Firefly; Wish Upon A Star. (59:25)  
**Personnel:** Marshall Allen, alto saxophone, kora, EVI; Knoel Scott, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone; Nasir P. Dickerson, tenor saxophone; Chris Hemingway, tenor saxophone; Michael Ray, Cecil Brooks, trumpet; Vincent Chancey, french horn; Adriene G. Davis, trombone; Farid Barron, piano; Dave Hoteb, guitar; Tyler Mitchell, bass; Wayne Anthony Smith Jr., drums; Ron McBee, Jorge Silva, Elson Nascimento, percussion; Tara Middleton, violin, flute; Gwen Laster, violin; Melanie Dyer, viola; Kash Killion, cello, sarangi.

Ordering info: [omnisoundlabel.bandcamp.com](http://omnisoundlabel.bandcamp.com)



**Michael Formanek  
Quartet**  
*Other Zones*  
CIRCULAR FILE  
★★★★

Free improvisation, in the hands of this group, which has released two prior albums from the same recording sessions that resulted in *Other Zones*, doesn’t negate responsibility to make coherent, accessible and attractive music. Rather, it allows these four to use their considerable knowledge to go where they like without constraint and venture further, fearlessly.

So, there’s wonderful productive spontaneity in these tracks, imaginative variety and flow. Supremely balanced, each musician contributes equally while exploiting the shifting intergroup relationships. Michael Formanek and drummer Gerald Cleaver play in happily syncopated synchronization, but the bassist and leader is also apt to charge forward with a pizz figure of clarity, speed and decisiveness, changing everything. Pianist Craig Taborn is unflinchingly graceful, deft and colorful, his electronics — including detuning and perhaps piano preparations — an enhancement. Saxophonist Tim Berne is masterful, darting everywhere, squalling, squealing, extending vocabulary like the elders whose heir he’s become — Julius Hemphill, for one — from his own perspective. Typically steely, when Berne’s moved to roar, as in “Skipping Stones” and “Metal Drones,” it’s a brilliant moment, fully earned.

Each selection is novel-like, packed with dense, detailed, narrative, developed in compelling ways. The players share the not-so-common knowledge that when they arrive at a moment of collaborative communion, they can stay with it before employing subtle adjustments evolving into something different.

—Howard Mandel

**Other Zones:** Skipping Stones; Dying Phones; Solid Bones; Vibrant Tones; Metal Drones; Porcelain Thrones; Evil Clones; Speaker Cones; Vast Unknowns. (72:00)  
**Personnel:** Michael Formanek, bass, Tim Berne, alto saxophone, Craig Taborn, piano and electronics, Gerald Cleaver, drums.

Ordering info: [circularfilerecords.bandcamp.com](http://circularfilerecords.bandcamp.com)



**Lake Street Dive**  
*Fun Machine: The Sequel*

FANTASY  
★★★★½

Initially, Lake Street Dive's *Fun Machine: The Sequel* seems largely separate from the band's canon of original music. However, the group's musical growth since this EP's predecessor

echoes through the stylistic diversity of the artists and styles compiled for this release: Burt Bacharach, The Pointer Sisters, Carole King, Bonnie Raitt, The Cranberries, Shania Twain and Dionne Warwick.

Listeners can bask in Lake Street Dive's jazz and soul foundations, heard in the smooth and warm Rhodes stomping out the hook to Shania Twain's "You're Still The One." Akie Bermis

demonstrates his lead vocal chops and personal appreciation for the iconic ballad with a cheerful tone, flexible phrasing of the vocal rhythms and punctuating enunciation that complements the staccato-style delivery of the melody. Rachel Price infuses her life experience into Carole King's "So Far Away" -- not looking to shock with unusual instrumentation as much as impart a different emotional vantage point, which gives the song all the uniqueness it needs.

Meanwhile, there's no escaping the hints of time-tied musicality found in the '90s-style crystalline chord progressions of The Cranberries' "Linger" and Burt Bacharach's sophisticated meter-swaps mixed with modest melodic chromaticism in "Anyone Who Had A Heart."

All in all, Lake Street Dive do what they do best here: Blend sounds, styles and personal artistry with finesse. The group isn't striving to imitate but rather make a record that's shaped as much by its established musical personality as by the sincere joy each member brings to the music as fans.

—Kira Grunenber

**Fun Machine—The Sequel:** Automatic; Anyone Who Had A Heart; You're Still The One; So Far Away; Nick Of Time; Linger. (23:21)  
**Personnel:** Rachael Price, lead vocals; Akie Bermis, keyboards, background vocals, lead vocals (3); Michael Calabrese, drums, percussion, background vocals; James Cornelison, guitars, background vocals; Bridget Kearney, bass, background vocals.

**Ordering info:** [fantasyrecordings.com](http://fantasyrecordings.com)

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The Frankfurt Radio Big Band recorded a concerto by Jim McNeely based on Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring*.

## Innovative Organizations of Sound & People

From Whiteman to Henderson, Ellington, Kenton, Fuller, Russell, Evans, Mingus, Thad Jones, Quincy Jones, Nestico, Brookmeyer, Bley, Schneider and onward, composers and arrangers have advanced jazz through innovative organizations of sound and people. A large ensemble is always a significant event, an opportunity for musicians to come together in a shared celebration of sonic art with their communities. It's still happening today, as these albums demonstrate.

Well-traveled lead trumpeter **Bijon Watson** teamed up with 30-year-old pianist/arranger extraordinaire **Steven Feifke** to lead an impressive ensemble in their self-titled debut, **Generation Gap Orchestra (Cellar; 57:15 ★★★★★)**, a meeting of talented musicians from younger to older and East to West, featuring Watson on lead, Kurt Elling, Alexa Tarantino, Sean Jones and John Fedchock among others. Feifke's colorful orchestration reveals a studious respect for traditional big band writing while generating a myriad of twists and turns in every arrangement. Clever treatments of jazz stalwarts like Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge" and Horace Silver's "Nica's Dream" pair with out-of-the-box surprises like Hugh Masakela's "Dollar's Moods" and "Remember Me" from the Pixar film *Coco*.

Ordering info: [cellarlive.com](http://cellarlive.com)

Trumpeter **Steven Bernstein's** band sounds bigger than the sum of the eight pieces of his seasoned New York cadre, the Millennial Territory Orchestra. Their new album, **Popular Culture (Community Music, Vol. 4) (Royal Potato Family; 28:44 ★★★★★)**, flows from sources that draw heavily on the smaller ensembles of Cotton Club-era Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus. There was an earthiness to both those composers that translates well to

Bernstein's chosen source material: Eddie Harris, the Grateful Dead, the Beatles and Bessie Smith, artists who connected with the greater public at large. Bernstein also includes a tune apiece from Ellington and Mingus, the latter's "Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love" arranged as if Mingus' muse himself might have given it a go. The writing is exquisite, with just the right mix of polish and irreverence.

Ordering info: [royalpotatofamily.com](http://royalpotatofamily.com)

Drummer **Steve Gadd** has led his own group, The Gadd Band, for decades now, with rotating personnel. He recently recalled one of his earlier iterations, featuring bassist Eddie Gomez and baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber, to record a set of funky covers and Gadd originals with the WDR Big Band. Former WDR Musical Director Michael Abene was tasked with the arrangements for their collaboration, **Center Stage (Leopard; 56:17 ★★★★★)**. The Grammy-winning arranger and producer made the decision to curtail his extensive compositional largess, saying, "Knowing the music and knowing the guys ... you got to figure out a way to stay out of the way." He succeeded in that more than was necessary, for the ensemble work is limited to mostly fanfare-type intros and codas, with simple interludes that loop continuously between the many solos, essentially reducing the multifaceted Cologne-based jazz orchestra to a giant backing horn section. Still, there is plenty of power and authority in those horn hits, befitting Abene's prior years as Maynard Ferguson's arranger. Gadd, Gomez and Cuber (who passed away this fall) are all in mighty form, albeit sounding somewhat restricted (despite Abene's good-faith attempt), like Batman in his versus-Superman armor-plated suit.

Ordering info: [jazz.centerstagestore.com](http://jazz.centerstagestore.com)

Free-jazz bass icon **William Parker** had a

unique approach with his large ensemble for a performance in New York back in 2002. He composed a score and individual parts, yet he made reading the notes completely optional for the players. The results, documented in the live album **Universal Tonality (Centering/AUM Fidelity; 1:50:03 ★★★★★)**, are intriguing, sometimes overextended and often chaotic, though one can discover an intense beauty amid the tumult. The 17-piece orchestra features many prominent creative improvisers, including trombonist Grachan Moncur III, violinist Billy Bang, Miya Masaoko on koto and drummer Gerald Cleaver, while Leena Conquest provides the narrative with her richly voiced interpretations of Parker's prose.

Ordering info: [aumfidelity.com](http://aumfidelity.com)

The aforementioned Steven Feifke studied his craft under **Jim McNeely**, and we can see how the teacher is truly the master here. **Rituals (Double Moon; 1:08:32 ★★★★★)** is the realization of McNeely's vision for Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite Of Spring)* through the lens of his chosen machination, a concerto for the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, with saxophonist Chris Potter as the soloist. A jazz version has been attempted many times before, but none as encapsulating of the complex harmonies and textures, the grandiosity and, yes — the terror — of the original. It's as if Stravinsky himself reorchestrated his magnum opus for big band, yet through McNeely it transitions undeniably to jazz, with its relentless yet grooving energy, supercharged by the band's urgent and flawless execution and Potter's characteristically incandescent improvising. Surely this is what Gunther Schuller had in mind when he espoused a "third stream" of music that was neither classical nor jazz. **DB**

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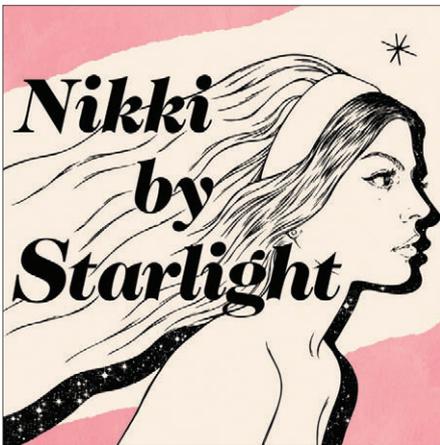
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**Nikki Yanofsky**  
*Nikki By Starlight*

MNRK  
★★★★½

Canadian singer Nikki Yanofsky has been making headlines since 2006, when she was 12 and became the youngest singer to ever headline the Montreal International Jazz Festival. The following year, her recording of Ella Fitzgerald's "Air Mail Special" for the Verve compilation *We All Love Ella: Celebrating The First Lady Of Song*, made her the youngest artist to ever record for the label. By the time she was 19, she'd cut several Gold and Platinum albums.

On this release, she revisits 15 standards from the Great American Songbook. A string section evokes the sound of a '50s pop album, as she sighs the opening lyrics to "I Get Along Without You Very Well." After the despondent intro, Paul Shrofel's piano and the rhythm section kicks in and the song becomes a joyful release, with Yanofsky taking on a devil-may-care attitude.

Brisk drumming and a galloping bass line bring a hint of rock 'n' roll to "I Get A Kick Out Of You." Yanofsky's bright vocal includes the often-censored cocaine lyric, then jumps into a scatted chorus that sends the tune into overdrive.

"Estate," an Italian tune popularized by Joao Gilberto's serene version, features the muted trumpet of Arturo Sandoval. The arrangement follows Gilberto's dreamy rendition, with Richard Irwin's drums adding Latin highlights to support Sandoval's solos. —j. poet

**Nikki By Starlight:** I Get Along Without You Very Well (Except Sometimes); Comes Love; Crazy He Calls Me; I Get A Kick Out Of You; Comment Allez-Vous; Stella By Starlight; They Say It's Spring; It Never Entered My Mind; C'est Si Bon; West Coast Blues; Let Me Love You; Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars (Corcovado); Estate; You Stepped Out Of A Dream; Some Other Time. (47:48)

**Personnel:** Nikki Yanofsky, vocals; Paul Shrofel, piano; Dave Watt, bass; Clinton Ryder, bass; Richard Irwin, drums; Mike Rud, guitar; Andy Dacoulis, guitar; Mohammed Abdul Al Kabhir, trombone; Dave Martin, trombone, tuba; Billy Martin, saxophone; Lex French, trumpet; Sheila Hannigan, cello; Francois Pilon, violin; Melanie Belair, violin; Ligia Paquin, viola; Greg Phillinganes, piano (3), organ (10); Arturo Sandoval, trumpet (12); Nathan East, bass (13).

Ordering info: [mnrk.com](http://mnrk.com)

**SONICA**  
*SONICA*  
OUTSIDE IN  
★★★★

Primarily a vocal album, *SONICA* takes its title from the French term for a respected female luminary. The album opens us with the Thana Alexa-penned "Doyenne," a multilayered track that samples a Sojourner Truth speech and a chorus of powerful voices of feminist resistance. *SONICA* goes on to showcase a collective of women who certainly fit that profile. Each track offers an intriguing facet of what the ensemble is capable of: Textural washes, stabs of keyboards, clever percussion and Julia Adamy's rock-solid bass lay the foundation for a tasty stew of sounds.

