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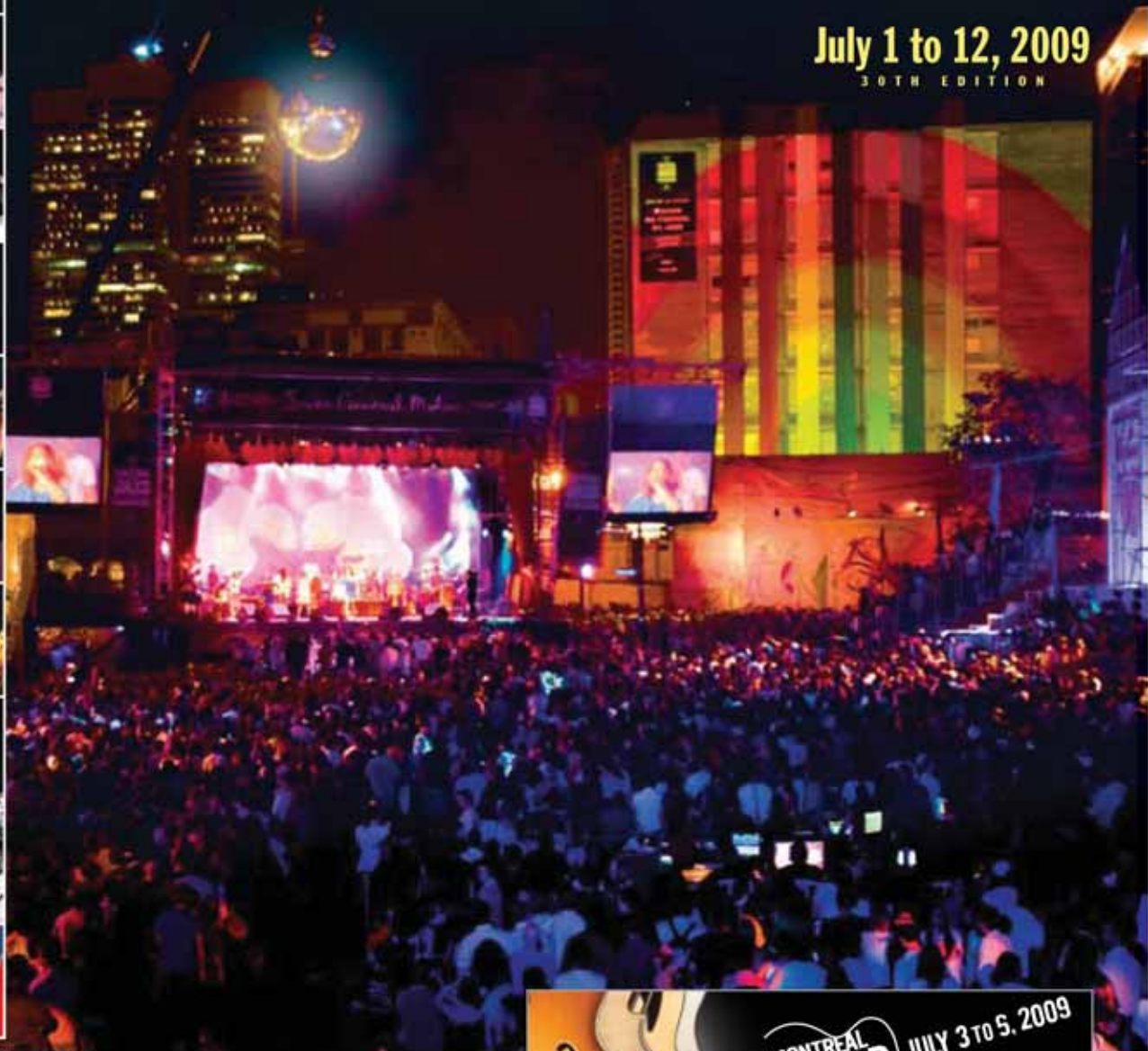
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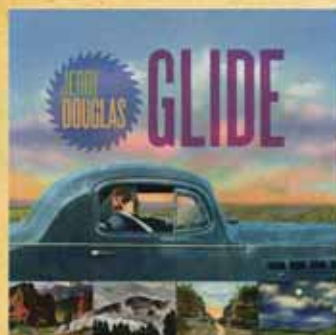
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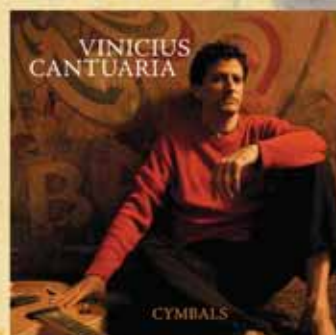
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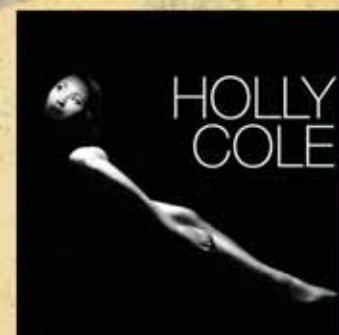
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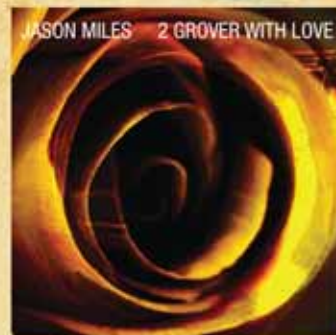
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## First Take

By Frank Alkyer

## Appreciation for a Pit-Bull Publicist

Peter Levinson would have loved this: an article on Page 8, the editorial page. But somehow, I can hear him saying, "Next time, Mr. Alkyer, what can we do about the cover?"

You see, Levinson was a publicist. He spent his life calling on newspaper and magazine editors, television producers and radio DJs. He promoted some of the greatest musicians who ever lived—like Frank Sinatra, Woody Herman, Artie Shaw, the Modern Jazz Quartet and Dr. Billy Taylor—and more than a few who never quite made it. Still, he gave them all a push.

That alone marks an impressive career in my book. But saying Levinson was a publicist is like saying Count Basie—one of Levinson's clients—was a piano player. Levinson was the dean, the godfather, the mack daddy of jazz publicists.

Unfortunately, I have to talk about Levinson in the past tense. He died Oct. 21, 2008, due to head injuries that resulted from a fall in his Malibu, Calif., home. He was 74. For almost two years Levinson suffered from ALS, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. The disease eventually took his speech, but not his will, or ability, to work. He learned to use a computer into which he would type his thoughts and it would speak for him. The disease probably had as much to do with the fall as anything else. His mind was still sharp. Unfortunately, his body failed him.

On the day he fell, according to his longtime assistant, Petra Schwarzwald, Levinson was working on a publicity plan for Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band. That was Levinson. He had no plans to retire. When he found a client he thought had real talent, like Goodwin, he'd champion their cause with vigor and intensity. In the last decade, he didn't take on as many clients. Instead, he wrote biographies, championing his musical heroes. He wrote four—all well-researched and great reads—about Harry James, Nelson Riddle, Tommy Dorsey and Fred Astaire.

But Levinson was best-known as a stylish, smart, old-school, pit-bull publicist. He began his career working for Columbia Records in the 1950s. He branched out into television and film publicity, but music, especially jazz, was his first love. His agency, Peter Levinson Communications, was one of the first independent publicity firms that catered to the music



Frank Sinatra and Peter Levinson on the set of the 1962 film *Sergeants 3*.

COURTESY LEVINSON COMMUNICATIONS

industry. It serves as a model for scores of similar agencies that exist today.

In hindsight, Levinson created a whole school of publicity, and his disciples are among the best-known publicity pros and talent representatives working in jazz—Don Lucoff, Arnold J. Smith, Michael Bloom and a host of others. Unless you're a jazz insider, you won't know these names, but you'd know their clients. That's the life of a publicist. They aim to make their clients stars and make their star clients legends. Levinson did this as well as anyone in the business, and he taught a host of others his methods.

"Peter was the Art Blakey of jazz publicists," said Lucoff, whose DL Media works with a wide variety of top jazz artists and record companies like Blue Note. "He gave so many of us a shot. He let us develop our chops and let us go on to become our own 'band leaders.'"

Michael Bloom, a West Coast publicist who represents a number of jazz artists and labels, worked for Levinson for only six months before talking his way into a gig at Gramavision, but it was time well spent.

"I immediately started working with Chuck Mangione, Rosemary Clooney, the MJQ, et al.," Bloom said. "Peter taught me to know all there is to know about that which you publicize, always follow up to make sure that the writer received the package, and always wear a tie."

"He was the last of the old-school publicists, at least for jazz, and there won't be anyone like him again."

DB



A man in a dark pinstripe suit, white shirt, and a red and white checkered tie is holding a gold saxophone. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a textured, metallic wall.

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#### When Tony Met Elvin

I was in attendance at Count Basie's club in New York to witness the Tony Williams Trio with John McLaughlin and Larry Young. It was the buzz around town, and even before then, Tony had energized us aspiring jazz musicians by joining Miles Davis at such a tender age. But what was more interesting was the time I met Tony when I was with Elvin Jones' group at Carnegie Hall. Tony seemed like a little boy in Elvin's presence and Elvin, being a most gracious individual, made Tony feel at home. A good time was had by all. Those were some heady days.

Gene Perla  
New York

#### Big Bands Thrive, With Fans' Help

Big bands are alive and well, albeit in a different form than previous days when bands could tour all year and make great strides in the music. University big bands are making great strides as vehicles for talented young players and writers alike. The radio bands of Europe are recording compelling specialty projects with jazz greats on a regular basis. There are countless big bands springing up around the world with aspiring young composers and players. I've worked with many of them.

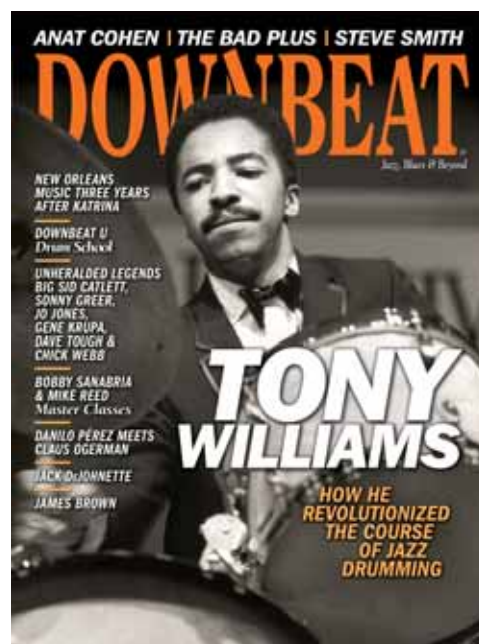
There are other bands that have cultivated a sound and style through years of perseverance, determination and consistent personnel. I'm particularly referring to the Bill Holman Big Band, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and my own band. Please support these organizations through buying their CDs and attending their concerts.

Bob Mintzer  
Los Angeles

#### No Place for Indoctrination

Mike Reed writes that while he and his peers were being indoctrinated into learning complex big band charts, he found it "shocking" to hear McCoy Tyner say how little music was written down during his time with John Coltrane ("Master Class," November '08). This shock effect comes from the bland institutionalization of jazz. Universities don't allow students to learn from the master improvisers and most instructors can't get hip to this free-jazz thing, anyhow. Most information students gain from free improvisers are gained on the streets.

Darrl Lynn  
Richmond, Va.



#### Hooked on DB

After reading my first DownBeat around 1963 in my drum teacher's studio, I was hooked. You've put out some great issues since then, but the recent Tony Williams issue (November '08) was the best I ever read. It's also understandable that today's students have no idea who most of the great drummers are, including Buddy Rich. Those of us who lived through the past 50 years could go out and see these great performers, which in turn motivated us to read more about them and that gave us the opportunity to hear first-hand from our idols about those who came before them. The only negative comment I have about the Williams issue was that I read it all in one night.

Michael Ruggelo  
mruggelo@whittier.tec.ma.us

#### Jarrett Buzz Kill

I saw the Keith Jarrett Trio at Symphony Hall in Boston on Oct. 26, 2008. The concert was incredible and the energy palpable. But when the trio came back out to play its third encore, Jarrett said he was distracted by a blue light and scolded the audience before walking off the stage. To say the mood was broken would be an understatement. Jarrett has a history of such outbursts and it is not acceptable or professional behavior. Maybe he should stay in the studio.

Grace Strake  
Boston

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Javon Jackson

## Latin Boost

**Miguel Zenón's MacArthur Fellowship may hint at rising institutional support for Latin jazz**

At 16, saxophonist Miguel Zenón gave up a full scholarship to engineering school in his native Puerto Rico to take a chance on music. "For some time I thought, 'If it doesn't work out, I'll start over,'" he said. "But it kept getting better and it seemed like I had taken the right road."

If funding is any indication, it's clear now that his decision was the right one. In early 2008, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to compose music based on the Puerto Rican folkloric plena. In September, he was named a MacArthur Fellow. The MacArthur Fellowship is an award of \$500,000—handed out over five years—granted without application by a secret nominating committee of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Over the years, winners working in jazz have included Ornette Coleman, Regina Carter, Max Roach, Cecil Taylor and John Zorn.

But Zenón is the first Latin American or Caribbean jazz artist to receive the fellowship in its 27-year history. He has lately focused on synthesizing folkloric music from Puerto Rico with modern jazz. His 2006 release, *Jíbaro* (Marsalis Music), reworked the traditional instrumentation of the rural Puerto Rican music of the same name.

Zenón has yet to develop definite plans for using the MacArthur money. The ideas at the top of the list include further investigation of the history and development of music in Latin America.

"I've always been interested in the connection between Latin American countries and African countries," Zenón said. "This is maybe a good opportunity to start putting that research into progress."

Synthesis has always been an important part of the criteria on which potential MacArthur Fellows are evaluated, according to Mark Fitzsimmons, the associate director of the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship Program.

"The ability to synthesize ideas and contributions for apparently disparate areas that come together as a whole is a clue about creativity," Fitzsimmons said. "We don't change our criteria to address any perceived social

agenda, but we do make an effort to be inclusive of who we consider."

Even though Latin American and Caribbean artists have profoundly influenced the development of jazz in the United States—from the Caribbean rhythms in music coming out of New Orleans to Zenón's recent study of jíbaro and plena—it seems that until now the foundational support system in this country has been slow to catch on. Zenón's MacArthur provides one hint that this may be changing.

In the late '90s, the Doris Duke Foundation began pouring more dollars into local programs supporting jazz with roots in Latin American cultures. The National Endowment for the Arts has named more than 100 Jazz Masters since 1982, but it wasn't until 2004 after the program was expanded that artists of Latin American heritage began to make their way onto this list, which now includes Paquito D'Rivera, Ray Barretto and Candido Camero.

Percussionist John Santos, who serves on the Latin Jazz Advisory Committee of the Smithsonian Institution, said that it is "beyond wonderful that Miguel is being recognized for his creativity. It means a great deal to those of us in the field and particularly those of us of Puerto Rican descent who he represents so beautifully while transcending any boundaries or labels."

But Santos is also wary that such support could dry up in the current climate for all arts funding.

"There are legions of highly deserving composers and performers throughout Latin America and the diaspora who merit support that has traditionally been, and still is, scarce," Santos said. "I would describe the current atmosphere as hostile toward the arts in general with the decimation of the National Endowment for the Arts as well as state arts councils across the country."

It's hard to say whether Zenón's award will directly open new doors for further institutional support of Latin American and Caribbean artists engaging a synthesis of jazz and their own cultural heritages. But with the award in Zenón's hands, it looks like the connection



Miguel Zenón

MARK SHELTON

between musical cultures will be strengthened at least through his own work. Zenón hopes to put some of the money toward a series of jazz concerts staged in areas of Puerto Rico where students and musicians aren't otherwise exposed to it.

"Part of the reason why people aren't drawn to jazz in general is because they've never had the exposure," said Zenón, who didn't learn much about jazz beyond what he taught himself until after he left San Juan. "Jazz has been put in a place where it's tied to a social class. Things have to be accessible—you have to pay so much to go to concerts and schools. The more regular people who are exposed to the music, it's going to be easier for musicians to make a living."

—Jennifer Odell



## Riffs



**Shemekia Signed:** Blues singer Shemekia Copeland has signed with Telarc. Her debut for the label, *Never Going Back*, will be released on Feb. 24. Details: [telarc.com](http://telarc.com)

**Harrison On-screen:** Saxophonist Donald Harrison, Jr., made his acting debut in the movie *Rachel Getting Married*. Harrison also composed the film's score with violinist Zafer Tawil. Details: [sonyclassics.com](http://sonyclassics.com)

**Abrams, Threadgill Awarded:** Pianist Muhal Richard Abrams and saxophonist Henry Threadgill were named United States Artists Fellows on Nov. 10, 2008. Each fellow is awarded a \$50,000 grant. Details: [unitedstatesartists.org](http://unitedstatesartists.org)

**Historic Head Hunters:** Herbie Hancock's 1973 album *Head Hunters* has been added to the Library of Congress's National Recording Registry for culturally important audio documents. Details: [loc.gov](http://loc.gov)

**Childs Commissioned:** Pianist Billy Childs has been commissioned to write a violin concerto for Regina Carter. The piece will premiere with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in January 2010. Details: [unlimitedmyles.com](http://unlimitedmyles.com)

**Duke For Kids:** Stephanie Stein Crease has written *Duke Ellington: His Life In Jazz*, a biography and activity book for children. Along with providing information about Ellington, the book also shows kids how to construct their own instruments. Details: [chicagoreviewpress.com](http://chicagoreviewpress.com)

**RIP, Dave McKenna:** Pianist Dave McKenna died of lung cancer on Oct. 18, 2008, in State College, Pa. He was 78. McKenna worked as a sideman to Stan Getz before launching his solo career in 1955 and recording often as a leader in the 1970s. He was known for his warm melodic touch and strong bass lines.



Blue Note 7: Ravi Coltrane (left), Lewis Nash, Bill Charlap, Peter Bernstein, Nicholas Payton, Peter Washington and Steve Wilson

## Blue Note Marks 70th Anniversary with New Septet, Concerts and Reworked Classics

When compiling a Blue Note songbook, for each song picked, hundreds of tunes had to be left out. To celebrate the label's 70th birthday in 2009, Blue Note pianist Bill Charlap and six other artists mined the archives and made their selections, creating new arrangements that translate familiar melodies into a modern jazz language.

"Blue Note became a home not just for the best and most creative, most rooted and forward-thinking musicians, but it also has become a testament and document to some of the greatest composers in jazz history," Charlap said.

Charlap's selection, "The Outlaw" by Horace Silver, is one of eight tunes on *Mosaic: A Celebration Of Blue Note Records* by the recently convened Blue Note 7. The septet also includes saxophonists Ravi Coltrane and Steve Wilson and trumpeter Nicholas Payton. Guitarist Peter Bernstein, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Lewis Nash round out the rhythm section. Many of the players arranged tunes on the CD—from Thelonious Monk's "Criss Cross," arranged by Wilson, to Nash's update of "Mosaic" by Art Blakey—creating a 21st-century look at tunes from the bebop and hard-bop eras.

"The arrangements are fresh," said Bruce Lundvall, chief executive officer of Blue Note. "It's not the stock arrangements at all."

Wilson, who also arranged "Little B's Poem" by Bobby Hutcherson, was drawn to the album's concept immediately.

"We're not trying to redo the tunes," Wilson said. "We don't claim to do them better, but it is a wonderful opportunity to bring a new perspective to it. It'll be great to hear this music evolve."

One of the main deterrents to creating an all-star band like the Blue Note 7 comes from

the concept itself. A band of established leaders sounds like a dream, until the reality of scheduling hits.

"Finding a time when all of us could be together and have the time so that all the arrangements could be written, rehearsed and recorded was no small feat," Charlap said. Busy work schedules necessitated speedy recording sessions. "If you think about Joe Henderson's *Our Thing* or Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*, some of those seminal records, they were made quickly."

The pace won't be as hectic when the septet starts a 50-date nationwide tour on Jan. 7, performing the album's tunes and a slew of arrangements that weren't recorded. While the band tours, additional celebrations will be held in New York clubs. A concert series spotlighting Blue Note's emerging talent is scheduled at the Jazz Standard from Feb. 24 to March 1, and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra will join Dianne Reeves and Joe Lovano to perform Blue Note classics from Feb. 19–21 in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater. Other label acts will be sprinkled throughout the city, with a birthday bash at Town Hall tentatively set for June.

"We're trying to get Blue Note artists in every venue in February," Lundvall said.

Throughout the past seven decades, there have been many famous Blue Note artists, and Charlap is realistic about leaving some notable composers out of his band's new recording. Even with a focus on a few distinct periods, it's impossible to recognize every musician that had an impact on the label.

"It's just a snapshot of some of the key figures. There's no way to touch on all of them," Charlap said. "There are easily volumes two, three, four and five."

—Jon Ross

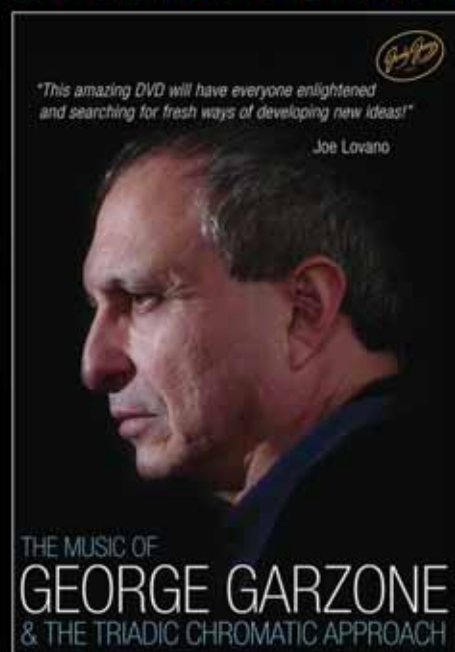


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## Chicago Sessions' Subscription Model Takes One-For-All Approach

Chicago engineer and producer Nick Eipers always trusted Blue Note and ECM while shopping to build his jazz collection. That branding concept gave him the novel idea to start a subscription only jazz label, Chicago Sessions.

Eipers' business plan is simple, but requires a customer's commitment, as a series of 12 new releases are mailed direct to the consumer for an annual fee of \$135.

Eipers believes, given the high local profile of bassist Larry Gray (who released *I, 2, 3 ...* on the label in October 2008) and harmonica player Howard Levy, as well as the local respect given to pianist Marshall Vente and bassist Steven Hashimoto, he has a chance with his unusual business model.

"Jazz lovers take more interest in the artist," Eipers said. "Since Chicago is world famous for its exceptional jazz scene, the concept of providing the best music of that scene in a subscription format doesn't seem ridiculous."

While Hashimoto said that the economy will have a big impact on the label's future, he's impressed that he was provided with the sort of insurance that other small labels don't



offer. His band Mothra released *Tradewind* on Chicago Sessions in December 2008.

"One cool thing about the deal is that should Chicago Sessions go out of business, the artists

have the provision to buy their masters back, so that their project doesn't enter into permanent limbo, as so many fine albums on small labels do," Hashimoto said.

Samples of sessions will be available on the Chicago Sessions web site before purchase, and Eipers hopes positive media reviews will further promote sales. But he is aware that this isn't a get-rich-quick scheme. Many of the artists he intends to support will be up and comers or less familiar names like guitarists Tony do Rosario, Zvonimir Tot and Aaron Koppel. Eipers will also have them present strictly original material.

"Since we are recording original compositions by each artist, subscribers are getting a more personal collection that perhaps some of the big label albums of standards and covers," Eipers said.

"Nick's feeling is that if you want to hear 'Autumn Leaves' there are plenty of other products out there," Hashimoto added. "From my end, it's a nice deal, the kind one rarely sees these days. I was able to pay my sidemen, something no other local label has ever offered."

—Michael Jackson

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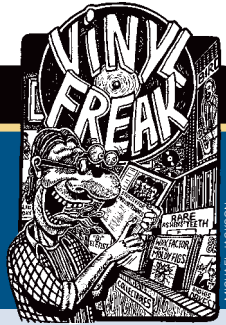




By John Corbett

## Maarten Altena *Papa Oewa*

(CLAXON, 1981)



This month, our column considers the materiality of records. The occasion of this reflection is a recent move. I am marveling over the weight of LPs, but other aspects of their physical existence as well, such as their volume, relative solidity and durability (schlepping them en masse, our movers calculated that one box bore at least 1,000 pounds atop it in the truck), and the dizzying array of variation on the basic circle-in-a-square format.

Surveying the rows of records before preparing for the move, I thought about the basic premise of the album, the way each spine represents roughly the same amount of time, like a proportional composition stretching from one end of the room to the other. Consider such a collection of records as a long multistylistic composition, each  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch swatch of color, text and design a marvel of concision that signifies about 40 minutes of musical time. Taken together, a modest box of records contains about five days of continuous listening. Despite its spatial economy, a bevy of records still has mass and vinyl accumulates with terrifying ease.

Packing up the collection was, for the most part, a cakewalk—just a matter of throwing them into smallish boxes. Records fit together so beautifully; they're made to be amassed. But certain unconventional covers drew attention to themselves automatically through their unwillingness to be safely packed, in particular a few Dutch examples. In Holland, musicians and their designers seem bent on making a mockery of conventions of domestic portaging. I was especially fretful over the velvety purple veneer on the periphery of my mint copy of the Instant Composers Pool classic (never reissued) untitled twofor, a hodgepodge of different groupings from 1969 and 1970. Would it

be crushed in transition? What about multi-tired player Willem Breuker's terrific *Baal Brecht Breuker*, on BVHAAS (1973)? Its burlap second cover makes it impossible to fit in a box with the other LPs. Breuker and pianist Leo Cuypers made one of the boldest odd-shaped covers, taking the normal LP square and turning it into an isosceles triangle, with sides at a tangent to the vinyl's circle. Most of the copies I've seen have been bent to conform to the normal record shape. Mine is a bit ragged, but not folded.

The most subtle subversion of the LP format is perhaps bassist Maarten Altena's solo outing *Papa Oewa*.

First of all, it's a record worth having, and like the rest of the Claxon catalog, it remains exclusively on vinyl. Altena's significance before he turned to classical music can't be overlooked, and the aggressive, open, often hilarious records he made alone and with his great small and mid-sized groups should be sought out vigorously. On *Papa Oewa*, he's playing a lot of cello, some crackle-box, and other odds and sods, as well as his gloriously gawky bass.

Holland was Fluxus-friendly, and that artistic movement's interest in little instruments and alternative packaging makes more sense. What's so confusing about the cover is that it seems, at first blush, to be perfectly usual. On closer inspection, however, it turns out not to be square, but just off-square, a parallelogram, with the top pitching ever so slightly to the right. Hence, when slid into a stack of records, its bottom right always pokes out, and the top left, if jammed in, gets damaged. In the end, I chose to move *Papa Oewa* by hand, like most of those other Dutch weirdos.

DB

E-mail the Vinyl Freak: [vinylfreak@downbeat.com](mailto:vinylfreak@downbeat.com)



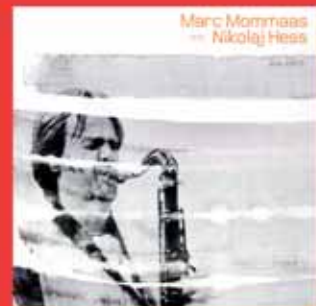
More than 60 years separate the first jazz recording in 1917 and the introduction of the CD in the early '80s. In this column, DB's Vinyl Freak unearths some of the musical gems made during this time that have yet to be reissued on CD.

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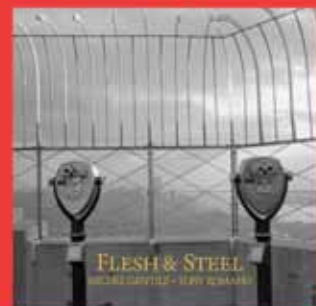
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Bill Gerhardt

Mommaas - Hess

Big Octave

Gentile - Romano





## Documentary Shows How Storm, Hard Times Can't Stop Young New Orleans Brass Band

When New York-based documentary filmmaker Colleen O'Halloran was in New Orleans in August 2005, a young brass band playing on the corner of Bourbon and Canal streets caught her attention. Called the To Be Continued Brass Band, the group of musicians—all still in their late teens and early 20s—sounded like a band with a bright future. Hip-hop superstars The Roots even offered to mentor the group.

"I was hoping they could come to New York and do a music video," O'Halloran said. "I just wanted to be more involved in what they're doing. Then Katrina hit."

Hurricane Katrina changed the group's fate as well as the collaboration that O'Halloran had planned with the band. Instead, she and Jason DaSilva directed and produced the documentary *From The Mouthpiece On Back*, which shows how the storm shattered the group—sending its members to different states—and how they were

determined to reunite. The documentary also delves into the musicians' lives in the city's troubled Ninth and Seventh wards, as well as the group's origins at the city's Carver High School.

"After the storm, if these young musicians don't play the music any more, what will happen to the music?" O'Halloran said. "We refocused it from a story on the band to frame it more so people could understand it's a lineage and we're just hopeful that it might spark more support to New Orleans musicians."

The filmmaker said that the camera's presence was not what inspired their determination.

"They were so into reuniting, I had to catch up with them," O'Halloran said. "I had to get to 10 cities in one week."

Trombonist Edward "Juicy" Jackson said, "We didn't have anything else to look forward to, so we had to get back together."

Today, To Be Continued plays regularly on



## All-Star Percussion Discussion

Percussionist Jack "Mr. Bongo" Costanzo (left) joined legendary congueros Armando Peraza, Candido Camero and Francisco Aguabella for a panel discussion on Oct. 11, 2008, at the Hyatt in Newport Beach, Calif. The event was part of the Los Angeles Jazz Institute's "Big Band Fiesta," which ran throughout the weekend and also featured Bud Shank, Gerald Wilson, Bill Holman and Arturo O'Farrill.

—Mark Sheldon

its old corner as well as in New Orleans clubs, like Rock Bottom Lounge. The group hopes that the documentary—which is being sold online through [fromthemouthpieceonback.com](http://fromthemouthpieceonback.com)—will help with its efforts to tour and record. Part of what makes them stand out is how they adapt their generation's music to the brass band format.

"We're just trying to get all kinds of music a chance," trumpeter Sean Roberts said. "Some people may not like rap or hip-hop, but even older people listen to the form when we're playing it. All music is good."

—Aaron Cohen

## The ARCHIVES

January  
1983

### Woody Shaw: Linked to a Legacy

By Linda Reitman

"If I stick to my convictions, I can work for the next 20 years," Woody Shaw said. "If I change now, I could ruin my career. By sticking to my beliefs, I'm even more strongly convinced I'm going in the right direction."

### The Frith Factor: Exploration in Sound

By Bill Milkowski

"I like the kind of electronics where you can cause something to malfunction in a way that



makes it sound more interesting

than how it was supposed to sound," Fred Frith said. "A lot of the sounds that I get in the studio have been the result of overloading or causing various pieces of technology to malfunction. Interesting things start to happen when things begin to break down."

### Warne Marsh's Inner Melody

By Francis Davis

"At some point, you have to be prepared to create—to perform," Warne Marsh said. "If we're talking about jazz, it fulfills

its meaning only when you play it live in front of an audience."

### Howard Johnson: Center of Gravity

By Lee Jeske

"The tuba's just a musical instrument that's been played badly, and for some pretty good reasons, too," Howard Johnson said. "It's only about 140 years old and it's taken this long for people to figure out what to play on it—how to play on it, what it can do. What it can do is play long tones and get a noble, beautiful sound."

DB



***By Dan Ouellette***

More than any other style of recorded music, jazz has educated and piqued the curiosity of its listeners with album packaging—personnel details, track information and liner notes—often accompanying top-drawer photography or other compelling artwork. This may become invisible as hard-copy albums disappear.

A portrait of actress Julianne Moore. She has long, wavy, reddish-brown hair and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is resting her chin on her right hand, which is raised towards her face. She is wearing a dark, strapless top. The background is a textured, greyish-brown wall.

B. B. KING (Joe) PAUL TURNER (Annie Lennox)  
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GERMAN (Lou Reed) KHARI SIMMONS (India.Arie)  
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PAT METHENY (Pat Metheny Group) KEVIN WILLIAMS (Marle Haggo)  
BOB DYLAN (New Found Road) JIM CREEGGAN (B)  
JIMMY SMITH (Ben Harper And The Innocent Criminals)  
NICKI MINAJ (id) DEAN JARVIS (Nelly Furtado)  
DAVID YOUNG (Coleman) TONY CIMOROSI (R)  
GUY PRESTON (Floyd) ELI WARD (Amanda)

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DB

January 2009 **DOWNBEAT** 21





David Kraus

ANDREW KLEIN

## Guitarist David Kraus Transcends Assault

Two years ago, Vermont-based guitarist David Kraus was hurrying to meet friends for dinner in Brooklyn on an August evening when an assault almost ended his career. While walking toward the subway in the borough he was considering to call home, four teenagers hit him with a piece of lumber from a construction site. After he fell, they broke his dominant arm in three places, ripping the tendons and ligaments from wrist to shoulder.

"The hardest part was not being able to play my instrument," Kraus said. "I'm used to touching my guitar every day—it's part of me. I was scared my career was over. I had to put what I was going through into something, somewhere. I put it into my music."

Instead of giving up, Kraus dug in his heels and underwent six months of intensive physical rehabilitation, exercising three times daily. He also returned to Vermont, becoming more active in social justice causes—especially food and energy—and making music.

The result is a new self-released solo album of classical pieces, *Qasaid Ul Qitara*, due out in March. This soft, acoustic approach shows one side of his multifaceted career. He played with trumpeter Lester Bowie from 1997 until Bowie's death in 1999. Kraus has also worked with tenor saxophonist Big Joe Burrell in 1995.

His latest project will take proceeds from CD sales, concerts and other fundraisers by Vermont musicians and pay for the Vermont Foodbank's food distribution costs.

After all Kraus has been through, his perspective remains grounded.

