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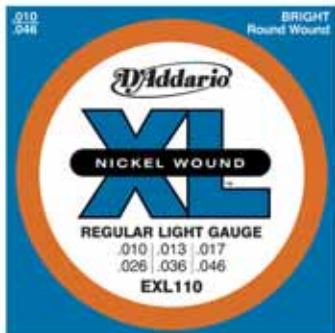
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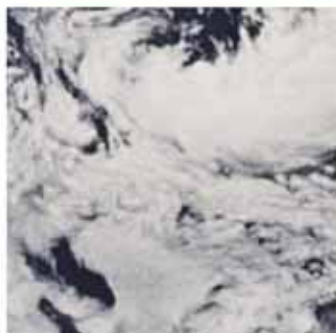
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- 8 First Take
- 10 Chords & Discords
- 13 The Beat
- 14 Backstage With ...  
Don Byron
- 19 European Scene
- 19 The Archives  
February 23, 1967
- 20 Caught
- 22 Players  
Clifton Anderson  
Pete Zimmer  
Bill Stewart  
Vince Mendoza
- 67 Reviews
- 82 Toolshed
- 86 Jazz on Campus
- 90 Blindfold Test



CLAYTON CALL

Pat Metheny

**27 75 Great Guitarists** | By Ed Enright

In the first of a series of articles that celebrate DownBeat's 75th anniversary, we shine the spotlight on 75 of the all-time great jazz, blues and beyond guitarists who have graced the magazine's pages. We scoured the DB archives for classic quotes and interviewed a number of the living masters to offer an overview of the historical progression of the guitar in improvised music through this group of the music's great six-stringers.

**Features**

- 56 **David Binney**  
*Finding Harmony*  
By Ted Panken
- 60 **International Live Music Guide**  
*100 Great Jazz Clubs*

**DOWNBEAT** *U* **GUITAR SCHOOL**

- 44 **Wes Montgomery**  
July 20, 1961,  
DownBeat Archives  
By Ralph J. Gleason
- 46 **Jack Bruce**  
*Far From Slumming*  
By Frank-John Hadley
- 50 **Master Classes**  
By Ken Hatfield & Mark Elf
- 54 **Transcription**



65 Alex Cline



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## First Take

By Jason Koransky

### Guitar Legacy

There are a number of great quotes in the Wes Montgomery story from the DownBeat archives that we reprinted on Page 44. In an interview by Ralph J. Gleason that originally ran in the July 20, 1961, issue, Montgomery discussed the guitarists who influenced his sound. One man in particular stood out.

"I got interested in playing the guitar because of Charlie Christian," Montgomery said. "Like all other guitar players! There's no way out. I never saw him in my life but he said so much on the records that I don't care what instrument a cat played, if he didn't understand and didn't feel and really didn't get with the things that Charlie Christian was doing, he was a pretty poor musician—he was so far ahead."

Christian, of course, is one of the "75 Great Guitarists" in our cover feature by Ed Enright (Page 27). He's one of only five guitarists in the DownBeat Hall of Fame—the others being Montgomery, Django Reinhardt, Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa. It was necessary to include him in this feature. Montgomery also talked about a few other of the guitarists who were obvious to include in the list, including Tal Farlow, Jimmy Raney, Charlie Byrd and Barney Kessel. In fact, the inclusion of many of the guitarists on this list of 75—we chose 75 because this is the first in a series of features that celebrate DownBeat's 75th anniversary—were imperative.

When it came down to closing the list at 75, the hard choices emerged. Which jazz, blues and beyond masters would we have to leave out? In this feature, we tried to offer a wide range of guitarists, from different time periods and different musical styles—from early swing and bebop to blues and fusion—who have played a pivotal role in the development of improvised music.

So, of course we could not include every "great" guitarist. Who do you think we should have included? We'd love to hear your opinions. Also, we know that books can (and have) been written about some of these artists. This made Enright's job of whittling down each entry to about 100 words a Herculean writing task. The entries are simply snapshots of these artists, offering some biographical information, DownBeat archive quotes and new quotes from some of the living artists on this list. We hope that as a collection, these pieces offer a compelling journey through the history of the guitar in jazz. After all, the instrument resonates with listeners, as Herb Ellis explained in the July 16, 1964, issue of DownBeat: "The guitar is a naked instrument. ... I just think that as an instrument, there is more honesty perhaps in guitar playing." **DB**



Django Reinhardt



Charlie Christian



George Benson

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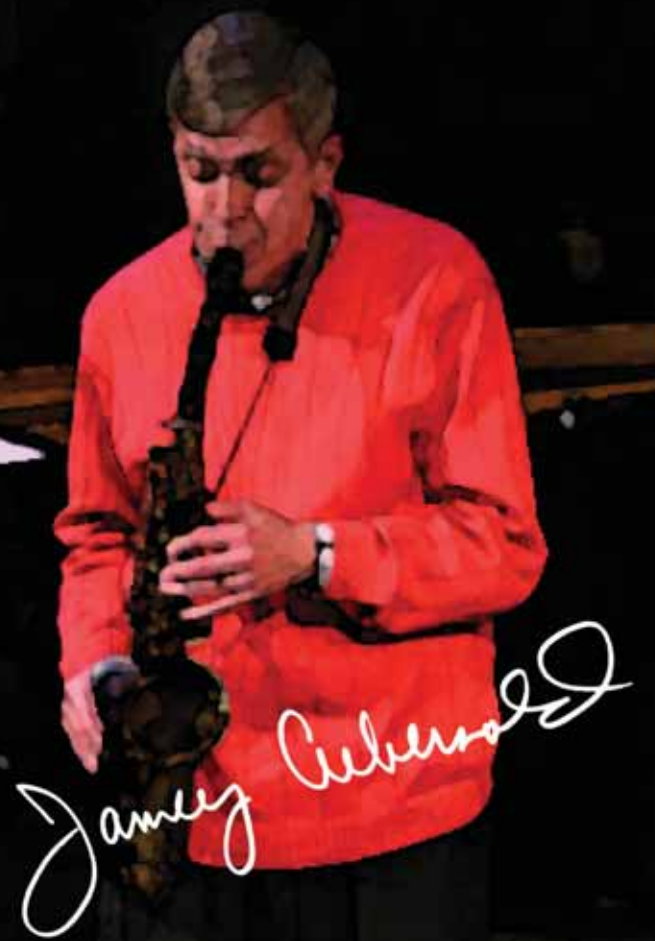
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## Chords & Discords

### Sold on Kelly

I had been tempted to purchase the Grace Kelly/Lee Konitz CD, *GRACEfulLEE*, every time I saw the ad for it, but just couldn't see spending money on a 15-year-old sax prodigy. Your review convinced me to take a chance ("Reviews," November '08). Not only does she hold her own with Konitz, Russell Malone and Rufus Reid, she's the star of the show. She's the greatest teenage sax player ever and an incredible improviser.

Toni Webb  
Santa Clara, Calif.