Drawing material from a wide range of sources, the recording is varied while remaining intentional. Their evocative rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Love's In Need Of Love," arranged by Julia Adamy, is an apt vehicle for the interplay of the group's voices, and its ever-green message feels particularly timely and rousing here.

Meanwhile, originals such as the groovy, synth-bass-studded "Come A Long Way" and the rollicking battle cry "Change It" serve as sonically lovely vehicles for socially in-tune



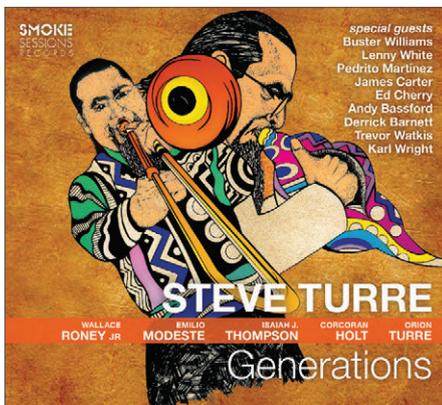
themes. "Where Ya Gonna Go" tips its proverbial hat to early Pointer Sisters records, 1940s-tinged swing, funk and vocal elasticity included. And their dreamy take on Bon Iver's "Michicant" is somehow even more tranquil than the original. This is reliant on the engineering, production and mix by Alexa, which wisely foregrounds *SONICA*'s shimmering vocal harmonies.

—Ayana Contreras

**SONICA:** Doyenne; Where Ya Gonna Go; Michicant; Come A Long Way; Love's In Need Of Love; Change It; Danny Boy. (31:21)

**Personnel:** Nicole Zuraitis, vocals, keyboards; Thana Alexa, vocals, percussion, additional keyboards; Julia Adamy, bass, synth bass; Ross Pederson (2), Dan Pugach (4), drums; Antonio Sanchez, drums, percussion, guitars (6).

Ordering info: [outsideinmusic.com](http://outsideinmusic.com)



## Steve Turre *Generations*

SMOKE SESSIONS

★★★★

If jazz is a notional century old, then it has passed through four generations by the normal means of reckoning. Steve Turre's intention here is to feature a youthful group — including his drummer-son, Orion, and Wallace Roney Jr., whose dad was a close associate — and then to team them up with figures from an older generation. The meeting of youthful energy and experience is always interesting to observe, and it can be heard in real time on these alternating cuts. When Buster Williams comes in for Corcoran Holt on “Blue Smoke,”

## Samara Joy *Linger Awhile*

VERVE

★★★★

Samara Joy is a charmer. She's got a voice that hits in the middle register well and she wields it knowingly, paying homage to the jazz songbook and owning the moment all the same. With this band, particularly guitarist Pasquale Grasso, Samara Joy has all the tools she needs to make the kind of Verve album that feels respectfully timeless.

Joy seems to inhabit these songs, finding all the charm and meaning in these standards and bringing them to some contemporary sense. These could be in the choices, filled with such meaty lyrics to wrap one's mouth around that it's just a joy to hear her say them. The detailed descriptions of Elisse Boyd and Murray Grand's “Guess Who I Saw Today” or the corners one must turn throughout Fats Navarro's “Nostalgia” (where Joy adds her own lyrics) are a delight at which to marvel.

The core group of pianist Ben Paterson, bassist David Wong and drummer Kenny Washington provide crucial but unflashy support, so adept at setting the mood they don't often break out for moments of their own. This isn't *Linger Awhile's* goal. This isn't

for instance, there is a change in the room. It isn't self-evidently better. You might find the younger man's deft playing more to your taste, but Williams knows the old songs in a different way and brings that knowledge to every line and phrase he plays.

Inevitably, a record like this has a certain unevenness of texture, and the format might work better as a live experience. But Turre makes himself the focal point of every tune, and it's fascinating to observe how he changes his intonation, his phrasing and note choices to accommodate new partners. He only uses his shells on “Flower Power,” but they're an integral part of his voice, and by no means a gimmick.

At nearly 75, Turre is now clearly an elder statesman of the music, but the message of this record is that the art of improvisation is an enactment of that profound American myth about perpetual rejuvenation. To play like this, irrespective of the company, is to turn back the years, and that is what *Generations* does, and does triumphantly.

—Brian Morton

**Generations:** Planting The Creed; Dinner With Duke; Blue Smoke; Smoke Gets In Your Eyes; Don D; Pharaoh's Dance; Flower Power; Good People; Sweet Dreams; Resistance. (76:16)

**Personnel:** Steve Turre, trombone; Wallace Roney Jr., trumpet, flugelhorn; Emilio Modeste, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone; James Carter, tenor saxophone; Isiah J. Thompson, piano; Trevor Watkiss, Fender Rhodes; Ed Cherry, Andy Bassford, guitar; Corcoran Holt, Buster Williams, bass; Derrick Barnett, electric bass; Orion Turre, Lenny White, Karl Wright, drums; Pedro Martinez, percussion.

Ordering info: [smokesessionsrecords.com](http://smokesessionsrecords.com)



Thanksgiving dinner, where the sides are as much the stars as the entree; these guys are the foundation for Samara Joy to be the adorned centerpiece. There aren't flashy solos in this tidy 40-minute album of standards. Everything is straight to the point, tugging at the heartstrings but not leaving much slack.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

**Linger Awhile:** Can't Get Out Of This Mood; Guess Who I Saw Today; Nostalgia (The Day I Knew); Sweet Pumpkin; Misty; Social Call; I'm Confessin' (That I Love You); Linger Awhile; Round Midnight; Someone To Watch Over Me. (41:19)

**Personnel:** Samara Joy, vocals; David Wong, bass; Kenny Washington, drums; Pasquale Grasso, guitar; Ben Paterson, piano; Kendrick McCallister, tenor saxophone (9); Terrell Stafford, trumpet, flugelhorn (9); Donovan Austin, trombone (9).

Ordering info: [vervelabelgroup.com](http://vervelabelgroup.com)



## Sirintip *Carbon*

ROPEADOPE

★★★★

Bangkok-born singer, producer and multi-modal artist Sirintip's climate change-inspired album *Carbon* paints an urgent, poignant and hopeful portrait of climate action. With 13 originals based on Sirintip's own climate research, *Carbon* invites listeners to engage with climate action in an innovative way — by listening to it.

On *Carbon*, the Thai-Swedish singer and producer, who's toured with acts like Snarky Puppy, works to stoke a less accusatory conversation around climate action. As opposed to focusing on the media narrative that the human race has failed the Earth, Sirintip's compositions invite others to engage more meaningfully with the state of our planet by making the data into sound and writing lyrics bathed in figurative language about the natural world.

“1.5,” for instance, is a song that integrates information from the sonic data app Twotone to musically convey the reality of Earth's steady temperature rise according to NASA data from 1880 to 2012. The resulting track is an eerie, dramatic and triumphant call to action. Likewise, her song “Aqi” is underpinned with a line she composed based on air quality data — the more polluted the air, the more dissonant the sonic interval used.

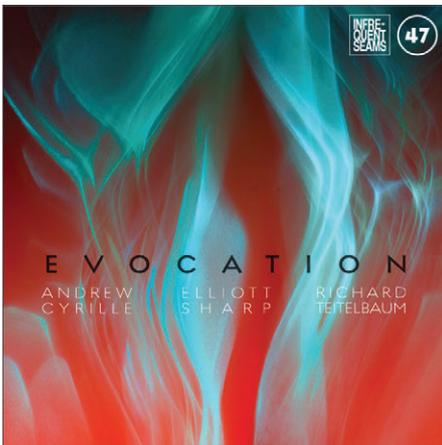
As it innovatively contends with urgent themes, *Carbon* lives in the liminal space between pop, jazz and neo-soul, combining dense harmonies and exploratory melodic ideas, Kate Bush-like ethereal pop production and the mellow sultriness of neo-soul into a musical fingerprint of Sirintip's own.

—Alexa Peters

**Carbon:** Hydrogen; Aqi; Oasis; Hostage; Red Eyes; 1.5; Unspoken Gold; I Cannot Escape; Plastic Bird; Stranger Of The Sea; Earth Moment; It's Alright; Siri. (42:10)

**Personnel:** Sirintip, vocals, vocal effects, programming; Kengkakaj Kengkarnka, piano, marimba, keyboards, synthesizers; Nic Hard, electric guitar, programming; Chris McQueen, moolon guitar; Nolan Byrd, drums, percussion, programming; Mahasarakham University, Thai electric guitar, morlam vocals, Thai percussion; Daniel Migdal, violins, viola; North Carolina Crickets, ambient vocals; Owen Broder, baritone saxophone; Michael League, electric bass, minimoog; Bangkok frogs, ambient vocals; Alex Hahn, flute.

Ordering info: [ropeadope.com](http://ropeadope.com)



## Andrew Cyrille/ Elliott Sharp/Richard Teitelbaum

### *Evocation*

INFREQUENT SEAMS

★★½

Free improvisation is about a particular moment in time, when musicians come together with no preordained plan or thematic material and forge something out of thin air — not discounting of course, the years of study, practice, development and performance each musician has logged in their careers.

By nature, the results are unpredictable, and often times the concert falls flat. The musicians might not connect with one another, or they might never achieve lift off. Sometimes a performance might feel transcendent in the particular space it occurs within, but a recorded document fails to live up to the experience after the fact.

The recording of this performance from Oct. 13, 2011, at Roulette in New York, definitely doesn't take off. It happens to the best musicians, including the veterans on this date. Drummer Andrew Cyrille, one of the most important and creative figures in free-jazz, had a long working relationship with Richard Teitelbaum, the synthesist and pianist whose passing at age 80 in 2020 was the impetus for this music getting released. In fact, they often gel here, with the latter's mix of samples embroidered by the former's pulse-driven salies and coloristic constructions.

But Sharp, either on his eight-string bass guitar or bass clarinet, never seems fully integrated, his rheumy blowing or pedal-transformed guitar noises tending to float over what his collaborators generate instead of interacting.

—Peter Margasak

**Evocation:** Opening; Singularity To Unity; Hudson North, Hudson South; Transoceanic Travelers; Evocation. (45:00)

**Personnel:** Andrew Cyrille, drum set, percussion; Elliott Sharp, eight-string guitar/bass, bass clarinet, electronics; Richard Teitelbaum, piano, computer, sampler.

**Ordering info:** [infrequentseams.com](http://infrequentseams.com)

Dear Jazz,

I never let myself think of you, and then all at once, I couldn't get you out of my head. You lingered like a haunting refrain. I lost sleep dreaming of you. Could I ever return to you?

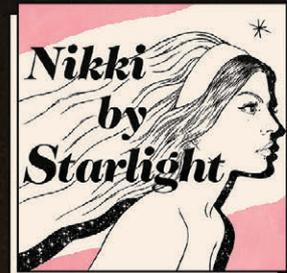
I always knew in my gut that you were right for me. If I could overcome pride, would you still have me? The harsh stance I once took against you had nothing to do with you. I never hated you; I resented what you represented in my life.

You made me feel alienated and lonely. I was your party trick. I was your freak. But I was and I miss *being*. You put me on a pedestal so tall that I stepped down to avoid the fall. Now the only falling I can associate to you is the falling in love.

They say that your first love is the hardest to get over. I never really got over you. I drowned your sound. I held you deep down where your echo was faint and easy to ignore. I walked a different path. Yet still, after all this time, those giant steps led me to the foot of your door.

Funny enough, you didn't change the lock. My key still works. It's not too late. Walking in on my own terms, even uninvited, I feel at home. You are familiar, safe and warm, and now that I'm here, I don't ever want to know the cold again.

Love always,

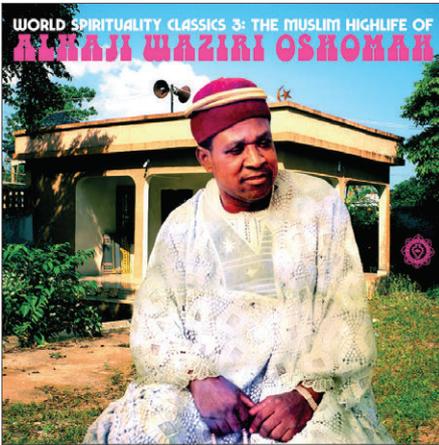


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## Alhaji Waziri Oshomah *The Muslim Highlife Of Alhaji Waziri Oshomah*

LUAKA BOP

★★½

Oshomah is a Muslim preacher from Afenmailand, a small area in southern Nigeria known for a community where Christians and Muslims coexist peacefully. Oshomah is also an entertainer and bandleader who has developed a singular style of music that blends local folk styles, the Nigerian version of highlife, a hint of Afrobeat and Western soul music. The forceful cadences and Oshomah's partial-

ly sung, partially shouted sermons create an upbeat atmosphere for his audience. The core band consists of two guitars, bass, synthesizer, drum kit and percussion, sometimes supported by a horn section. The set opens with "Forgive Them Oh God." The guitarists lay down overlapping rhythms that suggest highlife and soukous, accented by two-note horn fills. Oshomah sings/speaks in English, Etsako and other local languages, with brief scat interludes and a memorable chorus that winds through your head, despite the language barrier. Synthesizer/organ and the twin guitars share intertwining leads.