"I just do what I do because I have to, because I love it," Kraus said. "You deal with adversity and move on." —Jennifer Pierce

## Backstage With ...

By Kirk Silsbee



Javon Jackson

EARL GIBSON

Javon Jackson is a mature tenor saxophonist whose formative experiences in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers have shaped him as a player and bandleader. His new album, *Once Upon A Melody* (Palmetto), pays tribute to the elders he's encountered along the way—particularly Wayne Shorter, Sonny Rollins and McCoy Tyner. In October 2008, Jackson played at the Jazz at Drew series in Los Angeles and spoke about his current direction.

**This weekend you're playing with Les McCann. How did the collaboration between you come about?**

I first met Les McCann when I was with Art Blakey and he used to come hear us. Later, when I was with Elvin Jones, he came around again in Los Angeles and we talked. We agreed that we had to play together some time and we've been playing together since January. Art's band was a school and Les is a certain type of school himself: soul, funk and jazz. We're revisiting some of the *Swiss Movement* material. I'm conscious of what Eddie Harris played on that album, but Les is always open to any ideas I might have. I learned from Art that you can't be anybody but yourself. It would be suicidal for me to try to be anyone but Javon.

**On your new album, you play a piece by one of the greatest Jazz Messengers, Wayne Shorter.**

I realized recently that I'd never recorded

one tune from the Messengers library, so I chose Wayne's "One By One." We used to play that with Art, and Wayne would occasionally sit in with us. That was a thrill and it was a unique way to get close to his genius. Art devoted 50 years of his life to training young musicians. Nobody knew their names before they joined, but no matter who was in the band, it always sounded like Art's band. It was incredible.

**What do you look for in rhythm section players?**

Since I worked with Elvin Jones and Art, I look for drive in drummers—those guys spoiled me. I like to hear a bottom in bass players, but also a good sense of the pulse. I like it when a guitar player is responsive and can play what I call the "free safety" position: He can accompany me or play something in the front line. I need a pianist to have harmonic prowess, good ears, the ability to accompany, but also to challenge me as a soloist. Eric Reed is what I call the complete pianist because he can do everything as a solo player or as a rhythm section player.

**With Elvin Jones, Art and Jimmy Cobb, you've worked with three great yet different drummers.**

No disrespect to the pianists and bassists, but I looked at a rhythm section with Elvin or Art as top-heavy. You'd need somebody like Ray Brown or Buster Williams to make it a fair fight. But Elvin told me that he saw his role as supporting the rhythm section. I've worked with Buster, Christian McBride and Ron Carter, and each one of those guys can make any rhythm section sound like a Rolls-Royce. I appreciate a good rhythm section because I use it as a conduit to what I'm going to play, and I try to support the rhythm section with what I play.

**What aspects of the horn might you explore in the future?**

Going after different styles will help me expand my abilities and myself. The tenor saxophone has two-and-a-half octaves, but there's so much that can be done with it, so much to discover. Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane explored the potential of the horn on so many levels. It's impossible for one person to do everything on the horn, but those two, in particular, lived the quest to the greatest degree. **DB**





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## Jazz on the Mall Offers D.C. a Pre-Election Respite

This year's Duke Ellington Jazz Festival arrived at an ideal time, as news of an economic melt-down and the increasingly heated U.S. Presidential contest gripped most politically minded Washington, D.C., residents. In particular, the event's biggest feel-good distraction came with its Jazz On The Nation's Mall event on Sunday, Oct. 4, 2008, an afternoon graced with perfect autumnal weather.

The lineup, which began with Taj Mahal, delighted many people who sat in front or strolled by the Sylvan Amphitheatre with a steady program of upbeat jazz that ranged from funk-informed fusion (Christian McBride) and pulsating Latin jazz (Conrad Herwig) to entrancing modal bop (McCoy Tyner) and transfixing Afrocentric modern jazz (Dee Dee Bridgewater). The multifaceted program was generally agreeable.

McBride showed his flair for electric jazz as his ensemble, which featured keyboardist Geoffrey Keezer, saxophonist Ron Blake and drummer Terreon Gully, delivered an extended back-to-the-future set that evoked the best of Weather Report and today's funk. While Keezer's electric piano improvisations and shimmers and McBride's throbbing bass lines—on upright and electric—grounded the music in yesterday, Gully's snapping rhythms, which at times suggested West London's broken beat, kept the music firmly in the now. Blake's sinewy tenor saxophone passages nes-

Dee Dee Bridgewater



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

tled then erupted remarkably out of McBride's vigorous grooves.

The show should have set the afternoon for even more tantalizing performances. Instead, the succeeding sets from Herwig and Tyner were anticlimactic. Herwig's Latin ensemble displayed polished professionalism as it delivered Afro-Cuban renditions of chestnuts from the Miles Davis and John Coltrane songbooks. The trombonist and his cohorts retooled songs such as "Seven Steps To Heaven," "Lonnie's Lament" and "So What" with improvisational gusto and rhythmic friction. But there were no surprises other than perhaps Herwig not performing any material from his latest disc, *The Latin Side Of Wayne Shorter*.

Tyner's set also showed great promise, especially as his group featured saxophonist Gary Bartz, bassist Gerald Cannon and drummer

Pheeroan akLaff. But while Tyner displayed his legendary improvisational virtuosity and knack for thundering block chords, the group never gelled.

Bridgewater delivered the afternoon's most satisfying performance. Drawing on music from her latest disc, *Red Earth*, she fronted a large, multicultural ensemble that included pianist Edsel Gomez, bassist Ira Coleman, drummer Minino Garay and percussionist Lansine Kouyate. Gomez's evocative arrangements and the percussion-heavy instrumentation helped save her performance of "Afro Blue" from being contrived. She was at her most mesmerizing during her fiery makeover of Nina Simone's "Four Women," in which she didn't simply sing about the song's four characters, she transformed into them through her vocal prowess and sashaying stage presence. —John Murphy

Curtis Robinson



MICHAEL JACKSON

## Chicago's Hyde Park Festival Brings Music Marathon to South Side

The South Side of Chicago knows how to throw a party, including this neighborhood that's long been associated with the University of Chicago and, now, is internationally known as home to President-elect Barack Obama. The second annual Hyde Park Jazz Festival put on about 30 concerts in a single day on Sept. 27, 2008.

Last year, the festival committee was unsure if its resources would cover more than one day. Given unpredictable fall weather, the event got compressed into 14 hours—noon to 2 a.m. Concerts take place in a plethora of picturesque area venues, including the Smart Museum of Art, Oriental Institute, DuSable Museum of

African American History and Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, as well as the Checkerboard Lounge and the university's Quadrangle Club.

Not only do Hyde Park residents give widespread support for jazz, there was a constant lively interaction between audience and performers at the festival. Chicago's Sax in the City—a quartet of extroverted saxophonists Skinny Williams, Ray Silkman, James Perkins and Audley Reid—mingled with the crowd, parlaying what is commonly known as smooth jazz, though it was deafeningly loud and included tour-de-force takes on such staples as "A Night In Tunisia."

In contrast, the triumvirate of Curtis Robinson, Buddy Fambro and Henry Johnson, under the bashful heading "The Greatest Guitars" played a mellower set in the gorgeous



surroundings of the university's International House. The wood-panelled walls seemed in natural harmony with the hollow-bodied semi-acoustic instruments, and the billing squared up to the hype. All three guitarists were superbly matched but with different strings to their bow: Johnson with his amazing thumb strumming and fast shape-shifting solos, Fambro with a more processed but still elegant sound and Robinson, the dashing master of ceremonies, with a predilection for George Benson and Charlie Parker quotes. It was all standard fare, but played with such craft and hardcore jazz simpatico it won over the audience.

Post-midnight, Robinson fronted a slick, top-flight jam session at International House that didn't miss a beat, with musicians from the audience pulling off star turns including singers Dee Alexander, T'Corra Rogers, Maggie Brown and Barbara Gogin. Standby pianists Miguel de la Cerna and Greg Spero, trumpeter Corey Wilkes, drummer Robert Shy, and bassists Frank Russell and Joshua Ramos lent precision and subtlety. The finale provided so much energy that committee member Judith Stein is already seeking a local restaurant to host an after-after hours jazz breakfast for the next festival.

—Michael Jackson



In an event that had been a centerpiece of the now-gone International Association for Jazz Education conference, the 2009 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters celebration was held on Oct. 17, 2008, at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater. Also, unlike in recent years, this tribute included an inductees concert.

George Benson, Jimmy Cobb, Lee Konitz, Toots Thielemans and Snooky Young joined the elite fraternity of those who have received this honor. Recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder was also honored with the A.B. Spellman jazz master award for jazz advocacy.

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra kicked off the night with a powerful "Un Poco Loco," which had Wynton Marsalis smiling in quiet enjoyment of the orchestra's talented soloists. Benson joined the band for an uptempo "Stella By Starlight," and although he seemed like he wasn't quite loose, he showed some flurries of the ferocious chops that are his hallmarks.

Cobb echoed presenter Roy Haynes' speech about the beautiful simplicity of Cobb's playing. Haynes said that Cobb's performance on Miles Davis' recording of "Some Day My Prince Will Come" featured quarter notes played on the bell of the ride cymbal. When he

took the stage, Cobb drew laughter from the crowd by beginning to play the same way Haynes had described.

Thielemans joined the full orchestra for a beautiful and creative Richard DeRosa arrangement of "What A Wonderful World" that brought the audience to harmonic euphoria as Thielemans' harmonica wove through the 12-piece horn section. As Konitz took the stage, he summed up Thielemans' performance, asking, "How am I supposed to follow that?"

But as the laughter died, the audience quickly forgot that question as Konitz's extended pauses fluttered between dissonance and consonance in front of the large horn section on "Body And Soul."

After Van Gelder and Young's awards were presented, the orchestra took over, honoring Van Gelder with "Stolen Moments." On a disappointing note, despite Marsalis announcing that Young was coming out to play, the trumpeter, who will be 90 in February, never brought his trumpet on stage.

To close, the band honored the late Neal Hefti with a swinging blues that included 2008 NEA Jazz Masters trombonist Tom McIntosh and percussionist Candido Camero as soloists.

—Thomas Clancey



## John McLaughlin



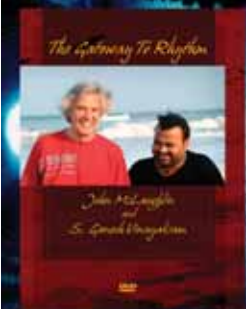
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# Gerald Cleaver

Detroit-Brooklyn  
Bridge Builder

Drummer Gerald Cleaver musically references the core names of '60s jazz and his hometown on his disc *Gerald Cleaver's Detroit* (Fresh Sound/New Talent), but he's not one to strictly adhere to a playbook. "I had recorded the music but had no titles," Cleaver said. "I didn't realize it was my tribute record until it was done."

A Brooklynite since 2002, Cleaver may be best-known as a background experimentalist. He paints ametric rhythm textures for Roscoe Mitchell, Charles Gayle, Matthew Shipp, Lotte Anker, Andrew Bishop and Sylvie Courvoisier. Cleaver also sculpts informed free-bop grooves with Craig Taborn, Yaron Herman, William Parker and Mario Pavone. Such performative strategies informed Cleaver's 2001 leader debut, *Adjust* (Fresh Sound/New Talent). Yet listeners who hear him on Jeremy Pelt's 2008 release, *November*, may be surprised at the uncompromising hardcore jazz attitude that bedrocks Cleaver's approach.

"A lot of people didn't realize I could swing," said Cleaver, just before flying to Europe for a week with Miroslav Vitous. "I love the tradition with all my heart, and the tradition is everything that's happened from point one up to the present."

Cleaver had somewhat different objectives for his own sextet, *Violet Hour*.

"Everybody is on the same page, but they wouldn't necessarily play together, given our scenes, and how cliquish New York can be. I wanted to bridge the gap."

The cliques that Cleaver wants to bridge, he added, are racial as well as stylistic.

"You do yourself a disservice when you exclude yourself from one or another group," Cleaver said. "I'm proud to live in New York, because every day I get on the train, and if I were hit over the head and woke up with amnesia, I wouldn't know where I was based on ethnicity. I love that balance, and it positively influences my thoughts about music."

Cleaver inherited his anything-goes attitude from his father, drummer John Cleaver, "a bebop baby" who during the '50s gigged locally with Joe Henderson, Yusef Lateef and Barry Harris.

"He is the most professional, inquisitive, free-thinking musician I know," Cleaver said. The younger Cleaver focused on trumpet while attending Cass Tech in the '70s. He recalled his father's laughter in response to his "confusion" upon an initial listen to John Coltrane's *Cosmic Music*, a gift from Alice Coltrane's brother Ernie Farrow, a long-standing friend. "It's ironic now," Cleaver said. "That is basically me."

In Detroit, Cleaver's other family friends included drummers Roy Brooks and Motown house musician Richard "Pistol" Allen. He attended Wayne State University, but dropped out at 19, mentioning the school's inability to relate to his own experiences.

"There were no black folks on the faculty, and the teachers had no connection with the music the way I grew up knowing it," Cleaver

said. "Detroit is 90 percent black and 10 percent white. I didn't grow up in a prejudicial household, but the reality is that I didn't go to school with any white kid until high school."

He stopped playing for five years, but resumed after attending the University of Michigan as a music education major.

"I started to rethink being a teacher and doing the day gig," Cleaver said. "Wynton Marsalis' example was inspiring. The turning point was seeing Betty Carter in Ann Arbor with Troy Davis, Darrell Grant and Ira Coleman. I'd never seen players of that caliber. I realized that I could and would do this. From then on, it was my desire to get my stuff together, to come to New York and try to make it work."

Toward that end, Cleaver joined forces with a small cohort of forward-thinking former Detroiters, among them Rodney Whitaker, James Carter, Taborn, Dwight Adams and Cassius Richmond. With them, he honed the instincts that inform his esthetic.

"We had so much in common," Cleaver said. "We all loved swinging. We loved playing out. We were left to our own devices in Detroit, and that mentality made anything possible at any moment. Your connection with another person generates the ideas and concepts. It's important to find what needs to be heard, what needs to be said. More than just playing a gig, I'm trying to get to the true nature of this musical relationship."

—Ted Panken

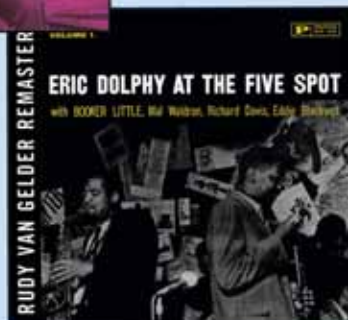
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## Players

During the last seven years, guitarist Mary Halvorson has become an increasingly active presence on New York's polyglot jazz and experimental music scenes. But to hear the 28-year-old Boston native turned Brooklyn resident tell it, her knotty yet clean-toned interval-leaping has evolved instinctually.

"I was never concerned with categories or what kind of music I was playing as long as it was good, whether it was jazz, experimental or rock," she said. "As long as I feel like I'm doing something creative and interesting, I'm open to whatever genre it might fall into."

Halvorson's expanding discography bears out such an explanation. Although she has been a steady collaborator of Anthony Braxton, her work with cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum, bassist Trevor Dunn and trombonist Curtis Hasselbring, as well as rock-fried projects like the duo People and Sugriwa, begin to indicate her nonchalant range. Her duo with violist Jessica Pavone, *On And Off* (Skirl), is emblematic of a disregard for purity, as they incorporate pop song ideas, free improvisation, through-composed pieces and folk-like cadences. She also brought out the thorny side of her improvising on *Opulence* (UgExplode), a bruising set of duets with San

Francisco Bay Area drummer Weasel Walter.

"There's a challenge to maintain your individual voice while playing these different kinds of music," Halvorson said. "But at the same time you have a community that is supportive and just as eager to check out your experimental rock band as your jazz band. It is a challenge not to wear yourself thin or lose yourself in it."

Throughout the past six years, Halvorson had wanted to work in the guitar-bass-drum format, an ambition she fulfilled with the new *Dragon's Head* (Firehouse 12). She never found the appropriate bassist until she met John Hebert in 2006. She also recruited Ches Smith, a drummer equally informed by jazz and weird rock, and the group premiered in February 2007. On the disc, her tunes are packed with astringent melodies, bursts of noise and unexpected twists.

Although Halvorson said that the response to her work has improved from the days she started, the condescension she has encountered as a woman guitarist reinforced her determination.

"I would hear things like, 'Oh, that's cute, you play jazz. Do you sing?'" Halvorson said. "It made me want to try harder and be like, 'Fuck all them,' to prove that I can do it."

—Peter Margasak



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## Gétetchew Mèkurya Ethiopian Thunder

Ethiopian tenor saxophonist Gétetchew Mèkurya took a few minutes to describe his sound at Chicago's Logan Square Auditorium before a concert with his Amsterdam-based backing punk band The Ex. Speaking in Amharic through a translator, he declared, "We have a bullet inside of this melody."

That international musical partnership has yielded a new album, *Moa Anbessa* (Terp), and an accompanying DVD on Buda Musique. Mèkurya's massive vibrato-laden tone and stark, indelible melodies sound a bit like Albert Ayler's, but they speak in a different tongue. His music is based on a traditional warrior's chant called *shellèla*.

"Shellèla is still important for us," Mèkurya said. "This melody releases the things we need when we're fighting. Now we are for fighting to develop this music and our culture."

Mèkurya, who was born in 1935 and lives in Addis Ababa, is an imposing figure. A natural showman, he donned a cape styled after a lion's mane for the Chicago set's climax. Across the language barrier, his decisive answers betray the stern authority he acquired teaching musicians in Ethiopia's Police Band for three decades.

Historically, Ethiopian popular and traditional music prizes lyrical cleverness and instrumental music is practically unknown. He changed all that though adapting a *shellèla* vocal melody for saxophone on "Shellèla Besaxophone," the last track on his collection of early-'70s recordings,



*Ethiropiques Vol 14: Negus Of Ethiopian Sax* (Buda Musique). Mèkurya's coarse-toned yet fluid ululations knife through massed brass and drums. His improvised music swings, but it owes

little to American jazz.

"He has little knowledge of Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins or John Coltrane," said saxophonist Russ Gershon of the Either/Orchestra,

## Michael Bates Contrapuntal Reformed Punk

Bassist Michael Bates frequently uses the phrase "the bigger picture." Indeed, the compositions on his third disc, *Clockwise* (Greenleaf Music), convey his explorative, picturesque sensibilities. Sometimes multiple melodies dance about like characters in a Dr. Seuss cartoon. Song titles such as "Lighthousekeeping" and "Great Exhibition," which reference literary works, attest that Bates aims to create a realm that extends beyond standard jazz convention.

"I like looking at the bigger picture and think about things that would lead me to different places," said the Vancouver, Canada, native, who now lives in Brooklyn.

Bates, who started out playing bass in punk bands, traces his love for music to his father, who he describes as "chronically interested in things."

"Not just music, it could be anything like a weird contraption or some restaurant in

Chinatown," Bates said. "Music just stuck with me."

Bates absorbs his disparate references through a knack for contrapuntal compositions.

"Counterpoint is linear writing," Bates said. "Sometimes, you'll end up with vertical structures. Certain notes will come together in vertical ways that aren't supposed to work; but they work well in the context of each line. It creates dissonance and resolution in beautiful ways."

Bates got the composing bug when he attended the University of Toronto, earning a degree in jazz performance. To harness his compositional gifts, he attended the Banff Centre, where he met Kenny Werner, Joe Lovano and Dave Douglas, whose imprint released *Clockwise*.

"Dave was running a composers workshop," Bates said. "I was the only bass player involved. I ended up playing on 30 different recordings. I

was impressed with the work ethic."

"The most striking thing about Michael was not just the music and the eager openness to practice and study, it was the organizational mind," Douglas added. "He rallied the troops, got folks organized toward playing original music."

Bates has primarily used his band Outside Sources to bring his compositions to life. His previous two discs, *Outside Sources* (Pommerag, 2003) and *A Fine Balance* (Winter & Winter, 2006), featured a Canadian lineup. *Clockwise* showcases his band's Brooklyn-based edition with saxophonist and clarinetist Quinsin Nachoff being the only holdover from the previous band. Trumpeter Russ Johnson and drummer Jeff Davis round out the group.

"I've found the right people to play this music," Bates said. "They are composers in their own right, and versed in a lot of different



the Boston-based band that has backed Mèkurya in England and Ethiopia. "He derived his music from traditional Ethiopian sources. When you go back to the vocal 'Shellèla,' you hear some of the same figures that he plays. It's that vocal quality that connects what he does to free jazz. He sounds similar to Ayler because of the extreme vocalization of their sound, the full-on energy of their playing and the simplicity of the forms that they use."

Gershon also admires Mèkurya's dissonance, which is especially evident when the Ethiopian saxophonist plays with The Ex. After sharing stages with them in Addis Ababa and Amsterdam, he asked them to become his band. While there's no precedent for punk rock in Ethiopia, Mèkurya responded instinctively to their force, which conveys a more kinetic energy than what he'd been hearing in his country recently.

"I played for a long time with the Police Orchestra in the National Theater of Ethiopia, and after that there is no big orchestra," Mèkurya said. "Our younger generation, they like hip-hop or synthesizers."

The Ex may not be orchestral, but Mèkurya's European colleagues said their attitude matches his.

"He's not interested in virtuoso musicians who play completely correctly. It's more important to him that there's a spirit and energy, and a feel for the music rather than that it be played perfectly," said Ex guitarist Andy Moor. "We had to find a way to communicate that had nothing to do with words, and that's probably a good thing with music."

Mèkurya is optimistic that his cross-cultural partnership with The Ex will reap rewards.

"The Ex is a strong and beautiful group," he said. "They play like I want. I am happy to go with them."

—Bill Meyer



BRYAN MURRAY

musical languages, not just traditional jazz music, which is important to all of us. They're versed in 20th-century classical music. Being in a generation of musicians who are writing is an essential aspect of what keeps this music fresh and growing."

—John Murph

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Tenor saxophonist Benny Golson has been thinking thoughts like these lately as he arrives at his 80th birthday on Jan. 25 (to be followed by his 50th wedding anniversary in March). He will celebrate his birthday with a CD by the New Jazztet (with Eddie Henderson in for Art Farmer), *New Time, New Tet*, out this month on Concord; and a concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 24 featuring Ron Carter, Curtis Fuller, Cedar Walton, Al Jarreau, the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and others. He'll also think about the colleagues who are not there: Farmer, Clifford Brown, John Coltrane, Lee Morgan, Philly Joe Jones, Paul Chambers—the ones who didn't make it.

Golson continues to play concerts and clubs. Last September he came to Chicago for a short week at Joe Segal's new Jazz Showcase in the South Loop. Opening night was slow, but Golson was competing with a persistent drizzle and John McCain's Republican presidential nomination acceptance speech. By the weekend the rain and the oratory has passed, and the fans came out to enjoy one of the great survivors of an increasingly fabled era of jazz innovation.

Among many things, Golson will be remembered for his appearances in two pictures. First, as the McGuffin in Steven Spielberg's 2004 *The Terminal*; and second, as Player Number 2 in Art Kane's 1958 Harlem brownstone photograph—"A Great Day In Harlem"—that appeared in *Esquire* magazine. The former

depended upon the latter. Tom Hanks' character in *The Terminal*, Viktor Navorski, was on a quest to complete his father's autograph collection of the 57 musicians who appeared in the famous picture, the final piece of which was Golson's signature.

A few days after Golson's Chicago opening, we sat down for lunch in his hotel. Golson exudes a friendly but distinguished air. He speaks softly and uses language with careful precision. Words appear in his e-mails that can send even the most literate reader to a dictionary.

I opened a large brown envelope. Inside was the original January 1959 *Esquire*.

"Oh my goodness," Golson said with some surprise in his eyes. "I lost mine."

He took the magazine and turned the pages cautiously, as if handling some fragile historic artifact. And there it was on pages 98 and 99. He reflected in a way that comes naturally to a man looking at a 50-year-old photo of himself standing as a young man among a community of his peers and heroes. "None of us had any idea what would happen with that shot," he said. "There are only six of us left. I'm at the top right here."

He then pointed out the other five out of 57 in the photo still alive: Hank Jones (90), Horace Silver (80), Sonny Rollins (78), Eddie Locke (78) and Marian McPartland (90). They've each seen and heard so much the others have missed by reason of mortality. When you see yourself as a young man in such a picture, I suggested,

one can't help thinking that the little game we all played in kindergarten, musical chairs, is a metaphor for life itself.

"I never thought of it that way," he said.

Clearly, the "jazz life" has been good to Golson. "Let me put it this way," he reflected. "I've been fortunate. It could have been the other way. But I had such a desire to get into this music, not to become famous, not even to make money, but to have my things played and please the people who would hear it. And it's happened in great abundance, more than I had anticipated. It's been good to me."

He looked back at the photograph. "I had just come to town, one of the young lions of 1956," he said. "Nat Hentoff called me for that picture. I don't know how he had heard of me. I was playing with Dizzy when that was taken, so I knew Diz. Also Art Farmer, Horace Silver, Johnny Griffin and Emmett Berry. But I had never met any of the others. Look at that. Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Gene Krupa, Charlie Mingus, Basie. I had to keep myself from asking for autographs. We didn't do that in those days. I was a nobody and just glad to be there."

Jazz was a young music when Golson stood on that Harlem doorstep sometime in July or August 1958. (The precise date has been lost.) Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor were barely on the radar. The first jazz record was only 41 years old, about the same span of time that separates us from the death of John Coltrane today.

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Few jazz musicians of importance had marked a 60th birthday yet, not even Louis Armstrong. The two oldest players in the Esquire photo were Zutty Singleton, 60, and Sonny Greer, 62. Old age in jazz was still uncharted territory in 1958. No one yet knew what a 65-, 70- or 80-year-old trumpet or saxophone player might sound like. Bunk Johnson, perhaps?

"The mind doesn't change," Golson observed with some experience in the matter of age. "Only the body. Sometimes the mind makes appointments the body can't keep. Arthritis, feeling tired, things like that. When you're young you're always ready to go. But the thinking doesn't change. In fact, if one has talent, it's like good wine. You add things to it. It gets better. You renew yourself. You take the older things, push them to one side and make room for the newer. Creativity never retires, unless you give up. I wake up every morning at this age and intuitively think, 'What can I do better today than I did yesterday? What can I discover today? What things are awaiting my discovery?' Enough is never enough. You want to get from here to there, then you get there and you want to go somewhere else."

Golson's uncle was a bartender at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem. One of Golson's earliest memories is being taken to the now legendary site of the earliest bop jam sessions and seeing the house band with Thelonious Monk, Joe Guy and Kenny Clarke. "I was 11 and didn't know what the heck it was all about," he admitted. "But Sugar Ray Robinson was there and my uncle introduced me to him."

A conversation with Golson doesn't go long before the subject of another of his childhood associations—John Coltrane—comes up. The two knew each other as boys in Philadelphia, and in some ways Golson seems to measure himself against Coltrane, even though they took vastly different paths. Perhaps it's because they started in the same time and place.

"Look at my friend John Coltrane," he said. "He was great, but he wanted to go farther. I haven't gotten there yet. Where is there? Wherever it is, we want to get there as soon as we can."

Where they began as adolescents, though, was the height of the swing era in 1940. Golson was 12, Coltrane 14. When they turned on the radio they heard anyone from Jan Savitt to Count Basie playing live music. "You know who my favorite band was then?" Golson asked rhetorically. "Glenn Miller. And I loved [tenor saxophonist and singer] Tex Beneke with that southern drawl he would sing. I loved that. 'Moonlight Serenade' and the movies, *Sun Valley Serenade* and *Orchestra Wives*."

Golson may have loved Miller and Beneke, but he didn't imitate them. His epiphany came at 14 in the Earle Theater. "It was the first time I ever saw a band live," he said, "and it was Lionel Hampton. When the curtain opened I was bedazzled. The bright lights were shining on these gold instruments. The music was like a

hand reaching out and grabbing me. Then Arnett Cobb stepped out from the reed section to the edge of the stage, and, lo and behold, a mike came up from the stage floor. When he started to play, the piano paled. I wanted a sax. We were just getting off of welfare, but I thought I could get one at a pawn shop. One day [my mom] brought a brand new one home, and wow. That's when it all started.

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"I was copying everybody's solos on records," he continued. "Coltrane and I were doing the same thing. There were no school jazz programs. Then right in the middle of all this along come Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Coltrane and I are trying to learn the traditional stuff, and not very good at it. Then this new stuff comes out. So we're trying to pick up on this new music before we've learned the old stuff. We had a kind of oath of determination to try to imbibe this music and make it part of our psyche."

Golson and Coltrane were like two peas in a pod then. Golson listened to Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster. Coltrane played alto and loved Johnny Hodges. "But he was always a little ahead of the rest of us," Golson said. "When we got to where he was, he was always somewhere else. He had a penchant for that. To always reach. But his reach never exceeded his grasp. He always got to it."

Was it a place Golson might have followed? "Truthfully," he said, "I wouldn't have known what I was doing. He was somewhere else then, and I was not in that place."

Does Golson believe that Coltrane is being remembered for the right reasons today? He asked what I meant. Is it his music, I explained, or the quasi-religious and mystical dimensions of his persona that surfaced in *A Love Supreme*? What other musician, after all, defined his music in such overtly spiritual terms that it produced a San Francisco church in his name? (Golson him-

self crafted an impressive orchestration of *A Love Supreme* in the '90s.)

"I don't think [he] would have been a part of that," Golson said. "I'm sure he would have shivered at that prospect of a Coltrane church. He was really not religious when I knew him. Whatever happened in his search happened later when we were no longer together. He was like Picasso in that he went through many periods. Many styles. He was always changing and evolving into something, searching."

Perhaps because Golson was once such a close witness to Coltrane's processes, he respects his outcomes even if he cannot entirely embrace them. Coltrane may have ended in the tangle of the free-jazz movement, but Golson had seen him master so much, he knew what he could do and seems willing to excuse what he might otherwise distrust.

But he is decidedly less sympathetic to others associated with the music. He won't mention any names lest he might harm a fellow musician. Yet he makes no secret of his views on the larger free-jazz musicology.

"Bogus," he said. "Completely and without any doubt. The lie cannot live forever."

Many years ago Golson said he approached a prominent young apostle of the new music. His mind was open and he was eager to understand its value.

"[This man] told me himself it was bogus," Golson recalled, "though without knowing it. Do you know about bass and treble clefs? The clefs are there only for convenience. You would have too many lines without the clefs. But they have nothing to do with concepts. I asked how he arrived at what he's doing. He said he played in the 'tenor clef.' It was ridiculous. There is no such thing.

"He was a clever man. He took what he didn't know, and made it into something that seemed unique. He said that he played off the melody, not chords. This was his system, to which he gave a fancy name. What do you think Sam and Cephus said in the cotton fields when they were buck dancing and strumming the banjo? 'Sam, I think that was a G7 in bar 10?' Of course not. They played off of the melody. It was intuitive. What do you think professional musicians do today when they don't know the song a singer is doing in some strange key? They play off the melody. It's nothing new.

"Then one day I picked up the International Herald Tribune and read a story proclaiming this man a jazz genius who has come up with a new system. He plays off the melody."

Golson rolled his eyes and slapped the table. "How can people be duped? Free-jazz was a way out for a lot of musicians who couldn't play the changes of 'All The Things You Are.' It opened the door to fakery.

"Not that it was invalid," he added. "There were guys who could play both—like John. That's why Coltrane was a great musician. He mastered it all. Whether you like where he ended up or not, he's entitled to our respect."



Golson is presently completing a book targeted to college and university jazz curriculums, which he hopes to publish later this year. Among the chapters, "The Bogus Genius."

Golson's genius is far less controversial. It lives in the easy warmth and fluency of his tenor lines, but his immortality may reside in a catalog of compositions that have taken root as major jazz standards that now have a life of their own.

Although he had recorded about a dozen sessions between 1950 and 1955, it was as a composer that he made his first serious impact when Coltrane brought Golson's "Stablemates" to Miles Davis in November 1955. The Davis Quintet (and shortly after Coltrane with Paul Chambers) recorded it for Prestige, thus cementing it into the canon of modern jazz titles. Since then it has been recorded 114 times by Golson and others. Further Golson standards include "Along Came Betty" (78 times), "Killer Joe" (94 times), "Whisper Not" (189 times) and, most famously, "I Remember Clifford," with 282 recorded versions, according to Tom Lord's *Jazz Discography*.

What kind of royalties come from such a songbook? "It varies according to how many plays I get," he said. "How many recordings, how many performances. BMI keeps track of that. Sometimes it's close to half a million in royalties. Sometime it's \$200,000. It might not be anything."

He continues to play those songs today because he knows his audiences want to hear them. "As much as I play them," he said, "I try to make something fresh out of them every time. I don't have any set solo routines. And when I play 'Clifford,' it's a reflective mood for me because I remember all those times we were together. They were the songs that gave me my reputation. I owe them my best because of what they've done for me. No, I don't mind playing them, any more than I mind signing autographs. It's a privilege."

Composing them came with no guarantees, though. "You can't get up and say, 'I think I'll write a hit today,'" he said. "You have to wait and see what the reaction is from the people who pay to see you. When I wrote those tunes 'Stablemates' and 'I Remember Clifford,' I had no idea what would happen to them. My wife told me that 'Killer Joe' was too monotonous. You never know."

"What gives a composition validity is the knowledge of the person writing it, the experience he can draw on," he continued. "But when you get to the meat of it, it's in the intervals, what follows what. That's what a melody is. When I write my songs, I'm conscious of intervals. Art Farmer was conscious of intervals. That's why he played so beautifully. You get the right intervals in place and you've got something that will live past your time—Duke, Coltrane, Bill Evans, Claude Thornhill."

As a composer, Golson has occasionally

served as his own lyricist on songs such as "From Dream To Dream" and "If Time Only Had A Heart"—mainly to deny the opportunity to others. "You have no idea how many sets of lyrics I've gotten to 'Along Came Betty,'" he complained. "I get some every year. Once a person had the audacity to write a lyric to 'Whisper Not' and record it. Legally I had to get them to take it off the market. I guess they think they're doing you an honor when they put words to your songs and you should be happy about it. But I have to say, 'I'm sorry.' I have never approved any of the attempts."