### Early Drummers Not Forgotten

We all want to add names to John McDonough's list of "forgotten" early drummers (November '08)—Ray Bauduc, for example. And there were good reasons why Cliff Leeman, Frank Carson and Maurice Purtill were never out of a gig. While McDonough's point—that musicians must study the history of their instrument—applies to all instruments, the drum set is special, as it has constantly evolved. What those early drummers did with lesser equipment has to be heard.

Bruce Morley  
Auckland, New Zealand

Regarding DownBeat's cover headline about Sid Catlett, Sonny Greer, Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, Dave Tough and Chick Webb: Isn't "unheralded legends" an oxymoron?

Jack Bowers  
Albuquerque

### Cleaver Heats Up Cruise

Thank you for the piece on Gerald Cleaver ("Players," January '09). I was on the Holland America Jazz Cruise and got to hear Cleaver several times with Jeremy Pelt's quintet. Cleaver's uncompromising hardcore jazz attitude was on full display.

Bill Benjamin  
Evanston, Ill.

### Women Saxophonists Deserve Mention

I was intrigued by the article on Greg Osby and his new label, Inner Circle Music ("The Beat," December '08). However, I was disappointed that of the artists on his roster, baritone saxophonist Lauren Sevian and tenor saxophonist Meilana Gillard were not mentioned. In an age where few record labels have female instrumentalists on their roster,



### Sonny's Tops

Nobody is more deserving than Sonny Rollins to win the DownBeat Readers Poll as Artist and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year (December '08). I was lucky to see him perform in Detroit last October. After the concert, Sonny sat patiently as a long line of fans greeted him. He signed autographs and chatted with all of the people. He is a great musician and, most importantly, a great human being.

Dennis Watson  
Detroit

this was an unfortunate oversight. Inclusion on Osby's roster reflects his dedication to finding new voices and his ability to judge a player the way players should all be judged: on the basis of how you sound. Not including these women's names in the article missed an opportunity to let your readers know about two talented saxophonists without discussing their gender or relegating them to the "women in jazz" sidelines.

Sarah Manning  
sarah@sarahmanningmusic.com

### Corrections

- » Percussionist Kevin Jones' name was misspelled in the review of TK Blue's *Follow The North Star* ("Reviews," December '08).
- » A quote about synthesizers in the article on Gétetchèw Mèkurya should have been attributed to Mèkurya's Ethiopian translator ("Players," January '09).
- » The photos in the Tomasz Stanko feature (October '08) did not show Stanko's Polish rhythm section of Marcin Wasilewski, Michal Miskiewicz and Slawomir Kurkiewicz, who we interviewed for the piece and of whom we intended to run photos. We mistakenly ran photos of another group with which Stanko performs—pianist Alexi Tuomarila, drummer Olavi Louhivuori and bassist Mats Eilertsen. DownBeat regrets the errors.

Have a chord or discord? E-mail us at editor@downbeat.com.



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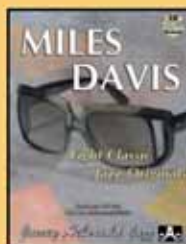
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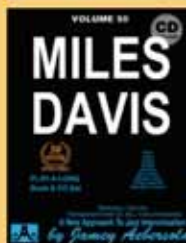


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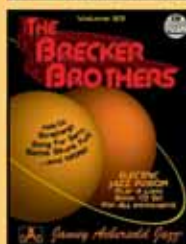
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14 Riffs

14 Backstage With ...  
Don Byron

19 The Archives  
February 23, 1967

19 European Scene

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Jon Irabagon  
Takes Top Monk  
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Jon Irabagon

Dee Dee Bridgewater (left), Cassandra Wilson,  
Joe Louis Walker, Keb' Mo' and B.B. King



masters, including David Sánchez, Greg Osby, Jane Ira Bloom, Jimmy Heath and Wayne Shorter.

Each artist possessed a unique approach. Israel-born Gilad Ronen had a verbose charge recalling David Liebman. Brooklyn-born Evan Schwam paid tribute to his mentor, Chico Hamilton, in an aching ballad. The rhythm section, featuring bassist Rodney Whitaker, drummer Carl Allen and pianist Geoffrey Keezer, acted as a pliant foil in each three-song set. Allen, now in his seventh year in the competition's house band, has picked up on indicators of success in the competition.

"The ones who play with us tend to do better," Allen said. "Those who use us as a playalong record don't tend to do as well."

For an organization whose name gets associated with maverick bebop, the decision to honor King at the Kodak may have seemed like an unusual choice, but it proved justified. Thanks to contributions to the Institute from the family that once owned the Dockery Farms plantation (the Mississippi landmark widely considered the geographical birthplace of the blues), the institute decided to honor a blues icon.

"We always showcase an American artist that has had an enormous influence on jazz," said Tom Carter, the president of the Monk Institute. King was born 20 miles from Dockery Farms in Indianola, Miss.

George Duke, the musical director for the evening, also saw a more urgent lesson in King's selection.

"The blues is such an important part of what I consider jazz to be," Duke said. "I've gone to colleges recently where I'll ask kids to play a 12-bar blues and they'll look at me like I'm kidding. Jazz is based on the blues. Even Bill Evans could play the blues."

The night's first half featured the three saxophone finalists: heady gospel from the second place winner, Baltimore's Tim Green, gorgeous bop from Texan Quamon Fowler, who took third place, and Irabagon's twirling Lee Konitz-like figures. On-the-spot interplay from an ebullient Dee Dee Bridgewater set a breakneck pace for the evening. Thelonious Monk International Composers Competition (sponsored by BMI) winner Sherisse Rogers' lush large-scale work, "Transitions," full of piquant colors, concluded the set.

The star power ramped up during the second set. Fronting a rhythm section of bassist John Patitucci, drummer Terri Lyne Carrington and Duke, a parade of celebrities rotated to pay tribute to King. Robert Cray and Joe Louis Walker teamed up with Kevin Eubanks for "Red House." Poncho Sanchez, Bridgewater and Shorter stormed through "Afro Blue." Keb' Mo' performed an unaccompanied "Walkin' Blues." Soon after, Cassandra Wilson brought the band out again in a magnificent reading of "Dust My Broom." After some words from Quincy Jones, King arrived on stage sitting in his throne as U2's Bono sang "When Love Comes To Town." Finally, the massive assemblage of star power—including Irabagon—joined together in a raucous rendition of "Let The Good Times Roll."

Irabagon walked away from his victory with a \$20,000 scholarship and a recording contract with Concord Records. He's already received critics' attention for his work with the unapologetically zany quartet Mostly Other People Do The Killing. While appreciative of the honor, Irabagon remained humble about his goals for the windfall.

"This is a good opportunity to start a new project and I have been wanting to do a more jazz-oriented record for a while," Irabagon said. "The way it's worked out for me as a musician, I like having all these different avenues of expression."

—Matthew Lurie

The Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition annually seeks to unearth and reward the industry's next big jazz star. Last fall's edition, held in Los Angeles for the second straight year, focused on the saxophone. Its star-studded gala concert at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre on Oct. 26, 2008, which also honored B.B. King, brought together musical genres and disparate sides of the music industry. Still, the clear winner was Brooklyn saxophonist Jon Irabagon, who claimed first place.