"My Luck" features the lead vocals of Oshomah's wife, Hassanah Waziri, singing the praises of the people who sing and dance to the band's music. A medium-tempo drum loop and an effervescent electric bass line support the overlapping guitar lines and Waziri's captivating vocal hook. The seven songs on this compilation span a 10-year period, from the mid-'70s to the mid-'80s, and the sound quality varies from crisp and clear to muddy, but the energy is always high and the groove relentless.

—j. poet

**The Muslim Highlife Of Alhaji Waziri Oshomah:** Forgive Them Oh God; Jealousy; Alhaji Yesufu Sado Managing Director; Omhona; Ovini Omoekeke Alhaji Inu Umoru; Okhume Ukhadume; My Luck. (73:35)

**Personnel:** Alhaji Waziri Oshomah, vocals; Madam Hassanah Waziri, vocals.

**Ordering info:** [luakabop.com](http://luakabop.com)

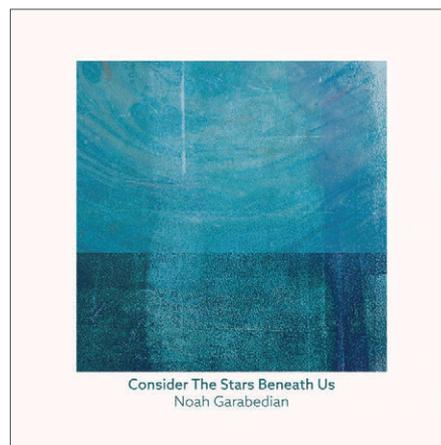
## Noah Garabedian *Consider The Stars Beneath Us*

OUTSIDE IN MUSIC

★★½

Noah Garabedian has progressed from the early promise of being a John Coltrane National Scholarship recipient in 2006 to working as a sideman, bandleader and member of the cooperative trio Ember. He has worked as an educator on three continents. His debut, the sextet recording *Big Butter And The Eggmen*, presented an inclusive musical vision that reconciled its titular pledge of allegiance to Louis Armstrong with touches of more contemporary brass polyphony. His second long player, the Bandcamp-only *Where Fables Meet*, was a more mainstream effort featuring a piano quartet.

The band on his third album, *Consider The Stars Beneath Us*, is nearly identical to that on its predecessor, except that Dayna Stephens has replaced Raffi Garabedian in the saxophone chair. But this time, the studio functions as an instrument rather than a mere means of recording. Electronic musician Samuel Adams sometimes adds subtle shadings in the background, and his rising synthesizer tones on "Petty Thieves" end the tune on a strong note.



But while the glossy production lucidly presents the technical gifts of each player, it sucks the air out of the performances. The opening track, "RR," is an homage to Ravi Coltrane and Ralph Alessi, and feels as though it is striving for reverence, but everything that's behind Garabedian's bass is so studied, it's ignorable.

—Bill Meyer

**Consider The Stars Beneath Us:** RR; Expectation. Regret.; Pendulum For NG; Salt Point; Petrichor; Petty Thieves; Shackleton's Cocoa; Alice. (55:13)

**Personnel:** Noah Garabedian, bass; Dayna Stephens, tenor and soprano saxophone; Carmen Staaf, piano; Jimmy Macbride, drums; Samuel Adams, effects, programming, additional recording; Moog Miniatur, Juno JU-06A.

**Ordering info:** [outsideinmusic.com](http://outsideinmusic.com)



## Charlie Ballantine *Falling Grace*

GREEN MIND

★★★★½

Guitarist Charlie Ballantine, the Indianapolis-bred-and-based musician with a style veering from mainstream to personalized rootsy turns, belongs to the sizable club of artists who exist off the usual jazz world radar but are worthy of broader attention and appreciation. For newcomers, his latest quartet album, *Falling Grace*, is a fine place to start the appreciation.

Ballantine, whose sound falls somewhere on the comparison spectrum alongside Bill Frisell, John Scofield and Julian Lage, is blessed with a flowing and unforced way with a phrase. His playing is flecked with blues and country tinges, and he steers clear of the familiar bullying tactics of guitar-bro braggadocio. He takes easily to the brisk swing directive of the title tune, but also issues tough-love lyricism on the opening "Thank You" and "Fix It."

In an age sometimes overrun with digital fussing and post-production fixatives, it's refreshing to hear a record blessed with honesty and grit. Reportedly, what was played in the studio is what we get to hear. There are certain endearing retro elements, including a comfy, lo-fi recording aesthetic, a funky and not-necessarily-in-tune piano (which Steve Jones works nimbly with) and Ballantine's extra dose of reverb.

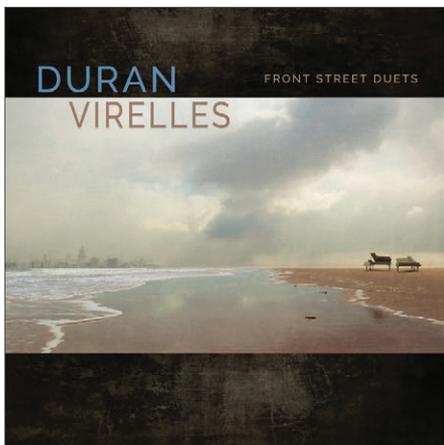
Variation of mood and idiom makes for a balanced song set. "Contemplation" is a loping waltz ballad, in minor mode, contrasting the understated joyful temperament of "Posterity II," with drummer Cassius Goens III picking up brushes and Jesse Whitman offering up a lithe acoustic bass solo. Ballantine notches up the distortion and intensity of riffs on "Sweet Tooth" and "Snow Angel" brings the sequence to a waltz-timed closure.

—Josef Woodard

**Falling Grace:** Thank You; Sweet Tooth; Posterity; Contemplation; Fix You; Falling Grace; Snow Angel. (33:40)

**Personnel:** Charlie Ballantine, guitar; Steven Jones, piano; Jesse Wittman, bass; Cassius Goens III, drums.

**Ordering info:** [charlieballantine.com](http://charlieballantine.com)



## Hilario Duran/ David Virelles *Front Street Duets*

ALMA

★★★★★

Piano legend Hilario Duran and his spiritual heir David Virelles deliver music of considerable power and passion in their ebullient *Front Street Duets*. Fans of the great Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, these piano masters recorded this sparkling album at the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto. Gould likely would have approved.

The recording consists of eight originals and a radical interpretation of “Body and Soul.” The album is primarily a celebration of Duran and Virelles’ native Cuba in such tracks as “Milonga Por Cuba” and Virelles’ arrangement of “Danza Lucumi,” a melody familiar to him from his hometown of Santiago de Cuba.

Duran’s “Milonga” salutes protestors who dared defy Cuba’s regime in July 2011. The track might be the still center of the album, particularly after the danceable and bright “La Malanga,” a marvel of dueling runs.

“Santos Suarez’s Memories” references the Havana neighborhood in which Duran grew up. One of the more playful pieces, it conjures mental pictures of that locale. Duran and Virelles spur each other on here, spinning an increasingly complex musical yarn in which it’s hard to tell who plays what. The joyous music they construct together is so absorbing.

Duran wrote “David’s Tumbao” to honor Virelles’ mastery of tumbao, the basic rhythm bass and conga drum play in Cuban jazz. As in “La Malanga,” the runs are spectacular. While this feels quite loose and spontaneous, Duran and Virelles, Duran’s junior by 30 years, never lose control. How these keyboard telepaths hang onto that control over these nine tracks is a pleasure to follow.

—Carlo Wolff

**Front Street Duets:** Guajira For Two Pianos; Challenge; Punto Cubano #1; Danza Lucumi; La Malanga; Milonga Por Cuba (Dedicated to 7/11); Santos Suarez’s Memories; David’s Tumbao; Body And Soul. (42:00)

**Personnel:** Hilario Duran, piano; David Virelles, piano.

**Ordering info:** [almarecords.com](http://almarecords.com)



## Cyrus Chestnut *My Father's Hands*

HIGHNOTE

★★★★½

While some may think that performing swinging music that includes standards, originals, blues and an occasional ballad is a bit out of style and overly predictable, throughout his career Cyrus Chestnut has proven otherwise. His steady stream of recordings since 1992 have been consistently rewarding and creative within the straight-ahead jazz genre without him feeling compelled to break down boundaries or pave new paths for the future. After all, why should he when the results are so much fun?

*My Father's Hands* is dedicated to Chestnut’s first important inspiration, his father, who passed away in 2021. His dad played piano in church and was responsible for his son’s love for music, supporting him every step of the way as he developed his own voice.

The titles of the songs that Chestnut per-

forms with two members of the late Tommy Flanagan’s trio, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Lewis Nash, all have a connection with his father. There are some touching moments along the way, particularly the closing “Epilogue,” which remembers his father’s last moments of life, and a solo rendition of “I Must Tell Jesus,” but *My Father's Hands* is not an overly somber tribute and contains its share of happiness. Among the highlights are Chestnut’s catchy “Thinking About You, a swinger that other musicians should adopt, welcome revivals of Ray Bryant’s “Cubano Chant” and “Baubles, Bangles and Beads,” and his “Working Out Just Fine,” which would have fit in well in the repertoire of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers.

—Scott Yanow

**My Father's Hands:** Nippon Soul Connection; Thinking About You; Cubano Chant; Baubles, Bangles And Beads; Yesterday; I Must Tell Jesus; Working Out Just Fine; There Will Never Be Another You; But Beautiful; Epilogue. (49:27)

**Personnel:** Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)



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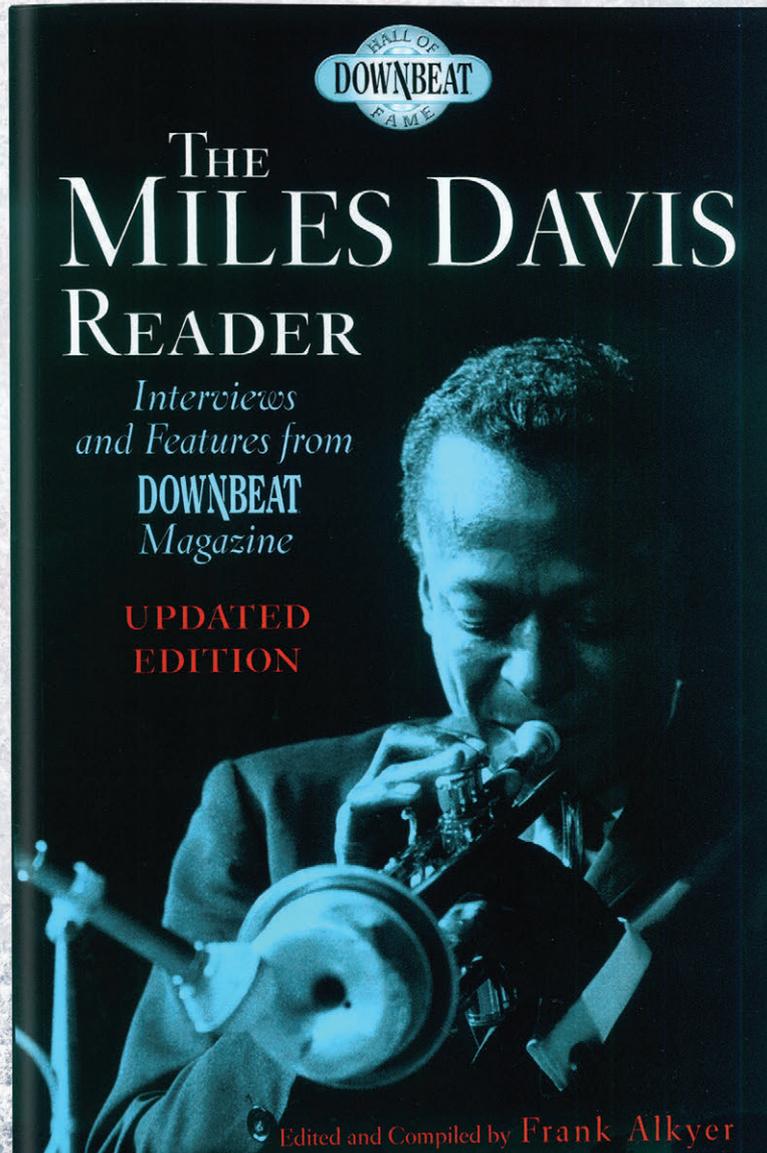
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## PETER BRÖTZMANN/KEIJI HAINO