Not quite never. Leonard Feather added an approved lyric to "Whisper Not," which Al Jarreau sings on the new Jazztet CD. And Quincy Jones penned the "Killer Joe" lyric. But generally, Golson remains protective of his songs' integrity. Not even a Jon Hendricks lyric to "Stablemates" made the cut. "I told him, 'Jon, don't do that any more,'" he said. "That's not the kind of tune for a lyric. Nobody can put a lyric to a tune of mine legally without permission. I usually hate those attempts to take a jazz tune and put a lyric to it. Worse is putting words to improvisations. It's not my cup of tea." **DB**

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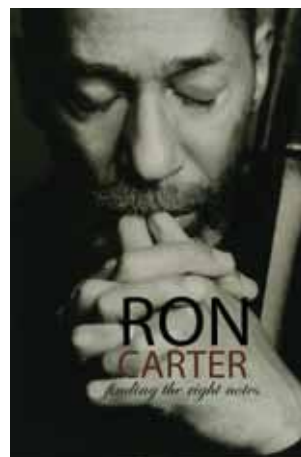
By Dan Ouellette | Photo by Morre/Dalle

# Beyond the Abstract

## Jazz and Hip-Hop Commingle in Ron Carter's Bass Lines

**T**he most unlikely recording experience of Ron Carter's exhaustive session work came in 1991 when the pioneering rap group A Tribe Called Quest rang him up. The request? To deliver bass lines on the track "Verses From The Abstract" for its sophomore CD, *The Low End Theory*, the follow-up to its triumphant debut, *People's Instinctive Travels And The Paths Of Rhythm*, issued in 1989 on Jive Records.

As it turned out, Carter not only helped to make *The Low End Theory* one of the best hip-hop—and pop—albums of all time, but also contributed to the ushering in of an era in the early to mid-'90s where jazz and hip-hop, both rooted in African-American music traditions, commingled in an intriguing and, at times, compelling fusion of rap and swing. A natural teacher in the classroom and on the bandstand, Carter also served to further school Q-Tip—Tribe's co-founder and MC, born Jonathan Davis, whose legal name now is Kamaal Fareed—in the rudimentaries of making



Excerpted from Dan Ouellette's new authorized Ron Carter biography, *Finding The Right Notes*, available at [danouellette.artistshare.com](http://danouellette.artistshare.com).





music that expanded beyond beat basics into rhythmic sophistication.

As for Carter's willingness to appear on a hip-hop record at a time when the rap-infused music was entering its second decade of impact (and often controversy) as a pop genre, his son Ron Carter Jr. is not at all surprised. "It's one of the biggest misconceptions about my father that he didn't know anything about hip-hop culture and music," Carter Jr. said. "How could he not? He had two teenage sons who wanted to be DJs and were hanging out in Harlem in the '70s. He bought my brother Myles and me mixers so we could learn."

Carter Jr. recalled four essential records that "every wannabe DJ" learned to mix on: "Dance To The Drummer's Beat," "Apache," "Scratchin'" and "Take Me To The Mardi Gras." The two Carter sons played those tunes over and over, so much so that Carter banned them from being spun in the home. "My dad told us to find some new records," Carter Jr. said. "He got tired of listening to those other ones. But he looked on hip-hop as an art form that was getting young kids into music."

## REQUEST FROM QUEST

Still, Carter wasn't a hip-hop aficionado by any stretch of the imagination, so that when A Tribe Called Quest's management contacted him, he had to do some homework. Who better to ask than his son Myles Carter, who was living in Paris at the time as a graffiti artist and was steeped in the city's hip-hop culture—which included the French rap group NTM and the Control of Paris artistic movement that Myles co-founded.

"My dad called me up, told me about the request and asked me if he should do it," Myles said. "Well, I knew that Tribe Called Quest was strictly about the music. As it turns out they were one of the most interesting and innovative hip-hop groups of all time. They had a noncommercial groove. My father has this incredible timing and cadence that can't be duplicated. His sound is so distinctive. So, what could be a better fit?"

In his book, *Check The Technique: Liner Notes For Hip-Hop Junkies*, Brian Coleman singles out *The Low End Theory* as one of the "36 immortal rap albums" and notes that A Tribe Called Quest "added a serious, studious, jazz edge to their supremely innovative productions." Coleman points out that the music of Tribe's first album was, in the words of Q-Tip, "emotions and colors." He then quotes Q-Tip on the second project as striving for a new level of sonic creativity: "I was chopping beats differently than other people were back then. The [second] album was like a project. A show. And everybody was invited to watch. The first album was about color, and *The Low End Theory* was more about technique."

Q-Tip told Coleman that the album got its name because he wanted to expand the dynam-



ics by stressing the low end, the bottom. It was a no-brainer then for Q-Tip to see if he could snag Carter for a session.

As a kid, the rapper was surrounded by music, especially jazz. "My dad was a jazz enthusiast," he recently said. "He was a hard-bop guy, the grittier and funkier the better. He had albums by Lockjaw Davis, Art Blakey, Lee Morgan, Horace Silver, Jack McDuff. Plus, he had albums by Miles, Duke and Coltrane. My cousins and uncles were into jazz that was more expanded, like the *Headhunters*. They loved Miles' albums like *In A Silent Way* and *Filles De Kilimanjaro*."

Yet Q-Tip gravitated to Davis' '60s quintet with Carter. "I always come back to the Plugged Nickel stuff and albums like *E.S.P.* and *Nefertiti*. I still listen to them. I could hear Ron being the anchor of everything that was going on. Usually a drummer would keep the beat on the ride cymbal, but Tony moved around a lot and really had a lock-up with Herbie. You'd expect the lock-up between the bassist and drummer. So Ron had to do double duty, to be the percussive force as well as establish the root to develop the harmony.

"In my way of thinking Ron Carter was the seminal bass player of the '60s and '70s," Q-Tip continued. "His sound was very precise, concise and rhythmic, and he played harmonically to lay the framework for songs. He's an icon."

With the Carter legacy deeply ingrained in his own musicality, Q-Tip asked the group's management to contact Carter. "It was an honor to get him on the record. I wanted his sound and his musicianship. He's so economical. He never overplays. He's probably the tastiest bass player ever. Some guys go overboard, but every note that Ron plays is there for a good reason."

Carter discussed the offer with Myles, and then signed on to play on a track. "But first I told them that there were stipulations," Carter said. "Cursing wasn't so blatant as it is today, but I said I didn't want to have that on the

tune. The trend toward harsh language was certainly going in that direction back then. To play on a tune like that would mean I endorsed it. The second thing I said was no drugs at the session. I never did drugs. If they were there, I'd go home. If not, then we'd get this done and have a great time doing it."

## SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Q-Tip recalls Carter as being cordial, even though he knew of Carter's reputation as a person who could be prickly. He didn't give Carter any instructions on how to play "Verses From The Abstract." Q-Tip said, "Ron came into the studio by himself, tuned his bass, settled in and got right down to business. He listened to the tune, wrote out some chord changes and then knocked it out. It wasn't complicated. We did a couple of passes, and I think we kept the first take. That was that. I remember it being really easy. He was maybe there for just a couple of hours."

Carter set up in the control room and plugged his pickup into the control board. Q-Tip was in the studio ready to rap the lyrics. "I asked him to rap it before we recorded so that I could hear the commas and the length of the sections," Carter said. "I didn't need to write anything down because I could hear the tune in my head. We did a few takes where I would move my commas around to match the phrasing. I wanted to make the song have some chord changes because what I was hearing was a monotone. I said to myself, 'How can you listen to this all day without some kind of harmony?' So I tried to sneak some chords in to see if that would work."

Carter wasn't sure that what he was proposing would fly. "All they would have had to do was say, 'Mr. Carter, that's not working,' and that would have been OK. I was in their employ. They trust what I do. They can't be afraid to tell me it's not working. That way I can do it differently and make the tune better



for them. That's my job."

There were no complaints, so Carter left them with one instruction. He laughed when recalling it: "I told them, whatever you do, just make sure the bass sounds good."

Even though Q-Tip recalls that there wasn't a whole lot of interaction, he does remember talking with Carter while he was setting up his bass. "I told Ron that I wanted to play the bass, and he said, play the piano first," he said. "That's where everything will begin for you, he said. If you know the piano first and foremost, then you'll be able to play the bass."

Carter remembers the exchange, saying that while he was impressed by how hip-hop artists were adept on the computer—cutting and pasting together music and words—they lacked the musicality to use different chords or use a different tonal center: "Instead of rapping in a drone without harmony or chord changes, they could elevate what they'd be singing by using another way of making lyrics that would be determined by the use of chords and harmony."

Carter added, "That's why I told Q-Tip to play the piano and spend time with someone like Sir Roland Hanna to see how chords and harmony work. I suggested he learn some simple chord changes like I, IV, V, I that would make the lyrics sound different, so the background would not just be boomp-boomp-shish, boomp-boomp-

shish. It's a shame rap guys who were really interested in the music and not just the rap didn't learn the basic skills to fully bring what they were doing into fruition."

In the March 2008 issue of *Filter* magazine that celebrated Tribe's legacy, Carter was asked to weigh in on Q-Tip. "I used to say that if rappers ever discovered a major triad, I'd give them a dollar—and I still have the same one," he said. "Q-Tip was aware of the jazz community. I think he would've hired Mingus if he were alive because he was Q-Tip's favorite bass player. But I didn't mind coming second to Charlie. A Tribe Called Quest was on the right track for elevating the musicality of hip-hop."

Called by All Music Guide critic John Bush as "one of the closest and most brilliant fusions of jazz atmosphere and hip-hop attitude ever recorded," *The Low End Theory* ranks in the top 10 hip-hop albums of all time by Breakdown FM's highly respected hip-hop culture proponent Davey D. Featuring Carter on the deep-grooved acoustic bass tune, "Verses From The Abstract" is a funky, philosophical autobiography by Q-Tip who celebrates heroes and colleagues. Rapping such lines as "rapping is my duty" and "I'm hooked on the swing," Q-Tip at the end acknowledges his special guest: "And this one goes out to my man, thanks a lot, Ron Carter on the bass, yes my man Ron Carter is

on the bass, check it out."

"I was honored that Ron appeared on the record," Q-Tip said. "People still talk about that song and his association with that record. It was a landmark event." He went on to say that many hip-hop aficionados became curious about jazz. "Countless people who never knew a thing about jazz or Ron started exploring, and that led to Herbie [Hancock] and Miles and other cats like Weather Report and Jaco [Pastorius] and Stanley Clarke. It was six degrees of separation."

The CD went gold in 1992 and platinum in 1995.

## MC SOLAAR STYLING

As a hip-hop fan, Coleman paid attention to Carter's contributions. "I've always been a music nerd, so I looked up who Carter was," he said. "Most fans probably didn't dig that deeply, but this led me to Guru with his *Jazzmatazz* albums where he used jazz musicians." In Tribe's wake came Branford Marsalis' hip-hop-infused *Buckshot LeFonque* and a few years later the Philadelphia hip-hop group The Roots hired jazz bagpipe player Rufus Harley to record with them. Plus, the jazz-rap connection led to the 1994 two-CD compilation album *Stolen Moments: Red Hot + Cool*, a 16-track hip-hop-meets-jazz CD on Impulse that raised funds to



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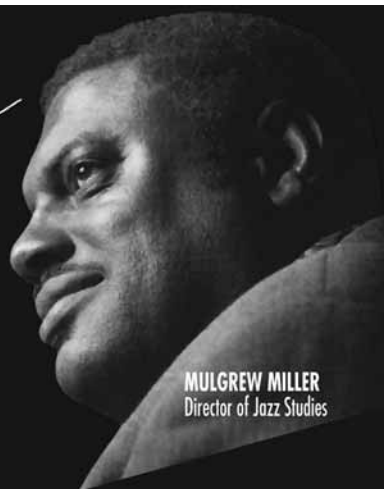
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fight AIDS.

Again, Carter was part of the mix, this time collaborating with French hip-hop star MC Solaar (real name Claude M'Barali) on the tune "Un Ange En Danger/An Angel In Danger." Carter brought his harmonic and funky sensibilities to the session, with a great bass solo in the mix.

**"I said to myself, 'How can you listen to this all day without some kind of harmony?' So I tried to sneak some chords in to see if that would work."**

As he had previously with Tribe, Carter called Myles about participating on the track. "I suggested that he do it not so much because MC Solaar was a great rapper, but because of the goal of the CD, which was to fight AIDS," Myles said. "In France, we called what MC Solaar did nursery rhymes. It was commercially successful, but it wasn't artistically at the same level as the best rappers. It's kind of like comparing Vanilla Ice to the Notorious B.I.G. MC Solaar was kind of cute, but he wasn't in the trenches with us."

Reluctantly, Carter agreed to record the song with MC Solaar. "I didn't know this guy, and I couldn't speak French," he said. "So I said OK as long as I could bring Myles to the date and have him be paid as my translator. I wanted someone on my side for a change so the producer and the engineer wouldn't get too far afield. I told Myles that if there was anything being rapped or said in the studio that I didn't like we'd stop."

The tracking took an hour-and-a-half. And for Carter, it was a fun experience that even turned into a video that was excerpted in Ken Burns' PBS documentary series JAZZ. "I thought what we did was the best meeting of minds between jazz and hip-hop on the *Red Hot + Cool* album," Carter said. "Most of the other acts seemed to be about blending but also showing how individual they were. MC Solaar and I were concerned with how we could match each other's style rather than be independent of each other on the same stage."

Fifteen years after the two had last collaborated, Carter got the opportunity to perform with MC Solaar again in 2008 when a French concert promoter proposed a one-time jazz-hip-hop

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summit at Châtelet, a 1,100-seat venue in Paris. Also on the bill was trumpeter Roy Hargrove with his funk-infused RH Factor band.

(Years earlier, Hargrove had played with Carter in a house band assembled for a TV special. During the group's rehearsal, the trumpeter got an upfront glimpse of Carter's measured authority. He played a solo, after which the bassist took him aside. "Carter called me out on a note in bar 13 that didn't go with the chord the band was playing," Hargrove said. "That showed me how deep Carter is.")

Hargrove opened the sold-out Paris concert with RH Factor, after which he dueted with Carter on "Every Time We Say Goodbye," which the Parisian newspaper *Le Monde* called the concert highlight. The writer then said, "Another great moment: the appearance of MC Solaar, although Ron Carter and his long fingers' supple accuracy sometimes gave the rapper a hard time." The show ended with a semi-jam session that featured all three headliners.

## LITIGATION RAP

Tribe and MC Solaar's work with Carter pre-saged the maturity of rap's fascination with jazz. In the early '90s, hip-hop artists were figuring out that it was cheaper to hire live instrumentalists in lieu of sampling recordings. Why? Primarily because there had been many litigation proceedings initiated by jazz artists who fought to get monetary compensation when their licks were sampled and showed up as major parts of a hip-hop recording. Myles was a source that enabled Carter to know when his bass lines were being ripped off.

"The morsels of excellence from my dad showed that the rappers had good taste," Myles said. "But they don't give thanks for Ron Carter, and that's not right. I'm not mad at them, but on the underside is the fact that some of these rap records sell millions and jazz musicians don't even come close to that."

Myles says that he can identify his dad's bass playing immediately. "I can't explain how I do it," he said, "but it's the way he puts notes down. It's the amount of pressure he applies when he plucks or when he caresses. It can't be duplicated. He has such a distinct sound. Like rap, it's his timing and cadence. Rappers can be pretty clever with their samples, but all it takes is one note of resonance for me to identify something that's my dad's. I tell him when I hear his samples, and then he follows up with his lawyer, I assume. I heard six or seven records with my dad's bass lines sampled."

One such sample was Dr. Dre's hit tune "A Nigga Witta Gun" from his 1992 gangsta rap album *The Chronic*, where the rapper used Carter's bass line that opens organist Johnny Hammond's song "Big Sur Suite" from his 1974 Kudu/CTI album *Higher Ground*, which Bob James arranged.

"Myles heard it on the radio and told me Dr. Dre was an up guy," Carter said. "So I bought

the album and found the track where he sampled my eight-bar bass line that he used over and over as the backbone of the tune."

Hammond's tune was owned by Creed Taylor's publishing company that subsequently contacted Dr. Dre, his publisher and lawyer. They negotiated an agreement. "The album sold about 3 million copies, and I believe our share was in the neighborhood of \$70,000," said Alan Bergman, Carter's lawyer. Carter and Hammond split the proceeds.

"It was Johnny's song and my bass line, so

the bulk of the royalties went to him," Carter said. "Johnny was in poor health at the time, so it came in handy. While what I received wasn't huge, the settlement served as an announcement to the rappers."

Even so, Carter wishes that he could have interfaced with Dr. Dre and his fellow hip-hop musicians. "Of all the music available in the world, how did this track get their attention?" Carter said. "Plus, if they had called me, I believe I could have found something better for them to use."

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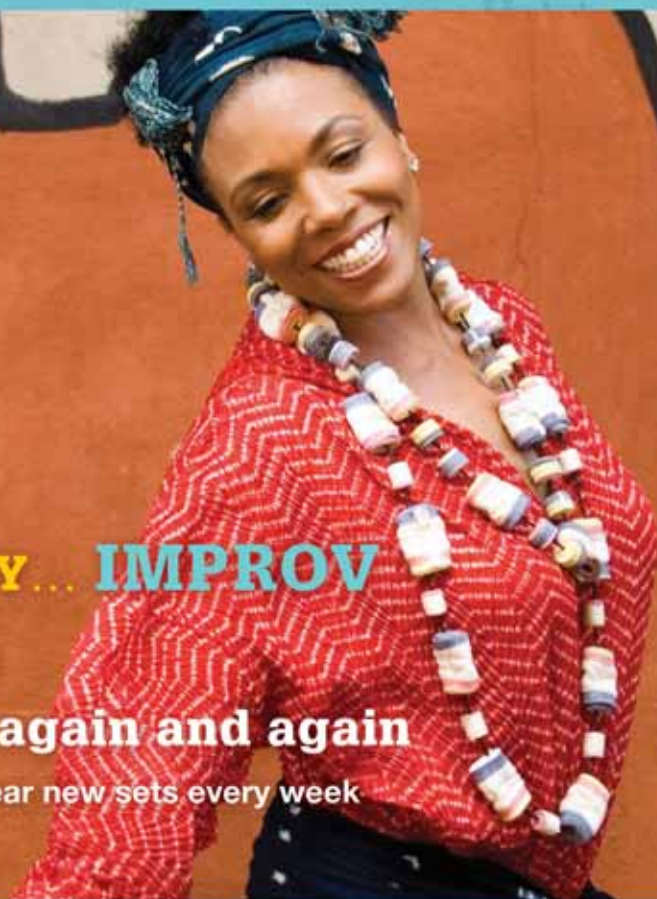
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### Gunther Schuller

#### *Journey Into Jazz*

BMOP SOUND

Composers of today's Olympian jazz-classical concertos would do well to listen to these deceptively understated, coolly creative pieces that capture the zeitgeist of the 1960s. These three newly recorded 20-minute works (dubbed "Third Stream" by Gunther Schuller himself) explore and synthesize myriad interactions between a jazz combo improvising and a chamber orchestra reading a through-composed score with some big band gestures. —Fred Bouchard (November)



### Uri Caine Ensemble

#### *The Othello Syndrome*

WINTER & WINTER

Uri Caine's composer projects are in a league by themselves. Even though two prior works—*Ulrich/Primal Light*, his breakthrough treatments of Mahler and *The Goldberg Variations*—can be argued to be masterpieces of post-modern cut-and-paste, the source materials don't throw as towering a shadow as Shakespeare's *Moor*, realized through Verdi's opera. Subsequently, *The Othello Syndrome* has a narrative the others can't touch, a demanding tale that requires more than brilliant collisions of genres, even those as subversive as Nguyễn Lê's Queen-like lead guitar in the romping Verdi transcriptions.

—Bill Shoemaker (November)



### Otis Taylor

#### *Recapturing The Banjo*

TELARC

The fascinating blues and blues-related music the six banjoists, with Taylor's singer/bassist daughter Cassie, craft in various groupings, never everyone together, flows over with emotional honesty. There may not be a better roots album released this year or decade than *Recapturing The Banjo*.

—Frank-John Hadley (March)



### John McLaughlin

#### *Floating Point*

ABSTRACT LOGIX

A shared sense of exhilaration, intensity, joy and purpose emerged in tracks ... much of the propulsive fury created by the team of drummer Ranjit Barot and percussionist Anant Sivamani. This is a case of Indian musicians using their extraordinary skills to explore U.S. fusion, giving the guitarist an amazing platform for compositional/improvisational development.

—Ken Micallef (September)



### Charlie Haden

#### *Family and Friends Rambling Boy*

DECCA

If you love jazz but your ears are also tickled by the high lonesome sound of the Carter Family, honky-tonk and bluegrass, bassist Charlie Haden's new disc will be a wonderful surprise. ... Hearing Haden play this music today—especially with the celestial sister harmonies of his triplet daughters, Petra, Tanya and Rachel—is a revelation.

—Paul de Barros (December)

# Best CDs of 2008


# Revisiting The New MASTERPIECES






## HISTORICAL

# Best CDs of 2008

	Artist	Title	Label	Issue
	Cole, Nat King	<i>Love Is The Thing/Where Did Everyone Go</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Cole, Nat King	<i>The Very Thought Of You</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Coleman, Ornette	<i>Town Hall, 1962</i>	ESP	OCT
	Culture	<i>Two Sevens Clash</i>	Shanachie	JAN
	Davis, Miles	<i>Kind Of Blue: 50th Anniversary Collector's Edition</i>	Columbia/Legacy	DEC
	Haynes, Roy	<i>A Life In Time: The Roy Haynes Story</i>	Dreyfus Jazz	JAN
	Zawinul, Joe	<i>Joe Zawinul: A Musical Portrait</i>	Arthaus Musik	JUL



## NEW

Artist	Title	Label	Issue	
	Braxton, Anthony	Trio	Victoriaville	AUG
	Clark, Mike	Blueprints Of Jazz Volume 1	Talking House	DEC
	Corea, Chick/Gary Burton	The New Crystal Silence	Concord	MAY
	Crispell, Marilyn	Vignettes	ECM	JUL
	Dafnis, Prieto—Sextet	Taking The Soul For A Walk	Dafnison Music	JUN
	Die Enttäuschung	Die Enttäuschung	Intakt	SEP
	Frisell, Bill	History, Mystery	Nonesuch	SEP
	Garson, Mike	Conversations With My Family	Resonance	JUN
	Gordon, Jon	Within Words	ArtistShare	APR
	Herwig, Conrad	The Latin Side Of Wayne Shorter	Half Note	SEP
	Kelly, Grace/Lee Konitz	GRACEfulLEE	Pazz	NOV
	Moss	Moss	Sunnyside	JUL
	Passos, Rosa	Romance	Telarc	AUG
	Pavone, Mario	Trio Arc	Playscape	OCT
	Robertson, Herb—NY Downtown Allstars	Real Aberration	Clean Feed	MAR
	Smith, Wadada Leo—Golden Quartet	Tabligh	Cuneiform	SEP
	Ullmann, Gebhard	New Basement Research	Soul Note	MAR
	Winstone, Norma	Distances	ECM	AUG



## HISTORICAL

Artist		Title	Label	Issue
	Bruford, Bill	Rock Goes To College	WinterFold	MAR
	Cherry, Don	Live At Café Montmartre 1966, Volume Two	ESP	OCT
	Cole, Nat King	Penthouse Serenade/The Piano Style Of Nat King Cole	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Evans, Bill	Everybody Digs Bill Evans	Riverside	JAN
	Horn, Shirley	Live At The 1994 Monterey Jazz Festival	Monterey Jazz Festival	NOV
	Mariano, Charlie	Helen 12 Trees	MPS/Promising Music	OCT
	McLaughlin, John	Remember Shakti—The Way Of Beauty	Sunnyside	JUL
	Nelson, Willie	One Hell Of A Ride	Columbia/Legacy	AUG
	Petruciani, Michel	Non Stop Travels With/Michel Petrucciani Trio	Dreyfus	JUL
	Various Artists	Stax/Volt Review—Live In Norway, 1967	Concord DVD	FEB
	Webster, Ben	Dig Ben! Ben Webster In Europe	Storyville	JAN



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NEW

# Best CDs of 2008

Artist	Title	Label	Issue	
	Adams, Justin/Juldeh Camara	Soul Science	World Village	SEP
	Alden, Howard/Ken Peplowski	Pow-Wow	Arbors	JUN
	Alperin, Misha	Her First Dance	ECM	JUL
	Anderskov Accident	Newspeak	ILK	SEP
	Baars, Ab—Trio/Ken Vandermark	Goofy June Bug	WIG	OCT
	Becker, David—Tribune	Leaving Argentina	Straw House	APR
	Berger, David—Octet	I Had The Craziest Dream: The Music Of Harry Warren	Such Sweet Thunder	NOV
	Bernstein, Steven	Diaspora Suite	Tzadik	MAY
	Bey, Andy	Ain't Necessarily So	12th Street	JAN
	Blade, Brian	Season Of Changes	Verve	SEP
	Blake, Michael—Sextet	Amor De Cosmos	Songlines	FEB
	Bley, Carla	The Lost Chords Find Paolo Fresu	ECM	JAN
	Bley, Carla—and Her Remarkable Big Band	Appearing Nightly	Watt	DEC
	Blind Boys Of Alabama, The	Down In New Orleans	TimeLife	FEB
	Bloom, Jane Ira	Mental Weather	Outline	JUN
	Bollenback, Paul	Invocation	Elefant Dreams	FEB
	Bonneville, Ray	Goin' By Feel	Red House	MAR
	Braxton, Anthony	12+1tet	Victoriaville	AUG
	Bruno, Jimmy	Maplewood Avenue	Affiliated Artists	JAN
	Butler, Henry	PiaNOLA Live	Basin Street	JUN
	Cables, George	You Don't Know Me	Kind Of Blue	MAY
	Caron, Danny	How Sweet It Is	Danny Caron Records	OCT
	Carter, James	Present Tense	EmArcy	MAY
	Christopher, Evan	Delta Bound	Arbors	APR
	Cohen, Anat	Notes From The Village	Anzic	OCT
	Cohen, Avishai—Trio	Gently Disturbed	Razdaz/Sunnyside	AUG
	Cole, Natalie	Still Unforgettable	DML/Rhino	DEC
	Copland, Marc	New York Trio Recordings, Vol 2: Voices	Pirouet	MAY
	Davies, Angharad/Tisha Mukarji	Endspace	Another Timbre	JUN
	Delta Saxophone Quartet	Dedicated To You...But You Weren't Listening	Moonjune	APR
	DeRose, Dena	Live At Jazz Standard, Volume One	MaxJazz	FEB
	Di Piazza, Dominique—Trio	Princess Sita	Sunnyside	DEC
	Dixon, Bill/Exploding Star Orchestra	Bill Dixon With The Exploding Star Orchestra	Thrill Jockey	APR
	Dixon, Bill—Orchestra	17 Musicians In Search Of A Sound: Darfur	AUM Fidelity	AUG
	Douglas, Dave—Keystone	Moonshine	Greenleaf Music	MAR
	Ehrlich, Marty/Myra Melford	Spark!	Palmetto	JAN
	Eigsti, Taylor	Let It Come To You	Concord	JUL
	Elias, Eliane	Something For You	Blue Note	MAY
	Ellis, John—Double-Wide	Dance Like There's No Tomorrow	Hyena	JUN
	Empirical	Empirical	Destin-E	MAR
	Erksine, Peter/Tim Hagans/ The Norrbotten Big Band	Worth The Wait	Fuzzy Music	MAY
	Fankhauser, Philipp	Love Man Riding	Crosscut	NOV
	Fernández, Agustí/Evan Parker/ Barry Guy/Paul Lytton	Topos	Maya	MAR
	Fieldwork	Door	Pi	AUG
	Free Form Funky Freqs	Urban Mythology, Volume 1	Thirsty Ear	MAY
	Gambarini, Roberta/Hank Jones	You Are There	EmArcy	MAY
	Gilchrist, Lafayette	Soul Progressin'	Hyena	DEC
	Granite, Avi	Red Tree	Pet Mantis	FEB
	Gress, Drew	The Irrational Numbers	Premonition	APR
	Guy, Barry/Marilyn Crispell/Paul Lytton	Phases Of The Night	Intakt	OCT



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NEW





# Best CDs of 2008

Artist	Title	Label	Issue
	<i>Heartplay</i>	Naim	JAN
Hamasyan, Tigran—Trio	<i>New Era</i>	Blujazz	MAY
Hemmersam, Jory/Dom Minasi—Quartet	<i>The Jon Hemmersam/Dom Minasi Quartet</i>	CDM	JUL
Holland, Dave—Sextet	<i>Pass It On</i>	Dare2	DEC
Hyman, Dick/Chris Hopkins	<i>Teddy Wilson In 4 Hands</i>	Victoria Company	FEB
Inhabitants	<i>The Furniture Moves Underneath</i>	Drip Audio	MAY
Iyer, Vijay	<i>Tragicomic</i>	Sunnyside	JUL
Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey	<i>Lil' Tae Rides Again</i>	Hyena	JUN
Jarrett, Keith/Gary Peacock/ Jack DeJohnette	<i>Setting Standards—New York Sessions</i>	ECM	MAY
Jones, Sean	<i>Kaleidoscope</i>	Mack Avenue	MAR
Karayorgis, Pandelis/Nate McBride/ Curt Newton	<i>Betwixt</i>	hatOLOGY	NOV
Keneally, Mike	<i>Wine And Pickles</i>	Exowax	OCT
Kimbrough, Frank	<i>Air</i>	Palmetto	MAY
King, B.B.	<i>One Kind Favor</i>	Geffen	NOV
Klein, Guillermo/Los Guachos	<i>Filtros</i>	Sunnyside	SEP
Kolker, Adam	<i>Flag Day</i>	Sunnyside	JUN
Kontorovich, Alex	<i>Deep Minor</i>	Chasma	JAN
Kouyate, Bassekou/Ngoni Ba	<i>Segu Blue</i>	Out Here	FEB
LaVette, Bettye	<i>The Scene Of The Crime</i>	Anti-	JAN
LeDonne, Mike	<i>FiveLive</i>	Savant	DEC
Lloyd, Charles—Quartet	<i>Rabo De Nube</i>	ECM	MAY
Locke, Joe—Quartet	<i>Sticks And Strings</i>	Jazz Eyes	MAY
Loueke, Lionel	<i>Karibu</i>	Blue Note	APR
Lovano, Joe	<i>Symphonica</i>	Blue Note	OCT
Lynne, Shelby	<i>Just A Little Lovin'</i>	Lost Highway	MAY
MacLeod, Doug	<i>The Utrecht Sessions</i>	Black And Tan	NOV
Mahanthappa, Rudresh	<i>Kinsmen</i>	Pi	DEC
Malinverni, Pete	<i>Invisible Cities</i>	Reservoir	JUN
Marchetti, Lionel/Seijiro Murayama	<i>Hatali Atsalei</i>	Intransitive	JUN
Marsalis, Wynton	<i>Congo Square</i>	Shanachie	JUL
Mauger	<i>The Beautiful Enabler</i>	Clean Feed	DEC
Maupin, Bennie	<i>Early Reflections</i>	Cryptogramophone	JUL
Maybe Monday	<i>Unsquare</i>	Intakt	JUN
Mazur, Marilyn	<i>Elixir</i>	ECM	JUN
McCaslin, Donny—Trio	<i>Recommended Tools</i>	Greenleaf Music	DEC
McGuinness, Pete—Jazz Orchestra	<i>First Flight</i>	Summit	AUG
McNeil, John/Bill McHenry	<i>Rediscovery</i>	Sunnyside	SEP
Mehldau, Brad—Trio	<i>Live</i>	Nonesuch	JUL
Meier, Nicolas	<i>Silence Talks</i>	Naim	OCT
Mengis, Manuel—Gruppe 6	<i>The Pond</i>	hatOLOGY	SEP
Metheny, Pat	<i>Day Trip</i>	Nonesuch	MAR
Mitchell, Nicole—Black Earth Ensemble	<i>Black Unstoppable</i>	Delmark	MAY
Moore, Michael/Fred Hersch	<i>This We Know</i>	Palmetto	NOV
Mostly Other People Do The Killing	<i>Shamokin'!!!</i>	Hot Cup	JAN
Newman, Randy	<i>Harps And Angels</i>	Nonesuch	DEC
NOMO	<i>Ghost Rock</i>	Ubiquity	OCT
Nuttree Quartet	<i>Standards</i>	Kind Of Blue	JUL
O'Farrill, Arturo—The Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra	<i>Song For Chico</i>	Zoho	SEP
Os Ritmistas	<i>Os Ritmistas</i>	Dubas Musica	APR
Otero, Fernando	<i>Página De Buenos Aires</i>	Nonesuch	MAR
Parker, William—Quartet	<i>Petit Oiseau</i>	AUM Fidelity	NOV
Parks, Kevin/Joe Foster	<i>Ipsi Sibi Somnia Fingunt</i>	self-released	JUN



**NEW**

# Best CDs of 2008

Artist	Title	Label	Issue
	Pelt, Jeremy <i>November</i>	MaxJazz	SEP
	Pizzarelli Boys, The <i>Sunday At Pete's</i>	Challenge	FEB
	Pizzarelli, John <i>With A Song In My Heart</i>	Telarc	OCT
	Plant, Robert/Alison Krauss <i>Raising Sand</i>	Rounder	JAN
	Postma, Tineke <i>A Journey That Matters</i>	Foreign Media	JAN
	Radiohead <i>In Rainbows</i>	ATO	FEB
	Reed, Mike—Loose Assembly <i>The Speed Of Change</i>	482 Music	NOV
	Reed, Mike—People, Places & Things <i>Proliferation</i>	482 Music	NOV
	Ribot, Marc—Ceramic Dog <i>Party Intellectuals</i>	Pi	AUG
	Robinson, Scott <i>Forever Lasting</i>	Arbors	OCT
	Roseman, Josh <i>New Constellations</i>	Accurate	JAN
	Rosenwinkel, Kurt—Group <i>The Remedy: Live At The Village Vanguard</i>	ArtistShare	AUG
	Saxophone Summit <i>Seraphic Light</i>	Telarc	JUL
	Schuller, George—Circle Wide <i>Like Before, Somewhat After</i>	Playscape	JUN
	Scorch Trio <i>Brolt</i>	Rune Grammofon	AUG
	Sehnaoui, Christine <i>Solo</i>	Olof Bright	JUN
	Sofferman, Brooke <i>Fine Whines</i>	Summit	APR
	Solal, Martial—Trio <i>Longitude</i>	CamJazz	AUG
	Spalding, Esperanza <i>Esperanza</i>	Heads Up	AUG
	Specter, Dave <i>Live In Chicago</i>	Delmark	AUG
	Stenson, Bobo—Trio <i>Cantando</i>	ECM	DEC
	Strickland, Marcus <i>Open Reel Deck</i>	Strick Muzik	JAN
	Stryker/Slagle Band, The <i>The Scene</i>	Zoho	DEC
	Tedeschi, Susan <i>Back To The River</i>	Verve Forecast	DEC