"I watched some of the guys after me at the semifinals and there were some amazing players there," Irabagon said afterward. "But as soon as it was over, I came back to doing the same gigs that I've been doing for the seven years since I've been in New York. But this is a great step. I'm thankful for it."

The October weekend began quietly with the semifinals, where judges and curiosity seekers nestled inside an auditorium on the University of California, Los Angeles campus. Introduced by rubato verbal monologues on the spirit of jazz from emcees T.S. Monk and Billy Dee Williams, the 12 semifinalists proceeded to give their all before the crowd. The contestants were charged with winning over different generations of saxophone

## Riffs

Terence Blanchard



JENNY BAGERT

**Spectrum Celebrated:** New York's Carnegie Hall will focus on African-American cultural achievements with a month-long festival in March entitled "Honor!" Terence Blanchard will headline the opening night concert on March 4 with Ron Carter, Roy Haynes and James Carter. Opera soprano Jessye Norman is curating the festival, which will also include events devoted to gospel, blues and classical music.

Details: [carnegiehall.org](http://carnegiehall.org)

**Hit the Road, Again:** Concord will reissue six discs of Ray Charles' post-1960 recordings for ABC and his own Tangerine label this year. Some vintage Charles recordings will also be available as digital downloads.

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

**Trumpet Ambiance:** Jon Hassell will trek through North America with his horn and laptop group from Feb. 5–14. His tour includes Columbus, Ohio; Knoxville, Tenn.; Philadelphia; Baltimore; New York; Minneapolis; Los Angeles; and Vancouver, British Columbia. Details: [jonhassell.com](http://jonhassell.com)

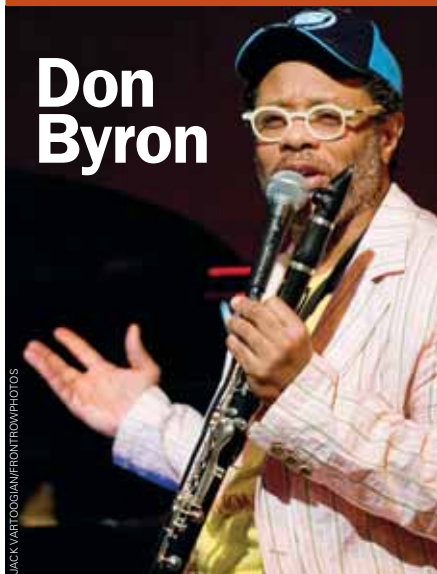
**Jazz Tech:** The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation received a \$1 million grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to fund jazz.Next. This program is intended to use technology to develop and support audiences for jazz. Details: [midatlanticarts.org](http://midatlanticarts.org)

**Bay Area Looks Back:** The Jazz Heritage Center in San Francisco celebrates the historic Fillmore neighborhood with the photographic exhibition "Harlem of the West ... Revisited." The show features shots of jazz musicians working in the area during the '40s and '50s. It will be on display through March 7. Details: [jazzheritagecenter.org](http://jazzheritagecenter.org)

## Backstage With ...

By Jennifer Odell

### Don Byron



JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

Don Byron celebrated his 50th birthday in style at New York's Jazz Standard this past November. He performed four different repertoires over the course of the week that cut across his musical past. He spoke between sets on the last night of his run, which looked to the music from his Latin-flavored *Music For Six Musicians* discs.

**You've said the difference between "tune-writing and composing" comes down to solving problems within the compositional structure of the piece. When you come back to older material, do you see new problems to solve?**

When you write, you make a problem for yourself and you solve it. I don't re-solve it when I come back to it. When I was doing this group, it was the main place where I was trying out things that had nothing to do with anything except Eddie Palmieri and Ray Barretto. It was my main compositional outlet in a period. Now I'm more of a writer, so some of the things that I'm playing are from other places. As I've expanded the kind of people I write for, I've added different flavors to my music, whereas this was a single-minded, strident thing.

**To what extent did your father, who played calypso, influence the material from the *Music For Six Musicians* albums?**

What's interesting is if you come from the English-speaking Caribbean, people leave you out of being part of the Latin pantheon and yet there are musicians in the English-speaking Caribbean who have a take on Caribbean music and what it is, and how

that fits together with Latin and Brazilian music. That's more my take. It's more pan-Caribbean than just Latin. My dad, even though he played on lots of calypso records, had Latin records, lots of jazz records too, but he seemed to see certain things as being from the same roots.

**How does the clarinet fit into tonight's Afro-Caribbean-minded lineup?**

The guy who led my father's band was a clarinet player and he was one of the great soloists I ever heard. When it was time for me to try to make a jazz clarinet style, I had a modally modern sound, but I also had Fats Green in mind. He could kick a sax or a trumpet player's ass with what he was playing. I also think about guys like Jimmy Hamilton. Other than Paul Gonsalves, he was probably the most modern-sounding player in the Duke Ellington band. A lot of things about playing modern lines are difficult. Just to look through a chord on the instrument when every register on the clarinet is a different fingering. With the sax and flute, or even the oboe, you get a few octaves of the same fingering, whereas with the clarinet you don't get any.

**Do you think the advance of digital music, which is a democratizing force, will lessen the degree to which critics seem to want to categorize your art?**

When I've created different kinds of music, people always have had something to say about it. They especially had something to say about the klezmer music. That's like a trade deficit between black musics and non-black musics. In terms of where the industry is going, the most disturbing thing is that all the bands that my kids listen to make records, then they give them away on the Internet. Their whole picture of the music business comes from a place of post-sampling where nothing belongs to anybody. They have no concept of ownership.

**What long-term projects are you thinking about?**

I have an opera that I'm in the process of writing, based on the book and movie *Gentleman's Agreement*. It's a story about ethnic identity, the thing that I'm always thinking about. Most people in jazz are used to writing short things and then the short things repeat. If you write long things then you have to be willing to be a dramatist.

DB



A man in a dark pinstriped suit and a patterned 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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## Oral History Project Offers Legends' Candid Tales

Despite current financial trends, some arts funding organizations are working to ensure that the history of jazz is recorded in the words of its architects. Living legends such as McCoy Tyner, Charlie Haden and Dave Brubeck are discussing their experiences coming up as artists and giving short performances for free to audiences in New York and Los Angeles as part of a new four-part series dubbed the Duke Jazz Talks.

The series kicked off on Oct. 29, 2008, with Tyner's appearance at the New York Public Library. His talk, and the ongoing series, is the result of a cooperation between the Grammy Museum, Recording Academy and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. A grant from the Doris Duke Foundation provided the main financial backing.

"The intention is to make the body of work we'll get from this whole series available to kids, students and to jazz fans so they'll be able to get history from the horse's mouth," said Grammy Museum Director Robert Santelli, who interviewed Tyner as part of the presentation. "Rather than have it interpreted, now you get to hear the legends speak for themselves about their music and their legacy."