### Duo

Purple Trap/Black Editions

The free music duo of German saxophonist Peter Brötzmann and guitarist/vocalist Keiji Haino have pulled out a four-LP box set of music, their first release since 1996, that includes eight, full-size, full-color art prints by the artists. The music is a full-force flight into the unknown. [blackeditionsgroup.com](http://blackeditionsgroup.com)

## MILES DAVIS

### That's What Happened: 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol. 7

Columbia/Legacy

The latest in Columbia's Miles Davis Bootleg Series, *That's What Happened* captures Davis on the comeback trail of his career. The three-disc set contains previously unreleased cuts from *Star People*, *Decoy* and *You're Under Arrest* as well as Davis and his crew live in Montreal from July 7, 1983. Check out DownBeat's October issue for the 4-star review of the box. [LegacyRecordings.com](http://LegacyRecordings.com)

## ELLA FITZGERALD

### Jukebox Ella: The Complete Verve Singles, Vol. 1

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For the first time ever, Verve collects the singles Ella Fitzgerald released on the label in one, beautifully packaged box. The 36-song, three-LP set features a tidal wave of Ella hits, including "Beale Street Blues," "A Tisket, A Tasket," "Travelin' Light," "Desafinado," "The Shadow Of Your Smile" and more. The limited first pressing on this one is set at 1,000. [umusic.com](http://umusic.com)

## BILLIE HOLIDAY

### The Complete Decca Recordings

Verve

This 50-track collection spans Holiday's five-plus years recording for the Decca label. The four-LP, limited-edition set features mastered takes on the 36 tunes Lady Day cut for Decca, plus a variety of alternate versions. The first pressing is 2,000. [umusic.com](http://umusic.com)

## WADADA LEO SMITH STRING QUARTETS NO. 1-12 EMERALD DUETS

TUM

The great trumpeter and composer refuses to be confined by genre or label. For his 80th birthday, he went big, delivering not one, but two major box sets. *String Quartets No. 1-12* matches Smith with the RedKoral Quartet performing string compositions Smith began working on as long ago as 1965. *Emerald Duets* pairs Smith with a host of friends such as Pheeroan akLaff, Andrew Cyrille, Han Bennink and Jack DeJohnette for five CDs worth of camaraderie. See DownBeat's September issue for the full scoop. [tumrecords.com](http://tumrecords.com)



## THREE FROM BLUE NOTE

**Blue Note Records continues to release waves of great sound on vinyl. In its Tone Poet series, the label issues two editions of John Coltrane's *Blue Train*, first recorded back in 1957 in Rudy Van Gelder's living-room studio in Hackensack, New Jersey.**

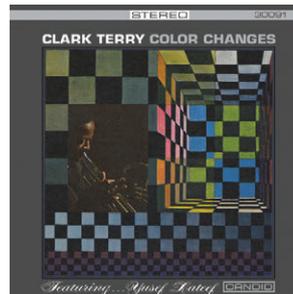
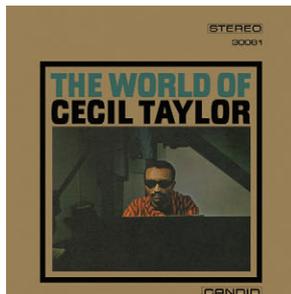
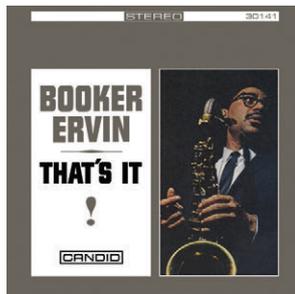
The album will be released as a one-LP pressing of the original album and a two-LP stereo pressing of *The Complete Masters*, which includes seven never-before-released tracks and a booklet packed with never-before-seen photos and an essay by Ashley Kahn. Both are pressed on 180-gram vinyl at RTI.

Going from the legendary saxophonist to a legendary drummer who made his name in Coltrane's quartet, Blue Note has unearthed a previously unissued 1967 live recording with Elvin Jones as a leader called *Elvin Jones Revival: Live At Pookie's Pub*.

The quartet on this date features Jones on drums, Joe Farrell on tenor saxophone, Billy

Green on piano and Wilbur Little on bass, and was recorded just two weeks after Coltrane's untimely death. The set comes in a 180-gram vinyl, three-LP set (or two CDs) with heavy-duty liner notes and plenty of photography from Francis Wolff, Ozier Muhammad, Christian Rose and more.

Going on a more modern tip, the label has also released the 10th anniversary deluxe edition of Robert Glasper Experiment's *Black Radio* as a three-LP set on 180-gram vinyl featuring bonus tracks, the remix EP *Black Radio Recovered* and a killer booklet packed with photography and liner notes by Glasper himself. **DB** [bluenote.com](http://bluenote.com)



## CANDID RELAUNCHES

**Candid Records relaunched in April, reissuing five great titles on CD from its back catalog that show amazing breadth and depth. Those titles are now out on vinyl.**

Pee Wee Russell & Coleman Hawkins, *Jazz Reunion*, offers a terrific 1961 date featuring the clarinetist and saxophonist recording together for the first time in 32 years.

At this point elder statesmen, the duo takes a trip back in time, even recording "If I Could Spend An Hour With You," a song they recorded together in 1929.

Clark Terry's *Color Changes* serves as a reminder of the trumpeter's imaginative approach, including arrangements by Yusef Lateef, Budd Johnson and Al Cohn for the date.

Spinning to the avant garde side comes *The*

*World Of Cecil Taylor*, featuring Archie Shepp, Buell Niedlinger and Denis Charles on this date, originally released in 1961.

Booker Little, *Out Front*, is considered the best of the trumpeter's limited, but beautiful, work. Little recorded only five sessions as a leader before passing away in 1961 at the age of 23. The quintet date features an all-star cast with Max Roach, Eric Dolphy and others.

Finally, Booker Ervin, *That's It!*, shows the tenor saxophonist in top form and heavily influenced by his time with Charles Mingus. **DB**

[candidrecords.com](http://candidrecords.com)

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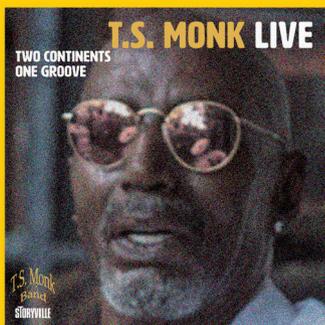
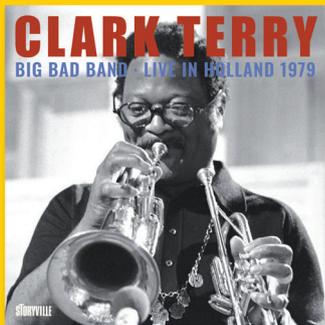


**LEO P**

2022 DownBeat  
Readers Poll Winner

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## OLD GEMS FROM NEW LAND

The New Land record label out of the U.K. has been busy on the vinyl scene this year, re-issuing Gerry Mulligan's 1963 classic *Night Lights*, a jazz noir masterpiece with the baritone saxophonist's sextet featuring Jim Hall.

The new label's latest offering comes in the form of Charles Mingus, reissuing the 1957 nugget of perfection, *A Modern Jazz Symposium Of Music And Poetry With Charles Mingus*. The remastered and expanded two-LP set includes bonus tracks, outtakes, rare photos and liner notes from the outing's original pianist, Bob Hammer. Recorded in 1957, the album came together in the heat of what is considered Mingus' most creative period. Often overlooked, it delivers high concept from one of the greatest artists to walk the planet.

In between, New Land delivered two trumpet gems in the form of Howard McGee's *dusty blue* and Blue Mitchell's

eponymously titled album.

The McGee sides offer a killer lineup, with Bennie Green on trombone, Pepper Adams on baritone saxophone, Tommy Flanagan on piano, "Ronald" Carter on bass, Roland Alexander on tenor saxophone and Walter Bolden on drums. Mitchell's work includes original liner notes from Leonard Feather as well as memories of Mitchell from the date's drummer, Doug Sides.

All of the New Land offerings are mastered from the original analog tape transfers by Kevin Gray at Cohearant Audio, then printed and pressed on 180-gram vinyl.

[newlandrecords.co.uk](http://newlandrecords.co.uk)

DB



## NEWVELLE RENEWS

During the pandemic, the vinyl-only label Newvelle Records had to hit the pause button. Happily, it has hit play again with four terrific new projects coming out this year.

The Renewal Collection, which can be purchased as a four-album set or separately, includes terrific, ambitious music. Elan Mehler's *There Is A Dance* features Mehler on piano with Tony Scherr on bass and Francisco Mela on drums. Michael Blake's *Combobulate* offers intensely playful music with Blake on tenor/soprano/flute; Steven Bernstein, trumpet; Clark Gayton, trombone; Bob Stewart, tuba; Marcus Rojas, tuba; and Allan Mednard, drums.

Dave Liebman's *Trust And Honesty* showcases the legendary soprano saxophonist also dipping into some tenor and flute with Ben Monder on guitar and John Hébert on bass. And flugelhornist and trumpeter Nadjé Noordhuis delivers *Full Circle* featuring an all-star cast of Fred Hersch on piano, Thomas Morgan on bass and Rudy Royston on drums.

Welcome back, Newvelle!

[newvelle-records.com](http://newvelle-records.com)

DB



# GIFTS WHICH HIT THE RIGHT NOTE



## VINCE GUARALDI TRIO

### *Jazz Impressions of Black Orpheus*

- 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary release of this GRAMMY® award-winning album
  - 3-LP, 2-CD and digital
- Plus a limited one-step lacquer process SMALL BATCH series LP

## THE MILES DAVIS QUINTET

### *Relaxin' (Small Batch Series)*

- Special edition of the 1958 classic, limited to 5,000 worldwide
- Mastered all-analog by Bernie Grundman at RTI
- Pressed using one-step lacquer process for maximum detail and clarity

## SUN RA

### *The Futuristic Sounds of Sun Ra*

- 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition on 180-gram vinyl, CD, and hi-res digital
- Remastered by Kevin Gray at Cohearent Audio
- New essays by jazz historian Ben Young and author Irwin Chusid



## JOHN LEE HOOKER

### *The Healer*

- Previously out-of-print GRAMMY® award-winning collection
- Features Bonnie Raitt, Carlos Santana, Canned Heat, and more
- LP cut by Bernie Grundman and pressed on 180-gram vinyl at QRP; Also available on CD

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### *It's a Good, Good Feeling: The Latin Soul of Fania Records*

- 89 Latin soul and boogaloo tracks released from 1965–1975
- Features Ray Barretto, Joe Bataan, Bobby Valentín, Ralfi Pagan, and more
- Presented in a 4-CD + 7" vinyl box set

## THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER

### *Fifty*

- New studio album by the multi-GRAMMY® award-winning vocal harmony legends
- Group celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022
  - Album features Germany's WDR Funkhausorchester and is available on CD and digital



## ORNETTE COLEMAN

### *Genesis of Genius: The Contemporary Albums*

- 2-LP and 2-CD box sets of the jazz saxophonist's first two albums, *Something Else!!!!* and *Tomorrow Is the Question!*
- All newly mastered audio by Bernie Grundman
- Includes new essay by journalist Ashley Kahn

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

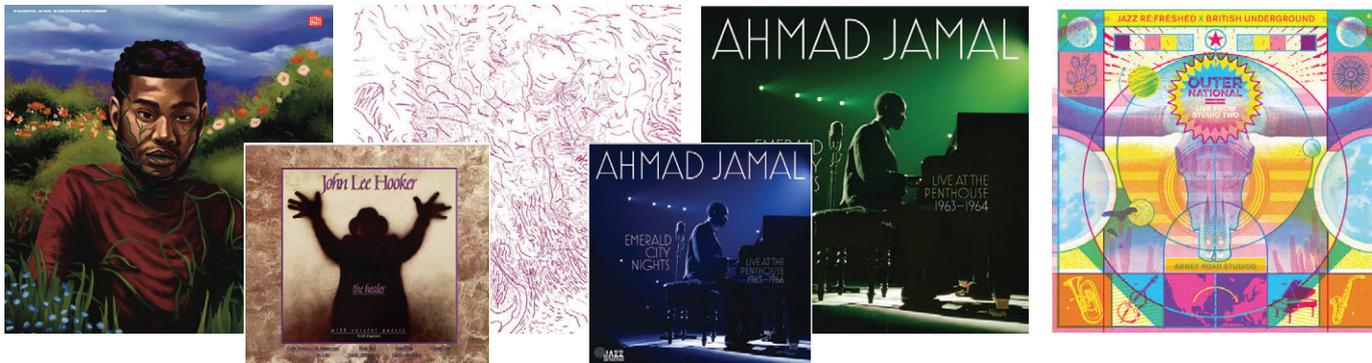
### *Chicago / The Blues / Today!*

- First volume from the highly influential 1966 blues trilogy
- Features Junior Wells, J. B. Hutto, Otis Spann, and more
- All-analog 180-gram vinyl mastered by Kevin Gray at Cohearent Audio

## BENNY CARTER

### *Jazz Giant (Acoustic Sounds Contemporary Records Series)*

- Fourth installment of the series, on 180-gram vinyl
- Celebrating 70 years of the legendary jazz label
- Remastered all-analog by Bernie Grundman and pressed at QRP



**AHMAD JAMAL, EMERALD CITY NIGHTS**  
**Live At The Penthouse 1963-1964 and 1965-1966** (Deep Digs/Jazz Detective)

Just in time for Record Store Day's Black Friday extravaganza, producer Zev Feldman launches his new imprint, Jazz Detective, with two volumes of previously unreleased live music by the great pianist Ahmad Jamal.