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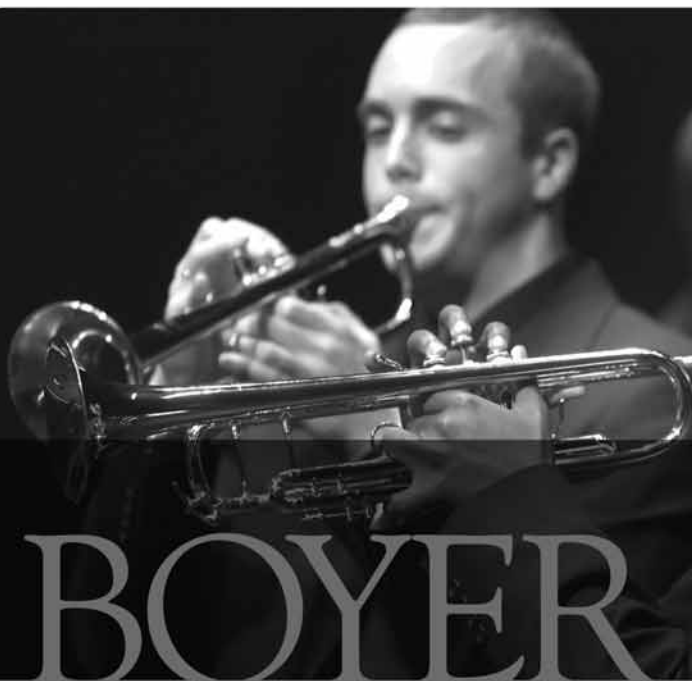
Artist	Title	Label	Issue	
	Third World Love	<i>New Blues</i>	Anzic	JUN
	Trion, Gyldene	<i>Live At Glenn Miller Café</i>	Ayler	NOV
	Turre, Steve	<i>Rainbow People</i>	HighNote	AUG
	Tyner, McCoy—Quartet	<i>McCoy Tyner Quartet</i>	McCoy Tyner Music	JAN
	Vandermark 5	<i>Beat Reader</i>	Atavistic	APR
	Vandermark, Ken	<i>Musician</i>	Facets Video	SEP
	Various Artists	<i>Gypsy Caravan</i>	World Village	MAR
	Various Artists	<i>What's Happening Pernambuco</i>	Luaka Bop	APR
	Von Schlippenbach, Alexander— Globe Unity Orchestra	<i>Globe Unity—40 Years</i>	Intakt	MAY
	Waits, Hope	<i>Hope Waits</i>	Radarproof	JAN
	Williams, Jessica	<i>Songs For A New Century</i>	Origin	DEC
	Wyatt, Robert	<i>Comicopera</i>	Domino	FEB
	Yedid, Yitzhak	<i>Oud Bass Piano Trio</i>	Between The Lines	OCT
	Yoshihide, Otomo—New Jazz Orchestra	<i>Live Vol. 1: Series Circuit</i>	Doubt Music	JAN



**HISTORICAL**

Artist	Title	Label	Issue	
	Alexander, Arthur	<i>Lonely Just Like Me: The Final Chapter</i>	Hacktone	FEB
	Brown, James	<i>I Got The Feelin': James Brown In The '60s</i>	Shout! Factory	NOV
	Brubeck, Dave	<i>50 Years Of Dave Brubeck: Live At The Monterey Jazz Festival 1958–2007</i>	Monterey Jazz Festival Records	NOV
	Carter, Benny	<i>Symphony In Riffs</i>	Rhapsody Films	APR
	Cole, Nat King	<i>10th Anniversary</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Cole, Nat King	<i>Just One Of Those Things/Let's Face The Music</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Cole, Nat King	<i>Songs For Two In Love/Sings Ballads Of The Day</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Cole, Nat King	<i>Unforgettable</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Cole, Nat King	<i>Welcome To The Club/Tell Me About Yourself</i>	Collectors Choice Music	APR
	Gillespie, Dizzy/James Moody/Gil Fuller	<i>Dizzy Gillespie &amp; James Moody With Gil Fuller</i>	Blue Note	SEP
	Gruntz, George	<i>George Gruntz Radio Days</i>	TCB	MAY
	Guy, Buddy/Clarence Gatemouth Brown/Bobby Parker	<i>Blues At Montreux 2004</i>	Eagle Eye	FEB
	Haden, Charlie	<i>The Private Collection</i>	Naim	APR
	Hawkins, Coleman	<i>The Hawk Flies High</i>	Riverside	OCT
	Heath, Jimmy	<i>Really Big!</i>	Riverside	JAN
	Hutcherson, Bobby	<i>Head On</i>	Blue Note	SEP
	Martin, Mel/Benny Carter—Quintet	<i>Just Friends</i>	Jazzed Media	FEB
	McGregor, Chris—Brotherhood Of Breath	<i>Eclipse At Dawn</i>	Cuneiform Rune	SEP
	Murray, Sunny	<i>The Hilversum Session</i>	ESP	MAR
	Patton, John	<i>Soul Connection</i>	Nilva/Just A Memory	OCT
	Revolutionaries, The	<i>Drum Sound</i>	Pressure Sounds	JAN
	Silver, Horace	<i>Live At Newport '58</i>	Blue Note	MAR
	Smith, Jimmy	<i>Midnight Special</i>	Blue Note	JAN
	Various Artists	<i>Play Your Own Thing: A Story Of Jazz In Europe</i>	EuroArts	JUL
	Various Artists	<i>Wattstax</i>	Stax	FEB
	Various Artists	<i>Wattstax (DVD)</i>	Warner DVD	FEB
	Various Artists	<i>Nigeria Special: Modern Highlife, Afro-Sounds And Nigerian Blues 1970–'76</i>	Soundway	APR
	Wonder, Stevie	<i>Number 1's</i>	Motown	FEB





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Kenny Barron



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Camilo



Herbie  
Hancock



# THE ART OF THE Solo

*JAMES MOODY, HERBIE  
HANCOCK, KENNY BARRON,  
TERENCE BLANCHARD,  
AHMAD JAMAL, MARIAN  
MCPARTLAND AND OTHERS  
ON HOW TO BUILD (OR  
DECONSTRUCT) JAZZ  
IMPROVISATIONS*

*By Bob Davis*

On the bandstand in 1942, James Moody began jamming on “I’m In The Mood For Love.” He improvised a solo so singable that it inspired Eddie Jefferson’s immortal marriage of lick and lyric, “Moody’s Mood”: “Pretty baby you are the soul who snaps my control.”

What was Moody thinking? In the middle of a tune or jam, when the improv torch was passed to him, how did he make his solo sing? “I was playing alto and I was really a tenor player,” he said. “I was trying to think of where my fingers should go on the alto, to play the song.”

It’s a strange and tricky task to stand up in front of a crowd and make up something interesting, compelling, connecting, moving and musical. Unlike editable art—a piece of writing, for instance, that can be contemplated and corrected—a jazz solo issues forth in real time. The notes can’t be taken back, reconsidered or rewritten. All the woodshedding ultimately comes down to that live, public moment of truth.

The answer to the question “How do you build a solo?” differs from musician to musician. Kenny Barron instructs his students to be as lyrical as possible. “In one lesson I may tell them,

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"We're going to take a solo. But I don't want you to double up at all. Try and leave space. Consider the fact that silence is a part of music, too," the pianist said. "I try to get them to understand that you have to leave space sometimes. Because when you're young you want to play everything you know at every moment. Be lyrical, and use space."

Oliver Jones also emphasizes respect for the original song. "Someone from my era who's been playing since the early '40s, we had a little bit more respect for melody," the pianist said. "I always like to state the melody first, and respect the composer's original thought. Somewhere within my tunes you'll always hear the melody, even if I'm playing it in the left hand. Whether harmonically or finding different ways to build my solos, I make sure that I'm not that far from the melody, but I want the things to sound exciting and fresh every time."

Something new coming up every time is vital for Herbie Hancock, for whom even stating the melody and sticking to the song are less important. He doesn't like to present what people expect. "I set about trying to design the presentation so that it's more of an experience for the audience," he said. "As far as the shape of the music is concerned, many pieces I reharmonize, or at least reshape the arrangement, so that it's not always just a melody and then there's improvisation, then the melody and then it's out."

"Wayne Shorter's group is interesting because they don't take that approach at all," Hancock continued. "Wayne plays a few phrases, and next you'll hear Danilo Pérez playing. He'll go off on something, complete some idea, but it's not like a whole long solo. It's an idea that can be picked up by the bass or drums. Sometimes they all play together."

That atypical structure—an animated toss-and-catch dialogue instead of serial soliloquies—is a freer form of group improvisation, a musical conversation in which players don't merely support but actually build upon each other's ideas. Ahmad Jamal has another approach—the entire ensemble is his instrument and the entire song is a solo. "There's the role of the architect," Jamal said. "Building blocks. You have to build if you're a musician. You have to be a musical architect, if you have the players who can do that. I like the idea of building and ending when it's complete—not before it's complete. I like to build as perfect a structure musically as I can."

Contrasting Jamal, Kenny Werner does not believe in "building" a solo. "I believe in starting from a place in my body, wherever the body is," the pianist said. "I may start hard, and then come back down. When someone asks me, 'How does a solo get made?' I use the title of Joe Henderson's 'Inner Urge.' If my inner urge is built up so that by the beginning of the solo I'm ready to gush, then it's not going to be building a solo, is it? It's going to start from a forceful place. It's either going to go from there upward; it depends on how much gushing I need to do. But you don't build a solo, you let the solo articulate where you're at."

"A solo you build might happen over three or four weeks," Werner continued. "If you start from a solemn place, and solemnity never wears off, then you begin and end in solemnity. But to come out of the solemnity that is your state of mind, and pretend to create momentum is saying nothing. So there is no building of a solo. There's building of the energy of a person or not. It could be the depleting of an energy, if that's who you are. Chet Baker didn't build a solo."

Whatever the structure, however formal or free, the solo is still composed instantaneously, one note at a time. "There are no wrong notes—it's what you do with the notes that you choose," Hancock said. "That doesn't mean you do anything. Any note can fit in with any chord. It depends on how you use it, and what came before and what comes after. I try not to be bound by the harmonic structure of the song. I don't use so much of a technical approach as I do an intuitive approach. But the intuitive approach includes the technical approach. I can choose how much of my brain I want to use, and how much response I want to use. If the chord's a G7, I might be in an entirely different key. I might do something that has nothing to do with a G7, but the context makes the difference. I like to work toward almost a 12-tone thing."

Jazz improvisation should be as natural as improvising a conversation, according to pianist Aaron Goldberg. "Building a solo is exposition in the



style of any narrative," he said. "You try to lure your listener in the first line to pull them in. Once they're in, where do you take them? You have a responsibility now that you've captured your audience. They're on the edge of their seat to see what you're going to do. Everything you play, everything you say, has to have some relationship—logical or otherwise—to what you just said. The same way that we're speaking, hopefully the sentences that come out of my mouth have some sense because they're related to the sentences that just came out of my mouth."

Clark Terry's "Mumbles" notwithstanding, most soloists strive toward statements evocative and articulate, beyond Joycean streams of consciousness or endless emoting full of sound and fury signifying nothing.

"People forget that the same thing applies to playing music and to being a jazz improviser, and they think, 'OK, now it's time to play scales,'" Goldberg said. "No, it's time to tell a story. If you just allow your brain to operate the way it naturally does, you will naturally build a solo. Without having to think about it. Often, it's just about getting out of your own way—letting go of some preconceived notions about what you have to play on this chord, what's supposed to happen when you get here, or play the thing that you practiced yesterday."

Michel Camilo has a contrasting approach. "You have to always think form," the pianist said. "It's not just random notes. Always think a beginning, a middle and an ending. Not only that, think hills and valleys. Don't just play notes in a vacuum. It's always nice to understand the 'Rhythm' changes. But what is the message? What is the song about? What's the title of the song? What was the composer thinking of? Search a little bit, and tune into that song's message. It's not just a whim."

"What are you looking for?" Camilo continued. "Are you looking for an introspective solo? An explosive one? Is it happy? Is it sad? Is it mellow? Is it going to make people cry? Are you going for a cold approach, or do you want to be hot? Is this an introspective song? Is this a violent mood or a dynamic, fast-paced one? Do I want people to have their hearts raised? Do I want them to have their memories come out through the music? Do I want them to be reflective of their human condition? I try to capture that feeling. All of these things come into play. Just let the piano play for you. Don't fight the piano."

Camilo continues with the admonition to learn tunes in different keys. "It forces your hands to go different ways, your fingers to work in different ways, and it opens your ears big time. And, therefore, you start thinking in terms of harmonic relationships. Not just this chord, that chord. That works great for your freedom. And don't forget to breathe. You could always play forever with your musical phrases. But if you start breathing with your musical phrases, then you start using the space in between the phrases."

Christian Jacob echoes the importance of breathing along with solo phrases. "You have to breathe and know where you're going," the pianist said. "Using your ear is how it works. I play and then I judge myself. What is the problem? I never breathe. And so I would invent an exercise to take care of this problem."

Terence Blanchard explained that his solos differ based upon the context they occur within a performance.

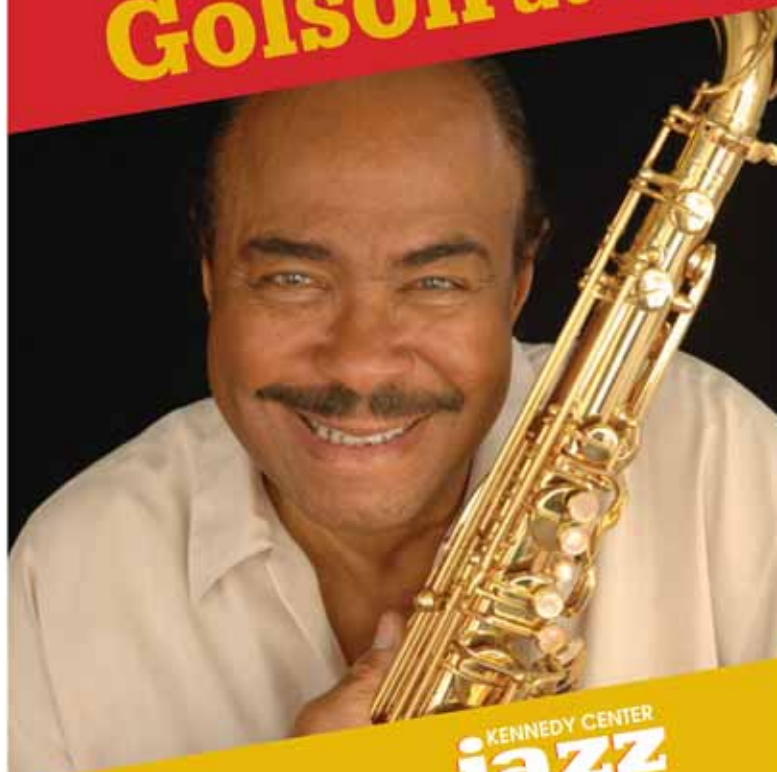
"Each solo takes on different meaning," the trumpeter said. "It's like watching a movie. You have individual performances in a scene, and when you put them together they make one story. You have to think of building a solo like building a composition, because you are telling a story. It's not just a collection of ideas you practice, but like taking an initial musical statement and then seeing how you can develop that idea into a cohesive musical idea or tale."

Moody thinks differently. "Whatever the song is I'm playing, whatever I'm thinking or feeling at the time, that's what comes out," he said. "How do you build a solo? I have never even thought about that. You play what you feel. I'm trying to play better tomorrow than I did today."

At the moment of musical impact most masters agree with the simple statement of Marian McPartland: "Don't think—just do what sounds good. Have enough technique to do at least part of what you're thinking, and just be free in your mind and don't try to show off or be smart. Just let it happen."

DB

# Benny Golson at 80



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## How to Practice 'Giant Steps'

*By David Demsey*

The chord sequence of “Giant Steps” is difficult, and not just because of the fast tempo. The real challenge lays in the unusual three-key structure of its brief 16-measure form (three equidistant key centers separated by major thirds, known as a thirds cycle). The three “Giant Steps” key centers are B major, G major and E-flat major; the harmony is made up of only ii-V-I or V-I in these three keys.

“Giant Steps” has two main sections. In the first, the harmony descends in the first four measures through the three key centers of B major, V-I in G major and V-I in E-flat major. The next four measures back up a bit, then descend through G, V-I in E-flat and to V-I in B major—a descent of an octave from B to B. The harmonic motion of the second half of the tune goes upward in response to this descent, ascending through the three key centers with ii-V-I progressions in E-flat major, G major, B

## "GIANT STEPS" HALF-NOTE KEY CENTER CONNECTIONS



Of these two sections, the first presents the toughest challenge for the improviser because the chord progressions shift so quickly. There are only V-I progressions, with no iim7 chord included. Each key center lasts for only four beats, requiring the improviser to shift instantaneously between three distant key centers.

In practicing this first section, it is easy to get sidetracked by concentrating too much on the notes or patterns that Coltrane plays over each of the individual chords, missing the more important element of the connections between the keys. Although there are melodic similarities between Coltrane's choruses, by far the most consistent element is the way he connects the key centers using voice-leading patterns that are the same, chorus after chorus. The moments that make all of Coltrane's choruses sound so consistent and give his solos so much forward motion are the connections between each Ima<sup>7</sup>

How should you practice establishing this level of connectedness? By slowing everything down. Don't only observe the common-sense rule of patience and slow-tempo practice, but also learn "Giant Steps" by practicing at first in half notes that clearly give the sound of the voice-leading connections between the keys.

The included music example demonstrates how half notes can outline these connections, showing two different voice-leading “pathways” used often by Coltrane in his solos. Whenever Coltrane plays a D-sharp on the first B major chord, he nearly always picks up a D-natural on the next D7 chord. It is possible to slide from key to key by moving in half steps, and in a number of instances by using common



tones between adjacent chords and not moving at all. Example A includes two possible “pathways,” but these paths can be created starting on any chord tone. It is interesting that the two voice-leading paths in Example A actually cross: the final A-sharp in the top voice of measure 16 leads to the A-sharp in the bottom voice of measure 1; and the final E in the bottom voice of measure 16 leads down a half step to the D-sharp in the top voice of measure 1.

Practice these half-note voice leading pathways like you would practice a chorale in the style of J.S. Bach. Then make up your own pathways. Different options are available at a number of points in the progression, by moving up a half or whole step rather than downward. These alternate choices will lead to new sounds. More advanced improvisers familiar with the 9ths, 11ths and 13ths of these chords will find that the upper structures present many more options and beautiful colors. A note to more advanced players: Coltrane rarely uses dominant chord alterations such as flatted or raised 9ths, or raised 5ths in “Giant Steps” solos. The harmony shifts so quickly that the ear doesn’t have time to pick up these alterations.

When these half notes become second nature, you can play effortlessly, at faster tempos; then, add quarter-note passing tones and go through the same process. Start by adding quarter notes over the Imaj7 chords only, then on all the chords of the easier second section, then over the entire progression. Slow the tempo back down to do this—and be patient.

Finally, add eighth notes by the same process. Use eighths just over the Imaj7 chords, then just in the second section and then throughout the progression. Again, slow the tempo down again—be creative, think of the tune as a laid-back, lilting bossa or a hard-grooving swing feel at around quarter note=120.

Many of Coltrane’s early takes of “Giant Steps” are more melodic, and we can see Coltrane hearing these voice-leading pathways. On take 4 on the March 26, 1959, recording session, the opening pickup F-sharp leads to common-tone F-sharps, then F-natural; in a lower voice, E-flat (the 3rd of Bmaj7) moves to D, which then stays as a common tone through modulations into G major and E-flat major. The integrity of this voice-leading remains as Coltrane keeps playing.

Slowly practicing these voice-leading pathways gets past the level of memorized finger patterns, and enables you to hear the tune and its modulations, perhaps the same way Coltrane did 50 years ago. **DB**

David Demsey is a saxophonist and is coordinator of jazz studies at William Paterson University in Wayne, N.J. He is the author of the transcription book *John Coltrane Plays “Giant Steps”* (Hal Leonard Artist Transcription Series), containing all of Coltrane’s nine existing recorded improvisations on this tune, as well as analysis and historical background.



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David Liebman is known for his contributions to the music of such legends as Miles Davis and Elvin Jones, not to mention his work as a leader. However, the saxophonist said that establishing the International Association of Schools of Jazz (IASJ) in 1989 “is the most important contribution I have made to jazz and to the world in general.”

“In our 19 years,” Liebman continued, “we have been responsible for more than 1,000 students, teachers and administrators coming together from nearly 40 countries.”

An organization like the IASJ exists only in relation to the schools and programs worldwide that offer jazz education. “Jazz develops on an international scale,” said Wouter Turkenburg, IASJ executive director and the head of the jazz department of the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Netherlands. “There is no longer one center of jazz, or one dominating place or city like we had in the past. Jazz lives and develops everywhere around the globe.”

“Despite the problems that jazz has encountered in the past decade, there is increased enrollment in jazz programs and new ones constantly being developed in America, Europe, and more and more non-Western countries such as South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam,” Liebman said.

For vocalist Judy Niemack, the view from abroad is more common than working stateside. Her teaching career began in New York, but eventually spread to doing vocal jazz workshops whenever she toured Europe. She’s been living with her husband in Europe for 15 years and has seen many changes. “Each generation of players has gotten better,” Niemack said. “More programs have started and younger people are teaching.”

Niemack—who moved to Belgium in 1992 and taught at the Brussels Conservatory, Antwerp Conservatory and the Royal Conservatory of the



Hague—eventually ended up in Berlin, where she helped form the Jazz Institut Berlin. She refers to a new program called Erasmus, where students within Europe can go to another country for one or two semesters. In her view, it's "changing the new European jazz scene."

"Jazz and improvisational music have become powerful forces far beyond the borders of the United States, and the Spanish speaking world is a rich source of new musical ideas and talent," said Berklee College of Music President Roger Brown, whose Berklee Valencia will open in Spain in 2011. Created from a partnership between Berklee and the Spanish performing rights organization SGAE, the Valencia campus will be the largest offshore U.S. music college in the world. "Valencia is a location on the Mediterranean with a wonderful climate and is a popular destination for students all over Europe. This program will be an excellent complement to our Boston campus, and it will allow North American students to study abroad and expand their own cultural horizons."

Other jazz programs across Europe are becoming increasingly competitive. Take the jazz program at the Royal Academy of Music in London, which trumpeter Gerard Presencer, the department head, said is the hardest department in the school to gain entry to. "With a small intake of students—one of each instrument per year—each year groups form a band that stays together," Presencer said. "We have approximately 35 students working on Bachelor's of Music and Master's of Music, and a faculty consisting of some of the finest jazz educators in Europe."

One of the Royal Academy's former teachers has also taught at many other schools internationally. Trombonist Jiggs Whigham headed up the first jazz school in Germany and is a former head of the Jazz Institut Berlin. "Since being named the first full professor of jazz in Germany in 1979, I've witnessed much development—most very good," said Whigham, who currently directs the BBC Big Band in England. "The awareness of jazz music and jazz education has grown considerably"

Whigham also taught at the Paris Conservatoire and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. "With all of this positive activity, there continues to be the challenge of what to do with all the fine young musicians graduating from these schools," he added. "This is not a problem exclusive to Germany. On a positive note, most all of the current members of the radio big bands—Hamburg, Frankfurt, Cologne and Stuttgart—are former students and products of the schools here."

Commenting on various programs she's had some familiarity with, Niemack said: "Each country is as individual as their people are, and each school reflects the taste of the department head. At The Royal Conservatory of The Hague, there's a strong mainstream and bebop-oriented program, and Barry Harris' teaching holds a strong influence. In Brussels, David Linx heads the vocal program on the Flemish side, so there's more emphasis on contemporary modern jazz and original lyrics. In Spain, jazz is still quite new, but the conservatories are helping to create a new generation of excellent players. For example, both Jordi Rossy and Guillermo Klein are also teaching at Musikene in San Sebastian, so students get some of that 'New York juice.'"

When it comes to New York, bassist Joris Teepe said the teacher's "life experience and commitment directly effects how they teach." Teepe, director of jazz studies at Prince Claus Conservatory in Groningen, The Netherlands, heads up the school's New York Comes To Groningen program. "It's a more pragmatic, performance-oriented way of studying jazz than what is often taught at other conservatoires. This means that when students enter the conservatory, they will be performing from the first day. The theory is applied to real playing situations, and in general classes are focused on making them ready to play jazz on the highest professional level. Piano study, lessons in arranging and compositions all find quick applications in studio projects and student performances." Alongside top-rated Dutch faculty and 25 nationalities represented, New York faculty includes Don Braden, Alex Sipiagin and Ralph Peterson.

This strong program appears to be representative of the growing quality of European jazz education.

"The level of international jazz study is high," Niemack said. "Each school has its own cultural flavor, which is added to the background of the American tradition. The scene is in good health."

DB

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## Artist vs. Presenter

### Two Sides of Personal Appearances

Jazz musicians spend (or would like to spend) most of their professional lives performing live. I'll analyze both sides of the performance contract in this response to recent questions about artists' rights vs. presenters' rights.

#### ARTIST PROTECTION

**Question:** What sort of a contract do I as an artist need for personal appearances? How do I protect myself and how do I make sure I get paid?

Try to get at least part of the price in advance. Traditionally, 50 percent of the total price is paid in advance, usually held in escrow by the agent if there is one. The other 50 percent is paid on the night of the performance, preferably before the artist goes on stage. If the date is a percentage date, those calculations usually go on while the performance is in progress.

The standard single engagement contract is usually in two parts. The first part is sometimes the AFM one-page form contract that outlines the parties, venue, date and place of the performance, hours, the price agreed upon and when payment is to be made. Sometimes this is the entire contract, but if it is, much is left unsaid. Have a second part called the artist rider, which contains specific protections the artist requires for his performance. This doesn't change much from gig to gig.

One item usually covered in a rider is billing, including the relationship between the artist's billing and the billing of supporting acts, if any exist. Where the gig involves travel, the rider will contain the details, such as how the artist and their sidemen will travel and if they'll be picked up at the airport. Hotel details are important, including the class of the hotel, the number of rooms, availability of room service and convenience to the venue. Some pianists like to have a keyboard in their rooms to practice and warm up. For one of my client's rider, this paragraph is in bold and all caps.

The next item might cover sound issues that, if elaborate enough, might be part of a technical rider. This is especially important where there are electric instruments or vocals. The artist would have certain requirements that must be agreed upon in advance. Failure to provide the proper sound can cause a bad concert.

Stage equipment is another important item; this might include music stands, stools, drum sets and risers—all the little things that make up the backline. These become big when not there.

The rider or the main contract (sometimes

both) must specify sound check time. For many pianists, the rider specifies a specific piano; I've had artists who refused to perform when it wasn't there.

Some riders mention the artist's dressing rooms and the food available. War stories abound about the rock groups who include long lists of food in their riders, but more often than not, the band rarely goes near the food.

If the engagement is on a percentage basis, there might be specific provisions about how the artist's representatives verify the number of tickets sold. At the big venue level where reserved seats are sold, the most important item is the ticket manifest, an affidavit from the printer of the tickets as to how many tickets they actually printed. It is the obligation of the promoter to account for each of those tickets. At the opposite level of percentage gigs, the proverbial "door gig," you may find the artist's manager (or even the artist himself) with the club owner late at night at a table at the back of the club counting out cash.

Other important paragraphs of the rider relate to free tickets, security, prohibitions against recording or photography, prohibitions against sponsorship without the artist's consent and possibly language giving the artist the right to approve advertising or obligating the promoter or club owner to buy advertising.

The rider may also cover insurance. The artist should carry his or her own insurance covering damage, injury or liability, and the presenter must have liability insurance.

Many of these items create additional expenses, and to the promoter or club owner, any financial obligations they assume in a contract become part of the cost of the show, and in the end calculated in determining how much they can pay.

No matter how complete the contract and rider, the unexpected can happen. A contract should have provisions relating to the circumstances under which the artist can cancel the agreement. The closer this happens to the date, the harder it should be to cancel if the promoter is not at fault. Certain things such as acts of God and transportation difficulties do sometimes result in cancellation. What happens then? Does the artist reschedule? Is the money returned? All these things should be covered in the well-drafted rider.

Sometimes this can lead to extensive negotiation between the artist and the promoter prior to the concert, but it's better to argue about things three weeks in advance than when the audience is in their seats and the artist refuses to go on.

## JAZZ SCHOOL



*Do you have a legal question that you'd like Alan Bergman to answer in DownBeat? E-mail it to him at [legalsession@downbeat.com](mailto:legalsession@downbeat.com)!*

#### PRESENTER PROTECTION

**Question:** As a promoter or presenter of concerts, how do I deal with an artist's rider that is one-sided and doesn't give me the protections I need? What should I be looking for?

Promoters are entitled to object to items in the artist's rider, but a promoter must read it well enough in advance to negotiate any changes that may be necessary.

First, you should be sure that you are actually dealing with the artist that you think you've engaged. If it's a group, you should list all the members of the group and make sure that their attendance is guaranteed. If the artist has a corporation, you should deal with the proper responsible parties so that you know who to go to after in the event of a breach of contract.

Get the name of the person in charge of the artist's show—usually the tour manager, although it may be the artist. You need someone available at the date who can make decisions. We've already discussed the question of when to pay. Unless you have reason to worry, giving the artist a check before the performance makes for a happy performer and a better performance.

When a promoter or club owner makes an investment in a date, he or she has the right to insist on certain exclusivity, meaning that the artist would not appear within a 60-mile range within 30 or 60 days before or after your concert. The same thing should apply to advertising for the artist's other concerts outside the limit.

You might insist on a first refusal for the artist's next date in your territory. If you're building an audience for this artist, you should have the right to follow up and benefit by the groundwork that you've done. Next, if you get



support from a record company, make sure that they have agreed to that in writing and that the commitment is there when you need it.

What if the artist is late, necessitating overtime? That should be the artist's responsibility, and if you are on a percentage arrangement, that should come out of the percentage. A related point is what happens in the event that the artist causes damage to the stage, the theater or the dressing rooms.

There is usually a guest list or free ticket list. Whose problem is it when the inevitable guest shows up and is not on the list? This should be the artist's responsibility.

If the contract is modified, even after it is signed, both sides must get signed and initialed copies of a final paper containing all that was agreed upon.

If you cannot comply with the artist's technical or catering requirements, state that in advance. Quite often the artist is flexible in this area, but problems arise if he or she gets to the venue and it's not as outlined in their rider. Too often, especially when dealing with small clubs, the venue doesn't object to the rider and assumes the artist is not going to refuse to perform. But I have seen this risk backfire too often.

If the artist is not a corporation, be sure that proper withholding taxes are deducted from the amounts paid; otherwise you, as the employer, will be liable for those taxes. If the artist is a corporation, get the employer identification number. Some states require withholding taxes whether or not a corporation is involved.


If you represent a school or other not-for-profit organization, you may have specific limitations applicable to your performances. For instance, schools do not permit alcoholic beverages on the premises. Schools usually do not pay deposits and usually do not pay on the date of the engagement. They also are self-insured, especially the large state universities.

Some countries, like Japan, have strict rules about drug violations or a history of violations. Be sure that these problems—if they exist—are addressed long in advance so that they can be dealt with in plenty of time for the concert.

Promoting concerts and arranging tours for jazz and pop artists is a job that should be reserved for professionals. Try to deal with people or organizations with reputations you know. Promoting a quality event usually involves a financial risk. It's no job for an amateur, nor is it something that can be done by absentee owners. Be there yourself and deal with all potential problems in advance and build your own professional support system. Adequate preparation and consistent communication are the keys to a successful performance.

**DB**

Alan Bergman is a practicing attorney—and jazz drummer—in New York who has represented the likes of Ron Carter, Jack DeJohnette, Joe Lovano, Dreyfus Records, Billy Taylor and the Thelonious Monk estate. To contact him, go to [alanbergman.com](http://alanbergman.com).



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**JAZZ SCHOOL**

## A Lifetime of Chops

### Warm-Up Tips for Maintaining Trumpet Embouchure Longevity

In music performance, longevity is the holy grail. After working hard for years on our art and gaining the wisdom of on-the-job experience, musicians want to enjoy the fruits of our labors and savor the joy of accomplishment.

For brass players, this quest is bound up with the challenge of maintaining physical skills on the instrument—no small feat as the body ages and loses resilience. We all grieve over the giants of brass who have suffered loss of power and fluency, or have had their careers cut short by chops problems and over-stressed embouchures. At the same time, we celebrate those players whose skills have remained strong into their later years, such as Clark Terry, Joe Wilder and Doc Cheatham.

The secret to longevity for a brass player is a lifelong commitment to a good daily warm-

up routine that focuses on all of the aspects required for successful playing. I have a daily warm-up that I have found useful for maintaining technique. I've learned about brass playing from the great brass teachers I've had (such as William Fielder, Mark Gould, William Vacchiano, and my first teacher, Doug Myers), from reading and research in the field, as well as from my peers.

Some of the most important concepts come from Arnold Jacobs, the former principal tubist of the Chicago Symphony and celebrated brass teacher, Don Jacoby, a trumpeter with the Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman bands, studio player and clinician, and Fielder, the renowned brass coach and teacher at Rutgers University. What follow are some of the nuggets from these masters that I use every day in my warm-up and playing.