This structure also allows some room for spontaneity. After discussing his experiences growing up as an artist, Tyner touched on his work with John Coltrane, speaking to a range of topics that would interest any student of music



McCoy Tyner and Robert Santelli

JORI KLEIN

history, no matter what their prior jazz background. He also performed a few moments of solo piano. But the most memorable part of the evening may have been a story told by Tyner and his brother Jarvis, a surprise guest, about how their mother was often frustrated to see more musicians than clients in her salon in Philadelphia when the Tyners were growing up.

The Duke Jazz Talks are in part the brainchild of Jacqueline Davis, the executive director of the New York Library for the Performing Arts, who had been looking for ways to incorporate jazz oral histories into the collection when she started speaking to the Duke Foundation about the idea for the series. All of the talks' video and audio recordings will be stored in the

library's music division archives and the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles.

"I got a call about three months after we wrote the grant proposal," Davis said. "They basically said, 'We're going to give you \$1 million.' At this point I wanted to go out and just celebrate. This was the opposite of what fundraising life is like for everything else."

Davis called on Santelli and Elizabeth Healey at the New York chapter of the Recording Academy to help bring in the artists, and the series was set relatively quickly. It continues in 2009, with appearances by Haden and Alan Broadbent at the Grammy Museum, and Bucky and John Pizzarelli and Brubeck in New York. —Jennifer Odell

## Brookmeyer Missouri Homecoming Features New Commission

On Feb. 18, a Missouri concert will mark the closing of a circle for trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, scholar/critic Dan Morgenstern and the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra (VJO).

The "We Always Swing" Jazz Series, in Columbia, Mo., will present a concert at the Missouri Theater that will feature the VJO performing Brookmeyer's newly commissioned and as-yet-untitled work. Brookmeyer will also serve as guest conductor of the VJO. On Feb. 17, Morgenstern will moderate two forums: a conversation with Brookmeyer and a look at the longevity of the VJO, which evolved from the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra (which included Brookmeyer) in the mid-'60s.

Brookmeyer was born in Kansas City, and he remembers the Columbia area well while he was honing his talents on valve trombone as a student in the late '40s.

"We used to drive over from Kansas City to

play dances at the University of Missouri in Columbia," Brookmeyer said. "This is a treat for me to not only get back home to Missouri, but to also have the chance to write a new composition for a band that had a big influence on me."

Morgenstern is equally happy to be involved with the Brookmeyer–VJO reunion.

"I was lucky enough to attend the first rehearsal of the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra at the end of 1965," Morgenstern said. "When I heard Bobby and everyone else at that rehearsal, it was astonishing. You could tell this band was going to be special. This reunion with Bobby and the orchestra is going to be special, as well."

The concert is funded through a \$30,000 matching grant award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which designated Brookmeyer as a Jazz Master in 2006.

—Terry Perkins



Bob Brookmeyer

JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS



SHORE FIRE MEDIA



## FAME Rebirth Reignites Muscle Shoals Sound

One of the touchstones during the glory years of '60s r&b was Muscle Shoals, Ala., where such luminaries as Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding laid down tracks at the town's FAME Studios. While the studio has always remained open, its founder, Rick Hall, has recently reactivated its house label, FAME Records, which had been shut since 1976.

Hall has picked up on the new industry landscape, as FAME will release downloadable songs from its MySpace site along with CDs.

"We need an outlet for young artists of today," Hall said. "In the last 25 years we've come full circle. It has become a singles market again—kids go in and download a hit. That's where we were when I was cutting Aretha Franklin and Otis Redding."

The label's initial release digs deeply into its catalog. Its compilation, *The Best Of Jimmy Hughes*, collects songs from an underrated soul singer who had a mid-'60s hit for the company with "Steal Away." FAME intends to release other archival material on disc and limited-edition vinyl, although staffers are still deciding on which artists to follow Hughes.

Though retired, Hughes, who still lives near Muscle Shoals, is excited about the release.

"It's a thrill to have it released," Hughes said. "It will be a thing to get my name back out there for people who remember me from years ago, and the youngsters, too. They've gotten away from this rap stuff for a while to listen to me."

FAME also stood out in the '60s because Hall and his staff did not yield to segregation and brought together black and white soul, country and rock musicians. Young blues- and rock-based artists who have signed to FAME recently say this tradition remains important. Guitarist Eric Erdman, whose funk-rock band The Ugli Stick will release its FAME debut in 2009, felt the decades of camaraderie when his group moved to Muscle Shoals from Mobile last year.

"I can tell a difference in our sound by rubbing shoulders with the old guard," Erdman said. "You get a little bit of funkiness from being around them."

—Aaron Cohen

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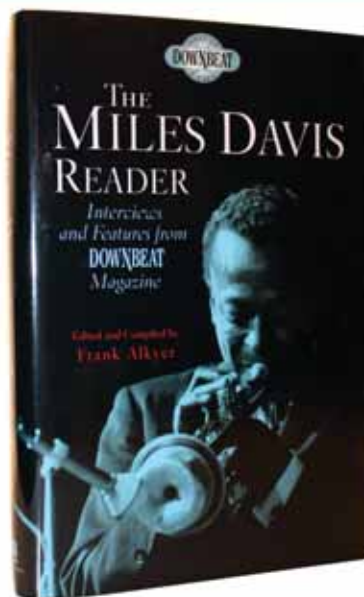
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# EUROPEAN SCENE

By Peter Margasak

Jazz's roots in Europe are strong. This column looks at the musicians, labels, venues, institutions and events moving the scene forward "across the pond." For questions, comments and news about European jazz, e-mail [europescene@downbeat.com](mailto:europescene@downbeat.com).

## Saxophonist Trzaska Creates Own Musical Home in Poland

Polish saxophonist Mikolaj Trzaska has been playing jazz for nearly two decades, but only recently has he found his place.

"I feel like everything started in the last five years," Trzaska, 42, said. "I was coming slowly to the core of this scene."

"This scene" refers to an international community of daring improvisers, and around five years ago Trzaska began to perform regularly outside of Poland, when he started working with Germany's Peter Brötzmann and Johannes Bauer and Chicago's Ken Vandermark. He recently made his first trip to the United States, touring the East Coast in a group called Magic, a new configuration with saxophonist Joe McPhee's Trio X, as well as visiting Chicago, where he was part of the Umbrella Festival.

Trzaska's journey to this global stage has been circuitous. It started when he was in college in his native Gdansk, where he studied painting in the early '80s. There, he discovered John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman records a couple of years before Poland broke free of Soviet control, and music from the West became more accessible. Still, Poland was perhaps the most tolerant and culturally supportive nation in Communist Eastern Europe, pro-

ducing important figures like Krzysztof Komeda and Tomasz Stanko. Yet by the late '80s, when Trzaska helped start a group called Milosc, jazz in Poland had calcified.

"Polish jazz musicians used to be busy, just playing within the country," Trzaska said. "Playing in culture houses, clubs and schools, those musicians kept the power. But it had stopped being art. It was just a job."