Each volume delivers two-LPs of music from the famed Seattle-based nightclub. The packages come on 180-gram vinyl transferred from the original tapes and mastered by Bernie Grundman. [deepdigmusic.com](http://deepdigmusic.com)

**JOHN LEE HOOKER**  
**The Healer** (Craft)

This 1989 classic served as a true comeback

for the legendary bluesman. With a little help from friends like Bonnie Raitt, Carlos Santana, George Thorogood, Charlie Musselwhite and others, the record went on to win accolades, awards and listeners, bringing a new generation of fans to Hooker's music. [craftrecordings.com](http://craftrecordings.com)

**JAZZ RE:FRESHED X BRITISH UNDERGROUND**  
**Outer National, Live From Studio Two, Abbey Road Studios**

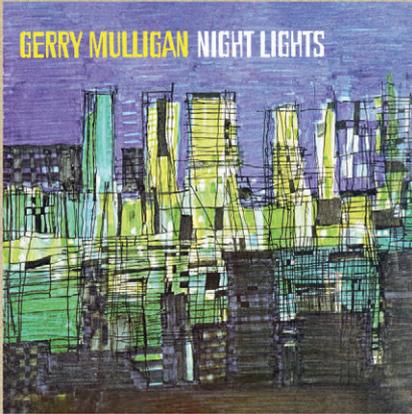
Here we have a live recording featuring U.K.'s rising jazz stars performing in the winter of 2021 during COVID lockdown. Tuba player Theon Cross leads this cast of artists that includes DoomCannon, Camilla George, Richard Spaven, Noya Rao, Daniel Casimir and Tess Hirst. [britishunderground.net](http://britishunderground.net)

**TOM SKINNER**  
**Voices of Bishara** (Brownswood/Nonesuch)

Another voice from the London scene, drummer, composer, producer and bandleader Tom Skinner serves up a deep groove on *Voices*, which features cello, bass and two saxophones. It's a hip and hypnotic blend of East meets West. [nonesuch.com](http://nonesuch.com)

**RA WASHINGTON/JAHNADA**  
**In Search For Our Father's Gardens**

This auspicious debut features RA Washington on piano, drum machines and vocals, and Jah Nada on bass, drums and synths. It's a two-LP set with a 14-piece cast. Cool that sides B and C were designed to be played separately ... or together. **DB**




# new land

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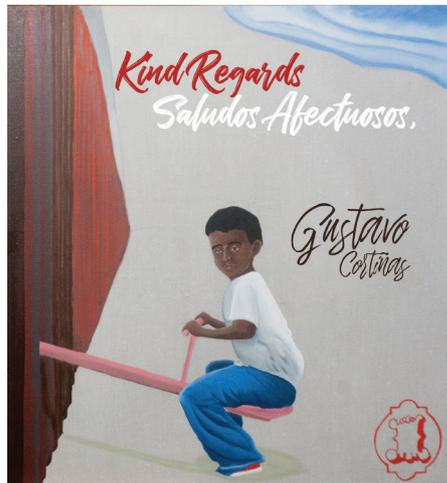
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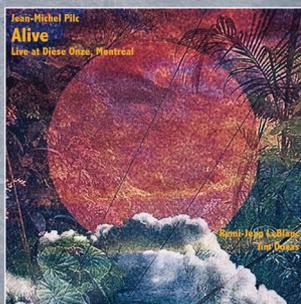
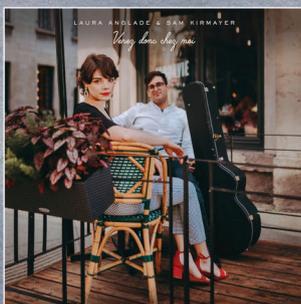
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# JUSTIN TIME RECORDS



# A LOOK BACK AT 2022



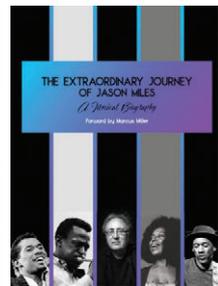
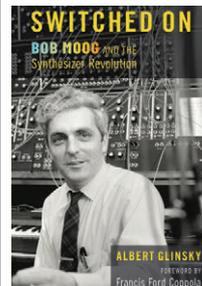
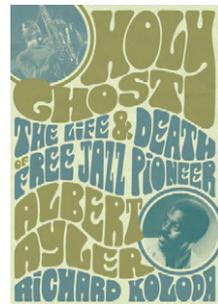
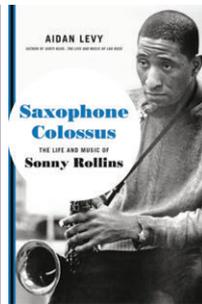
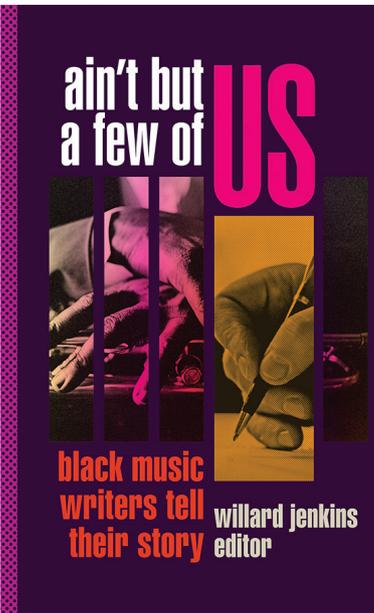
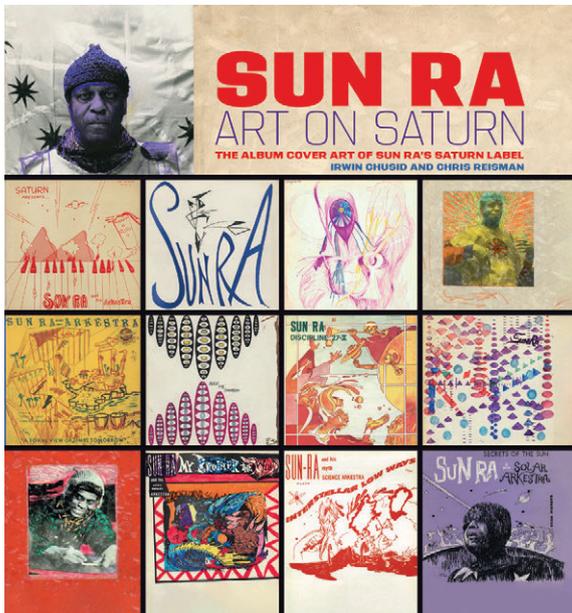
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# MUSIC READING!

BY FRANK ALKYER

*When considering what to buy those who are impossible to buy for (guilty, as charged), loved ones can't go wrong with a great book. And while there are plenty of them out there, here are seven that your jolly-ole musical elf might just want to dig into!*

## SAXOPHONE COLLOSSUS: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF SONNY ROLLINS

By Aidan Levy Hachette Book Group

In an incredibly deep, well-researched and thoughtfully written biography, author Aiden Levy dives into the world of Sonny Rollins, one of the greatest tenor saxophonists to ever walk the planet. Clocking in at 784 pages (including the index), *Saxophone Colossus* comes in as an exhaustive work, one that can be enjoyed, studied and absorbed thoroughly by Rollinsologists for the ages. [hachettebookgroup.com](http://hachettebookgroup.com)

## SUN RA: ART ON SATURN

Edited by Irwin Chusid and Chris Reisman Fantagraphics

Authors Chusid and Reisman deliver the wide and wild world of cover art — in full color — from the great Afrofuturistic bandleader's Saturn record label. It serves as what the authors describe as the first comprehensive collection of Ra's cover art and includes printed album record covers and sleeves as well as hundreds of hand-designed, one-of-a-kind covers and sleeves created by Ra and members of his Arkestra. [fantagraphics.com](http://fantagraphics.com)

## HOLY GHOST: THE LIFE & DEATH OF FREE JAZZ PIONEER ALBERT AYLER

By Richard Koloda Jawbone Press

Author Richard Koloda spent two decades

researching this addition to the legend of free-jazz saxophonist Albert Ayler. The author painstakingly traces Ayler's path from the Midwest to France, as well as his mysterious death at just 34 years old. The result here is a book that's one part music bio, another part detective thriller trying to decipher how Ayler was found floating dead in New York's East River on Nov. 25, 1970. [jawbonepress.com](http://jawbonepress.com)

## THE REAL AMBASSADORS: DAVE AND IOLA BRUBECK AND LOUIS ARMSTRONG CHALLENGE SEGREGATION

By Keith Hatschek University Press of Mississippi

Author Keith Hatschek documents a musical program of the same name created by Brubeck and his wife, Iola, featuring Louis Armstrong. It was envisioned as a three-act Broadway extravaganza with the world's foremost musicians. The story plays out over difficult terrain. The civil rights movement was just kicking into high gear. The powers that be were not ready for it, or what the Brubecks and Satchmo wanted to lay down. [upress.state.ms.us](http://upress.state.ms.us)

## SWITCHED ON: BOB MOOG AND THE SYNTHESIZER REVOLUTION

By Albert Glinsky Oxford University Press

Author Albert Glinsky charts the very uncharted course that Bob Moog took in helping to create a musical revolution. Billed as the

first complete biography of Moog, this 496-page hardcover traces the trials, tribulations, victories, losses and lunacy of Moog's journey in with a foreword by Francis Ford Coppola. [bobmoogfoundation.myshopify.com](http://bobmoogfoundation.myshopify.com)

## AIN'T BUT A FEW OF US: BLACK MUSIC WRITERS TELL THEIR STORY

Edited by Willard Jenkins Duke University Press

Historically, the craft of jazz criticism has been vastly the terrain of white men covering Black music. That may be slowly changing, but author Willard Jenkins has, for years, documented the voices of Black jazz critics, presenting the results in this well-conceived and timely package. He interviews some two dozen writers, delivering guidance to the next generation. [dukeupress.edu](http://dukeupress.edu)

## THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF JASON MILES: A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY

By Jason Miles Book Writing Cube

Jason Miles may not be a household name to many, but he is to the people who have worked with him. As a keyboardist, composer and producer, Miles has collaborated with everyone from Miles Davis, George Benson and David Sanborn to Michael Jackson, Luther Vandross and Whitney Houston, to name just a few. In this *Musical Biography*, Miles recounts his life and times, which is an outgrowth of a one-man show he performs. [jasonmilesmusic.com](http://jasonmilesmusic.com)

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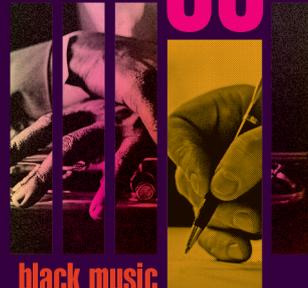


Owen Broder, saxophones  
Riley Mulherkar, trumpet  
Carmen Staaf, piano  
Barry Stephenson, bass  
Bryan Carter, drums

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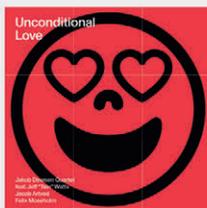
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# Unconditional Love

Jakob Dinesen Quartet  
feat. Jeff "Tain" Watts  
Jacob Artved  
Felix Moseholm



OTHER NEW RELEASES



Jakob Dinesen feat.  
Jeff "Tain" Watts  
**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE**  
CD: STUCD 22052 / LP: STULP 22051  
Jakob Dinesen (ts), Jacob Artved  
(g), Felix Moseholm (b), Jeff "Tain"  
Watts (d)



Karl Berger – Kirk  
Knuffke  
**HEART IS A MELODY**  
CD: STUCD 22092  
Karl Berger (vib, Rhodes, p,  
Melodica), Kirk Knuffke (Cornet), Jay  
Anderson (b), Matt Wilson (d)



Jan Harbeck Quartet  
**BALANCED**  
CD: STUCD 22102 / LP: STULP 22101  
Jan Harbeck (ts), Henrik Gunde (p),  
Eske Nørrelykke (b), Anders Holm  
(d), Eiel Lazo (congas)



Wollesen Ferm  
**HEART IN HAND**  
CD: STUCD 22022 / LP: STULP 22021  
Ned Ferm (ts, cl, fl, vln, perc, el-p),  
Rune Kjeldsen (g), Anders "AC"  
Christensen (b), Kenny Wollesen (d,  
perc, p, vib, a.o.)