#### EXAMPLE 1: Mouthpiece Exercises

A. PLAY ON MOUTHPIECE ALONE (GLISSANDO BETWEEN NOTES) - THEN ON TRUMPET IN SAME MANNER

PLEASE SEE JAMES THOMPSON - "THE BULLING BOOK" (EDITIONS SIM) ETC. DOWN TO F#

B.

PLEASE SEE JAMES STAMP - "WARMUPS & STUDIES" (EDITIONS SIM) DIATONICALLY UP THE C SCALE (CHECK PITCH WITH PIANO)

#### EXAMPLE 2: Stamp Warm-up Exercise

ETC. - PLEASE SEE STAMP BOOK

#### EXAMPLE 3: Flow Studies

A.  $\text{♩} = 60$

TRANSPOSE CHROMATICALLY DOWN TO STARTING NOTE = D<sub>2</sub>

$\text{♩} = 64$

$\text{♩} = 80$





NICK RUECHEL

## Sound Concept

The most important factor in playing the horn is sound. In order to get a great sound from your bell, you have to have a great sound in your head. Developing a good sound comes from listening, storing what you listen to in your memory and listening critically to what comes out of your bell. Record yourself for a reality check.

## Breathing

Proper and relaxed breathing are the foundations of efficient brass playing. It can be useful to concentrate on the mechanism of breathing away from the horn to develop good habits you can apply on the horn. Good breathing should eliminate unnecessary tension and minimize extraneous motion. Jacoby explained that we breathe with the diaphragm. He espoused a method in which a player expands in all directions to give the diaphragm the room it needs. Then, a player should blow through the horn.

## Mouthpiece Buzzing

Mouthpiece buzzing helps accustom you to using more air. Buzzing also helps to develop a proper air/lip balance, where the outward force of air is contained by embouchure muscles. The correct balance between these elements will result in a centered tone. For mouthpiece work, I am a devotee of James Thompson's *Buzzing Book* (Éditions BIM), and start my warm-up each day with exercises from his routine. The mouthpiece exercises from the James Stamp book *Warm-Ups And Studies* (Éditions BIM) are also useful. (Example 1)

## Stamp Exercise

The next part of my routine is the Stamp warm-up exercise No. 3, which opens up my sound. Try playing this exercise on the mouthpiece and on the horn, paying special attention to intonation and the transitions between notes. The key to maintaining balance in these exercises is to "think down while ascending" and "think up while descending." (Example 2)

## Flow Studies

The flow studies of the brass teacher Vincent Cichowicz are useful in working on the con-

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### EXAMPLE 4: Flexibility Studies

EXAMPLE 4: Flexibility Studies

A. CHROMATICALLY DOWN TO F#

PLEASE SEE SAI LIN'S "LIP FLEXIBILITIES" (SALGUBRIDER MUSIC)

B. 8x CHROMATICALLY UP TO C

PLEASE REFER TO EARL IRONS - "27 GROUPS OF EXERCISES" (SOUTHERN MUSIC)

C. CHROMATICALLY DOWN TO F#

D. CHROMATICALLY DOWN TO F#

### EXAMPLE 5: Single Tonguing Exercises

EXAMPLE 5: Single Tonguing Exercises

A. TOO-TOO-TOO-TOO (WIND PATTERNS)

B.

### EXAMPLE 6: Clarke 2nd Study Adapted to Different Scale Qualities

EXAMPLE 6: Clarke 2nd Study Adapted to Different Scale Qualities

C. MAJ. ("JAZZ ARTICULATION")

MINOR

DOMINANT

WHOLE TONE

DIMINISHED

PLAY IN ALL KEYS - SLURRED, SINGLE TONGUED & "JAZZ ARTICULATION"



cepts of Jacobs, Jacoby and Fielder. They open up your sound and help your flexibility. While playing the flow studies, remember Jacoby's image of blowing the air farther out, and to progressively use a small amount of tongue arch as you ascend past the fourth/fifth of the scale. It can be challenging to "hang on" through the descent in the higher versions of these exercises; that's where the idea of balance in the Stamp exercise can be applied. (Example 3)

## Lip Flexibility

Flexibility exercises are the foundation of my ability to get around the horn. Recommended methods for lip flexibility include the Max Schlossberg *Daily Drills And Technical Studies* (M. Baron), Charles Colin's *Advanced Lip Flexibilities I* (Charles Colin Music), Earl Iron's *27 Groups Of Exercises* (Southern Music), and Bai Lin's *Lip Flexibilities* (Balquhider). I use exercises from Lin and Irons as part of my daily routine, as well as those of my own devising. The key to performing lip flexibilities is the use of tongue arch, gradually changing the syllable from "aa" to "ee" as you move from the low to high register. It's important to maintain a balance between use of air, embouchure and tongue level, and to minimize the amount of motion when moving from note to note. (Example 4)

## Dynamics

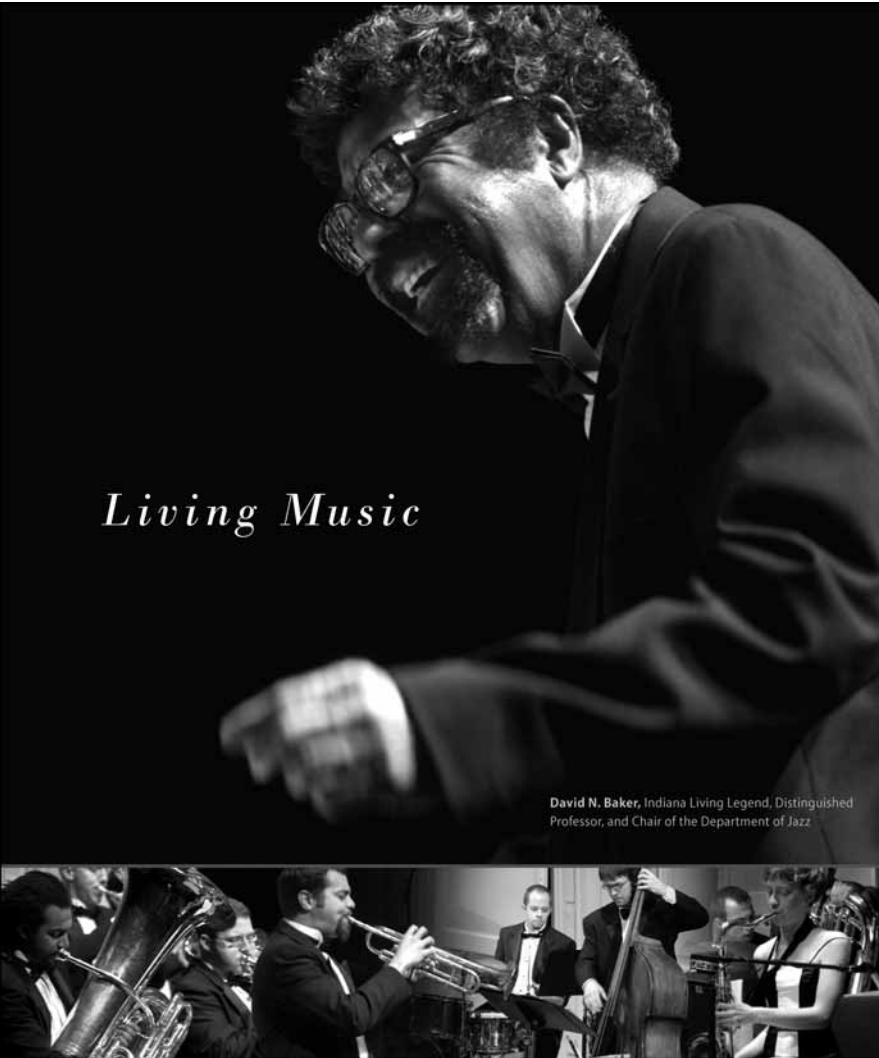
This is an area of practicing that is often neglected. I make sure to start my day playing softly in all registers, maintaining a focused, efficient approach, then expanding the dynamic range gradually while keeping focus. This approach is indispensable for maintaining strength and control on the instrument. Try practicing long tones with a gradual crescendo and decrescendo, while keeping consistent pitch and sound quality.

## Tonguing

The development and maintenance of a light, fast and accurate single tongue is vital for playing jazz. Tongued scale exercises are a regular part of my routine (Example 5). This version of an Herbert Clarke exercise from the book *Technical Studies* (Carl Fisher), adapted to different scale qualities, is good for developing the bebop articulation of tonguing on the offbeats and slurring into the downbeats. Try doing these with a metronome set to half tempo, as well as Example 6.

With all tonguing exercises, keep a light approach and make sure to maintain a continuous air flow. Try slurring the exercise first and then add the tongue, striving to keep the same quality of air movement. **DB**

Trumpeter Brian Lynch tours the world as a leader as well as with Eddie Palmieri and Phil Woods. He's on the faculty at New York University. Visit him on the web at [brianlynchjazz.com](http://brianlynchjazz.com). Tom Dambly contributed to this article.



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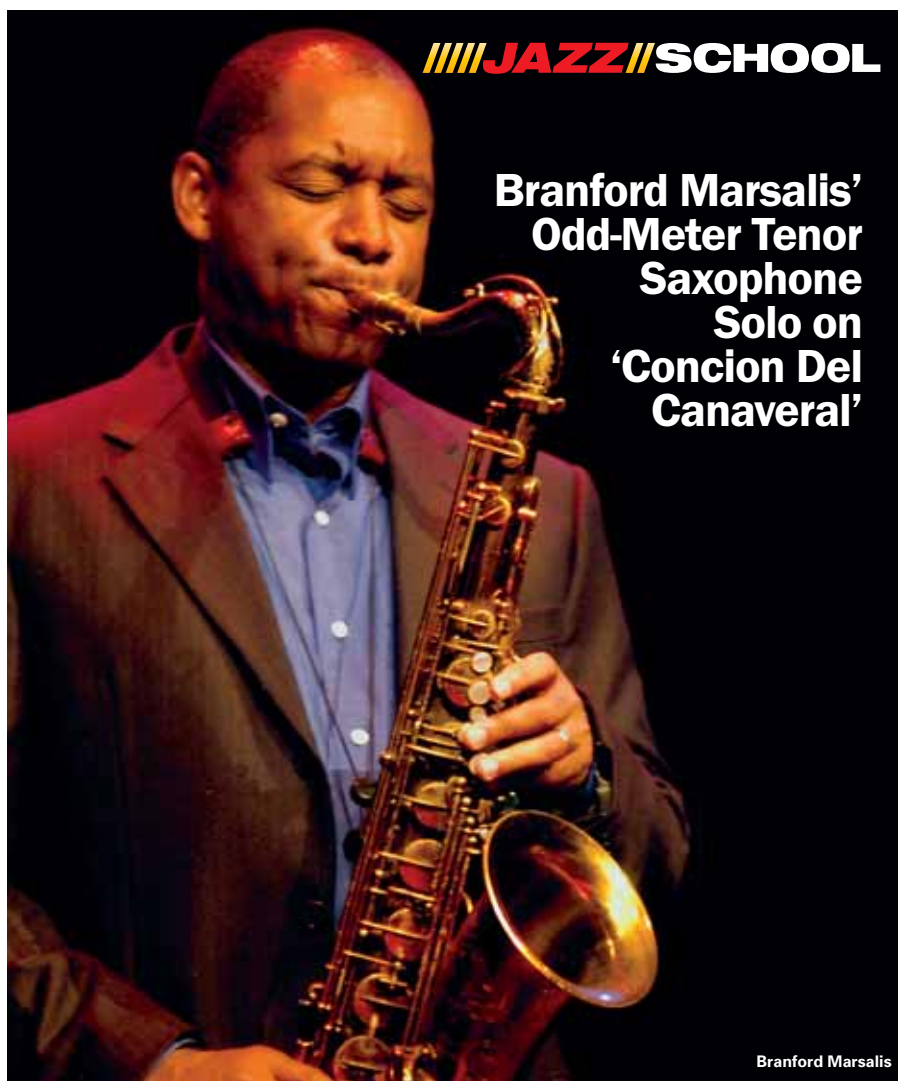
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by Jake Saslow



**JAZZ SCHOOL**

## Branford Marsalis' Odd-Meter Tenor Saxophone Solo on 'Concion Del Canaveral'

Branford Marsalis

Branford Marsalis' tenor saxophone solo on "Concion Del Canaveral" is an excellent study for anyone interested in achieving more rhythmic freedom in odd-meter playing. From David Sánchez's 2000 CD, *Melaza*, this solo in 7/4 is full of over-the-bar line phrases and rhythmic complexity.

Marsalis plays in 7. A musician new to odd-meter playing may feel 7/4 as a bar of 4/4 plus a bar of 3/4. By feeling the full 7/4 bar, the soloist has more freedom in his or her rhythmic phrasing, which allows for a broader palette of different rhythmic subdivisions within the bar. However, 4+3 is just one way that Marsalis feels the time in this solo. Also, in some of Marsalis' 8th-note-based lines, it's not the rhythm—but rather the accented notes—that imply how he feels the time. This illustrates the importance that articulation has on time feel.

In measure 4, although the phrase is nothing but quarter notes, the way that Marsalis accents the notes implies that he feels measure 4 as 3+4 while he feels measure 5 as 4+3. The harmonic

structure is a repeating eight-bar chord progression. Instead of outlining the eight-bar form, Marsalis does the opposite. On the third beat of measure 8, he starts phrasing in a 2/4 rhythm that carries over the bar line until the phrase ends on beat 4 of bar 9.

Hemiolas often emerge in jazz phrasing. Hearing a musician repeat a 3/4 rhythm in 4/4 is common, but such rhythmic vocabulary is less common in odd-meter playing. This concept is a great way to phrase over the bar line and gain rhythmic freedom in odd meters.

Marsalis applies this concept again in measure 17, where he implies three bars of 5/4 over 7. This is impressive because the three bars of 5 are in the middle of a phrase instead of the beginning or end. To incorporate such rhythmic devices into his playing in such a fluid manner shows that they have been internalized completely. In measure 31, Marsalis divides the bar as 3+3+1, which is another way to feel 7/4 other than 4+3.

Another example of a hemiola starts on beat



5 of measure 38. This 3/4 rhythm consists of two quarter notes and a quarter-note rest. He repeats this rhythm for more than two bars, creating a rhythmic tension that leads toward the end of an eight-bar phrase. However, instead of releasing the tension at the beginning of the next eight-bar section as the listener might expect, Marsalis extends the phrase until it reaches its peak on beat 5 of measure 41.

Marsalis again phrases in 2/4 from beat 5 of measure 45 until beat 1 of measure 47.

Throughout this solo, Marsalis shows an ability to phrase over the bar line by implying different time signatures over 7/4, often starting in mid-phrase and on various beats within the measure. Most importantly, he does it in an organic and melodic way, not mechanical or preconceived. **DB**

DB

Jake Saslow is a saxophonist in the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz's performance college program at Loyola University in New Orleans.

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# The Insider

By Béla Fleck

## Fusion 101

### Lessons From Return To Forever

I have had a few life-changing musical moments, where time stopped and the fabric of things changed. The first one I remember was hearing Earl Scruggs play the banjo at 6 or 7. Next it was The Beatles and after that hearing Charlie Parker. Then, at Music and Art High School in New York, I got into Justin DiCiccio's jazz appreciation class. One day he played "Spain" from Return To Forever's *Light As A Feather*.

I was instantly converted into a life-long Chick Corea fan. Things had changed about who I was going to be. That year, my older brother Louie got us tickets to see Return To Forever at the Beacon Theatre. It was 1975 or '76, and they were playing the *Romantic Warrior* material. The show was mind-blowing. I had never seen guys play at this level. I now understand that for young musicians, there is an impact when they realize how incredible musicians can be. Before this show, I never realized that instrumental music could be so much fun. It was so different from the jazz clubs I went to in the city, where the music tended toward a detached cool. This stuff was hot! I was stunned by Stanley Clarke and Al Di Meola's fingerboard agility. They left no area of their fingerboards untouched.

I didn't know how to do that on the banjo, but it dawned on me that there was no reason why I couldn't. Every note they played existed on my banjo as well. I had been playing banjo for two-and-a-half years, and had assimilated most of the banjo music that I could get my hands on. Although I had a long way to go as a musician, it was clear that I was going to be a strong player with new ideas. Pouring that hot concert on top of this liquid young musician was going to have a big impact.

I rushed home and whipped out my banjo. The layout of the fingerboard unlocked. I began to play the scales as a guitarist would, in every key, all the modes, from the open position, up to the last note on the fingerboard, and beyond. I could figure out the arpeggios, and see the connective tissue between the positions into which I had been locked. I could see that due to the close tuning of the banjo, I was going to have to find ways to shift and not get stuck in a position. It was the biggest leap I had as a student of the banjo.

The guy who blew me away the most was



Return To Forever meets the Flecktones: Chick Corea (left), Jeff Coffin, Stanley Clarke, Future Man, Béla Fleck, Lenny White, Victor Wooten and Al Di Meola

COURTESY BÉLA FLECK

the guy I could understand the least. Because I had no keyboard experience, the way Chick played seemed like magic. Everything he played hooked me. I wanted to know what he was doing. He stopped and started a lot, or "left space." It seemed like this stuff could work on my instrument, but it was like music from Mars, after all the bluegrass I had been learning. From then on Chick has been a primary source of inspiration. When I am beginning to doubt myself, I can put on *Romantic Warrior* and remember how exciting music can be. When I'm playing too many non-stop lines, I can listen to Chick solo and remember that I can leave space.

When Victor Wooten appeared in my life—calling me and playing the bass over the phone—I was impressed, but I couldn't figure out what it had to do with me at first. I had been making solo albums with bluegrass musicians, trying to push them into the shapes, harmonies and rhythms I heard. But it wasn't easy, and they didn't always seem to be having a good time. When I played my wacky ideas for Victor, Howard Levy and Future Man, they soaked up the hardest stuff I had written, and asked for more. I was being pushed to be more complex, rather than to make it simple. It was freeing. In 1990, the Flecktones came onto the scene, and I was living a version of what I had seen RTF do—taking complex and arty music, and making it fun for all kinds of people. I was where I had always wanted to be, playing at jazz festivals, as well as bluegrass and roots festivals.

One day in Jacksonville, Fla., I got off my touring bus and brought my clothes into the hotel. I walked back out and climbed onto the bus, and Chick was standing there. I was like, "Wow, Chick, what are you doing on our bus?" And he was like, "Béla, what are you doing on our bus?" While I was inside the hotel, our bus had gone and parked, and his

had pulled up.

I was finding myself in circles that Chick occupied, and got the nerve to ask him to play on a project of mine—*Tales From The Acoustic Planet*. It was an unbelievable experience to play with him for the first time. About seven years later, I was backstage at the Newport Jazz Festival, where I was performing with Stanley Clarke and Jean-Luc Ponty. Ted Kurland mentioned that Chick was interested in doing a duet tour with me. It took a quarter-second for me to say, "Yes!" Doing the duo shows with Chick was an exercise in humility. Hanging in there with him was beyond my ability, but he is such an open and giving player, that he made what I do work.

When I heard that RTF was reuniting last summer, I was thrilled, and a little nervous. Would it be as incredible as it was when they changed the course of my life? To compound my nerves, they invited the Flecktones to open some shows for them. This was an amazing turn of events. For the Flecktones, which was basically created on the RTF template, to even exist at the same time was an unlikely dream.

Coming off stage after playing our opening set at the Aug. 5, 2008, show in Philadelphia, Chick waited with high fives and smiles. Then we got to go watch them out front. I hung out by the soundboard in Philly. The next night in Boston I sat in the third row center.

They sounded amazing. There were some differences. Al and Stanley didn't jump off the stage and help each other back on stage like they used to. But they played their asses off. Lenny White had a subtler way around the drums, more like jazz than rock, with a marvelous feel. Chick was even more bent on harmonically stretching the edges of the music. The groove was on, and it looked to me like they were having a ball. It stacked up and went above most things that have come and gone since.

DB





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W.O. Smith students Tony Moorer (left), L'Amber Craig, Austin Wilhoite, Ronnie Robertson and Kylan Dodson

## Nashville's W.O. Smith School Expands Lessons with New \$5 Million Home

For nearly a decade, Jonah Rabinowitz had his eye on a former tire warehouse in Nashville. Where racks of tires once stood, the executive director of The W.O. Smith/Nashville Community Music School envisioned practice studios and a concert hall rising from the building's concrete floor—all of which would be an improvement over the two small houses that had served as the school.

"We had a waiting room that fit six or seven people seated comfortably, and on any given Monday, we might have 125 people going through the building," Rabinowitz said. "We were not providing an atmosphere where education was being done at its best."

That has all changed as Rabinowitz welcomed the first students to the school's new home in that former tire warehouse last October. Along with offering more basic lessons, the school's all-volunteer music teachers can now provide additional ensembles and expanded theory classes. A music library and instrument lockers have also been created.

"When you come into the building, it looks like a real music school," said piano teacher Doug Fluegel.

Bassist W.O. Smith, who recorded as a sideman for Coleman Hawkins, founded the school in 1984. Smith's vision was to welcome children who participate in the Nashville School District's free lunch program into the school, creating a much-needed activity for kids from the city's impoverished areas. Students take weekly half-hour lessons on instruments provided by the school. About 450 students between the ages of 7 and 18 are enrolled in the school's programs, which is 100 more than were enrolled at the end of 2007. Rabinowitz attributes this growth directly to the increased space for more

teachers in the new building.

W.O. Smith relies on volunteers from a variety of backgrounds. Some instructors are professionals pitching in between gigs and university teaching assignments, but the majority have little or no academic training. According to Rabinowitz, volunteers serve mainly as positive role models to their students, and every high school senior enrolled in the program graduates.

"Music is a lot of math, a lot of reading and a lot of using your brain in ways that you didn't before," Fluegel said. "There's just so much to think about. That's why all of them graduate—they're able to get these things."

To secure funding for purchasing the \$5 million building, organizers relied on a number of large donations, including \$1 million from the Bank of America Foundation.

"There are so many other pressing needs that all communities have," Rabinowitz said. "A lot of people think that this is a luxury, not a necessity."

The organization's expansion has led to an increase in students and volunteers, but the cost to the students—50 cents per lesson—has remained the same.

"We wanted to make sure the kids and their families contributed something," said board member Colleen Dowd. "If it was completely free, they wouldn't value it as much."

Part of Dowd's job is to find new donors and cultivate interest in the school. She's also creating a school foundation and is looking to spread the organization's method to other cities.

"The way that we touch these kids is so evident when you walk in the school and you see the smiles on their faces," Dowd said. "We'd like to see the W.O. Smith community model replicated all over the country." —Jon Ross

## School Notes



**Newton Hired:** Flutist James Newton has become a full-time professor in the ethnomusicology department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Newton will teach jazz composition and co-direct the school's contemporary jazz ensemble with Kenny Burrell.

Details: [ucla.edu](http://ucla.edu)

**Mingus Summit:** The Manhattan School of Music's jazz department will devote the Feb. 20–22 weekend to Charles Mingus. The summit will include a competition for middle and high school bands from across the New York area, a concert featuring members of the Mingus Orchestra as guest soloists and a panel discussion with Sue Mingus, Gunther Schuller and Justin DiCioccio.

Details: [msmny.edu](http://msmny.edu)

**Vermont Scholarship:** The adult jazz camp Jazz Vermont will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2009 by awarding two full scholarships to its July program in West Dover, Vt. To participate in the contest, a musician must be a trumpet player or saxophonist over the age of 21.

Details: [jazzcamp.com](http://jazzcamp.com)

**Iowans Record:** The University of Northern Iowa's Jazz Band One under the direction of Chris Merz has self-released the disc *Thinking Globally, Acting Locally*. Details: [uni.edu](http://uni.edu)

**Berklee Reaches Kids:** Cafe 939, the student-run coffeehouse of Boston's Berklee College of Music, is now hosting workshops geared toward children between the ages of 3 and 5. Berklee music education students run the workshop series alongside faculty members Libby Allison and Charlene Ryan.

Details: [berklee.edu](http://berklee.edu)




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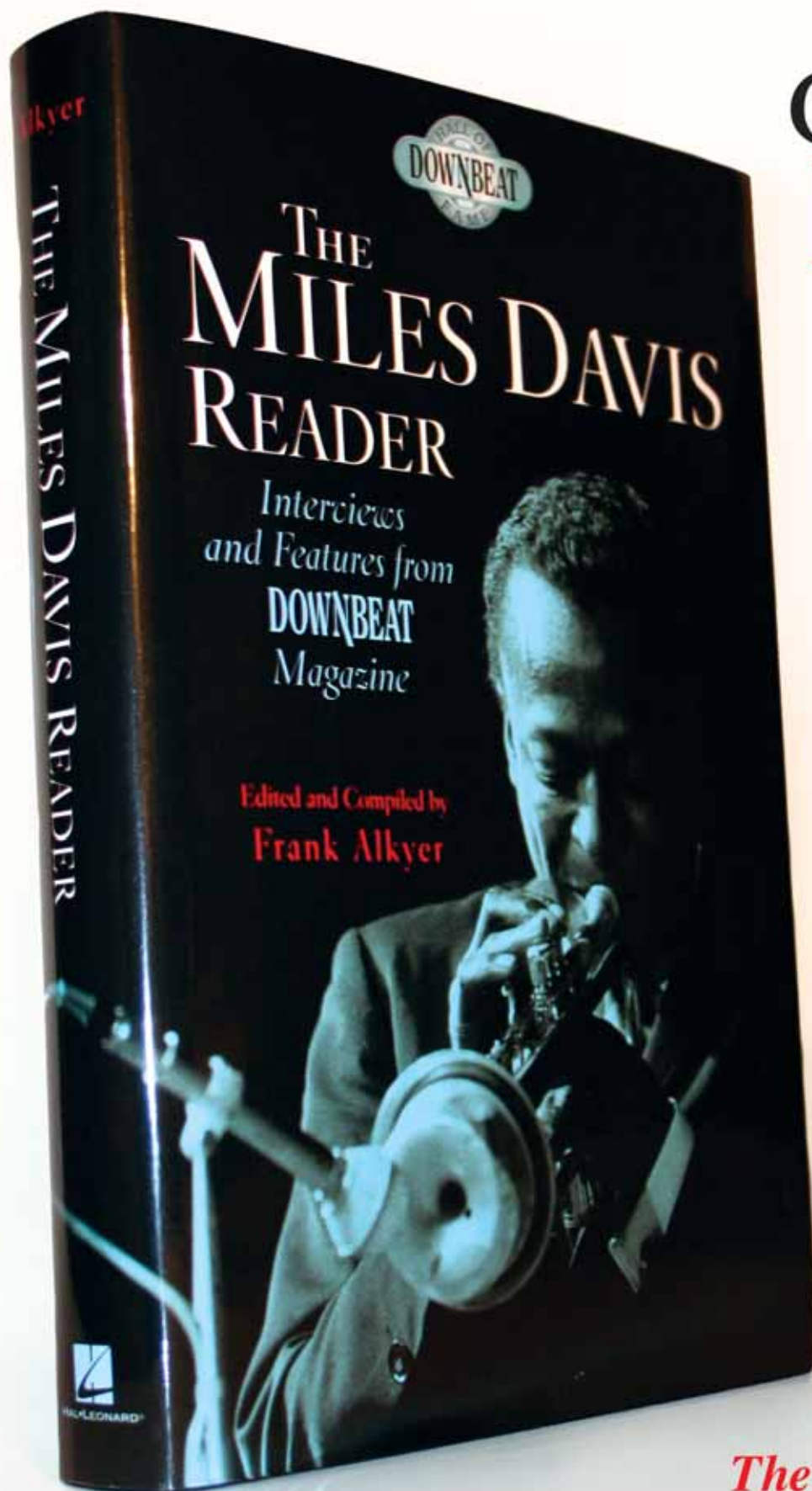
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# Reviews

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

83 Jazz  
87 Blues  
91 Beyond  
94 Historical  
97 Books

## McCoy Tyner

### Guitars

HALF NOTE 4537

★★★★½

McCoy Tyner isn't exactly known for playing against type. For the last 45 years—ever since leaving John Coltrane's steamship of a band—the mighty pianist has motored along, making relatively formulaic if continuously vital records that prove him to be one of jazz's most stirring improvisers. A chameleon he ain't. So hats off to producer John Snyder for steering him to a project that lets him blow off steam while playing against type for a bit. With five distinct string players helping Tyner create 14 tracks, *Guitars* is one of the more novel titles in his discography.

How novel? Well, a year ago I wouldn't have bet that the 69-year-old icon would be trading unscripted abstractions with Marc Ribot. But a curt romp through jitterville is this program's salutation, and even before John Scofield, Béla Fleck, Derek Trucks and Bill Frisell come charging through the revolving door on tracks of their own, it's refreshing to hear Tyner's thunderous modal attack put on hold while he gets raucous (and a few tracks later, dreamy) with the rootless cosmopolitan. While Ribot's more mainstream jaunts ("Passion Dance" and "500 Miles") are only so-so, the novelty of the free exchange is appealing.

Things get a bit more regimented from there, though the three pieces with banjo player Fleck should turn a listener's head. Echoes of Africa and the Middle East waft through the strings during "Tradewinds," with Ron Carter's bass and Jack DeJohnette's toms responsible for an enticing pulse. Africa also bubbles up in "Boubacar" and "Baba Drame," two pieces that Frisell helps generate. The latter closes the date, and its circular riff creates a kora-esque atmosphere that might have sounded futuristic but fitting on Tyner's immortal *Sahara*.

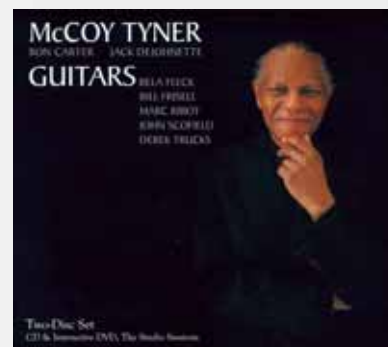
Hard-swinging bop lingo juices the rest of the action. Unsurprisingly, Scofield kicks the hell out of "Mr. P.C." It's likely that he's the guitarist who feels most integrated with Tyner's blowing vibe. What Trucks does with his blues tune is cool, but pedestrian.

The other news about *Guitars* is the inclusion of a DVD, a lagniappe that offers a glimpse into the creative process. Frisell and Scofield trade studio stories during set up, Tyner's fingers are in action during warm up and his eyes sparkle while performing—the footage makes a case for jazz being a visual art, a notion sometimes forgotten. Its inclusion helps make this title that much more fun. —Jim Macnie

**Guitars:** Improvisation 2; Passion Dance; 500 Miles; Mr. P.C.; Blues On The Corner; Improvisation 1; Trade Winds; Amberjack; My Favorite Things; Slapback Blues; Greensleeves; Contemplation; Boubacar; Baba Drame. (74:14)

**Personnel:** McCoy Tyner, piano; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Ron Carter, bass; Marc Ribot (1–3, 6), John Scofield (4, 5), Derek Trucks (10, 11), Bill Frisell (12–14), guitar; Béla Fleck, banjo (7–9).

» Ordering info: [halfnote.net](http://halfnote.net)



## Bebo Valdés & Javier Colina

*Live At The Village Vanguard*

CALLE 54 8869 721111

★★★★½

If you break Afro-Cuban popular music down to its bare essentials—the pivoting and swinging rhythm, the sophisticated romantic harmonies, the rich catalog of melodies—you have the ingredients for endless variation, the same thing a jazz musician searches out. That's made Cuban music a sympathetic partner for jazz, but jazz fans should be able to recognize the monumental greatness of an improviser like Bebo Valdés without needing him to play "Salt Peanuts."

Valdés does quote "Salt Peanuts," though it's a natural part of the then-86-year-old's thoroughly uncompromising performance (he's now 90), almost a little nod at the historic venue chosen for this recording. Valdés ambles deeper into jazz terrain at the end of this delightful set, transforming the Bill Evans Vanguard signature "Waltz For Debby" into an anthem of his own. But the heart of this CD is Valdés' spirit and imagination playing straight-up Cuban music.

Through perky numbers like his own "Ritmando El Cha-Cha-Cha," the classic "El Manisero" and the willfully exotic "Andalucía," the pianist is a wellspring of feeling, fusing elegance and a halting quality in an irresistible manner. He takes the gushiest material, the ivory cascades on "Siboney" or "Rosa Mustia," and infuses it with enough grit to keep it from moving anywhere close to Liberace territory. Valdés approaches boogie-woogie on



the cute "Bebo's Blues" and he handles "Yesterdays" with authority, again slyly recasting the jazz standard à la Cubana.

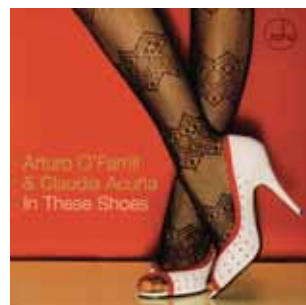
The pianist's favored partner here is bassist Javier Colina, and he deserves plenty of credit for the music's eloquence. In fact, jazz bassists could learn a thing or two listening to Colina, primarily in terms of sound. He has a great projective tone that doesn't linger, and his plucking is pleasantly boxy, with solid but relaxed time and a neat nasal turn in infrequent arco excursions. The communication between these two is intimate, bespeaking an abiding trust and love. Like the whole record, it's enriching to hear, a conversation between high-level musical deities.

—John Corbett

**Live At The Village Vanguard:** Con Poco Coco; Sabor A Mí; Ritmando El Cha-Cha-Cha; Rosa Mustia; Andalucía; Siboney; Tres Palabras; Aquellos Ojos Verdes; Bilongo; Si Te Contara; Bebo's Blues; Yesterdays; El Manisero; Waltz For Debby. (65:16)

**Personnel:** Bebo Valdés, piano; Javier Colina, bass.

» Ordering info: [calle54records.com](http://calle54records.com)



## Arturo O'Farrill & Claudia Acuña

*In These Shoes*

ZOH 200808

★★★★½

When I put on the first cut of this album, my wife came running down the stairs and we sat cracking up, as Claudia Acuña talk-sang the lyrics of the title track in a come-hither stage whisper, with Adam Rogers' twanging "Secret Agent Man" guitar. Even if you've already heard this hilarious Kirsty MacColl song (I hadn't), Acuña's version is an offer that's hard to refuse. Carefree, light, sexy and fun, yet also brilliant in its effortless linkages of jazz, Latin and the pop/dance/lounge favorites of its two progenitors, *In These Shoes* is a stunningly original album. Most of the songs are in Spanish, which could be a stumbler for many listeners, so I hope Zoho issues the lyrics (preferably bilingual) on its web site. But by and large, the music carries the messages.