He and his cohorts began referring to their music as "yass" to symbolize their opposition to Poland's jazz mainstream. Yet by the end of the '90s, Trzaska had become disillusioned with his own group's output.

Eventually, younger Polish bassist Marcin Oles and his brother and drummer Bartlomiej Brat Oles inspired Trzaska; they made several records together, which revealed a more spacious and freer sound than his work with Milosc. All of the albums were released by Kilogram, an imprint that Trzaska and his wife, Ola, launched in 2001.

"I had some frustration and depression,"



Mikolaj Trzaska

Trzaska said. "Nobody in Poland was interested in releasing my things, so I was pissed off. I realized that I had to do it myself."

The label has issued 15 titles, including some records with players like drummer Paul Wirkus and guitarist Tomasz Gwincinski playing with Trzaska.

Working with the Oles brothers was a stepping stone for Trzaska, but the breakthrough came a couple of years later when he played at a festival in

Sweden and met Danish bassist Peter Friis Nielsen—a fierce Brötzmann collaborator—along with drummer Peeter Uuskyla. They began working together in a fully improvised setting. The slew of recordings Trzaska has released since then have not only displayed his growing confidence and strength, but also his interest in collaborating with poets and exploring his Jewish roots. *Shofar*, an excellent recording with guitarist Raphael Roginski and drummer Macio Moretti, finds the trio interpreting pieces from Moshe Beregovsky's book of collected Jewish melodies and working with electronics. **DB**

## The ARCHIVES

February 23,  
1967

### The Modulated World of Gil Evans

By Leonard Feather

"I never played scales and exercises in my life," Gil Evans said. "The thing with me is I have a peculiar way of developing. This is the emotional, nonintellectual part of me. The development never ends, because the quest is always there. I can sit down at the piano and just look at it for hours."

### A Matter of Inspiration and Interpretation

By Stanley Dance

"The things that provide inspiration are always those that

nobody—by which I mean the public—ever considers," Billy Strayhorn said. "The public always considers that people who are inspired go off in a fine frenzy, tear their hair and all that business, and then come up with the 'Fifth Symphony.' Actually, inspiration comes from the simplest kind of thing, like watching a bird fly. That's only the beginning. Then the work begins."

### The Youngest 40-Year-Old in Jazz

By Valerie Wilmer

"I've had soul roots and I've also had training in classical instru-



mentation," Tom McIntosh said. "I feel close to both. If I want to express myself truly, I don't feel

that the classical side should say, 'You can't do this.' It is equally wrong for the jazz side to say, 'You can't express that in that way.'"

### The Well-Rounded Writer

By Helen Dance

"Once in a while I'd hear a good conga drummer in Havana and think, 'They're swinging,' and wonder why they didn't try that with the horns, too," Chico O'Farrill said. "I'd wonder why they weren't influenced by all the jazz they heard. But in the end, that's what happened. They were." **DB**





## Bottom Ends Soar, Flamenco Woven in at Berlin Fest

Berlin's weather was gray, but the music at its 44th annual JazzFest Berlin was as sunny as the yellow linden trees and buses that line its avenues. In his second stint as artistic director of the event, Nils Landgren, a Swedish trombonist of broad tastes and dry wit, pursued themes that were both clear (trombonists, Swedish bands, wide-ranging styles) and subtle (venerable reedmen, tributes and blooming bass clefs).

Spiritual forefathers were honored in a big way. Saxophonist Maceo Parker mostly sang Ray Charles' hits, including a Latin take on "What'd I Say." His backing group, the WDR Big Band, blazed through conductor Mike Abene's hard-sock charts with Frank Chastenier's wild-eyed B-3 rumbings. Another alto player, David Sanborn, kudoed Hank Crawford with five horns and a rhythm section. The evergreen crowd-pleaser lifted his searing vibrato to the roof on "Tin Tin Deo" and "Beale Street Blues." Conductor Vince Mendoza reimagined Gil Evans/Miles Davis with cameos for Nguyễn Lê's sinuous guitar and Markus



Richard Galliano

DETLEV SCHILKE

Stockhausen's polished trumpet.

Trombonists cranked aplenty. Eight played one show, including New Orleans' fest-stopping Bonerama. Roswell Rudd's Trombone Tribe, with Landgren standing in on his signa-

ture red Yamaha, featured tuba players Bob Stewart and Matt Perrine bottoming all with oomph. When Bonerama called Rudd out from the wings to play his "Bone Again" and "Muskrat Ramble," the 1,000-seat Festspiele



Mats Gustafsson

BJORN WANHATALO

## Off the Radar, Umeå Turns 40

While seasoned North American jazz festivals have incurred fanfare about their recent milestones, the Umeå Jazz Festival, in a culturally rich and growing university town in the northerly Norrlands part of Sweden, celebrated its 40th anniversary from Oct. 22–26, 2008. The event affirmed what makes Umeå a significant stop on the European festival circuit, even if its location keeps it apart from the regular touring grid.

The festival is a fine place to check in on the shifting landscape of jazz from Scandinavia, and, by extension, the rest of Europe. Plenty of the best music came from this part of the continent, and one highlight was homegrown. Umeå-born saxophonist Mats Gustafsson appeared in several settings as artist-in-residence. His new group Swedish AZZ was a distinctive marvel, a mixture of free playing, vintage sounds (in real time and supplied by and deconstructed on turntable), and

musical notions between inside and outside. For sheer cathartic intensity, the festival's potent post-free-jazz apogee came when Gustafsson—with baritone sax wailing, wooing and splitting tonal differences—engaged in a free-improvisational power trio with German fire-eater tenor saxophonist Peter Brötzmann and dynamic drummer Paal Nilssen-Love.

Inside-outside experiments made some of the stronger impressions. The witty Monk's Casino, featuring pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach and the flexible German trumpeter Axel Dörner, took its cues from Thelonious Monk's innate levity and avant-garde leanings. From Finland, Mikko Innanen and Innkvisitio proved to be one of the more dazzling young bands around: funny, funky and risk-taking, with an expressive secret weapon in wildly inventive keyboardist Seppo Kantonen, who mixed painterly timbres and unpredictable ideas on synthesizer. He is one of the more fascinating

Hall soared in riotous fun. Rudd and Landgren also blared a high-steppin' romp of Fats Domino's "I'm Walkin'."

Buffered between trombone bands, Bobo Stenson whittled a brilliant piano set with bassist Anders Jormin and skittering drummer Jon Fält. Other Swedes included slow-burn fusion quartet Pling (led by Lina Nyberg, who meticulously enunciated her playful English lyrics) and wobbly goth duo Wildbirds & Peacedrums. Edgy Berliners packed cozy club A-Trane to see Arne Jansen's sleek guitar trio and Soap, a fun foursome with a rapper.