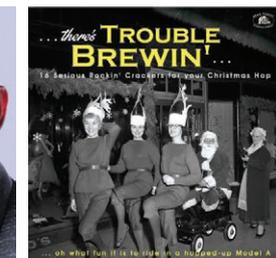
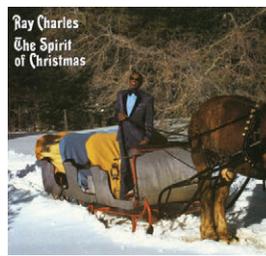


Scott Hamilton  
**CLASSICS**  
CD: STUCD 22032 / LP: STULP 22031  
Scott Hamilton (ts), Jan Lundgren  
(p), Hans Backenroth (b), Kristian  
Leth (d)

Stunt Records

Stunt Records, Sundance Music / Gothersgade 107 / DK-1123 Copenhagen / Denmark / sundance@sundance.dk / www.sundance.dk

Distribution: Stateside Distributors/statesidemusic.com



# YULE BE GLAD

BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

**Santa's a jolly fellow, but it must be hard for him to be merry when timeworn Christmas music engulfs him like an avalanche. It's a wonder that countless recordings of "Jingle Bells" and other favorites haven't made Mr. Claus sourer than Scrooge. To his benefit – and ours – some new releases serve up fresh-sounding music that staves off groans of "ho-ho-oh-no!"**

**JOE MCCARTHY'S NEW YORK AFRO BOP ALLIANCE BIG BAND**  
**The Pan American Nutcracker Suite** (Angelface)

If you're beginning to tire of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's classic 1960 recording of Tchaikovsky's classic fairy tale ballet, keep an ear out for this version by drummer-educator Joe McCarthy with his 18-piece band. The New Yorker approaches familiar material not out of devotion to Ellington or Tchaikovsky but out of service to his own creative vision, one emphasizing the marvel of Brazilian and Venezuelan dance rhythms. Extra slices of chocolate candy-cane cake to McCarthy and saxophonist-conductor Vince Norman for their fine arrangements. [joemccarthymusic.com](http://joemccarthymusic.com)

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**  
**Louis Wishes You A Cool Yule** (Verve/UMe)

Given Louis Armstrong's great success with pop and novelty songs, you might think he recorded a lot of Christmas songs. Not so — the 11 tracks on his first Yuletide collection, singles from the 1950s and '60, are about it. Satchmo's inimitable gravelly vocals and to a lesser extent on this collection his Gabriel's horn give him the magnetism to have mastery of, say, "White Christmas" and zany "Zat You, Santa Claus?" The one and only Ella Fitzgerald adds to the toasty vibe of "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm" and singer Velma Middleton joins Satchmo for laughs on "Baby, It's Cold Outside." [vervarecords.com](http://vervarecords.com)

**JANE MONHEIT**  
**The Merriest** (Club 44)

An engaging singer whatever the season, Jane Monheit invests the well-known tunes of her second holiday album with an emotional resonance that banishes even their most banal sentiments. The meticulousness of her polite style is evident on "The Christmas Song" and "Christmas Time Is Here" while spunky "Winter Wonderland" and fun "Let It Snow!" have her loosening up. Her treatment of Broadway composer Cy Coleman's "(Christmas) Stay With Me" sticks with you. [janemonheitonline.com](http://janemonheitonline.com)

**DAVE KOZ & FRIENDS**  
**Christmas Ballads-25th Anniversary Collection** (Just Koz Entertainment)

Dave Koz, the chart-topping smooth-jazz saxophonist, has led popular Christmas tours every year since 1997 and sporadically released Christmas albums. Unlike seven previous ones, his latest features ballads that he hasn't recorded before. They provide mellow aural bliss to anyone relaxing near a fireplace of crackling logs on a wintry night. [davekoz.com](http://davekoz.com)

**RICHARD WILLIAMS**  
**Hollywood Christmas** (self-released)

Utah-based pianist Richard Williams has the sugar-plum fantasy of giving cinematic quality to secular Santa tunes. Apparently on his mind are *Home Alone*, *Elf* and some

unmade movie starring revelers Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack. [richardmusic.com](http://richardmusic.com)

**RAY CHARLES**  
**The Spirit Of Christmas** (Tangerine)

On his only Christmas album, first released in 1985 and now reissued in remastered sound, Ray Charles sings chestnuts with an acute sensitivity to the soulful connotations of the special season. Tenderhearted and poignant, Charles cancels out the fatigue of "This Time Of Year" and "What Child Is This?" among others. It's "The Spirit Of Christmas," from the occasionally crude movie *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, that comes closest to Christmas services at a Black gospel church. [raycharlesstore.com](http://raycharlesstore.com)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**...There's Trouble Brewin'** (Bear Family)

The German archival label Bear Family has a series of compilations that feature obscure old jazz, country and R&B tunes connected in theme to a certain holiday or season. This curiously titled seventh installment featuring Christmas music zeroes in on R&B- and country-rooted proto-rock 'n' roll cut between 1951 and '63. Of 16 selections, Chuck Berry's "Run Rudolph Run" is by far the most popular, with riff-master Santa Berry having a great time putting his reindeer through their paces. Available on LP only. [bear-family.com](http://bear-family.com) **DB**

RICHARD WILLIAMS



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[Jodyjazz.com](http://Jodyjazz.com)

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## Pro Tools Subscriptions

Avid Pro Tools audio production software is now available via three subscription-only offerings featuring new capabilities. Pro Tools Artist includes everything needed to make beats, write, record and mix studio-quality music. Pro Tools Studio enables music creators, producers and engineers to easily create large projects and builds on the current Pro Tools platform with enhancements. Pro Tools Flex is a high-end tool for pros who require the full power and advanced workflows of Pro Tools. [avid.com](http://avid.com)



## Tension Reducer, Comfort Increaser

The Vandoren Strap Bar separates the cords of the saxophone neckstrap to reduce tension in the neck and chest. This results in increased comfort and allows the saxophonist to breathe more freely and easily. Like the Vandoren Harness, the Strap Bar was designed to make saxophone playing more comfortable. For a player who experiences neck issues and may not be ready to move to a harness, the simple design of the Strap Bar offers an excellent alternative. [vandoren.fr/en](http://vandoren.fr/en)



## Must-Have Effects Pedals

Fender's Hammertone Effect Pedals are a new family of effects designed to cover a wide range of sounds, including distortion, overdrive, delay, reverb, fuzz, metal chorus, space delay and flanger. The Hammertone line features an easy-to-use interface that demystifies pedals and helps players take their bass or guitar tone to the next level. This accessible line brings an end-to-end solution that supports players as they learn to play or seasoned players who are exploring their creative journey. Used individually or stacked to create a chain, these nine must-have effects can tackle any tone. [fender.com](http://fender.com)

## High-Fidelity Earplugs

Through a partnership with EarLab's dBud Earplugs, D'Addario provides comprehensive hearing protection without compromising sonic quality. The dBud Earplugs feature an acoustic filtering system and a patented volume slider that lets you reduce the volume by either 11dB or 24dB. Each set of earplugs comes with two dBud ear filters and five pairs of reusable silicone inserts. [daddario.com](http://daddario.com)



## All-in-1 Keyboard

Roland's E-X50 Arranger Keyboard is a perfect instrument for both home or stage use. Offering a diverse range of sounds plus automatic accompaniment features, a microphone input and onboard Bluetooth audio, the E-X50 is ideal for everyone from beginners and hobbyists to professionals looking for an all-in-one performance keyboard. The E-X50 features a stylish design and a full-range stereo speaker system that fills the room with big, enveloping sound. [roland.com](http://roland.com)



### High-Functioning Kit

Yamaha's DTX8 series and DTX10 series high-end electronic drum sets offer a blend of functionality and playability with expanded polyphony and reduced latency. The DTX8 Series (including the DTX8K-M and DTX8K-X models) is ideal for drummers searching for high-quality sounds and functionality in an electronic kit. The DTX10 series (including the DTX10K-M and DTX10K-X models) is made for drummers who demand flagship performance and durability. Both series offer the option of mesh pads or Yamaha Drum's proprietary Textured Cellular Silicone pads. [usa.yamaha.com](http://usa.yamaha.com)

### Jingle All the Way

Grover Pro Sleigh Bells have 24 resonant steel bells that are permanently attached to a turned hardwood handle. Exquisitely finished in concert black, a particular highlight is the hard rubber foot that allows the player to quickly and silently pickup or set down the instrument, eliminating any unwanted bell sound. These are the only commercially available sleigh bells with this feature. The foot also functions as an easy grasp handle to facilitate ease of playing loud passages. [groverpro.com](http://groverpro.com)



### Colorful Ukes

Cordoba's 15CM Matiz ukulele shares the same aesthetic as the company's Protege C1 Matiz guitar. The 15CM Matiz ukulele is available in four colors, including Mint, Chili Red, Mango and Classic Blue, and it includes a color-matching gig bag made from durable, road-ready recycled nylon material. Additional features include a sleek satin finish and Aquila strings. [cordobaguitars.com](http://cordobaguitars.com)



### Improvisation Tutor

University of North Texas educator Mike Steinel's *Running the Changes* (Hal Leonard) teaches musicians of all levels the essentials of improvising over chord changes. The book includes play-along practice tracks that cover all major parts in the ensemble, including C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef instruments, and lead sheets for vocalists. Topics include melodic paraphrase and quotation; using riffs; basic chord theory; ornamentation; chord tone soloing; bebop scales and more. [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)



### Broadcaster's Choice

Samson's Q9x Broadcast Dynamic Microphone is designed to produce high-quality audio for broadcasts, podcasts, streams and music recordings. The Q9x features an XLR output and easily integrates into most existing professional or home studio setups. It has a dynamic mic capsule optimized for vocals. The cardioid pickup pattern provides superior off-axis rejection while minimizing ambient noise, making it suitable for use in untreated home studios. A mid-boost circuit switch adds extra presence to vocal frequencies when engaged. [samsontech.com](http://samsontech.com)



### New & Improved Theremin

Moog Music's new Etherwave Theremin is based on the company's original Etherwave circuitry and aesthetic designed by Bob Moog in 1996. This new evolution delivers improved precision, portability and playability for the professional theremin player or curious newcomer. It's controlled by moving one's hands in the air in the proximity of two metal antennas — one for pitch, and one for volume. Other improvements include enhanced bass response and stability in the low registers; updated antenna connections for quick assembly and easy removal; and a quick-release mic stand adapter. [moogmusic.com](http://moogmusic.com)



### Instant Recordings

iK Multimedia's iRig Pro Quattro I/O is a four-in/two-out field-recorder and audio/MIDI interface with up to 24-bit, 96kHz conversion and a MEMS mic onboard. A deluxe bundle is available with custom iRig XY stereo mic capsules and complete accessories. The iRig Pro Quattro I/O offers four high-quality, low-noise mic preamps with phantom power; Hi-Z and line-level instrument, RCA and TRS inputs; plus XLR balanced, 3.5mm stereo and headphone outputs and full MIDI I/O. [ikmultimedia.com](http://ikmultimedia.com)





JAN PERSON

John Coltrane's landmark composition "Giant Steps" invites tonal exploration.

# 'Giant Steps' as Shorter Steps

As an educator, I'm always looking for ways to bridge the wide gap between improvising over the more common cycle-of-fifths standard tunes and "Giant Steps," with its unsettling newness of the "up a minor third, down a fifth" chord progressions that frequent John Coltrane's landmark composition (see Example 1). So, as in life, I look for what is shared in common! That can lead to greater successes and often dwarfs what divides us.

My friend and colleague Neil Gonsalves, director of the Centre for Jazz and Popular Music at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa, recently composed his own tune-variation, "Little Giants," posting it

online and inviting others to solo over it. The resulting progression of descending chords, though not compatible with Coltrane's own melody, frequently substituted minor chords for dominants. To explore it, visit <https://tinyurl.com/4a7hewen>; see #littlegiants on Facebook; or look up Gonsalves' name and "Little Giants" on Facebook or YouTube for a link to his Google folder of backing-track plus lead sheets in various keys.

Gonsalves' chord progression replaced Coltrane's opening sequence of Bmaj7-D7-Gmaj7-B $\flat$ 7-E $\flat$ maj7 with Bmaj7-B $\flat$ m11-A $\flat$ maj7-Gm11-Fmaj7. The pattern of major, minor, major, minor, major must have resonated with me, though the arrival-chord was

not Coltrane's E $\flat$ maj7.

Later, while mentoring a student in a subsequent lesson, I recognized a different tonal organization for "Giant Steps" that I don't recall encountering previously. I can't imagine I'm the first one to conceive of it; but since this uncommon approach has since greatly assisted performances by improvisors newer to the tune, I'm outlining it here for you and your own students to share and explore.