It's a crazy and irreverent cross-hatching of rhythms and styles. "Paciencia," a gorgeous minor ballad, originally done in Portuguese by Brazilian singer-songwriters Lenine and Dudu Falcao, offers a lovely message about calming down, even if the world won't stop spinning. "Cuando Cuando" is, of course, the Italian lounge favorite done as a cha-cha. Acuña's light,

## Donald Harrison

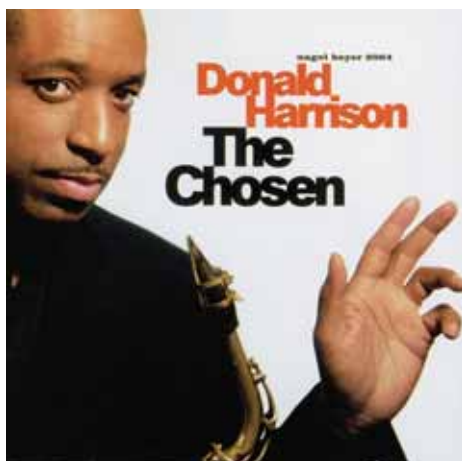
*The Chosen*

NAGEL HEYER 2084

★★★★

Donald Harrison offers no overarching concept or theme to justify his latest CD—just a quartet of players road testing a mix of comfortable standards and some originals. The lack of pretense is nice, and so is the music.

Harrison comes out swinging hard on "Mr. P.C.," a tune I've come to regard lately as the "I Got Rhythm" of the modern era—a barebones blues platform with spring in its step and a capacity to inspire without getting in the way. Harrison makes it his overture here and delivers the kind of fast, focused and impassioned blowing that many like to think still constitutes the heart of the jazz experience. Harrison can do a lot, and does about all of it here. He sets a high bar for himself, but rises to it



only sparingly thereafter.

He slides into "If I Were A Bell" shyly, almost obliquely, then plays a break that sounds like a proclamation, as if to assert his intent to

cut loose and soar. But the tune seems to resist his attempts to take flight, and he remains grounded through much of the next three choruses, hemmed in and in search of a muse. The best of it seems to go to pianist Victor Gould, who then has "Caravan" all to himself as the leader sits out a number. "They Can't Take That Away From Me" is taken in a relaxed groove similar to "Bell," but Gershwin points Harrison on a more fruitful track. After a Charlie Parker-esque break, he hits a vein of comfort and confidence that carries through to the final tag line.

Among the six originals, all by Harrison, that make up the majority of the program, the best by far is "To Nola With Love," a sensual, bluesy ballad without actually being a blues. It takes its time, but doesn't waste a minute. The title track is a moderately interesting tune, but the line is a little arch and rigid, and a bridge sounds as if it were imported from another



# The HOT Box

pure voice makes you hear anew this oft-repeated plea. Ditto for her Ella Fitzgerald-like clarity on the cha-cha-with-horns “Willow Weep For Me,” to which O’Farrill contributes a ripping piano solo.

“Como Dos Amantes” is a haunting and dark love story with a fluid yet on-top-of-the-beat rhythm suggesting flamenco and Cape Verdean morna. Van Morrison’s “Moondance” gets a Venezuelan joropo treatment, with Acuña waxing expansive, Rogers quick-strumming a little instrument that sounds like a cuatro and Yosvany Terry slipping into a dark John Coltrane vein on soprano saxophone. It’s over to Vera Cruz for “California,” a call-and-answer coro like “La Bamba,” but with a South African jive vibe. Ruben Blades’ classic “Dime” gets a sizzling trombone salsa reading (arranged by the Spanish Harlem Orchestra’s Oscar Hernandez), tagged with a slow, sweet finish. Then it’s back to African Cuba for “La Piye,” a swaying song with vocal chorus that draws on guaguanco, Yoruba and abakuá rhythms, and featuring Pedrito Martinez on percussion.

Dafnis Prieto’s traps sparkle throughout. A couple of cuts feel a bit forced, including the Latin jazz version of Batacumbelle’s “Jibarito” and the atmospheric “Agua”; even on that, Acuña displays the aching vulnerability that makes her voice so irresistible. O’Farrill says the idea of this album was to forget about being “serious” jazzers and just play tunes they loved. Has anyone else done this, especially with so much finesse and élan? Well, certainly not “in these shoes.”

—Paul de Barros

**In These Shoes:** In These Shoes; Vida Sin Miel; Paciencia; Cuando Cuando; Agua; Como Dos Amantes; Moondance; Willow Weep For Me; California; Jibarito; Dime; La Piye. (49:18)

**Personnel:** Arturo O’Farrill, piano; Claudia Acuña, vocals; Adam Rogers, guitar; Michael Mossman, trumpet; Reynaldo Jorge, trombone; Yosvany Terry, saxophones; Ruben Rodriguez, bass; Dafnis Prieto, drums; Pedrito Martinez, percussion, vocals.

» Ordering info: [zohomusic.com](http://zohomusic.com)

song—a striking contrast but without connective tissue. Once he lays all this aside and starts to swoop and dive about, the music settles into a more straightforward and confident mid-tempo groove.

Four additional drummers join Harrison and the quartet for “Drum Line,” a dialogue between alto and chorus of New Orleans-style percussion that rises to a plateau and persists a bit too long, but is a cinch to keep feet tapping and heads bobbing. “I’m The Big Chief Of Congo Square” is a hard-swinging blues against a similar rhythm, and wraps this good set.

—John McDonough

**The Chosen:** Mr. P.C.; The Chosen; If I Were A Bell; Caravan; They Can’t Take That Away From Me; To Nola With Love; The Right Touch; Urban Serengeti; Drum Line; I’m The Big Chief Of Congo Square. (65:50)

**Personnel:** Donald Harrison, alto saxophone, percussion, Fender Rhodes; Victor Gould, Jesse McBride (10), piano; Max Moran, bass; Joseph Dyson, Jr., drums; Conun Pappas, Fender Rhodes (10); The Old School Drum Line from New Orleans, (9).

» Ordering info: [nagelheyer.com](http://nagelheyer.com)

CDs ≡	CRITICS »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>McCoy Tyner</b> <i>Guitars</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★½	★★½
<b>Bebo Valdés &amp; Javier Colina</b> <i>Live At The Village Vanguard</i>		★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★
<b>Arturo O’Farrill &amp; Claudia Acuña</b> <i>In These Shoes</i>		★★½	★★½	★★★½	★★★★½
<b>Donald Harrison</b> <i>The Chosen</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★

## Critics’ Comments

### McCoy Tyner, *Guitars*

A rewarding experiment in multiple personality production. Marc Ribot’s passion for the pedal claws against the winds, but Béla Fleck displays unsurprising flawlessness. John Scofield is snug, lucid and swinging. Derek Trucks has a dark shimmer on “Greensleeves,” and Bill Frisell drifts contemplatively. But Ron Carter’s crackjack walking bass kicks the host trio.

—John McDonough

Good for Tyner, jumping into new territory like this, but these polite encounters don’t spark much magic. The Ribot free-improv pieces and the modal encounters with Frisell bear nice surprises, and Trucks’ “Slapback Blues” and Scofield’s “Mr P.C.” break out robustly. The accompanying DVD, shot live in the studio, is a fly-on-the-wall treat.

—Paul de Barros

Leave it to Tyner to continue to be original. He changes with each of the miles-apart guitarists, rolling with the punches, never becoming a caricature of himself even on the signature “My Favorite Things.” They start out with a nasty little Ribot scronk—what a daring move. Trucks is the closest to Coltrane, and sounds fantastic; Frisell is also wonderful, and un-Frisell-ish.

—John Corbett

### Bebo Valdés & Javier Colina, *Live At The Village Vanguard*

In the twilight of his career, the master Cuban pianist savors—and communicates—with surprising crispness the essence of warhorses like “Siboney,” “Andalucía” and “El Manisero,” as well as North American standards like “Yesterdays.” Colina’s buzzing arco solos round out the sound to perfection.

—Paul de Barros

All that signature poise works toward the goal of pleasure on this intimate affair. The glide that the pianist puts into his work conjures the dance grooves that are always floating around Cuban performances, even when they take on a salon vibe, as they do here.

—Jim Macnie

When *The 86 Years Of Eubie Blake* came out in 1969, age seemed to be its raison d’être. But jazz was young then, still untouched by geriatrics. Things are different now. Though it won’t vault him into the ranks of major players, this smart, suave set catches Valdés, at 86, in a case study of what happens when wisdom and command converge.

—John McDonough

### Arturo O’Farrill & Claudia Acuña, *In These Shoes*

Can’t tell if it’s the splash of the ensemble, the breeziness of the material or the informality of the singer that makes this Acuña’s most enjoyable work on disc. You’re right—it’s probably a mix of all three. Kudos to the powerful sense of fun that O’Farrill brings to his dates.

—Jim Macnie

The band is tight as a jam jar, but the match with Acuña isn’t made in heaven; she doesn’t integrate as much as sing over them. Several tasteless choices, as in “Moondance,” which is a cringer.

—John Corbett

Acuña proves herself a first-class singer-actress with a taste for tongue-in-cheek sensuality on the nicely naughty title track. This bilingual CD is wrought with a sleek sense of craft and charm. But O’Farrill and the octet notwithstanding, it sits on the fringe as a jazz work, seasoned by short solos but rooted in a pop temperament.

—John McDonough

### Donald Harrison, *The Chosen*

From the avalanche of New Orleans dedicated records since Hurricane Katrina, this is my favorite, mostly because it’s great music and doesn’t make a gimmick out of the city’s misery. Even the potentially whack idea for a second-line track, “Drum Line,” is solid and joyous. What crisp kit-work from Joseph Dyson, Jr.

—John Corbett

Love the way Harrison comes out cracking up his lines, turning them into percussive gambits and melodic wrinkles. The mainstream tunes and N’awlins parade mix is a formula for him at this late date, but the band is animated and the music bristles.

—Jim Macnie

Harrison aims his husky tone, driving conviction and emotional resolve at the catastrophe still hovering over his city, most forcefully on the passionate ballad “To Nola With Love.” There’s nothing extraordinary here—just a fiery and beautifully integrated band, including young pianist Victor Gould, clearly a guy to watch.

—Paul de Barros

## Khan Jamal

Cool »

PORTER 4018

★★★★½

## Ted Daniel Quintet

Tapestry

PORTER 1503

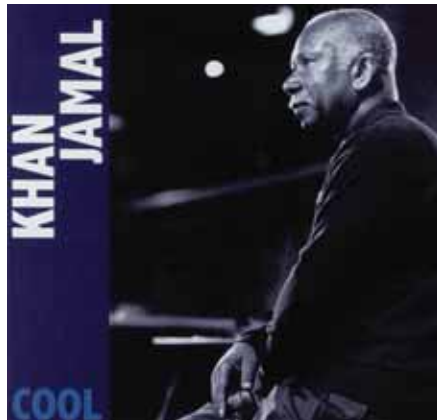
★★½

Vibraphonist Khan Jamal is a sadly overlooked figure from the loft scene period, his instrument's seeming incompatibility with the avant-garde combined with his unassuming manner and longtime residence in Philly rather than New York conspiring to keep him well under the radar. But his mastery and quiet urge toward invention on the vibes deserve a closer look. Last year's reissue of the 1972 recording *Drumdance To The Motherland* offered a partial remedy, and now Florida-based Porter Records uncovers two further, albeit somewhat less revelatory, sessions from Jamal's back catalog.

*Cool*, a percussion and strings session recorded in 1989, has none of the free-jazz-meets-fusion alchemy of *Drumdance*. As its title suggests, it's a much more restrained affair, with the leader's vibes and John Rodgers' cello combining for an almost chamber-jazz feel, contrasted by the heavy propulsion of Dwight James' drumming and Warren Ore's tree-trunk-thick bass. That dichotomy lends a spark of dynamic tension to the session that brings out an atypical aggression in Jamal's playing. Cool it may be, but there's a barely contained sense of abandon that emerges from beneath the laid-back veneer.

Ted Daniel's *Tapestry* is closer in spirit to *Drumdance* than Jamal's own effort, but unfortunately is hampered by abysmal sound quality. Recorded in January 1974 at Omette Coleman's Artist House in Soho, it sounds as if it was taped underwater ... from inside a closet.

The dreadfully muffled sound quality is especially a shame given the adventurous music buried within. The album features Daniel on



flugelhorn, only picking up the trumpet on the 14-minute bonus track, "Asafego," which opens the CD. Like Jamal, Daniel is an overlooked element of the '70s avant-garde who has recently seen a flurry of renewed activity, between reissues and new releases. Here he leads a quintet including Jamal, drummer Jerome Cooper and his bandmates in Brute Force from Ohio, bassist Tim Ingles and his brother Richard on Fender Rhodes.

Ingles' wah-wah-inflected bass and Richard's Rhodes washes lend the session an ethereal haze, which, combined with the sonic limitations of the recording, create a frozen-in-amber quality, kept aloft by Jamal's vibes, as buoyant as helium. Daniel's horn oozes through this mist in slow motion, the molasses-thick combination emerging from the aural fog like *Bitches Brew* experienced on Thorazine. —Shaun Brady

**Cool:** Professor B.L.; A Dansk Morn; Rhythm Thang; Innocence; Six Plus Seven; Mrs. J's Blues; Cool. (38:10)

**Personnel:** Khan Jamal, vibes; John Rodgers, cello; Dwight James, drums; Warren Ore, bass.

**Tapestry:** Asafego; Tapestry; Sweet Dreams; Mozambique. (50:15)

**Personnel:** Tim Ingles, electric bass; Jerome Cooper, drums; Khan Jamal, vibraphone; Ted Daniel, flugelhorn, trumpet; Richard Daniel, Fender Rhodes.

» Ordering info: [porterrecords.com](http://porterrecords.com)

## Francisco Mela

Cirio

HALF NOTE 4536

★★★★★

Along with Dafnis Prieto, Francisco Mela has helped change the perception of contemporary Cuban drummers. His

debut album was a broad, composerly journey to far-flung worlds, using a variety of textures and musical combinations.

This live recording mixes the settings just as much—the full quintet performs on only a few pieces—but a distinct African thread runs



through all eight songs. Guitarist Lionel Loueke plays a large part in this; in addition to performing his song "Benes"—filled with the harmonic sophistication, cyclical theme and sudden bluesy turns we've come to expect from him—he adds spectral colors to the surging "Tierra And Fuego" and chiming atmospheric effects to the title song.

The concept of family is another theme that marks *Cirio*,

which is named in honor of Mela's father. The song has an unsettled quality, thanks mainly to Mark Turner's tenor saxophone and Jason Moran's jittery piano; bassist Larry Grenadier creates a dark, foreboding foundation. Contrast that with "Maria," dedicated to Mela's mother,



## Bruno Råberg

Lifelines

ORBIS MUSIC 0508

★★★

Bassist Bruno Råberg would not be out of place on

the ECM roster. However, it would be inappropriate to reduce *Lifelines* to the ECM esthetic, even though the connection can often be made. He has a predilection for moody and ethereal passages, but Råberg also enjoys sharp contrasts and can introduce frequent tempo shifts, relying as much on unison as on call-and-response segments. Structure and free form co-exist to create living compositions.

The dichotomies are reinforced by two drummers, Ted Poor and Matt Wilson—who take turns behind the kit—and saxophonist Chris Cheek. Guitarist Ben Monder has rarely taken on so many personae over an album. The band emphasizes lyricism and displays a welcome sensitivity. Their restraint and control leaves room for moments of abandon, though. Their chemistry makes it a challenge to differentiate the compositions from the improvisations, the best example being the bluesy "Dream Walker" taken at a delightfully slow speed.

Råberg is a physical player with an understanding of dynamics. He's also a skilled arranger, shown by the meshing of Miles Davis' "Nardis" and his "Cow's Tail" and how he balances melody and abstraction. —Alain Drouot

**Lifelines:** Disc 1—Agog; Agni; April Suite; Chosen Path; The Journey; Revisited Path; Intersection; Moondown; An Afternoon By The Meadow; Gymnastics/Skyscrapers; Ballad For Summer's End. (61:19) Disc 2—Elegy; Nardis/Cow's Tail; For a Do Retrato; Cosmic Kerfuffle; Doxian (Darken In Color); Expectation; Candescence; Distant Roads; Flurries; Dream Walker; Eruption; New Land. (67:22)

**Personnel:** Bruno Råberg, bass; Chris Cheek, soprano and tenor saxophone; Ben Monder, guitar; Ted Poor, Matt Wilson, drums.

» Ordering info: [brunoraberg.com](http://brunoraberg.com)

which has its own complexities but is dominated by Moran's sensitive reading of its theme. A third generation is recognized in "Urick Mela"—named for the drummer's son and highlighted by Turner's fragile narrative and the tension between guitar and drums. Two trio outings illustrate Mela's melodic side.

The blowing pieces by the full band that open and close the set offer more of a mixed bag. While "Tierra And Fuego" illustrates each of the players' signature strengths, "Afro Son" is the weakest composition and suffers from an overly congested center section. —James Hale

**Cirio:** Tierra And Fuego; Channel 2; Cirio; Maria; Pequeña Serenata De Uma; Benes; Urick Mela; Afro Son. (61:14)

**Personnel:** Francisco Mela, drums, vocals; Jason Moran, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Lionel Loueke, guitar, vocals.

» Ordering info: [halfnote.net](http://halfnote.net)



## Steel Nerves

**Aaron Irwin: *Blood And Thunder* (Fresh Sound/New Talent 320; 55:10) ★★★½** This smart set of tunes balances alto and tenor with guitar in some great musical conversations. It doesn't hurt that you've got Chris Cheek on tenor and Ben Monder playing guitar. Altoist Irwin keeps things interesting, aided by bassist Matt Clohesy and Ferenc Nemeth, whose drumming threatens to undermine the sax-guitar dynamic. "Like The Sunshine" and "The Wizard" cue the listener that melody as well as improvisation matter, even as Nemeth's beats help shape the proceedings. The program evokes the spirit of a Warne Marsh/Lee Konitz reunion.

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

**Bob Mover: *It Amazes Me* (Zoho 200809; 62:30) ★★★** With his crooning and sax stylings, Mover recalls the personal melding of Jimmy Rowles with Stan Getz. The album is full of standards that have the potential to seduce the lover in us all. A tad quaint, Mover's band and interpretations still manage to convey an edge. Uptempo blowing vehicles like "I Believe In You" and "People Will Say We're In Love" balance out songs like the title track and "How Little We Know," which beg for candlelight and perhaps another glass of wine.

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

**Chris Greene: *Soul And Science 2: Electric Boogaloo* (SM 003; 49:00) ★★★½** On a rough-and-ready outing, saxophonist Greene dovetails nicely with his mostly electric piano player Damian Espinosa in a set that has a garage band feel, with help from bassist Marc Piane and drummer Tyrone Blair. The music is funky, as "Adamantium (Part III)" indicates, but it can also be straightahead with a standard like "Bernie's Tune," played true to form as an uptempo swinger. "You Win Again" gets down to the roots of the music with its gospel-blues feel. Greene's multiple sax approach and the band's loose feel point to a band in the process of becoming and capable of connecting.

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

**Eric Person: *Rhythm Edge* (Distinction 4004; 60:23) ★★★** Person's soulful stylings lean toward the sophisticated in this set of 16 tunes that combines uptempo swing and ballads in what is essentially a straightforward jazz outing. Fans of solid blowing will find much to like in Person's uptempo



Jimmy Greene: exploratory suite

visit to "Yesterdays," but also with his more experimental, open-ended "All Out In The Open," a song that suggests searching for form even as it remains a brief, forceful statement of conviction. Person also flirts with electric keyboards, such as on the uptempo swinger "Supersonic."

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

**Jimmy Greene: *The Overcomer's Suite* (Nu Jazz 1001; 61:27) ★★★½** Tenor and soprano saxist Greene manages to avoid the tiresome overplaying side of long strides (except for "I'll Keep Loving You," all of the six songs average well more than 10 minutes), thanks to a tight band and interesting solos and arrangements. For fans of extended, exploratory playing that manages to keep its center, *The Overcomer's Suite* sticks out. Its emphasis is expressed through what feels like a quasi-religious outing via the variegated "Anthem Of Hope," the stately "Gethsemane" and insistent "David Undaunted."

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

**Mike Frost Project: *Live* (Blujazz 3365; 60:11) ★★★½** The best parts of *Live* come on the blues: It's funky, swinging and unpretentious. Tenorist Frost (who doubles on soprano) is in the pocket, throaty and full of feeling on the uptempo swinger "Buzzy." For fans of lively jump blues with a few twists (the mood pieces "Nica's Winter Waltz" and Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood"), the Frost Project sounds like a winner live.

DB

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[library.pacific.edu/ha/brubeck/exhibits/travel](http://library.pacific.edu/ha/brubeck/exhibits/travel)



## SFJAZZ Collective

Live 2008:  
5th Annual  
Concert Tour  
SFJAZZ RECORDS

★★★★½

This limited-edition, three-CD set commemorates the 5th annual concert tour of the stellar octet. This time out, the cherry-picked group plays arrangements of Wayne Shorter classics, as well as eight commissioned originals. Disc 1 kicks in with the spiraling riff of Shorter's "Armageddon," arranged with his characteristic rhythmic thrust by Miguel Zenón and featuring the ever-feisty Dave Douglas, abetted by punchy hits from Eric Harland. Renee Rosnes' "Aurora Borealis" is a lovely feature for Zenón, with its rising refrain, recalling Maria Schneider's impressionism.

Most of the compositions and arrangements here are long-form and episodic, giving all hands a chance to prove their muscle on deck, though sometimes the original idea goes astray. Rosnes, who was once in Shorter's band, digs in, and her presentation of "Footprints" is a lively closer to the collection. She also contributes a kicking arrangement of Shorter's "Diana" with solo-goaded motifs bringing out the best in Zenón and Stefon Harris. The rhythmically tethered swing of Harland's setting of "Yes Or No" (incorrectly listed as "Yes And No") maintains a seam of tension with offbeat hits that counterpoint the soloists until Matt Penman walks under Joe Lovano's entry and the audience cheers the tenor saxophonist as if the champ had just entered the arena.

Lovano's version of "Infant Eyes" brings out the Coltrane influence in '60s-era Shorter by using one of Lovano's own strengths—swooning balladry—navigating the compelling harmony and extended phrase lengths with palpable reverence for the original. The thoughtful treatments of the Shorter pieces, and the equilibrium between fiery solos and dynamic negotiation of the contour of the arrangements, reveal the depth of mutual respect here. Of the originals, Penman's oscillating "The Angel's Share" stands out; Lovano's swaggering "This, That And The Other" is the least pretentious; ostinato elements in Robin Eubanks' "Breakthrough" hint at his M-Base past; but Harris' homage to intuition, "The Road To Dharma," provides the most assuaging lay-by in this polyphonic torrent of quality music.

—Michael Jackson

**Live 2008: 5th Annual Concert Tour.** Disc 1—Armageddon; Aurora Borealis; Infant Eyes; Go; Breakthrough; Yes Or No. (58:14) Disc 2—Secrets Of The Code; El Gaucho; The Year 2008; Diana; Black Nile. (56:05) Disc 3—Frontline; The Angels' Share; This, That And The Other; The Road To Dharma; Aung San Suu Kyi; Footprints. (59:58)

**Personnel:** Miguel Zenón, alto saxophone; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Stefon Harris, vibes; Matt Penman, bass; Renee Rosnes, piano; Eric Harland, drums; Dave Douglas, trumpet.

» Ordering info: [sfjazz.org](http://sfjazz.org)



**Atomic**  
**Retrograde**  
 JAZZLAND 06025  
 17688 438

★★★★½

**Atomic**  
**School**  
**Days**

**Distil** »  
 OKKA DISK 12073

★★★★



Despite the fact that they remain largely unknown on this side of the Atlantic, with every new album the Swedish-Norwegian quintet Atomic further strengthens its claim to be one of the world's greatest jazz outfits. On the dazzling new *Retrograde*, the group manifests its assurance and ambition in the loosest tunes of its career. The sturdy post-bop themes, usually composed by pianist Håvard Wiik, reedist Fredrik Ljungkvist and trumpeter Magnus Broo, are still here, yet many of the arrangements are radically more spacious and open-ended. "Db Gestalt," for example, takes its time. The tune opens with an elegant tenor sax line, soon answered with a contrapuntal piano-and-trumpet unison phrase. When the full band finally kicks in, Atomic avoids the obvious theme statement and jumps right into rigorous improvisation.

But rigor isn't interchangeable with ferocity; throughout the album the members of Atomic, including one of the planet's most explosive drummers in Paal Nilssen-Love, keep the performances carefully pitched even at their most probing. "Invisible Cities" is even sparser, its skeletal, pensive melody and Ljungkvist's clarinet solo is held together by a typically tactile, yet uncharacteristically minimal track-long improvisation by the drummer.

There are some hard-driving scorches here, such as Broo's "Painbody" and Ljungkvist's homage to Chicago swing-era bandleader "King Kolax," but for the most part Atomic explores a different dynamic than on previous efforts, and the group nails it just as effectively. The set includes a third disc recorded live in Seattle about six months after the studio sessions that fill the first two, and while the intensity is heightened, the thoughtfulness is the same.

*Distil* is Atomic's second collaboration with School Days, a quintet that shares the rhythm section of Nilssen-Love and bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten; reedist Ken Vandermark, trombonist Jeb Bishop and vibraphonist Kjell Nordeson round out the lineup. This two-CD set was recorded live at Chicago's Green Mill over two evenings in April 2006, but all nine pieces

were newly written for the engagement. The elegant power of Atomic's earlier work is fully in evidence here. With the extra personnel, this collaboration could easily veer into chaos or bombast, so it's impressive the octet maintains its bearings. The compositions by Bishop and Vandermark are a bit more analytical and complicated, but the ebullience of the various improvisations and the sharp, buoyant arrangements bristle with an unmistakable excitement. Considering that this hybrid band doesn't get to play and practice much, the power of the sounds are even more impressive. —Peter Margasak

**Retrograde:** Disc 1—Db Gestalt; Retrograde; Invisible Cities; Painbody; Correspondence; Sweet Ebony; King Kolax. (50:16) Disc 2—Invisible Cities II; Papa; Don Don; Folkton; Hola Calmares; Swedish Oklahoma; Koloniestraße. (46:07) Disc 3—Crux; Db Gestalt; Painbody; Swedish Oklahoma; King Kolax; ABC 101b. (57:31)

**Personnel:** Fredrik Ljungkvist, reeds; Magnus Broo, trumpet; Håvard Wiik, piano; Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, bass; Paal Nilssen-Love, drums, percussion.

» Ordering info: [jazzlandrec.com](http://jazzlandrec.com)

**Distil:** Disc 1—Deadline; Irrational Ceremony; Visitors; Dark Easter. (51:55) Disc 2—Andersonville; Fort Funston; Closing Stages; Ghosts And Spirits; Buñuel At The Cocktail Party. (64:39)

**Personnel:** Jeb Bishop, trombone; Broo, trumpet; Håker Flaten, bass; Ljungkvist, tenor saxophone, Bb clarinet; Nilssen-Love, drums; Kjell Nordeson, vibraphone; Ken Vandermark, baritone saxophone, Bb & bass clarinet; Wiik, piano.

» Ordering info: [okkadisk.com](http://okkadisk.com)

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## James Moody & Hank Jones Quartet

*Our Delight*

IPO 1013

★★★★

Two parts of the story behind *On Golden Pond* parallel *Our Delight*. The first is the autumnal quality.

And though the key personnel—Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn on the screen, Hank Jones and James Moody on disc—have been around the block a few times, neither had starred with the other until these projects. There's another similarity, in that part of the *Pond* story centers on the encounter between generations, with the young pups made wiser by their elders. That's not to say that Todd Coolman and Adam Nussbaum are unenlightened, but throughout *Our Delight* they keep their groove cool to match the patience and thoughtfulness exhibited by the leaders.

Moody plays with his old-fashioned, bur-nished sound; not once does he toughen his tone with a trendy edge or succumb to the tenorman's glossolalia of honks and squeaks. Jones is similarly restrained, seldom straying beyond the middle range of the keys or hardening his attack. Both show a little imprecision now and then on the technical side, but these moments of less



than perfect rhythmic placement are rare and, when balanced against what each has to offer, insignificant.

The magic here isn't a matter of chops. It's not even fundamentally about ideas, though these wizards exhibit an endlessly fascinating way with improvising close enough to the tune to reference the material while taking

it outside to the point of stimulating the listener's imaginations and enhancing the composition.

This spirit guides the quartet at a medium clip through tunes from the bebop canon that more eager players tackle with more brio and, perhaps, less insight. The finest moments surface on "Body And Soul." As on the piano/flute treatment of "Old Folks," the rhythm guys sit out, and it's just Moody and Jones, caressing the changes as each has done so many times. The fact that they still find something new is a tribute not just to these two masters; it is a reminder that the wellspring of standards will never run dry.

—Robert Doerschuk

**Our Delight:** Our Delight; Birk's Works; Con Alma; Lady Bird; Eternal Triangle; Body And Soul; Good Bait; Darben The Red Fox; Soul Trane; Woddy 'N You; Old Folks; Moody's Groove (77:41)

**Personnel:** James Moody, tenor saxophone, flute; Hank Jones, piano; Todd Coolman, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums; Roberta Gambarini, vocals (12).

» Ordering info: [iporecordings.com](http://iporecordings.com)



## Otis Redding

*Live In London And Paris*

STAX 30892

★★★½

Otis Redding belongs to the small, elite group of great soul singers. He has one excellent concert album in his discography, *Otis Redding Recorded Live* (part of a 1966 show at Los Angeles' Whiskey A Go Go, accompanied by his working band), and a good one, *Live In Europe* (1967, with all-stars Booker T. & The MGs). About the latter, Peter Guralnick once noted that Redding sounded "excessively mannered"—some of the time, yes. Still, an imperfect Redding concert recording is better than the best from most any other soul or r&b vocalist.

The new *Live In London And Paris* expands on the earlier volume by adding seven tracks to the original 10-track set, no new songs, presumably the entirety of two shows on the same tour. Redding's turbocharged attack—the one riff-and-verse original, "I Can't Turn You Loose," vaults double-speed from crescendo to crescendo—is a wonder. He vigorously seizes and throttles songs associated with Sam Cooke, Smokey Robinson, the Rolling Stones and the Beatles (the last two, on both nights, seem affected). He also emulsifies the Tin Pan Alley item "Try A Little Tenderness" and his own "Respect." The London bobbies and Paris gendarmierie present in the respective concert halls must have feared a riot. Little of Redding's equally incredible softness was in supply at either show so one needs to go to his early and post-death Volt albums for jolts of that soul magic.

This is mandatory listening for soul enthusiasts; the less committed can live with the compacted *Live In Europe* and/or one of two Redding DVDs—*Dreams To Remember* and *Remembering Otis*. —Frank-John Hadley

**Live In London And Paris:** London—Introduction; Respect; My Girl; Shake; Day Tripper; Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song); (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction; Try A Little Tenderness; Paris—Introduction; Respect; I Can't Turn You Loose; I've Been Loving You Too Long; My Girl; Shake; (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction; Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song); These Arms Of Mine; Day Tripper; Try A Little Tenderness. (67:17)

**Personnel:** Otis Redding, vocals; Booker T. Jones, organ; Steve Cropper, guitar; Donald "Duck" Dunn, bass; Al Jackson, Jr., drums; Wayne Jackson, trumpet; Andrew Love, Joe Arnold, tenor saxophone.

» Ordering info: [concordmusicgroup.com](http://concordmusicgroup.com)

## Taj Mahal

*Maestro*

HEADS UP 3164

★★★★

For this 40th anniversary oeuvre, Taj Mahal marshals cues from the furthest reaches of blues-based music to create a retrospective of the influences that have informed four decades of experimentation and innovation.

Resurrecting Slim Harpo's Louisiana swamp-blues sound, Mahal wraps his voice around "Scratch My Back" to open the album, and injects enough suggestive phrasing and straight-up growling to make Blue Lu Barker blush along the way while his Phantom Blues Band provide the foundations of sultry, funky blues. He checks out more of the New Orleans blues derivations later on "Hello Josephine" and "I Can Make You Happy," which feature members of the post-Katrina supergroup The New Orleans Social Club. Mahal is at home and at his best at these moments, but his scope is hardly limited to the Mississippi Delta.

A reggae-inspired lilt meets Los Lobos' graceful Latin blues on a creative arrangement



of "Never Let You Go," performed by Taj's daughter, Deva Mahal, while a contribution by Ziggy Marley on Mahal's 1970s "Black Man, Brown Man" speaks to his previous work with Bob Marley on *Mo Roots*. Like so much of the album, both tracks underscore how Mahal's musical roots have been fed by influences from across the Americas and Caribbean.

Over the years, Mahal has also done his own share of influencing artists, another aspect of his career that the album represents. Ben Harper was once his student, and was invited to include his "Dust Me Down." The track skates by on easy grooves, which leads it to fade somewhat into background music, but the song's poppy flavor still enhances the mix.

This is a fitting and fun tribute to the wide swath of ideas Mahal has contributed not only to contemporary blues, but to pop music in general.

—Jennifer Odell

**Maestro:** Scratch My Back; Never Let You Go; Dust Me Down; Further On Down The Road; Black Man, Brown Man; Zanzibar; TV Mama; I Can Make You Happy; Slow Drag; Hello Josephine; Strong Man Holler; Diddy Wah Diddy. (57:35)

» Ordering info: [headsupsup.com](http://headsupsup.com)



## Almost Snuck By

**Billy Boy Arnold: *Billy Boy Sings Sonny Boy* (Electro-Fi 3405; 71:09) ★★★½** John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson once gave a youngster on Chicago's South Side the harmonica lesson of a lifetime. Six decades later, it's payback time. Charismatic and relaxed, Arnold is in love with "Decoration Day," "Good Morning Little School Girl" and 15 more

Williamson precious gems. His swinging devotion, conviction and artistry are perfectly understood by guitarist Billy Flynn, bass player Bob Stroger, drummer Big Eyes Smith, pianist/guitarist Mel Brown, and producers Andrew Galloway and Alec Fraser. Foul-ups: Arnold struggles when singing "Tell Me Baby" and "Springtime Blues" lacks a spark.