Flamenco strains snaked in and out of the fest. Avishai Cohen's bass and voice cut Sephardic arabesques while Shai Maestro's piano dovetailed fleet tracery; Itamar Doari's feathery cymbals and hand-drumming wrought uneasy peace. During his set, Lê conjured Miles Davis as matador on "Blues For Pablo." James Genus filigreed a flamenco electric bass solo on "17" in Herbie Hancock's ear-tweaking caper. French accordionist Richard Galliano's Mediterranean-tinged tango—forged in alliance with pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba, bassist George Mraz and drummer Clarence Penn—wove old and new-world threads in exquisite tapestry. Their set featured the Gypsy waltz "Laurita" along with the stylish neo-bop of "Love Day."

At club Quasimodo, elder saxophonists relived their histories on different nights throughout the fest. Bennie Maupin intoned ruminative bass clarinet and whale song, Ronnie Cuber blew craggy baritone and Peter Brötzmann squeezed tart noise over Michael Wertmüller's pelting drum kit. But of the many tenor veterans in concert, Heinz Sauer in particular sounded heroic with pianist Bob Degen. —Fred Bouchard

and wilier keyboardists on his side of the Atlantic. His open approach and appreciation of space sometimes resembled Craig Taborn or Joe Zawinul at his most angular, but with a dry Finnish sense of humor.

Swedish pianist Esbjörn Svensson's death in June was felt particularly hard in his homeland. In Svensson's memory, saxophonist Joakim Milder wrote the poignant orchestra-choral-jazz piece "Mysterious Ways." An example of the tricky business of mixing genres and ensembles, Milder's piece proved sophisticated in design, and poignant in its emotional palette.

A sense of geographical and stylistic balance was in order with a list of strong American visitors, including the Dave Holland Quintet, Joshua Redman's empathic trio and the best American act deserving wider recording—Henry Threadgill's Zooid. Threadgill projected a creative voice and vision all his own. His intricate-yet-flowing music served as brainy puzzler and visceral listening experience, at some personally devised crossroads of European art tradition, Africa, New York, Chicago and New Orleans. —Josef Woodard



## Chicago Musicians Build Global Showcase at Umbrella Fest

Michiel Braam

MICHAEL JACKSON

In its third year, Chicago's Umbrella Festival has sprouted into one of the strongest events in the city's cutting-edge music calendar, featuring vibrant local musicians and challenging combinations of international visitors.

In a collaboration with the city's Department of Cultural Affairs' Michael Orlove, the Umbrella cartel of bookers from the Hungry Brain (cornetist Josh Berman and drummer Mike Reed), The Hideout (Mitch Cocanig), Elastic (saxophonist Dave Rempis) and the Velvet Lounge (saxophonist Fred Anderson) were on a major roll with this year's improv summit. The Chicago Cultural Center hosted "European Jazz Meets Chicago" on opening night, Nov. 5, 2008, presenting six concerts throughout the building. With backing from the Polish, Italian, Austrian, Dutch and Swiss consulates and the German cultural organization Goethe Institute, Austrian pianist Elisabeth Harnik and Polish saxist Mikolaj Trzaska were introduced to Chicago. The city also became reacquainted with Italian power trio ZÜ and the brilliant pianist Michiel Braam, bassist Wilbert de Jood and drummer Michael Vatcher.

At the small performance space Elastic two nights later, Braam collaborated with Chicago talent. The hometown musicians augmented his Dutch band Bik-Bent-Braam. Rempis, trombonist Jeb Bishop and trumpeter Jamie Branch stood out in this 13-member ensemble that employed multifarious cues—some graphic, some text-based and some notated—to direct the sonic flow. Braam had a diffident air, conserving bombast for his lively colorations, which ran the gamut from one-fingered glissandi the length of the keyboard to a battery of traditional and non-traditional hops and skips. Vatcher is the wittiest of drummers, always listening, ego in check. Capable of swinging mightily when required, as during nostalgic passages in Braam's compositions, he preferred to tickle the drum heads with long skinny chopsticks, carefully commenting on fiery play from the Chicagoans. The collaboration was a rousing success with the Elastic audience, which

was also treated to a solo set from festival artist-in-residence saxophonist John Tchicai.

Tchicai, currently living in southern France, had not visited Chicago since 2002, but made himself at home with the local scene, pulling off a fine finale on Nov. 9 at the Hungry Brain with a septet uniting flautist Nicole Mitchell, guitarist Mary Halvorson, bassist Josh Abrams and baritone saxophonist Aaron Getsug. Tchicai encouraged his ensemble to sing and make other vocal exclamations. This, combined with soulful modal shadings that recalled his association with John Coltrane, made for a varied presentation that transcended the room. It climaxed a strong bill that included cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum's sextet and flame-throwing multireedist Mars Williams with bassist Brian Sandstrom, drummer Steve Hunt and synth scientist Jim Baker. A strategist more than full-bore blower, Tchicai adjusted his solos at Elastic in the absence of backing tapes he had planned to play against. He stood professorially and threaded his way through disguised and undisguised Thelonious Monk compositions.

Coincidentally, German improv godfather Alexander von Schlippenbach chose to encore his solo piano set at the Velvet Lounge three nights earlier with Monk explorations, including a marvelous sprint through "Trinkle Tinkle." Schlippenbach's longterm duo with drummer Paul Lovens also preceded a storming set from ZÜ at the Cultural Center, which married Jacopo Battaglia and Massimo Pupillo's drum-'n'-bass breakbeats with processed textures from Luca Mai's baritone sax.

Even with the infusion of blood and ideas from Europe at the Velvet, a crack Chicago quintet led by Berman, with drummer Frank Rosaly and vibist Jason Adasiewicz, was just as salient. Berman's offerings were an intelligent cross dressing of the vintage and contemporary: He and saxophonist Keefe Jackson poised lyricism and texture, notated passages and freeplay, a juxtaposition that this increasingly inclusive festival readily permits.

—Michael Jackson



## Clifton Anderson Second Step Forward

Trombonist Clifton Anderson's latest disc, *Decade* (Doxy), denotes the approximate timespan that separates the recording from *Landmarks* (Milestone), his 1997 debut as a leader. The grooves are crisp, the musicianship pristine, the attitude interactive and the tunes contain melodies and harmonic challenges that prompt the band's strong solos. The 51-year-old musician's warm, capacious tone and forceful, well-constructed lines bespeak his roots in the J.J. Johnson school.

All of which begs the question: Why did Anderson—best known to the jazz public as the regular front-line partner of his uncle Sonny Rollins for much of the last quarter-century—wait so long to take his second step toward building a solo career of his own?

"It wasn't my original intention," Anderson said. "*Landmarks* was played fairly regularly on the radio and the critics thought it was good, so I assumed I'd be able to get a gig. But I couldn't get arrested—I was offered jobs for such bad money that I couldn't accept, if only because I wanted to be able to pay my sidemen something. Club owners would say, 'Oh, that's like Sonny Rollins' band without Sonny,' as if that was a negative thing."

Anderson acknowledges his debt to "the way Sonny applies calypso into jazz." But *Decade* represents his own perspective, honed through three decades of active participation in New York's various scenes. A 1978 graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he backed such calypso stars as The Mighty Sparrow, was primary soloist in Guilherme Franco's seven-drum Brazilian unit and played lead trombone in Broadway shows and classical orchestras. All the while, he devoted himself to hardcore jazz, imbibing the freedom principle as articulated at Sam Rivers' Studio Rivbea and in Brooklyn at Reggie Workman's The Muse, alongside learning the lexicon of bebop at Barry Harris' Jazz Cultural Theater and in Slide Hampton's World of Trombones.