## 2-for-5 & 5-for-2

The original opening phrase of "Giant Steps" quickly hits you with its novel cycle: Bmaj7-D7-Gmaj7-B $\flat$ 7-E $\flat$ maj7. The ingenuity of third-leaps upward (instead of fifths down-

### Example 1: "Giant Steps" (original changes)

ORIGINAL: Bmaj7 D7 Gmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Am7 D7

Gmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Gb7 Bmaj7 Fm7 Bb7

Ebmaj7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7 C#m7 F#7

Bmaj7 Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 C#m7 F#7

### Examples 2-3

Am7 D9 Am7 D9sus

IN G: II V IN G: II V

### Example 4

VARIATION: Bmaj7 Am7 Gmaj7 Fm7 Ebmaj7

ORIGINAL: Bmaj7 D7 Gmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7

### Examples 5-6

D9sus Bb9sus D9 Bb7

= Am7/D b = Fm7/Bb = Am7/D b = Fm7/Bb

### Example 7

VARIATION: Bmaj7 Am7 Gmaj7 Fm7 Ebmaj7 D7

ORIGINAL: Bmaj7 D7 Gmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Am7 D7

### Example 8

VARIATION: Gmaj7 Fm7 Ebmaj7 C#m7 Bmaj7 Bb7

ORIGINAL: Gmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Gb7 Bmaj7 Fm7 Bb7

### Example 9

VARIATION: Ebmaj7 D7 Gmaj7 F#7

ORIGINAL: Ebmaj7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7 C#m7 F#7

Bmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 F#7

Bmaj7 Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 C#m7 F#7

### Example 10

VARIATION: Ebmaj7 D7 Gmaj7 F#7

ORIGINAL: Ebmaj7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7 C#m7 F#7

Bmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 C#m7

Bmaj7 Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 C#m7 F#7

### Example 11: "Shorter Steps" (harmonic variation)

Bmaj7 Am7 Gmaj7 Fm7 Ebmaj7 D7

Gmaj7 Fm7 Ebmaj7 C#m7 Bmaj7 Bb7

Ebmaj7 D7 Gmaj7 F#7

Bmaj7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 C#m7 OR F#7

ward), plus shifting key-centers mid-measure (instead of the more-typical barline-locale) can be disorienting, especially if transposing the tune to different keys.

While ii-V progressions may seem more familiar, I regularly remind my students that when it comes to chords, "any ii can have its V, and any V can have its ii." Both chords exist in the one key, one family; and only one tone of emphasis needs to change above the bass tone for a ii7 chord to become a V9 chord (Example 2, shown in G). If you choose not to shift that seventh of the ii chord to the third of the V chord, then the ii7 chord becomes instead a V9sus (Example 3), still very much in the same key.

So if you were to solo over a modal tune of all minor chords, you could still approach soloing as if their related V chords also follow them. And over a tune of all dominant chords, such as a basic blues, you could consider adding in their respective preceding minor ii chords (as demonstrated in so many bebop blues tunes).

That established, what happens if we replace each dominant V chord in the first three bars of this four-measure "Giant Steps" progression with instead its related ii chord? We'll arrive at a descending-bass pattern that is more linear throughout the phrase: descending whole-steps representing the same key centers as the original chords. As you can see

in Example 4, Bmaj7-D7-Gmaj7-Bb7-Ebmaj7 becomes Bmaj7-Am7-Gmaj7-Fm7-Ebmaj7.

Now we have a memorable *linear* chord progression (B-A-G-F-Eb) — rather than the original based on leaps (B-D-G-Bb-Eb), and the chords descend in consistent whole-steps. Moreover, we have alternating chord-qualities (major, minor, major, minor, major).

### Suspending Disbelief

The sonic effect, if Coltrane's bass-tones are preserved, is merely as if we'd altered the original D7 to D7sus (Am7/D) and Bb7 to Bb7sus (Fm7/Bb), as shown in Example 5. While I'm not suggesting Am7 and Fm7 as necessarily ideal chord substitutions for *com-*

ping at these locales, they are indeed compatible with Coltrane's melody. For a secondary pianist such as myself, they do increase the ease of comping. And if I further choose to conceive of the Am7 and Fm7 instead as Am6 and Fm6, I've then voiced over Coltrane's bass tones a D9 and B $\flat$ 9 (Example 6) corresponding with the original V chords in the second half of Coltrane's first two measures.

More importantly, this new flow of alternating major and minor qualities, along with their descending roots, preserves the key cen-

ters of the tune while providing a linear-thinker harmonic steps that are not so giant — a perspective that is initially easier to process.

Complete the phrase with the dominant chord originally found in the fourth bar; and we find that although its quality is indeed dominant, the bass still descends, now by half-step, from E $\flat$ maj7 to the fourth measure's D7: Bmaj7–Am7–Gmaj7–Fm7–E $\flat$ maj7–D7 (as in Example 7).

Following a cycle-of-fifths drop from measure four to five, the next four measures then

transform into a harmonic pattern parallel to the first four, now a major third lower, becoming Gmaj7–Fm7–E $\flat$ maj7–C#m7–Bmaj7–B $\flat$ 7 (see Example 8).

### The Easy Part

The last eight bars of "Giant Steps" are considered simpler by most musicians since no minor-third chord-leaps ensue. Yet, we can simplify them further with the oft-used concept of eliminating the ii chords and focusing more on the Vs. This creates four pairs of chords that descend by half-step while shifting quality from major to dominant and back — each pair descending a fifth to the next pair. Thus, the third four-bar phrase becomes Ebmaj7–D7–Gmaj7–F#7 and the fourth phrase Bmaj7–B $\flat$ 7–E $\flat$ maj7–F#7 (Example 9).

By doing so, we have created a minor-third progression in the final two bars (E $\flat$ maj7–F#7). If you prefer to eliminate all minor-third progressions, then, in the final bar, use the original C#m7 instead of the original F#7 (thus the ii for its V, as in Example 10), resulting in a descending whole-step movement from the preceding E $\flat$ maj7 to the C#m7 (Bmaj7–B $\flat$ 7–E $\flat$ maj7–C#m7) and another one proceeding from that C#m7 to the Bmaj7 at the top of the next chorus of the tune.

### Shorter Steps

John Coltrane's original chords and melody display not only musical brilliance but mathematical elegance. The shorter steps above, derived from the original, have their own elegance, arriving at the 16-bar progression (shown in totality in Example 11) that a budding soloist could visualize over the original comping.

If you find "Giant Steps" a challenge, give this alternate look a try. Share it with others, and then work back towards Coltrane's original changes. Remember that a speedy tempo is not required to enjoy the beauty of these harmonies. If you've already mastered his progressions, you may find — as some of my more advanced students have — that soloing with these mostly stepwise chords in mind can open up some new perspectives for your improvisations.

Find PDFs of these chord progressions printed in the keys of C, B $\flat$ , E $\flat$  and F, plus a play-along track archived with this article, at [garciamusic.com/educator/articles/articles.html](http://garciamusic.com/educator/articles/articles.html). DB

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Trombonist, vocalist, composer and educator Antonio García ([ajgarcia@vcu.edu](mailto:ajgarcia@vcu.edu)) is the former director of jazz studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, who recently relocated to his native New Orleans. See his related DownBeat articles at the above link, such as "Improvising over Contemporary Harmonies Using Common Tones," "Sub-Progressions as Sub-Targets," "Red Top Blues Variations," "Unlocking Standard Tunes: Use Your Keys!" and "Reharmonizing Melodies 'On the Bus,'" as well as his book *Cutting the Changes: Jazz Improvisation via Key Centers* (Kjos Music).

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Melissa Aldana uses more than three octaves of range here.



MARK SHELDON

# Melissa Aldana's Tenor Sax Solo on 'Emilia'

This year heralds Melissa Aldana's first album on Blue Note Records: *12 Stars*. It's the Chilean tenor saxophonist's sixth recording as a leader, and

the first to document a collaboration with Norwegian-born guitarist Lage Lund, who produced and cowrote the entire album with Aldana. They are joined on *12 Stars* by

a band of aces that includes pianist Sullivan Fortner, drummer Kush Abadey and bassist Pablo Menares.

The entire album is a fantastic listen, and

I found “Emilia,” a slower, moodier piece, particularly evocative. And check out those changes: slash chords, seventh chords and even some simple triads, all in the same song, and not necessarily in the same key (make that *not at all* in the same key). The solo here is presented in concert key, but is octave-transposed (as tenor saxophone often is). So, the part marked *8va* (measures 16–22) is actually at concert pitch.

I often point out soloists’ use of range, and Aldana uses more than three octaves. The highest note is the D<sub>5</sub> in bar 21 and the lowest note is the B<sub>1</sub> in bar 14.

Another improvisational device that has been discussed in previous Transcription columns has been the technique of playing the highest pitch around the midpoint of the solo, creating a climax. Aldana, however, does the opposite here, and puts that low B<sub>1</sub> at almost the very middle.

Curiously, that high D<sub>5</sub> almost bisects the remainder of her improvisation, producing a sort of secondary climax. Adding to that, after this highest pitch, Aldana, over the course of the following two bars, makes her way down to a resounding low B natural.

This traversing a little over three octaves in 10 bars may come off as extreme, but we hear this sort of octave-hopping quite a bit in this improvisation. Bars 4–5 start on a high D and end on a low D, plummeting two octaves in seven beats. We get a similar two-octave drop from the high F# in the center of bar 8 to the low F# on the second beat of the 10th measure (also taking up seven beats).

The bottom B<sub>1</sub> around the midpoint was arrived at from a descent starting at a C two octaves up, but this time Aldana makes the trip in about one measure. And in the middle of bar 22, we start on a very high G and by the middle of the next measure have descended two-and-a-half octaves to a low D. These are the extreme examples, but you’ll notice many of Aldana’s lines cover an octave or more.

One convention Aldana does adhere to a bit more closely is the use of increasing rhythmic density. There is an escalation of it throughout, from eighths to triplets to 16ths to 16th-note triplets and eventually some 32nds toward the end (in measures 25–26). But it isn’t totally linear — that would be predictable and therefore potentially uninteresting. In fact, the most sparse playing Aldana does is when she hits the highest part of her range here (bars 19–21, coinciding with that secondary climax).

And the 32nd notes appear near the end, but not at the end (four bars before the end, to be exact). Notice that the 16th-note triplets occur during and one bar before and

after these measures. Aldana brings our ears from 16ths through 16th-note triplets to 32nds and back through 16th-note triplets to 16ths, creating an arc of rhythmic energy. After that there isn’t much more to say, and she concludes her improvisation.

Phrasing is another aspect Aldana approaches with an ear toward variation. Notice how often she plays over the bar line (measures 4–5, 7–8, 11–12, 13–14, 22–23, 26–27 and 28–29 are some clear examples), and there are also points where she doesn’t play before or on the first beat (like playing a rest over the bar line, sort of analogous to negative space in painting). Bars 6–7, 12–13 and 24–25 are all instances of this technique, as well as, in a different way, measures 19–20, where Aldana creates a similar effect by holding a high C over the bar line.

An added facet of playing over the bar

line, a device Aldana uses sparingly, is anticipation. There are a few places where she starts playing on the chord before it happens. Sometimes it’s a small amount — like in the middle of bar 26, when she plays the G natural on the A major seventh, but it’s not even a full eighth note before the A<sub>1</sub>maj7, or the B<sub>1</sub> 16th note at the end of measure 18, presaging the B<sub>1</sub>6 on the Bm/A.

In other places, Aldana anticipates chord changes a little sooner (see measures 7 and 13), but never as much as a full beat (she comes the closest at the end of bar 10). Regardless, this still produces the sense of falling forward into the next chord and fuels the momentum of her improvisation. **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. He recently released an album of Indian classical music played on the string bass, titled *Border Of Hiranyaloka*. Find out more at [jimidurso.bandcamp.com](http://jimidurso.bandcamp.com).



Pianist Dan Tepfer, one of the developers of FarPlay, jams online with bassist Christian McBride.

COURTESY OF DAN TEPFER

# FarPlay Delivers on Promise: Live Collaboration at a Distance

Jamming live with musicians in different locations has been a promise of the internet for almost 20 years, but one that has remained largely unfulfilled. Popular conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams create latency — a mere nuisance in conversation, but utterly unusable in terms of musical interaction.

FarPlay, a new tool developed by musicians for musicians, attempts to change all that. It's the brainchild of jazz keyboardist and composer Dan Tepfer, who saw a need for music to bring people together during the social isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, and veteran Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) developer Anton Runov. The cross-platform app (Windows, MAC and Linux) uses a simple peer-to-peer topology, allowing groups of performers to interact in real-time via ultra-low-latency audio and video — empowering real-time jamming at a level of quality and convenience not possible until now. This is quite a distinct advantage compared to music-collaboration software that requires a central server, which adds a middle-man factor that increases data travel time and,

therefore, audible latency.