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

**Bobby Wayne: *Soul Station* (Bonedog 26; 53:34) ★★★½** A veteran soul-r&b-blues singer based in Pittsburgh, Wayne is authentic on every minute of *Soul Station*. His far-ranging yet tight vocals reveal his pained heart one song then on the next embrace a sunny blue sky, moods illuminated by a crackerjack rhythm section, horns, strings and background vocalists. Bassist Mike Sweeney is responsible for providing Wayne with good songs; his seven include the slow-swaying heart-breaker "Right About The Rain." Even when not in strong voice, Wayne inhabits the moment with sincerity and integrity.

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

**Steve Guyger: *Radio Blues* (Severn 0044; 53:03) ★★★½** The chromatic harmonica expert out of Philadelphia enlivens original material and the occasional loaner like Joe Liggins' "Honeydripper" with a push-'n'-pull between repose and edginess, resolving tension in terms of Chicago blues or jump-blues—everything links to the 1950s r&b radio broadcasts on which he was raised. As a passable vocalist, Guyger operates mostly on low wattage. Fabulous Thunderbirds guitarist Johnny Moeller matches him in authenticity.

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

**The Groundhogs: *Live At The Astoria* (Eagle Vision CD/DVD 30258; 79:20/81:00) ★★★½** The ultimate concert video of blues-rock guitarist Tony McPhee would date



Terakaft: Tuareg associations

YONICK JOLLY

from the early 1970s, when Rolling Stone's Lester Bangs swore the power trio was "so blast-furnace hot and so loaded with manic inspirations spirogyrating this way and that, that you don't even have to try to listen, you just let it rain down on your skull." Settle instead for this 1999 gig in London: McPhee's still good for all sorts of astounding sonic manipulations, given as votive offerings to Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf or John Lee Hooker.

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

**Scott Ainslie: *Thunder's Mouth* (Cattail 2008; 43:02) ★★★½** Ainslie, a singer and acoustic guitarist who's an expert on Robert Johnson's guitar techniques, applies his winning musical personality to self-penned tunes and non-originals borrowed from Johnson, Son House, J.B. Lenoir, Tom Waits and the John Lomax field recordings treasure chest. The emotional pull of Ainslie's music is always strong, perhaps most so on the titular slave lament and on the slow, serious folk blues "Another Man Done Gone." In unobtrusive but unmistakable support of this Vermonter are cellist Eugene Friesen, Cajun guitarist Sam Broussard and multi-instrumentalist T-Bone Wolk.

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

**Terakaft: *Akh Issudar* (World Village 468084; 57:17) ★★★½** As with their former band Tinariwen, Malian singers/guitarists Kedou Ag Ossad and Liya Ag Ablil make appealing associations between American blues and the folk music of the Tuaregs. Songs sung in Tamahaq about hurtful love, friendship, life-sustaining water, tribal pride and colonialism on their second album shimmer with minor-key guitars, sounding indisputably fresh while evoking the blues past. Skip James, with his A-minor tuning, would be at home with these nomads. DB

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

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## Al Foster Quartet

*Love, Peace And Jazz!*

JAZZEYES 004

★★★½

Al Foster possesses a meager catalog of leader dates in spite of long tenures with Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The excellent *Love, Peace And Jazz!* is only the second release of the drummer's career. Recorded in April 2007 at the Village Vanguard, the album reaps the benefits of its stable lineup. Bassist Douglas Weiss appeared on Foster's debut album, *Brandyn* (1997). Saxophonist Eli Degibri joined Foster in 1998 and pianist Kevin Hays followed in 1999. Foster revisits two of his own compositions and unveils "Peter's Mood." He typically relies on cymbals early in a song, and uses the snare drum and tom-toms to raise the intensity.

His sidemen know how to respond. On Foster's "The Chief," a catchy line that opens the album, the drummer wills the contrast between Hays' lyricism and Degibri's ferocious soprano. "E.S.P." and "Blue In Green" follow a similar arc. Degibri stands at the center of these eruptions. Foster's unaccompanied solos at the end of "E.S.P." and beginning of "Brandyn" showcase his tom-toms, and provide more highlights. —Eric Fine

**Love, Peace And Jazz!:** The Chief; E.S.P.; Blue In Green; Peter's Mood; Brandyn; Fungii Mama. (69:09)  
**Personnel:** Al Foster, drums; Kevin Hays, piano; Douglas Weiss, bass; Eli Degibri, tenor and soprano saxophones.

» Ordering info: [musiceyes.com](http://musiceyes.com)



## ICP Orchestra

*Live At The Bimhuis*

ICP 046

★★½

ICP's best performances come when all its components are in balance—when Misha Mengelberg's absurdist leanings provide counterweight to Han Bennink's bombastic antics, and when the puckish solos of Wolter Wierbos and Tristan Honsinger share space with the beauty of improvisations by Michael Moore and Ab Baars. Unfortunately, the only balance that strikes you on this set from mid-2008 is the lack of any in the sound mix. This has the audience-centric aspect of a bootleg recording, with Bennink's drums too loud and lacking any sonic depth, the horns too high, the strings too low and Mengelberg all but inaudible.

We all have our favorite bootleg recordings where the performance is so entrancing that the sound issues don't matter a whit. That's not a saving grace here. In fact, this seems like a fairly tame outing for ICP, with a lot of pent-up tension during Mengelberg's "Op Naar Aan/Uit" and Baars' "Misha, Pass The Donkey" but not much release. Mengelberg's "Jaloers? Ik?" delivers the goods more effectively, wallowing in like a drunken elephant and moving into some effective interplay between the strings and clarinet. The ensemble work is also fine on Herbie Nichols' "Change Of Season." The horns blend mournfully and Bennink is wonderfully chaotic, but the sound imbalance is at its worst here, undercutting the performance, and it fades after just five minutes. For those who love ICP this is an exercise in frustration. —James Hale

**Live At The Bimhuis:** Jacky-ing; Met; Op Naar De Mooche; Jaloers? Ik?; Rollo 2; Op Naar Aan/Uit; Reef; Misha, Pass The Donkey; Change Of Season. (47:39)

**Personnel:** Misha Mengelberg, piano; Han Bennink, drums; Michael Moore, alto saxophone, clarinet; Ab Baars, Tobias Delius, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Wolter Wierbos, trombone; Thomas Heberer, trumpet; Mary Oliver, violin, viola; Tristan Honsinger, cello; Ernst Glerum, bass.

» Ordering info: [icporchestra.com](http://icporchestra.com)



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## Torben Waldorff

*Afterburn*

ARTISTSHARE 0078

★★★

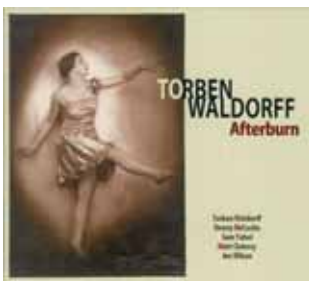
Guitarist Torben Waldorff has a clean, straightforward playing style and his compositions reflect a preference for ensemble-oriented workouts. His understated guitar work on *Afterburn* is often overshadowed by saxophonist Donny McCaslin's fluid tenor playing. A restrained player who seems to prefer working in the background, Waldorff sounds best when soloing, using rich tonal colors and mixing single note picking with discreet, clever chording.

On "JWS," Sam Yahel's organ provides a solid, grooving foundation for McCaslin's adventurous improvising. Waldorff's compositions occasionally lack excitement, but the group does a fine job on Maria Schneider's "Choro Dançado." The dialogue between Waldorff and McCaslin is the main attraction on this recording, with many rich moments featuring the two in a near-perfect alliance. A democratic band-leader, Waldorff gives ample room to his bandmates, and can provide a dynamic intensity whenever he so chooses. Still, on this disc, McCaslin is the MVP. —Mitch Myers

**Afterburn:** Daze; JWS; Espresso Crescent; Choro Dançado; Heimat; Squealfish; Eel Thye Deeflat; Skyliner; Man In The Black Hat. (61:36)

**Personnel:** Torben Waldorff, guitar; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; Sam Yahel, piano, Fender Rhodes, organ; Matt Clohesy, bass; Jon Wikan, drums, percussion.

» Ordering info: [artistshare.com](http://artistshare.com)





## Corey Christiansen

**Roll With It**

ORIGIN 82513

★★★

This album has a homey feel. The simple, direct way it communicates starts off with the funky, medium-tempo groove of “Your Way.” Nothing fancy, nothing ornate—the music conveys an ease that’s pleasing to the ears, as the song’s opening lines borrow from “Summertime,” suggesting that the listener should put their feet up and enjoy.

The quartet, led by guitarist Corey Christiansen, features tenor saxophonist David Halliday, Hammond B-3 organ player Pat Bianchi and drummer Matt Jorgensen. The album is funky with lots of blues attitude. On the grinder “Roll With It,” which has a backbeat vibe, Christiansen offers well-placed guitar lines, laced with a feeling that draws you in.

*Roll With It* features all original music. “Steele” breaks with the soul-jazz groove as a convincing uptempo swing tune, with the band cohering around the infectious blues theme. “Kaiya’s Dance” and “Sideways” veer off the beaten path as ballad and impressionistic pieces, back to back, suggesting Christiansen has more on his plate than just creating good grooves. These two songs give *Roll With It* an edge that keeps you interested. Then it’s back to basics with the closer, “Half Pay.” The song’s slinky backbeat, Halliday’s Eddie Harris-inspired expressions and the soul-jazz funk evoke a solemn John Scofield ready to bust loose.

—John Ephland

**Roll With It:** Your Way; I’ll Just Wait; Roll With It; Steele; Kaiya’s Dance; Sideways; Half Pay. (54:11)

**Personnel:** Corey Christiansen, guitar; David Halliday, tenor saxophone; Pat Bianchi, Hammond B-3 organ; Matt Jorgensen, drums.

» Ordering info: [origin-records.com](http://origin-records.com)

## Cynthia Felton

**Afro Blue: The Music Of Oscar Brown Jr.**

FELTON ENTERTAINMENT

★★½

Lyricist Oscar Brown, Jr. was no trained singer. If he didn’t have flawless vocal technique and impressive range, his voice had lots of character. Brown could conjure wicked worldliness, penitent anguish, comic lust and humbled awe. His songs are parables and incisive social commentary, which require interpretive skill.

Young Cynthia Felton is an impressive alto vocalist with a formidable falsetto. She takes on the Brown songbook, but not always with the best results. She shines on her thrilling gospel-tinged cadenzas, as on “Afro Blue.” Her esthetics, though, are of an ingénue raised on “American Idol”: on-the-beat phrasing, excessive melisma, and hair-trigger changes in dynamics and register. The individuality of the ballad “Strong Man,” the tone poem “When Malindy Sings” and the social lament “Brother, Where Are You?” are neutered by her uniformity of interpretation.

Felton produced and arranged the album. The instrumental delights include how the harp and arco bass cogently accompany “Brown Baby,” Ernie Watts’ liquid phrasing on “Long As You’re Living,” and Nolan Shaheed’s pungent trumpet on “Mr. Kicks.” Stellar instrumental performances, however, can’t trump a mismatch of singer and material.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Afro Blue:** Motherless Child; Afro Blue; Mr. Kicks; Work Song; All Blues; Brother, Where Are You?; But I Was Cool; When Malindy Sings; Dat Dere; Brown Baby; Harry’s Hips; Strong Man; Long As You’re Living; Motherless Child (reprise). (64:30)

» Ordering info: [cynthiafelton.com](http://cynthiafelton.com)



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## Michael Moore

*Fragile*  
RAMBOY 25

★★★

## Michael Moore Trio

*Holocene* »  
RAMBOY 24

★★★½

## The Persons

*Sweet Ears*  
RAMBOY 23

★★½

With his pleasingly rounded tone and sure way with a sweet melody, Michael Moore is the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine go down in ensembles like the comically fractious ICP Orchestra, the rampantly eclectic Available Jelly, and Jewels And Binoculars, a band that has bravely committed itself to playing jazz using only Bob Dylan compositions. But even more than his instrumental and interpretive gifts, Moore's versatility has made him such a valued player; he's as convincing splitting split tones with Ab Baars as he is sailing an Irving Berlin melody over a sprightly brushes-on-snare beat. These three records show the deep inquiry it takes to acquire such depth. On each, he rations the genre-hopping in order to engage a particular concept.

*Fragile*, the newest recording, is as close as Moore gets to playing it straight. It was tracked in a single day by a piano quartet drawn from fellow residents of Amsterdam, where the California-born reedist has lived for more than 25 years. The material is unfailingly lyrical and on the sunny side. Moore composed most of its 16 themes within a single season in 2007, and they're mainly motivated by a desire to honor the delicate relational ties that constitute a traveling musician's main safety net. While he sings a bit of blues on "Families Be So Mean," he remains mostly on message by doling out one winsome air after another. Even when the oft-acerbic Baars guests on the contrapuntal chamber piece "A Friend Stays The Night," there's more honey than vinegar. Pianist Harmen Fraanje is almost too tuned into this approach, and it's the moments when keys and reeds blur into a melted-sugar glaze that make this record less than totally satisfying.

*Holocene* was recorded in 2004 and 2005 with a couple New Yorkers who easily straddle the divide between chamber music and jazz. Ironically, this is the most European-sounding recording; even when Erik Friedlander strums his cello in emulation of American folk guitarists, the accordion's timbres evoke a feeling of walking down a rain-spattered, stone-paved street that's existed for hundreds of years. Moore's lyrical tendencies are balanced by a strain of pensive melancholy, which comes to the fore on deliberate and tragedy-tinged



"Gilgamesh," as well as an increased use of dissonance and broad interval leaps. Even when he jousts with the boundaries of pitch, as on the whinnying solo turn "Discrepancy," a nice tune lays just around the corner to lead you through the thicket. If you prefer your coffee black and your wine dry, this record may be more to your liking than *Fragile*.

Moore first conceived The Persons in the late '70s, when he lived in New York. Throughout its incarnations it has been all about the possibilities afforded by two electric guitars. *Sweet Ears*, which was recorded in 1996 but shelved until 2008, documents the group's final Amsterdam-based edition with guitarists Danny Petrow and Nick Kirgo. Your appreciation for this record will depend in large part upon your appreciation—or tolerance—of their tonal vocabulary. The opening track, "Vicky/Sweet Ears," lays out the good and the bad. Moore and the cellist skitter around each other in a manner similar to their more outside moments with the Clusone Trio, but then a big, tight groove locks in; and a swell groove it is, full of little starts and halts that give each player a tiny window where they can show their stuff. Unfortunately, one of the guitarists ventures a brittle, aluminum tone that reminds me of how Allan Holdsworth sounded in Bill Bruford's late-'70s fusion bands. This fusion-esque element mars *Sweet Ears'* appealingly intricate arrangements and strong performances.

—Bill Meyer

**Fragile:** Paint As You Like; Miss Yosemite; Yahoo Day; Fragile; Bagdad; Families Be So Mean; Mudgekin; Old Grey Stella; The Troubadours; Sanctuary; A Friend Stays The Night; How Small Birds Flit; Ringtail; Asian Pear; The Smell Of Novato; Upside-Down Man. (69:19)

**Personnel:** Michael Moore, reeds; Harmen Fraanje, piano; Clemens van der Veen, bass; Michael Vatcher, drums, glass harp; Ab Baars, clarinet (3, 11).

**Holocene:** The Thaw; To And Fro; Well On Our Way; Jodi Jones; Dark Christians; Gilgamesh; Killjoy; Discrepancy; Fata Morgana; Accumulation; Trouble House; Unity; Woodcut. (50:04)

**Personnel:** Moore, reeds; Guy Klucevsek, accordion; Eric Friedlander, cello.

**Sweet Ears:** Vicky/Sweet Ears; Sluggo; Humoroso; Ishi/Let 'Em Ring; The Pimps Next Door; Brunheiras; Hinde-wu; RAM; Love Henry. (66:52)

**Personnel:** Moore, reeds; Ernst Reijseger, cello; Danny Petrow, Nick Kirgo, guitar; James Royer, bass; Vatcher, drums.

» Ordering info: [ramboyreorderings.com](http://ramboyreorderings.com)



## Bernstein's Century

There's a point midway through Leonard Bernstein's "Age Of Anxiety" symphony that acts like a prism into his art. Bristling with excitement, the wayward energy of this section alludes to not only formal classical strategies but folk, pop, jazz and blues, the instrumentation rife with percussion, some almost honky-tonk piano and broad strokes of melancholy. Standing in the heart of the 20th century, Bernstein's musical output, chronicled in *The Original Jacket Collection: Bernstein Conducts Bernstein* (Sony Masterworks 88697 27988; 66:03/72:10/60:00/60:12/72:05/48:21/60:11/60:15/54:03/54:12) ★★★★★½ reflects unparalleled ambition, creativity and some over-reaching.

An artist who conducted the New York Philharmonic at 25, Bernstein's love affair with America, New York City and the world couldn't be contained in strictly formal classical expressions. Thus, we have Broadway and film music, experimental opera, music for ballet, religious music that stretched the conventions of the day and more. In each case, Bernstein takes the form he is using and remains voluntarily bound by it, even if he bends it to his own uses.

For example, with one foot in the 19th century and the other extended toward the new millennium, Bernstein's 20th-century take on spirituality is represented in his Jewish "Kaddish" and "Jeremiah" symphonies, ending with the double-disc *Mass: A Theatre Piece For Singers, Players And Dancers* (1971). *Mass* has an outsized, rock-concert sensibility, which now sounds like a product of its time alongside then-contemporary stage productions like *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. More classical in orientation but still drinking in pop sensibilities, *Mass* is either a mess or a brilliant convergence of theater, message poetry, symphonic gestures and religious idealism.

*On The Town* (1960) is a revelation, given its expanded song list as a Broadway show when compared to the musically clipped version we get from the film of the same name. Songs like "Some Other Time" and "Lucky To Be Me" are standouts on their way to becoming jazz standards. The power and glory may be lacking in these stage performances when compared with what Frank Sinatra was capable of doing on screen, but the music is closer to what Bernstein intended. The same is true with *Symphonic Dances From West Side Story* (1961), which was also originally presented as a Broadway musical. Unlike *On*



Leonard Bernstein: music as music

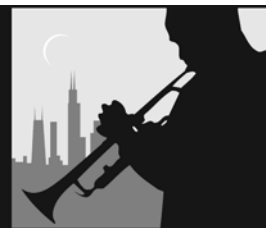
DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

*The Town*, *West Side Story*'s film corollary ended with a successful soundtrack recording, which is superior to its original stage version (the soundtrack isn't in this set). Still, it is good to hear Bernstein's original intent for music written in symphonic form, which would become grist for the jazz-standard mill with "Somewhere" and "Cool," among many others.

This package was created to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Bernstein's birth and the 50th anniversary of his appointment as music director of the New York Philharmonic. The 10-disc set includes definitive recordings of his greatest works as a composer. We don't have all the Columbia recordings in this package. The broad range of styles is an accurate reflection, however, of what kind of artist Bernstein was.

That can make for a fascinating listening experience. Take "Prelude, Fugue And Riffs For Solo Clarinet And Jazz Ensemble" with guest artist Benny Goodman. It is a rare example of a work that doesn't use literary or dramatic devices, but instead exists on its own. Its contrapuntal form mixes with a swing undertow and elements of the blues, but driven by the composer's love of horns, reeds and attitude. It was commissioned by Woody Herman for his dance band in 1948 and Bernstein revived it three years later for his musical *Wonderful Town*. This 1963 recording finds Goodman at home in the classical clusters and breezy delight of Bernstein's music. As with the three fanciful dance episodes from *On The Town* that follow (also 1963), it's possible to imagine Bernstein's greatest gift to listeners was the opportunity to love music as music. DB

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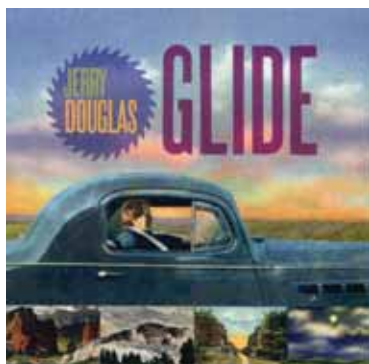
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## Jerry Douglas

**Glide**  
KOCH 4553  
★★★★½

Few musicians have so dominated an instrument in their era as dobro genius Jerry Douglas does with the resonator guitar. While best known for his bluegrass work, Douglas has been a prolific and pervasive presence on the modern music scene in many contexts. Bluegrass neither defines nor confines his enlightened expertise on his signature instrument. *Glide* may not be the definitive Douglas dobro recording, but it is definitely an engaging and enjoyable overview of his excellence.

"Bounce," a trio opener with kindred musical spirits and frequent collaborators bassist Edgar Meyer and mandolinist Sam Bush, serves dually as a warm-up and a role model as it exhibits the relaxed virtuosity and conversational approach that colors Douglas' music. Meyer is also featured as a composer with "Unfolding," in which violinist Luke Bulla provides a one-man string section, although Guthrie Trapps's electric guitar solo steals the show.



Douglas delights in changes of tempo and mood within a piece and occasionally even within a solo. A song like "Sway Sur La Rue Royale," recorded in New Orleans with an assortment of Crescent City stalwarts, is perfect for his approach. It's a string band homage to a New Orleans funeral procession for the first three minutes or so before Orange Kellin's clarinet leads it

into parade time for a strutting conclusion. Douglas similarly melds a couple of traditional tunes on the solo piece "Trouble On Alum" as his watercolor meditation breaks into a semi-restrained Scottish jig.

Other highlights include a trio take on the Flatt & Scruggs bluegrass classic "Home Sweet Home," with Earl Scruggs on banjo and Tony Rice supplying rhythm guitar, and the cool cross-cultural instrumental dialogue of "Two Small Cars In Rome," which ultimately becomes a stylish showcase for steel guitar legend Lloyd Green.

—Michael Point

**Glide:** Bounce; Glide; Marriage Made In Hollywood; Route Irish; Sway Sur La Rue Royale; Unfolding; Long Hard Road; Home Sweet Home; Two Small Cars In Rome; Trouble On Alum; Pushed Too Far. (55:06)

» Ordering info: [kochrecords.com](http://kochrecords.com)



## Jimmy Herring

**Lifeboat**  
ABSTRACT LOGIX 011  
★★★★½

Jimmy Herring, now touring with Widespread Panic and a vet of the Aquarium Rescue Unit, Allman Brothers and various groups with former members of the Grateful Dead, taps several old bandmates for his first solo recording. *Lifeboat* is a muscular, multicolor work deeply rooted in fusion and informed by strains of jam band, modern jazz and Southern rock. Hints of the Dixie Dregs and Return To Forever are abundant.

The guitarist, joined by a core group including bassist Oteil Burbridge, flutist/keyboardist Kofi Burbridge and drummer Jeff Sipe, hardly stays to the beaten path. The band swings hard on a smartly arranged version of Wayne Shorter's "Lost," with Herring, Burbridge on flute and guest saxophonist Greg Osby harmonizing on the melody before shifting to a series of soaring solos. The mix expands to Disney music with a cinematic, playful version of the "Jungle Book Overture," also featuring Osby, and to deep funk with the clavinet-punched "One Strut," one of a half-dozen Herring originals on the CD.

Herring's speedy, shape-shifting lines are a treat on those pieces, as well as the types of tunes that might have been expected, including "Scapegoat Blues," the furiously twisting opener; the moody "New Moon" and floaty ballad "Lifeboat Serenade," both offering ample space for Derek Trucks' slide-guitar hoodoo; and the densely textured "Transients," partly a showcase for Burbridge's remarkably fluid six-string bass improvisation. Herring fans won't be surprised by his genre-crossing abilities. For others, his musical range will come as a revelation.

—Philip Booth

**Lifeboat:** Scapegoat Blues; Only When It's Light; New Moon; Lifeboat Serenade; One Strut; Jungle Book Overture; Lost; Transients; Gray Day; Splash. (64:25)

**Personnel:** Jimmy Herring, guitar; Oteil Burbridge, bass; Kofi Burbridge, flute, piano, keyboards; Jeff Sipe, drums; Greg Osby, saxophone; Matt Slocum, keyboards; Derek Trucks, slide guitar (3, 4); Bobby Lee Rodgers, Leslie, rhythm guitar; Ike Stubblefield, Hammond B-3; Tyler Greenwell, drums; Scott Kinsey, organ.

» Ordering info: [abstractlogix.com](http://abstractlogix.com)

## Lee Konitz and Minsarah

**Deep Lee**  
ENJA 9517  
★★★★

It seems impossible that Lee Konitz has left his 70s behind. It's not just the rigor of his tone or the creativity of his lines that belie his 80 years, but the spark he brings to his interactions with relative youngsters, whether it's with drummer Matt Wilson or the trinalational trio that joins him here.

German pianist Florian Weber, Israeli drummer Ziv Ravitz and American Jeff Denson are natural collaborators for Konitz because, like so many of their generation, they are his children, embracing his long-held and practiced belief in music that defies easy characterization, along with his love of risk-taking. The latter is clear from the drop here, with a three-part suite by Weber starting things off in a subdued mood when most listeners might be expecting a hotter tempo. Konitz plays suitably grainy on the dramatic "Invention" and then strikes a stately stance in duet with Denson's arco accompaniment on the glacial "Chorale." The closing movement, "Canon," offers classic Konitz—beginning with a melancholic solo, balancing



solemnity and playfulness in the center section, and then moving into a more spritely frame of mind to close.

Weber's other piece, "Color," also allows the saxophonist to explore a number of different moods over a constantly shifting rhythm. The writing by the other group members tends to cast him in a more singular role.

Ravitz expresses his infatuation with metallic soundscapes on two pieces, and Konitz relishes the open space he gets on "See The World For The First Time." Denson's pair presents the most traditional post-bop settings, and while "As The Smoke Clears" suffers from too many tempo changes, "Spiders" is an effective, evocative closer. Given the loose time and creative interplay displayed on the sole standard, "Stella By Starlight," you might guess that this quartet could create an effective group improvisation, but their mid-tempo "W 86th" doesn't hang together over a tentative-sounding rhythm base.

—James Hale

**Deep Lee:** Three Part Suite—Invention, Chorale, Canon; Deep Lee; Stella By Starlight; Cactus; As The Smoke Clears; W 86th; See The World For The First Time; Color; Spiders. (59:58)

**Personnel:** Lee Konitz, alto saxophone; Florian Weber, piano; Jeff Denson, bass; Ziv Ravitz, drums.

» Ordering info: [enjarecords.com](http://enjarecords.com)



## Ari Hoenig

**Bert's  
Playground**  
DREYFUS JAZZ FDM  
46050369192

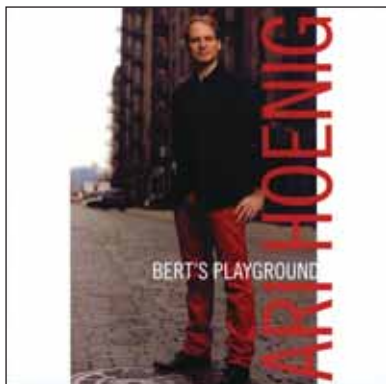
★★★½

Francis Dreyfus seems to like drummer leaders. He has worked with Roy Haynes and Aldo Romano, and this is Ari Hoenig's second album on his

French label. Hoenig, one of the most melodic and nimble percussionists on the scene, obliges, opening with one-time jam session staple "Moment's Notice," recast in 7/8. Unsurprisingly, Chris Potter unspools a monster solo, nailing the outgoing theme in the high register just when you think, lost in virtuosic display, he has lost track of it.

"The Way You Look Tonight" is a trio feature for Gilad Hekselman's warm-toned guitar and bassist Orlando LeFleming's solid swing. Hoenig loves quoting melodies and riffs on the kit, although sometimes this can make the music sound too cute. He takes that one step further by playing the melody of "Round Midnight" solo.

Five Hoenig originals intersperse the stan-



dards, including the title cut, dedicated to the drummer's goldfish, which features Matt Penman on bass and alto saxophonist Will Vinson. The outstanding "Green Spleen" rears out of an ominous intro like a Brecker Brothers' funk classic.

With guitarist Jonathan Kreisberg working the wah-wah and Potter biting at the bit, the track also reveals Hoenig's almost schizophrenic, turn-on-a-dime talent, as he jump-cuts

from second-line snare rolls to funky backbeats, Gene Krupa-like tom-tom builds or rock drummer bombastics, all while offering whip-crack commentary and punctuations. Occurring after such a peak in the record, Hekselman's "Embraceable You" seems a little too abrupt a dynamic shift, but then bumps in the road and sudden about-faces seem central to Hoenig's vision.

—Michael Jackson

**Bert's Playground:** Moment's Notice; The Way You Look Tonight; Seraphic; Ramilson's Brew; 'Round Midnight; Fall; Bert's Playground; For Tracy; Green Spleen; Embraceable You. (64:49)

**Personnel:** Ari Hoenig, drums; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Will Vinson, alto saxophone; Jonathan Kreisberg, guitar; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Matt Penman, Orlando LeFleming, bass.

» Ordering info: [dreyfusrecords.com](http://dreyfusrecords.com)

## Christian Scott

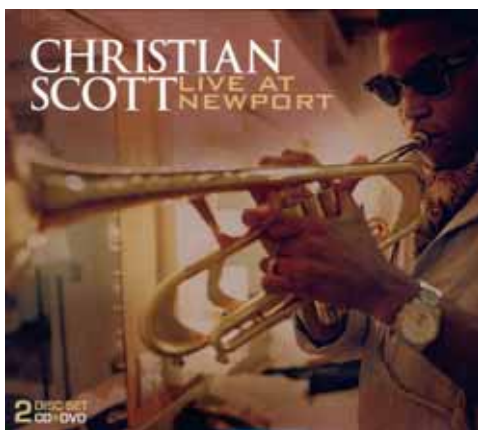
**Live At  
Newport**  
CONCORD 30853

★★★½

When listening to Christian Scott play on this scintillating live date, sometimes it's difficult not to think of fellow New Orleans-native

trumpeter Terence Blanchard. The similarities come not only from Scott's declarative melodic flares, which soar heroically on the opening "Died In Love" and the triumphant "Anthem," but also from Scott's moody compositions, many of which contain the evocation and suspense of movie soundtracks.

Luckily for Scott, some dissimilarities exist as well. His improvisations don't engage in fanciful displays of virtuosity as much as Blanchard. Instead, Scott pares down essays, maximizing the splendor of his melodies, while still embellishing them with nifty yet economical asides. Also, Scott demonstrates a closer affinity toward rock, hip-hop and electronica, most of which are enlivened by pianist Aaron Parks' insistent hammered notes on "I Died For Love" and "Litany



Against Fear," guitarist Matt Stevens' crunchy accompaniment on Stevens' "Rumor" and Jamire Williams' lacerating and propulsive drumming.

This live engagement, captured last August, finds Scott advancing as a noteworthy bandleader. It helps that his sextet, which also includes bassist Joe Sanders and saxophonist Walter Smith III, is

composed of his contemporaries. That enables Scott to forge a unified modern jazz sound. Scott allots plenty of room for his bandmates to show their musical prowess, while simultaneously asserting himself as a leader through his cocksure improvisations. With an included DVD of the live performance, this set offers a teaser of greater things to come from this bright and burgeoning new talent.

—John Murph

**Live At Newport:** I Died In Love; Litany Against Fear; Isadora; Rumor; Anthem; The Crawler; James Crow Jr., Esq.; Rewind That. (73:44) DVD—Same song sequence, deleting The Crawler and adding All Access Documentary "The Newport Experience." (108:00)

**Personnel:** Christian Scott, trumpet; Aaron Parks, piano; Matt Stevens, guitar; Joe Sanders, bass; Jamire Williams, drums; Walter Smith III, tenor saxophone.

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## Marathon Gifts

It's hard to imagine any performer other than Art Tatum whose work is so admired yet so accessible. For all his feats at the keyboard, nothing he did was too hip for café swanks. While scattering musical puns or flaunting jaw-dropping chops, Tatum never lost the respect, if not the outright worship, of his peers.

The 10 CDs and bonus DVD that comprise **Tatum Art (Storyville, 108 8603) ★★★★★** would seem to be a perfect gift for the casual fan as much as the serious student of jazz, especially since almost all of these 212 tracks were previously available and none was recorded in a studio for commercial release. But they make the point as well that, like chocolate or wine, Tatum is savored best in small quantities: With each CD running well more than an hour, it's easy to burn out even on excellence.

That being said, one does emerge from this Tatum marathon with insights that don't come from spinning just one album at a time—or with questions to consider against the consensus concerning his incomparable gifts.

Begin with the quote chosen by Arnold Laubich to close his introduction to the package's 38-page booklet: "The details are not the details," observed architect and designer Charles Eames. "They are the product." The effect of *Tatum Art* calls this into question, as details pile upon one another to the point that one begins to wonder if Tatum thought about whether they might illuminate the repertoire he addresses.

Particularly in the solo setting in which he was most prolific, the effect of his approach is to erode distinctions between songs in inverse proportion to how many of them you take in. A sense grows that the written content is less important than the tinsel with which Tatum adorns and sometimes obscures it. Usually he does so with brilliance and flair, but rarely do his decorations highlight the composition; more often he treats the silences between parts of a melody as cues to unleash essentially the same runs or descending II-V patterns that he applies similarly in other tunes.

Exceptions abound, but as Eames warns, they're most often in details that may blow by too quickly to notice. Time and again Tatum's stride patterns pound



Art Tatum: abundant excellence

us into awestruck admiration; only when they slow down a bit, as in "Chinatown, My Chinatown" on the first disc, is it clear how startling is the inner-voice movement of each chord he hits within that pattern. He wasn't oblivious to what was going on around him in jazz; on disc three he blazes through "Song Of The Vagabonds," recorded in 1946, over intricate switches in rhythm, going beyond stride to sparer placements of notes, irregular syncopation and empty space.