"A lot of things were going on," Anderson said. "There was camaraderie and openness—you could stand next to master musicians. I'd hang out at Walter Booker's Boogie-Woogie Studios, where people like Herbie Hancock went in and out, and you could walk into the back of the Village Vanguard any time. It was much different than today, where if you can play somebody's solo or do certain aspects of what someone has done well, you're rewarded. Musicians were interested in what they could come up with to make them unique from one another, and they valued that uniqueness."

Anderson has drawn on that ethos in fulfilling his front-line duties with his uncle, who hired his sister's son in 1983, 19 years after giving him his



MARK SHELDON

first trombone and a decade after first inviting him to attend rehearsals.

"Sonny likes everything to be intuitive," Anderson said. "Rarely are there cues on stage. Especially when I first started working with him, wherever he went is where you'd go—you had to be ready to follow him at the drop of a hat, which is demanding. One night at the Bottom Line, he started playing tunes we hadn't rehearsed, and as soon as we'd figure out what key he was in, he'd go to the bridge of another song. That's what he felt like doing, but he didn't do it to mess us up. He just wanted to create something.

"He feeds me information by playing it," he continued. "Obviously, I don't have Sonny's technical ability or vocabulary, but at least I've developed a sound capability and energy to be able to hang with him. When he wants to create a musical color, I can help."

Anderson, who doubles as managing director of Doxy, Rollins' imprint, is booking 2009 engagements to support *Decade*. But he anticipates that for the indefinite future, he will continue navigating the highwire with Rollins before large audiences.

"Since Sonny works so steadily, I didn't have to be concerned with survival," he said. "I could use the time to get the other parts of the business together, to play next to my uncle, and observe him and learn from him—and also help look out for him. He's one of the greatest role models any musician could have."  
—Ted Panken

## Pete Zimmer Self-Contained Early Riser

Pete Zimmer took a crucial step at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston when he agreed to an early morning time slot for independent study. This attitude impressed his instructor, tenor saxophonist George Garzone, who began using the young drummer on gigs, and continues to do so a decade later in New York.

“The thing that made me realize that he was going to make it,” Garzone said, “was that he was willing to get up for 8 a.m. lessons. I thought, ‘This guy’s got balls.’”

Zimmer has lived up to his teacher’s evaluation. Since moving to New York in 2001, he has self-released four albums that feature himself with other rising stars. Along with building a profile as a bandleader and owner of the Tippin’ label, Zimmer remains true to the hard-bop tradition.

“Just the word bop—I don’t know if it scares people, but it sounds older,” Zimmer, 31, said shortly after releasing the album *Chillin’ Live @ Jazz Factory*. “As much as the music has been progressing—and as much as I respect that—in a lot of ways it has confused the audience. And it’s put the industry in a different direction than maybe myself and a lot of other people would like to see it go.”

Zimmer, who grew up outside Milwaukee, continues to follow the blueprint he sketched before recording his first album, *Common Man*, in 2004. He looked to standard bearers like Miles Davis and Art Blakey for inspiration, but also wanted to reflect more contemporary developments.

“We were playing fresh material while still keeping in that tradition,” Zimmer said. “I attempted to create something that could be appreciated by others besides jazz musicians or jazz aficionados.”

*Chillin’*, recorded at a now-defunct club in Louisville, Ky., represents a departure from Zimmer’s high-octane quintet albums that include tenor



ANDREW LEPEY

saxophonists Joel Frahm and Garzone, and trumpeter Michael Rodriguez. The relaxed outing spotlights a single horn, trumpeter Jeremy Pelt. Israeli guitarist Avi Rothbard replaces the pianists who perform in Zimmer’s other groups. Zimmer’s light touch on his kit’s two ride cymbals and knack for blending into the ensemble are prominent. “Some drummers can feel like a lead weight and Zimmer feels more like a tap dancer,” said Frahm, who has worked with Zimmer since 2001.

Zimmer attributes his initiative in part to a seminar that Chamber Music America sponsored in 2003. One of the speakers urged artists to play a more active role in managing their careers. The seminar convinced Zimmer to release his first album independently.

“With most artists, when there’s an excitement or a buzz, initially it comes from the artists themselves,” Zimmer said. “If artists are excited about their music, they can do a lot on their own.” —Eric Fine

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## Bill Stewart Orchestral Strategist

Bill Stewart paused briefly when absorbing a question. He then gave a paced, methodical response that didn't so much react to the query as study it. He teased out its implications and made certain that it had been fully explored.

He met even a relatively simple scenario regarding whether he would prefer to work more as a leader with an extensive analysis of how bandleading carries added responsibilities and distractions from the music. Finally, he said, "I would like to increase my work as a leader."

While the drummer's reflexes behind the kit are quicker, a similar process goes on when Stewart performs. He is an exacting architect of rhythm, providing sturdy support but also constructing a graceful façade to comfortably house his bandmates' efforts. That approach has attracted a number of artists who recognize how Stewart enhances their sound, including Joe Lovano, Chris Potter and John Scofield.

On *Incandescence* (Pirouet), Stewart's second CD with his trio of organist Larry Goldings and pianist Kevin Hays, he offers nine tunes that use his analytical powers to find myriad ways to combine the two keyboards.

"I was thinking of new instrumentations to write for," Stewart said. "I thought two keyboards would be interesting because there's a lot of notes. You could write almost orchestrally."

Each track on *Incandescence* is like a different proposition for the keyboardists. He alternately has them play at odds and in unison, engaging in an airy tug-of-war or slinking into a mutated organ-trio

groove, weaving delicately around one another or butting heads and reveling in the ensuing sparks. Stewart acts as an artistic grammarian, punctuating so the others' statements take on additional depth and new meanings.

Stewart's extensive work with Hays and Goldings has been a continuous source of inspiration.

"It's more about me feeling comfortable with the musicians than the instrumentation," Stewart said. "I'm comfortable playing with Kevin and Larry rhythmically. If it's supposed to swing they can do that, and if it's something else rhythmically they can usually grasp that, too."

By his own estimation, 98 percent of Stewart's work has been as a sideman. With this experience, he should have picked up a few pointers by now in how to successfully lead. "I've always felt most comfortable as a sideman when I could bring my own musical personality to the table," he said. "If I'm leading a band, I try to set up the music so the musicians can do that. If I write a set of music and have another band play it, I would expect it to sound different."

Stewart gives equal credit to Hays and Goldings for shaping this group's personality.

"They both have good ears for harmony, so I could write unusual harmonies and they can improvise and expand upon them. We did a couple of short European tours and the music grew as they got more comfortable and stretched it out. I was impressed with their ability to expand on what I had written and actually make it sound better than it would have—or maybe even should have." —Shaun Brady

## Vince Mendoza Blue Tones

Vince Mendoza challenged himself to respond to visual art recently when he created music based on a painting by modern German artist Ernst Wilhelm Nay. The process also made the composer/arranger think more about the color blue. The result is *Blauklang* (ACT), which is the third in a trilogy of Mendoza's large-ensemble recordings dating back to the early '90s.