Tepfer and Runov developed what became the Broadcast Output of the experimental online collaboration app JackTrip, which Tepfer used throughout the pandemic to stream live duo concerts with jazz musicians like Cécile McLorin Salvant, Fred Hersch, Gilad Hekselman, Melissa Aldana, Linda May Han Oh, Miguel Zenón, Antonio Sánchez, Kristin Berardi, Christian McBride, Aaron Diehl and others.

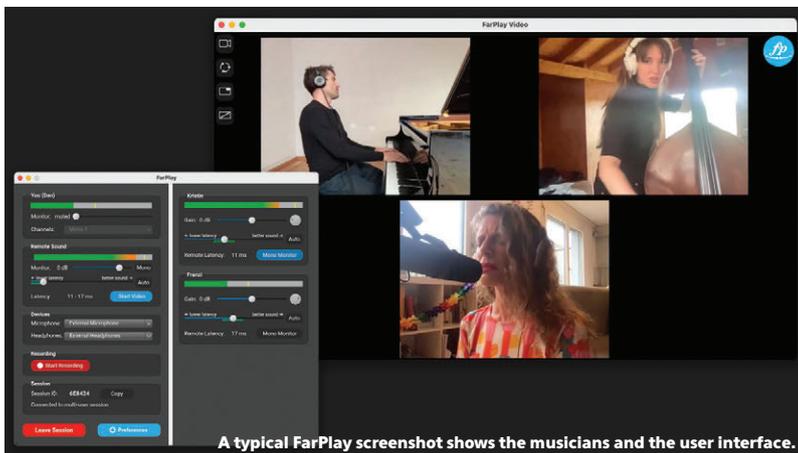
Applying his experience using JackTrip as a musician, Tepfer designed the visual interface and the web server, aiming to simplify the process of connection and setup as much as possible. Runov wrote a new codebase that circumvented the need to open ports on the user's router and integrating direct latency measurement, among many other features.

Ultimately, they took the best elements of JackTrip — unbeatable stability and low latency — and made them more easily accessible in a brand new app of their own. Using FarPlay, musicians hundreds or even thousands of miles apart can rehearse, perform and record as though they were literally in the same room. Online,

FarPlay can deliver mic-to-speaker latencies well under 20 milliseconds in many situations, which is unnoticeable to performers. For session recording, FarPlay captures separate high-resolution tracks for each participant that can then be imported into a DAW for further development. For real-time recording or webcasting, FarPlay offers separate outputs for monitoring and broadcast, the latter ensuring that the audience hears all the musicians in studio quality and in as perfect sync as they hear each other.

DownBeat participated in a demo session of FarPlay this fall that began with an online meet-and-greet, quickly moved into a swinging blues jam, took a minor-key romp through a jazz standard and finally settled into an intimate ballad performance.

Getting started with FarPlay was as easy as Tepfer said it would be. After downloading and installing the app, I connected a Samson G-Track Pro studio mic with built-in audio interface to the USB port of my MacBook Pro. I had my baritone saxophone warmed up and ready to go. Tepfer sent me an invitation-to-jam link, I clicked on it and next thing you know,



A typical FarPlay screenshot shows the musicians and the user interface.



A FarPlay session with singer Cécile McLorin Salvant



COURTESY DAN TEPFER

Tepfer applied his extensive experience using JackTrip.

I'm practically in the same room as the pianist, who was overseas in Paris, and bassist Massimo Biolcati, who joined our session from New York, some 750 miles away from my setup in Chicago.

We checked our levels in the headphones and made sure our gain inputs were in the green before launching into a medium-tempo blues in F, just bass and bari. It was a "Eureka!" moment: Everything felt natural and good. I instinctively started laying back on the beat, and the two of us held it together as easily as if we were in the studio together side by side. Liberated and suddenly feeling playful in such a comfortable setting, I started experimenting — doubling up the time on my solo, playing hits that landed right on top of the beat and closely following Biolcati's lines (via audio) and body-movement cues (via video) for more spontaneous interaction.

Tepfer joined on piano for a minor-key romp through "Autumn Leaves," completing the trio and giving a sense of just how well FarPlay works even when multiple performers are involved.

When time came for Biolcati to split, Tepfer and I elected to play through the Duke Ellington ballad "In A Sentimental Mood" as a duo. The back-and-forth and give-and-take that spontaneously took place between sax and piano was exquisite. The ever-so-slight audio delay caused by the 4,000 miles between us didn't even come into play in this relaxed, rubato-like context.

I found the user interface for FarPlay to be

incredibly intuitive, so it was a piece of cake to adjust each player's level in my headphone mix, tweak my own input signal and find a sweet spot for the latency setting.

Shortly after the conclusion of our session, Tepfer sent me a WAV file mix of the high-resolution tracks that were captured during our performances — something any FarPlay user can easily learn to do. The sound was not only superior to what we heard live in our monitor mix, it was full, crisp and suitable for mastering.

It was a rewarding hang, to say the least, and totally worthwhile — every musician with access to a computer should experience a FarPlay hookup to feel the music-making magic it helps foster. It will surely change the way musicians collaborate going forward, so players, vocalists and engineers would be well advised to get onboard now.

With FarPlay, musicians can sense one another's presence over the internet, inspiring better and more organic performances. Likewise, teachers can directly interact with students practically anywhere on the globe.

FarPlay works with any computer system's external audio interface or built-in audio hardware, like any other music software. It also offers fine-tuned control over buffering, allowing users to locate the precise spot that eliminates both latency and audio dropouts.

FarPlay is the easiest to use of any remote-

collaboration software we've evaluated so far. Tepfer and his team made sure that musicians don't need to be network experts to enjoy the app's benefits immediately. There's no need to configure a server, open ports on a router or go through elaborate setup procedures. Starting or joining a FarPlay session is as easy as using Zoom, only everything looks and sounds way better. And, since no server is involved, audio data is securely shared between session-mates.

Further features of FarPlay constitute a professional engineer's dream: uncompressed audio for studio-quality sound and human-feeling connection, built-in low-latency video, an intuitive interface focused on speed and usability, a super-efficient codebase for the lowest-possible mic-to-headphone latencies, no time limit on sessions, no specialized hardware, real-time monitoring of participants' sound levels, real-time monitoring of latency with unprecedented accuracy and persistent sessions where participants can leave and return to sessions freely.

FarPlay is now available in a free version that offers the app's essential features. A Standard subscription (\$5.99/month) includes advanced features such as persistent sessions, multi-user sessions and freedom from time limits. The Standard Plus tier (\$7.99/month) offers multitrack recording and separate multi-channel broadcast output. —Ed Enright

[farplay.io](http://farplay.io)

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## Jim McNeely & Ryan Truesdell, Part II

During this year's International Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers symposium in Austin, Texas, celebrated jazz orchestrators Jim McNeely and Ryan Truesdell administered the DownBeat Blindfold Test to each other, onstage in front of a live audience. In advance of the event, each artist chose four tracks for his counterpart to identify over the course of the test, for a total of eight musical selections — the second half of which are presented here. (Part I of this Double Blindfold Test appeared in DownBeat's November issue.)

### Rabih Abou-Khalil

"Ma Muse M'amuse" (*The Cactus Of Knowledge*, Enja, rec'd 2000). Abou-Khalil, oud, composer/arranger.

**Ryan Truesdell:** I have no clue. Is it a big band?

**Jim McNeely:** More of a medium-size band.

**Ryan:** I love the really low clarinets and kind of violent harmonies going up and down. Is it a trombone player?

**Jim:** No.

**Ryan:** Then I don't know.

**Jim:** It's a guy I've worked with in Frankfurt, the oud player Rabih Abou-Khalil. He was born in Lebanon, grew up in Germany and lives in France. This is an album he did in the U.S. with Dave Ballou playing trumpet, Antonio Hart on alto, Dave Bergeron on euphonium, and the tuba player is a guy he works with a lot, his name is Michel Godard. He plays on this and he's the bassist — he goes on forever, this guy is amazing. And the drummer is Jerrod Cagwin, an American who moved over to Europe.

Rabih wrote this. It's French for "my muse amuses me," and everything is in really precise unison. He studied Western composition, and when I arranged his music for the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, everything was very precisely notated, and very well, in groups of two and threes; the meter changes all the time. He told me, "Tell the cats it's not complicated, it's all about twos and threes." It was remarkable stuff, once everyone really learned it. The other thing is, with a piece like this, there's no harmony. You can't talk about hip voicings; there aren't any. It's unison and octaves.

**Ryan:** He changes the scale every once in a while, and that's where [the feeling of harmony] is coming from. There's no [traditional] bass. I'm glad you picked this — I definitely want to check it out. 10 stars, 11.

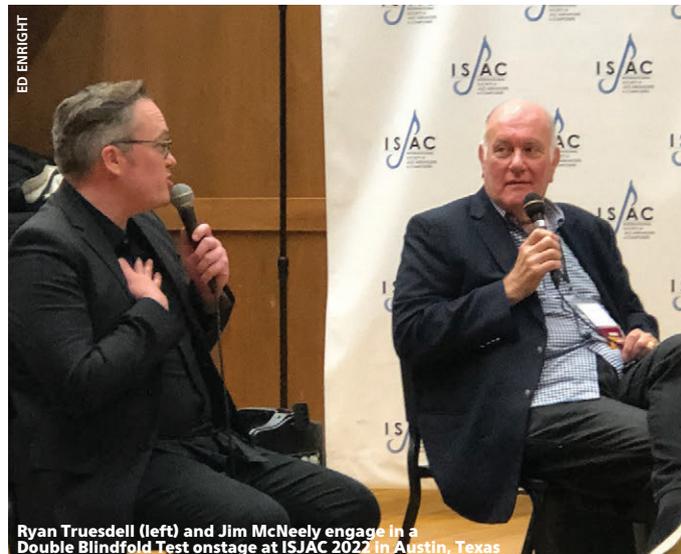
### Vanessa Perica Orchestra

"Dance Of The Zinfandels" (*Love Is A Temporary Madness*, Independent Release, 2020) Perica, arranger/composer.

**Jim:** That's great. I don't know who it is. And I love the part where the rhythm section drops out and the horns keep the rhythm going. A lot of times if you lose the rhythm section and the horns are so used to sitting back on the rhythm section, you take the rhythm section out and it starts to sag. These people were really pushing it.

**Ryan:** Vanessa Perica is an Australian composer. I just found out about her, and her record just blew me away. It's really incredible. It's a band of Australians. From what I know of her, she went to school for music and did composition for a while and then decided to step away. For a period of time she worked fashion and then decided to come back, and this was sort of her debut record after she came back. The whole record is remarkable.

**Jim:** I'll give that 1,226 stars.



Ryan Truesdell (left) and Jim McNeely engage in a Double Blindfold Test onstage at ISJAC 2022 in Austin, Texas

### Oliver Nelson Orchestra

"Sound Piece For Jazz Orchestra" (*Sound Pieces*, Impulse!, rec'd 1966) Nelson, soprano saxophone, composer/arranger.

**Ryan:** I don't think I know, but I'm going to take a guess. Is it Oliver Nelson? I recognize his language, but I don't remember this record with such a huge band.

**Jim:** It's from a record called *Sound Pieces*, and this is called "Sound Piece." It's an L.A. band: Ray Brown is playing bass, Shelly Manne on drums, and then [trumpeter] Conte Candoli and a lot of other West Coast people. This piece had a huge impact on me when I was in high school. I heard this and thought, this is what I want to do. I went to a stage band camp my senior year in high school, and I was in an arranging class with Oliver Nelson, and I got to meet him.

The remarkable thing about this piece is, he wrote it for the Stuttgart Radio Big Band. And reading the liner notes, that was the first inkling I had that there are these bands in Europe that work for the radio, and little did I know I would base about 25 years of my career working with European radio bands. He wrote this for them, but then he recorded in L.A. Later on in the piece he plays.

**Ryan:** I would have recognized his playing, his harmonic language. ... I love the repetition, but it changes all the time, in an interesting way.

**Jim:** "I've got French horns, I'm gonna use them." [*scats a horn line*] That line is a tough one.

**Ryan:** That's what was throwing me off, because I knew he did wider stuff, but I thought, "That's a really big orchestra." 1,226 stars plus 2.

### Billy Childs Ensemble

"A Man Chasing The Horizon" (*Autumn: In Moving Pictures*, ArtistShare, 2010) Childs, piano, composer/arranger.

**Jim:** I'm stumped. I love it, the way it shifts textures, but I have no idea who it is. [*audience members help identify Billy Childs*]

**Ryan:** It's from the second jazz chamber record that Billy did.

**Jim:** That's the one I don't have.

**Ryan:** I love how he does all of the modern things but then he has that orchestral stuff.

**Jim:** And he still plays his ass off.

**Ryan:** There's a whole section here where it's just him and rhythm section and they keep going and going. I love the orchestration with the strings and the harp.

**Jim:** I'll give Billy a bazillion stars.

DB

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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