As abundant as these CDs are, the DVD reminds us of the rarity of visual documentation of Tatum in action. The excerpt from *The Fabulous Dorseys* is interesting but not informative; Tatum is the only player in the famous blues jam whose hands aren't shown during his solo. But on a trio snippet and its outtakes from a "March Of Time" newsreel as well as a delectable solo reading of "Yesterdays" from "The Spike Jones Show" in 1954, Tatum commands a nearly perfect technique in his ability to play at the highest level of virtuosity with almost no apparent effort.

But whether suffering the tedious musical puns of bassist Slam Stewart in trio settings, draping one stupefying but irrelevant line after another like kudzu on the vine of "Danny Boy" or communicating his boredom before an inattentive audience with an unsubtle quote from "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen" during "Body And Soul," Tatum makes the case that even the classiest car on the highway can spend a lot of time coasting. **DB**

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



## Russell Gunn

### Love Stories

HIGHNOTE 7183

★★★★½

A skilled trumpeter more likely to drop a fat-bottomed hip-hop beat under his neo-bop compositions than swing, Russell Gunn expands jazz's notions of rhythm and melodic rhyme. When Gunn lowers his pinky into a love-themed outing, you can bet it won't be of the roses and chocolates variety.

Including "Bitch, You Don't Love Me," "The Stalker Song" and "I'm In Love With A Stripper," *Love Stories* courses the mental side of love, its deftly composed, richly expressed melancholia infused with deep solos from Gunn and the much-maligned saxophonist Kirk Whalum. As with Gunn's previous recordings, *Love Stories* is epic in scope. Sure, the ticky-tacky programmed beats distract somewhat, but the music's lush flow, noirish atmospheres and gorgeous soloing maintains Gunn's high standards.

Gunn steps back in time in "Love For Sale," led by saucy vocalist Heidi Martin's rye reading. But *Love Stories* is about the dark side, even when layering Spanish guitars over a clap-happy MPC beat in the pensive "Ghandi's Love." "Bitch, You Don't Love Me"'s organ/violin pizzicato intro recalls "East St. Louis Toodle-O" as it slithers and slides; "I'm In Love With A Stripper" (by the rapper T-Pain) couples a fat beat with a choir of heavenly synths and cooing keyboards. Matching machine flow and melodic clarity with his growing compositional mastery, Gunn continues to challenge jazz convention.

—Ken Micallef

**Love Stories:** Love Requiem; All You Need Is Love; Because I Love You (The Stalker Song); I'm In Love With A Stripper; Bitch, You Don't Love Me; Love Me In A Special Way; Love For Sale; Ghandi's Love; He Loves Me; The Stalker Song (Alternate Ending). (56:19)

**Personnel:** Russell Gunn, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kirk Whalum, tenor saxophone; Brian Hogans, alto saxophone; Orrin Evans, piano, keyboards; Mike Scott, guitar; Carlos Henderson, bass; Montez Coleman, drums; Kahlil Kwame Bell, percussion; Heidi Martin, vocals; Dave Darlington, faders.

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



## Bik Bent Braam

**Extremen** »

BBB 10

★★★½

## Georg Breinschmid & Friends

**Wien Bleibt Krk**

ZAPPEL MUSIC 0009

★★★½



For Dutch pianist Michiel Braam and Austrian bassist Georg Breinschmid, jazz is part of a broader musical platform that allows them to expound upon extramusical concerns. While their music's appeal varies widely, each record is a success at articulating its appointed vision.

Braam's biggish band Bik Bent Braam uses a combination of skeletal composition and structured improvisation to posit a thrillingly optimistic vision of democracy in action. His tunes and set lists are merely suggestions; each member of the band can, by signaling one from a set of prearranged cues, call a new piece or recommend a different approach at any time. Since the other members might or might not take the signaler up on their suggestion, you never know how a song might turn out.

The instability of Bik Bent Braam's approach is potentially messy and this, along with their readiness to draw on anything from Cotton Club antics to freely improvised chatter, leads to surprises and some uneasy listening. But they embrace unpredictability with a spirit of infectious fun, and leaven their chaos with a heaping measure of discipline, which insulates the music from impulsive acts of sabotage. With players like trombonist Wolter Wierbos and saxophonist Frank Gratkowski on board, you can be sure there'll be some bracing solos; what's impressive is the way that ensemble's commitment to collective coherence makes a potential train-wreck like "Michaelx"—with its jump cuts from subterranean reed tangles to mad swinging to near-rock rollick—seem elegant.

Breinschmid has extensive classical training and experience, and although he turned his back on an orchestral career to embrace jazz in the late '90s, his music is much tidier than Bik Bent Braam. On *Wien Bleibt Krk*, he uses vintage marches, Balkan themes, cabaret-style songs and a jazz-informed rhythm concept to craft a love letter to his adopted hometown of Vienna.

The album starts off in stirring fashion, with a quick-paced violin–accordion–bass romp through a Gypsy-flavored melody that argues persuasively that the Balkans do indeed begin in Vienna. Breinschmid's solo takes off from a quick, impish quote of "Desafinado" to spin intricate figures around the melody. A whole record of such material would be just fine. But the album goes off the rails. The waltz "Musette Pour Elisabeth" sounds fussy; the vocal duo of Breinschmid and Agnes Heginger mug their way through "A Klanes Brabitschek"'s fricative

vowels and intentionally off-key whistling with more than a few broad winks, proving the rule that anything that feels compelled to declare that it is funny isn't. Things hit rock bottom on the unbearably cartoonish "Florentiner Marsch," where the bassist's sprightly steeplechases with Thomas Gansch's trumpet run smack into the wall

of Gansch's painfully goofy faux-flamenco

vocal stylings.

—Bill Meyer

**Extremen:** Frankx; Michiel; Wollox; Michaelx; Puttex; Angelox; Wlix; Erix; Franxs; Haeks; Pjax; JWX (76:35)

» Ordering info: [michielbraam.com](http://michielbraam.com)

**Wien Bleibt Krk:** Wien Bleibt Krk; Klans Wiener Basssolo; Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze; Musette Pour Elisabeth; A Klans Brabitschek; I Pee A Hedgehog With Long-Lasting Waves; Mussorgsky, Mei Oida Freind; Balkandrom; Fussball-Aversions-Wienerlied; An Uns Zwaa Kummt Kana Foabei; Skubek's Delight; Komisches Wienerlied; Florentiner Marsch; Midnight In Heanois; For The Lost Daughters And Sons Of Vienna. (76:17)

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## Cory Combs And The Great Plains Ensemble

*Fairfax In The Pacific*  
EVANDER MUSIC

★★★★

Americana is dangerous territory, despite pies on the checkered cloth and the sunny smiles of the folks seated around the table. A composer can bloat on the nostalgia or become snared by the banality. There's a small needle that has to be threaded, particularly if the ultimate goal is to trump the cultural references with persuasive original music. It's no small feat, as evidenced by Cory Combs' ambitious *Fairfax In The Pacific*, which enlists a jazz quintet, a string quartet and more than a dozen strategically placed samples, most of which are taken from an '80s home movie shot in Kansas.

Combs occasionally succumbs to Americana default settings with hymns and quaint parlor waltzes, albeit with well-tweaked arrangements. When he wrings the last lumen of dusky glow from long string notes, one half expects to hear David McCullough. However, his charts featuring the quintet have strong rhythms and panache. The front line of trombonist John Gove and saxophonist Dan Willis nail the charts and solo boisterously. Combs, John Hollenbeck and Harry Whitney maintain a seamlessness whether



they are reading technically taxing parts or stretching out under a solo. On those occasions when then he adds the strings, Combs' music is impressive.

Rather than approach *Fairfax In The Pacific* as jazz fusion, consider it as a narrative work. The samples extend beyond the voices of Combs' relatives to a Brazilian river and a Berlin farmers market, while the album art is comprised of Polaroids, pencil drawings of trolleys, caps and peelers, and a text presented as faux figure descriptions. They create fleeting, if not inchoate associations, which are the sources of the album's strengths and shortcomings.

—Bill Shoemaker

**Fairfax In The Pacific:** Fairfax In The Pacific/Wehiwehi/Oe; Rubber Band—"70s Cop Show Version; Missouri Waltz; American Tourist; Helium; There'll Be Some Killin'; Air Conditioned Nightmare: a. The Gun In The First Act Goes Off In The Third, b. Paper Of Pins—Theme And Variation, c. West Of The 100th Meridian; Were You The Pick Of The Litter?; Italian Western—Death Scene; I Know You're Alive And Well; The Last Living Descendent Of The Mona Lisa; Solitude; There'll Be Some Killin'—Reprise; One Day I Will Have The Strength To Open The Tighest Jar In The World; Missouri Waltz—Reprise; Buffalo Head; Graduation Toast—1986. (77:51)

**Personnel:** Cory Combs, bass, samples, toy piano; Dan Willis, tenor saxophone, clarinet; John Hollenbeck, drums, percussion, glockenspiel; John Gove, trombone; Harry Whitney, piano, prepared piano; Allen Biggs, xylophone; Kayo Miki, violin; Matt Combs, violin, mandolin, voice; Emily Onderdonk, viola; Mark Summer, cello.

» Ordering info: [evandermusic.com](http://evandermusic.com)



## Southside Johnny with LaBamba's Big Band

*Grapefruit Moon: The Songs Of Tom Waits*  
LEROY 2008

★★★★½

As longtime leader of the r&b-inspired rock outfit The Asbury Jukes, Southside Johnny Lyon knows a thing or two about harnessing the power of a great horn section. He takes that affinity for brass and woodwinds to the extreme by teaming up with former Jukes trombonist Richie "LaBamba" Rosenberg and his 18-piece big band to produce a CD celebrating the music of Tom Waits.

Lyon's soulful and growly voice proves a nice fit in this unlikely scenario, as he reinterprets and puts his own personal spin on the gritty narratives and haunting melodies of 12 Waits compositions. Waits makes a cameo on "Walk Away," performed as a rousing vocal duet with Lyon.

Singers and songwriters aside, the real star of this big band concept album is LaBamba—not so much for his solid trombone chops (featured in a couple of solo spots) but for his skill and creativity as an arranger for large ensemble. He does an amazing job of fleshing out and reharmonizing Waits' tunes, which are typically presented in a minimalist fashion on the original recordings. LaBamba's charts open up for plenty of soloing, too. Featured aces include tuba player Howard Johnson, guitarist Glenn Alexander, trombonist Brian Pastor, trumpeters Mark Pender and Chris Anderson, and saxophonists Timmy Cappello, Jerry Vivino and Frank Elmo.

LaBamba employs a rainbow of timbres from the big band palette and relies on classic orchestration devices that make this towering excursion sound like the soundtrack to a Hollywood spy thriller, only performed by East Coast cats with a strong grasp of swing, a stylistic edge and an understated sense of humor. —Ed Enright

**Grapefruit Moon:** Yesterday Is Here; Down, Down, Down; Walk Away; Please Call Me Baby; Grapefruit Moon; All The Time In The World; Tango Till They're Sore; Johnsborg, Illinois; New Coat Of Paint; Shiver Me Timbers; Dead And Lovely; Temptation. (61:26)

**Personnel:** Southside Johnny Lyon, vocals, harmonica; Tom Waits, vocals (3); Richie "LaBamba" Rosenberg, arranger, conductor, trombone; big band.

» Ordering info: [southsidejohnny.com](http://southsidejohnny.com)

## Blink.

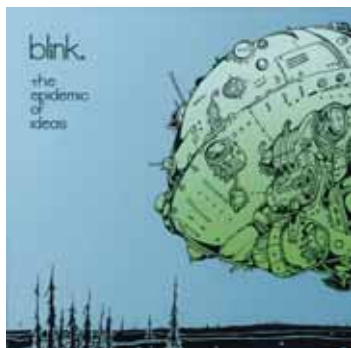
*The Epidemic Of Ideas*  
THIRSTY EAR 57185

★★★★

There's no mistaking Blink.'s Chicago pedigree; the roiling energy and beefy compositional style that brands the city's modern jazz groups is ever present on the quartet's debut. But alongside those qualities is a seemingly contradictory sparseness—the calm in the eye of a storm, perhaps, or delicate carvings on a monumental edifice.

But if Blink.'s membership hailed from New York, much the same case could be made. After all, the narrative arc of their compositions, accumulating and devolving elements, betrays the influence of Tim Berne, while the barbed-wire guitar leads and mind-clouding electronic textures could have been ported over from a Sonic Youth record.

The album's title seems to suggest a group bedeviled by a plague of concepts. But while there are a surfeit of influences and directions on display, the foursome's gift is in mind-melding their disparate urges into a single compelling direction. After a brief, mood-setting opening



track, "Secret Weapon: Part I" kicks off with a raucous funk-jazz groove before Dave Miller's corralled feedback intrudes, bringing chaos to toe-tapping order. Jeff Greene's walking bass and Quin Kirchner's shuffling brushwork start "Rivers And Tides" in an almost parodically traditional fashion, but Greg Ward's keening

alto drags them into more expansive musings before Miller throws another curve, emulating Bill Frisell in his skronkier days and forcing everyone to venture some angular swerves.

The Waits-in-Bali glockenspiel that opens "Glass" certainly doesn't suggest the nerve-racking insistence that the tune builds into before dissolving into an airy drift. If this feedback loop of unpredictability is an epidemic, one can hope it's contagious. —Shaun Brady

**The Epidemic Of Ideas:** The Sum; Secret Weapon: Part 1; Rivers And Tides; Sources; Displacement; Secret Weapon: Part 2; Glass; I Am; Underground Games; Three Illustrations; Misadventures; We Disappear. (53:06)

**Personnel:** Jeff Greene, bass, samples, harmonium; Quin Kirchner, drums, percussion, glockenspiel; Dave Miller, guitar, effects; Greg Ward, alto saxophone.

» Ordering info: [thirstyear.com](http://thirstyear.com)



## BOOKS

by Frank-John Hadley



### Winding Musical Roads Lead to the Delta

Ted Gioia has finally got the blues. In the years before *Delta Blues* (W.W. Norton), he'd written intelligently about jazz and also spun off into rarefied musical niches of healing songs and work songs. Unlike recent books on the blues where writers revel

in spinning controversy, Gioia delivers the straight goods without a polemic agenda.

Throughout the 400-plus pages of *Delta Blues*, he tells the blues story with clarity and depth. But he does not obsess over the book's title—Gioia looks outside the Memphis-to-Vicksburg box.

The first chapter digs into the entangled roots of the blues, the encounter of African traditions with Western concepts. Gioia (who also plays jazz piano) outlays some of the cultural, sociological and psychological aspects of the Southern-born African-American music, posing questions and reaching conclusions such as "the essence of the blues was not innovation, was not the spread of a new way of making music, but stemmed primarily from the retention of traditional practices and perspectives." Rather than continuing with one reasoned insight after another, potentially setting up logjams for non-academic readers, he shifts into a smooth narrative flow that makes for pleasurable reading the rest of the way.

The story Gioia tells is a corker, with loads of interesting detail dotted with contradictions, mysteries and myth-busting. The Mississippi cotton field guitarists—flamboyant Charley Patton, complex Son House, hoboing Bukka White—get plenty of attention, as does business man H.C. Speir for recording and releasing 78s. Typical of Gioia's eloquence as a writer, and indicative of his sensible enthusiasm for the blues, is a passage on White's important 1940 Vocalion sides: "[It was] a personal statement of deep emotional intensity but with larger, inescapable social overtones, rarely expressed so clearly or so well; and infused with a pulsating, grooving rhythm, an irresistible momentum that sweeps up the listener in its wake."

Marquee names—Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King—are all here, including pages on their life events far from the Delta homeland. Obscure figures like pianist Louise Johnson and guitarists Blind Joe Reynolds and Kid Bailey (aka Willie Brown) are championed, although the author admits information about them is scarce and recorded evidence of their skills remains scant. Chicago's Chess Records gets notice, as does the Memphis scene, and there's the fascinating accounting of the 1960s blues revival, when white acolytes sought out missing heroes like Skip James.

*Delta Blues* takes readers into the current decade, with Keb' Mo' overpraised but North Mississippi Allstars and Chris Thomas King rightly applauded. No hidebound purist quick to disapprove of Akron's Black Keys, Gioia believes that the Fat Possum label's Matthew Johnson may be right in having an "expansive vision" of the blues—all of which is why the author of *Delta Blues* should continue to monitor the music for far into the future.

DB

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## Essential Sound Products MusicCord-Pro: Power Worth a New Listen

Musicians constantly search for new ways to improve their sound and get the most out of their equipment, using everything from custom-made instrument cables, hand-wound pickups, cryogenically frozen strings, expensive picks and a host of costly outboard gear. With all this care and effort, it seems strange that musicians never consider the influence of the cheap \$2.99 power cables that run it all. According to Michael Griffin, president of Essential Sound Products (ESP), the power cable plays a significant role in amplified tone, and he can prove it.

High-end audio cables have been around for nearly 20 years and are popular in the audiophile world. Monster Cable was one of the first companies to offer these products to the public. The theory is simple: a better signal path between components will increase the audio quality of a system. For musicians, high-quality instrument and microphone cables have become widely accepted products in the market.

An audiophile and avid jazz fan, Griffin became aware of the influence of power cables on audio quality after a friend let him try an after-market cable on his tube pre-amp. "I noticed an immediate change in the sound of my system," Griffin said. "Surprised by this, I began to look into the possibilities of developing a power cable specifically optimized for improving audio quality."

Griffin was an engineer at General Motors at the time, and began to develop his first product, the Essence power cord, which was released to the audiophile market in 1995.

Looking for other market applications for his product, he began to think about potential musical applications, leading him to develop the MusicCord and MusicCord-Pro power cords.

People can be skeptical that a power cord can really impact the sound of their gear. According to Griffin, every cable has specific impedance and will color the sound of the device to which it is connected. "I designed the MusicCord series to be completely transparent—to not add any color at all—allowing your equipment to deliver at its full potential," Griffin said.

The MusicCord accomplishes this by filtering out phase distortion, which can result in a lack of clarity, and by delivering a faster and more consistent flow of AC power to the device as compared to a standard inexpensive power cable. The technical argument is convincing, and ESP has plenty of data to back up its claims. Plus, it is really music to your ears.

To test the cord, I played two guitars, a solid-body electric and an amplified hollow-body jazz guitar, both through a boutique tube amp and a solid-state jazz amp. As recommended by ESP, I began with the standard 18-gauge power cords that come with most equipment. After listening carefully to the sound, I switched to a heavy-duty 14-gauge cord and played the same passages on the instrument. Surprisingly, there was a distinct difference in the sound of the amps using the heavier power cord. The notes were significantly clearer and the amps ran quieter.

With confirmation that power cords do

make a difference, I then switched to the MusicCord-Pro. The difference in sound quality was amazing. There was an increase in clarity, with cleaner highs and tighter bass notes. Both amps also sounded warmer and fatter. Although the results were consistent on both guitars and amps, I noticed that the tube amp received a slightly more significant quality boost as compared to the solid state. This is an indication that the inexpensive power cord has been more of a limiting factor on this amp as opposed to the solid state. According to Griffin, this increase in quality is the amp performing at its maximum potential for the first time.

With such a groundbreaking product, it's no surprise that musicians are starting to take notice and use the product. Artists such as guitarist Henry Johnson and bassist Victor Wooten are among MusicCord's endorsers. Johnson tried the cord and was immediately sold. "I have been playing guitar for more than 30 years, and I felt I knew everything about guitar amps," Chicago-based Johnson said. "But I was shocked to hear the difference in tone from my JazzKat amp using the ESP power cord. There was more volume and the guitar was noticeably cleaner."

It is always exciting to experience something innovative. Listing at \$179.99, the ESP MusicCord-Pro is a revolutionary product that will make your instrument amps, microphone preamps, PA and outboard gear sound significantly better.

—Keith Baumann

» Ordering info: [essentialsound.com](http://essentialsound.com)



## Ibanez PM35 Pat Metheny Signature Guitar: Affordable Quality for Aspiring Musicians

Ibanez has introduced the newest addition to its Pat Metheny series, the PM35. With an attractive price tag, this guitar represents a growing industry trend to provide professional-quality instruments at incredible prices.

Ibanez has been working with Metheny for nearly 20 years developing signature hollow-body jazz guitars, including the PM20, PM100 and PM120 models. Metheny is proud of these guitars and has performed and recorded with all of them. However, as these have list prices of more than \$3,300, there was a definite need for a more affordable option.

With a list price of \$1066.65, the PM35 is targeted at the first-time jazz guitar buyer. This is the first Metheny model to be built in China by Artcore Custom. Reminiscent of Metheny's original PM20, the model features a single cut-away and single pickup. The PM35 has a full-sized archtop body with a slightly slimmer depth to help reduce



feedback problems and improve tone. The guitar is attractive, with a naturally finished maple top, back and sides, and gold hardware. A single Super 58 humbucking pickup is set into the top at the bridge location with volume and tone controls mounted on the lower bout. The bridge is the standard "floating" style, but uses a tune-o-matic top allowing for precise control over the intonation of each string.

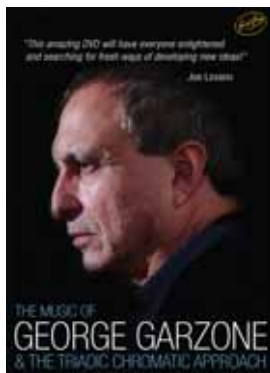
The Metheny PM35 is well built and a pleasure to play. The five-piece maple and bubinga neck is comfortable and sleek, with a nice radius and medium frets. The Super 58 pickup is warm, fat and impressively quiet, producing a respectable "jazz" tone. I did find that the guitar has a tendency to feedback at higher volumes, but this is typical of any acoustic archtop. The PM 35 places a professional jazz guitar within the reach of players who previously could have only dreamt of owning a such quality instrument.

—Keith Baumann

» Ordering info: [ibanez.com](http://ibanez.com)

## The Music Of George Garzone And The Triadic Chromatic Approach: DVD Master Class

George Garzone has developed an improvising concept called the triadic chromatic approach. The saxophonist uses the four groups of triads—major, minor, augmented and diminished—and has figured out how to improvise on them with random inversion, with a half-step coupling between each triad. "This is a way of playing that helps you break away from your normal repetitions," Garzone said.



Before the release of the DVD *The Music Of George Garzone And The Triadic Chromatic Approach*, one would have to travel to New York or Boston to study with Garzone. Now, with this two-DVD set, released by saxophone mouthpiece maker JodyJazz, Garzone has put his lessons on video. The DVD has a conversational feel, offering an engaging glimpse into Garzone's style. "It was off the cuff," Garzone said. "One of my students today said that it was like being in class."

Garzone works through the examples of his concept slowly, as he's presenting material that is foreign to most musicians, and has the potential to completely break down an artist's conception of improvising. "The goal is to get

this into your subconscious," he said.

Any jazz artist could benefit from studying the in-depth lessons in the triadic chromatic approach. For saxophonists, the DVD contains a lesson by Garzone on how he achieves his large, free-flowing sound. He explains and demonstrates how he takes his lower lip off the reed, and supports the mouthpiece with his top teeth. The DVD

also includes performances of such tunes as "The Mingus That I Knew," "Hey Open Up" and a couple of free improvisations by Garzone and his group The Fringe (drummer Bob Gullotti and bassist John Lockwood), accompanied by vibist Mike Mainieri, saxophonist Frank Tiberi and guitarist Chris Crocco.

It also includes .PDFs of written examples of the random triadic and chromatic approaches, and exercises to work on the concepts, lead sheets transposed into concert, bass, B $\flat$  and E $\flat$ , and several interviews. MSRP: \$89.95.

—Jason Koransky

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## 1» Smarter Music

MakeMusic has released SmartMusic 11, a free update for current subscribers of SmartMusic, an interactive music practicing tool for soloists, bands, orchestras and choirs. Highlights of the update include an easier set-up feature, hundreds of new band and orchestra titles, assessment improvements for all instruments and automated weekly rhythm assignments with printable grade book reports.

More info: [smartmusic.com](http://smartmusic.com)

## 2» Tune and Tempo

Planet Waves' new Metronome Tuner is a full-featured metronome equipped with onboard tempo, beats and time division variations, with an accurate chromatic meter-style tuner. A 1/4-inch input jack adapter lets any electric instrument to be plugged in, and a built-in condenser microphone allows for the tuning of acoustic instruments. MSRP: \$49.99.

More info: [planetwaves.com](http://planetwaves.com)

## 3» Gig Easy

IK Multimedia has released a new range of accessories for the StompIO, IK's custom pedalboard and amp rig that boots up directly to AmpliTube X-Gear. The rugged metal GPU Stage Case fits a Mini PC or Mac Mini, letting users gig live with their computer next to their StompIO. IK's Double Switch and Expression pedals allow for further customization of their rig. The StompIO Gig Bag and Tour Rack, with a 17-inch rack mount LCD screen, were designed to help gigging musicians survive on tour. MSRP: Stage case, \$129.99; pedals, \$79.99; gig bag, \$99.99.

More info: [ikmultimedia.com/stompio](http://ikmultimedia.com/stompio)



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« 5



4»



1»



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« 3

## 4» Hands Free

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More info: [line6.com](http://line6.com)

## 5» American Sound

No extensive knowledge of synthesis or sequencing is required to use Roland's new GW-8 workstation, a user-friendly instrument with high-quality sound. The GW-8 features a wide variety of pre-programmed styles. Additional features include an infrared D Beam, a pitch-bend/modulation lever and a pair of control knobs for real-time expression.

More info: [rolandus.com](http://rolandus.com)

## 6» First-Timer

Steinberg's Sequel 2 is an easy-to-use music studio designed for first-time computer music enthusiasts. The Sequel 2 uses intuitive tools to record, edit, mix and perform

music with a library of more than 5,000 loops, 600 ready-to-use instrument sounds and effects. MSRP: \$130.99.

More info: [sequel-music.net](http://sequel-music.net)



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## Blindfold Test

»»»» Continued from Page 106

### Dee Dee Bridgewater

"Red Earth (Massane Cissé)" (from *Red Earth*, EmArcy, 2007) Bridgewater, Fatmata "Mama" Kayaté, vocals; Edsel Gomez, piano; Cherif Samana, kora; Ira Coleman, bass; Minino Garay, drums.

At first, I thought it was Dee Dee Bridgewater. It is? She sounds so different. It's gorgeous.

She's approaching the music from the Malian side of the trade route, where I'm approaching it from the Yoruban/Nigerian side of the trade route. I love the kora and the use of other instruments that you don't normally find in the blues. It's connecting the dots and finding your home. This music is spiritual. I give it 100,000 stars. I've never heard Dee Dee sing the blues

this way, and the way she improvises, well, it's not about the melody. This is off the charts.

### Lizz Wright

"My Heart" (from *The Orchard*, Verve, 2007) Wright, vocals; Glenn Patscha, keyboards; Chris Bruce, electric guitar, bass; Oren Bloedow, electric guitar; Joey Burns, acoustic guitar, quartet; Larry Eagle, drums; Catherine Russell, backing vocals.

This is Lizz Wright, and it's from *The Orchard*. I like the energy behind this tune. It's wonderfully danceable. I wanted to hear more improvisation. It doesn't have to be the vocalist, but the musicians can get off the beaten path when they solo. Lizz has a beautiful voice with such a huge tone. She reminds me of my voice, so low and chocolaty.

### Dorothy Love Coates

"Ninety-Nine And A Half" (from *The Best Of Dorothy Love Coates And The Original Gospel Harmonettes*, Specialty, 1991/rec. circa 1952) Coates, lead vocals; Evelyn Starks, piano; Mildred Miller, Vera Kolb, Willie Mae Newberry, Odessa Edwards, backing vocals.

Watch out, watch out. (*snaps fingers and laughs during the tune*) I'm guessing Shirley Caesar or Mavis Staples, but that staccato thing is something else. That growling is something I want to do, but it's not going to happen in this lifetime. You can't help but feel the chills, and it's inspirational and uplifting. It's coming from right there [in her gut]. (*after*) It's Dorothy Love Coates? I love it.

### Abbey Lincoln

"I Could Sing It For A Song" (from *Over The Years*, Verve, 2000) Lincoln, vocals; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone; Brandon McCune, piano; John Ormond, bass; Jaz Sawyer, drums.

It's Abbey Lincoln. Abbey's my heart. I studied Betty Carter as much as I could to learn bebop. But I look at myself as carrying on that tradition that is specific to Abbey Lincoln, which is being a culture bearer—to not only sing the standards but always remembering to write music that belongs to the times you're living in. Abbey is a poet, which is something I aspire to be. I'd love to become a better lyricist. Not many people realize what a great songwriter she is, and what she does politically is so important. Abbey's not afraid to raise issues and to talk about the world falling down. The whole package of Abbey Lincoln is one of the greatest things in vocal music today. I love this song. It sounds so asymmetrical; it's not in a 32-bar or 16-bar form. That's so typical of her songs, where she wants the ideas to come first and not have to fit them into a form. She creates the music that makes its own form. **DB**



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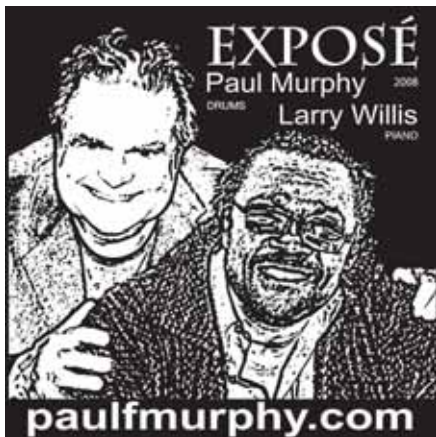
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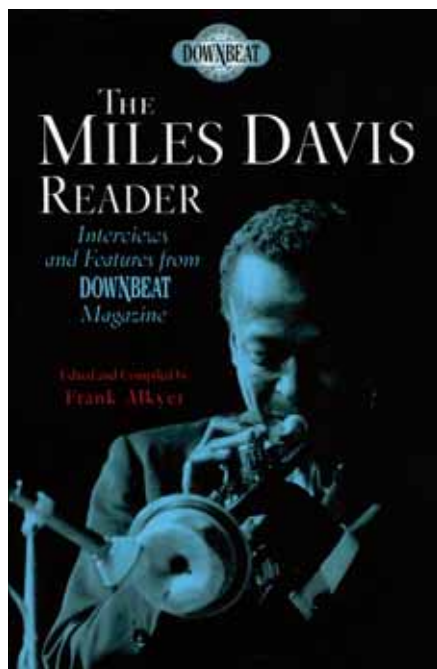
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Cassandra Wilson sat down for a “Blindfold Test” at Dizzy’s Den on Sept. 20, 2008, as part of the 51st Annual Monterey Jazz Festival Presented by Verizon. It was her first time taking part in the test with an audience. Although nervous at the beginning of the session in front of about 500 people, Wilson relaxed and got into the songs. She left with the set list to find some of the tracks she heard for the first time.

## Betty Carter

“In The Still Of The Night” (from *It’s Not About The Melody*, Verve, 1992) Carter, vocals; Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Ariel Roland, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

Of course, that’s Betty Carter, and this is “In The Still Of The Night” from *It’s Not About The Melody*. It’s funny that back then some people said she was having difficulty with her intonation, but look at the name of the album. For Betty, it wasn’t about the melody. She nails everything. You don’t hear singers today doing what she’s doing rhythmically. She’s focused on delivering some of the most amazing, swinging shapes and forms that a vocalist has done. Her pitch is what I describe as moveable. She’s not trying to hit the center of a note, and sometimes she just slides right into it or goes around it. Betty was a huge influence on me, not only for her music, but also for the way that she led her own band. She was in the trenches with the musicians. Most of the time you see a singer in front of a trio or quartet and not enjoying being with the musicians supporting her. But Betty was one of the first singers I saw who was a musician onstage. She was having conversations with everyone. That turned me on to jazz.

## Joe Henry

“Stop” (from *Amor*, Mammoth, 2001) Henry, vocals; Brad Mehldau, piano; Marc Ribot, guitar; Meshell Ndegeocello, bass; Brian Blade drums.

Robert Plant? It felt like a T-Bone Burnett production because of the overtones. Is this a jazz singer? A pop singer? A rock singer? It’s not Elvis Costello, is it? I liked this a lot, the thickness of the production and the layers of overtones. I always find recordings like this pull me in because as a musician I want to hear as broad a spectrum of frequencies as possible. It sounds like a richly recorded session, and I like the use of the drums, which sound shadowy at times. I like the voice, too. It’s rough and it reminds me a little of Dr. John. I don’t look for perfection in a voice. I want the voice to convey what you feel.

## Ray Charles

“Two Years Of Torture” (from *Blues + Jazz*, Rhino/Atlantic, 1994/rec. 1959) Charles, vocals, piano; big band.

That voice is so familiar. It’s driving me crazy. It’s a big band, and it’s a blues singer, but there’s something about it that’s messing me up. It’s a blues singer in a different context. I can hear that voice, but he’s not normally inside of that setting. It’s not Joe Williams. He’s got a deeper voice, but that’s his context. (after) Oh, it’s Ray Charles? It’s young Ray Charles and he’s not in rock ‘n’ roll. I couldn’t put the voice and the context of the music together, but it’s not that unusual because he worked with a lot of jazz musicians. This tune shows you how well-rounded a musician he was.



Cassandra Wilson

## Shirley Horn

“My Funny Valentine” (from *I Remember Miles*, Verve, 1998) Horn, vocals, piano; Charles Ables, bass; Steve Williams, drums.

(sings along after the track ends) I miss her. Shirley Horn. There’s something about her changes, the subs she uses. You go to a music store and get a *Broadway Fake Book*, and there are the original chords. Most jazz musicians find different chords to go under the melody, which are called subs. Shirley was unique in finding subs. She used them to bring something out in the melody that she wanted to express. The subs she uses on this song I would have never thought of doing—nor would have many other musicians. Shirley was so Milesian in her approach. There’s so much emotion and emphasis on space. It doesn’t get any better than this—her chestnut voice and all those alternate changes she used.

»»» Continued on Page 102

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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