VOLKER BEUHAUSEN

"I was approached to do this project with the idea of the blue theme, which was a gallery theme for a collection of blue paintings," said Mendoza, whose showplace for the premiere and recording of *Blauklang* was the Traumzeit Festival in Duisburg, Germany. Performed with a slide show of Nay's "rhythmic pictures" from the early '50s, *Blauklang* is defined as "blue sound" and refers to the relationship between music and fine art. "The idea of 'blue' became a distraction," Mendoza said. "I found more initial inspiration from the paintings themselves: What's the feeling of blue and what's evocative of the color? I found the music works separately apart from the art. I didn't want the CD to be so much an art collection, but a selection of musics that represent a feeling.

"I started to work based on visual cues," he continued. "The inspiring element came when I was responding to the color blue inside the painting and not just to the idea of blue; the feeling of blue, the era of Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*, his alliance with Gil Evans and what that meant."

Known for his writing and arranging for artists in and outside of jazz (including Joni Mitchell, Elvis Costello and Björk as well as Joe Zawinul, Dianne Reeves, and Michael and Randy Brecker), Mendoza wrote *Blauklang*, "not as a big band project, but as chamber music, with a mixed ensemble of winds and string quartet, rhythm section, no piano," he said. "The main thing for me is having different combinations of instruments in the context of jazz arrangements, with jazz soloists as the core, other instruments as a balance."

A self-described "composer who arranges, not an arranger who composes," Mendoza wrote *Blauklang* in relation to two other works that form the first part of his "trilogy," the big-band recordings *Sketches* and *Jazzpaña*. But Mendoza is not keen on this formulation.

"This whole 'trilogy' thing was manufactured," he said. "It's a trilogy from the standpoint that there was a project, stemming from a radio production."

Mendoza's consistent philosophy of composition and arranging also indicates how his disparate works sound cohesive.

"Every piece of music has a different demand to it," he said. "In this set there was a programmatic element, the sounds, instruments, what it would feel like and sound like, the method for improvisors. With everything I go through a period of discovery, taking music apart and putting it back together. Instrumental expectations for 'Blues For Pablo' and 'All Blues' required that I take them apart, think what made sense and get rid of things. Those pieces have forms, with a thread of the compositional element running throughout.

"I tried to work them into the sounds of the other compositions, making them in the context of the ensemble," he continued. "'Blues For Pablo' was difficult because it was for a different ensemble, and I had to filter out blues and big-band elements since this project, oddly enough, was not about the blues. This was my point of view of what I thought to de-bluesify the song. It wouldn't have been honest otherwise." —John Ephland

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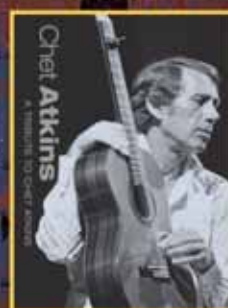
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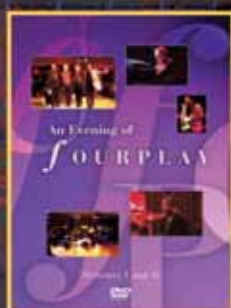
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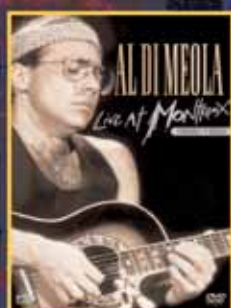
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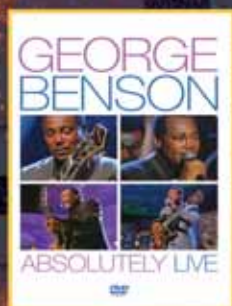
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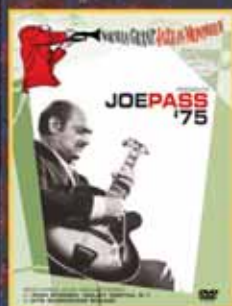
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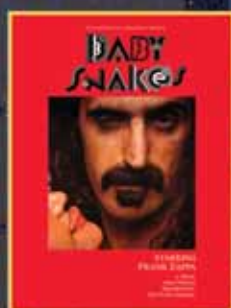
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# 75

## The Six-String Sensations Who Have Innovated Improvised Music

By Ed Enright

Only five guitarists are currently in the DownBeat Hall of Fame—Charlie Christian, Django Reinhardt, Wes Montgomery, Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa. A small list, but one that shows the wide-ranging influence that the guitar has had on music since it made its way into jazz in the 1920s.

In the first in a series of articles to celebrate DownBeat's 75th anniversary, we shine the spotlight on 75 of the all-time great jazz, blues and beyond guitarists who have graced the pages of the magazine. We talked to a number of the living masters, and combed our archives for quotes and background information on the artists who have given the most popular instrument in the world a place in DownBeat.

# GREAT GUITARISTS



## Django Reinhardt

The magnificent Belgian-born Gypsy Reinhardt was more than a great instrumentalist. He became the embodiment of European jazz in the 1930s. Reinhardt's virtuosity enabled him to accomplish feats of incredible dexterity on the frets, and the scope of his technique was even more incredible when one considers that he played with a maimed left hand. Unrivaled in his expressiveness and originality, Reinhardt played with emotional intensity and uninhibited romanticism. "Reinhardt had an infallible ear," fellow guitarist Charlie Byrd once said (DownBeat, July 14, 1966). "He was famous for his explosive attack and scintillating passages of single notes. ... It would take years of concentrated study to play like Reinhardt."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

## EARLY PIONEERS



Freddie Green

JAN PERSSON

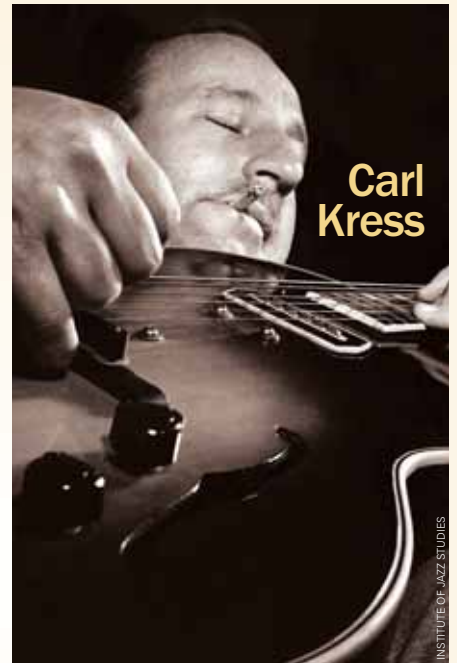
Green was invaluable in giving the Count Basie band an airy and elastic rhythmic foundation that stood in contrast to other big bands of the day. He joined Basie in 1937 and stayed with the big band leader for nearly five decades. "With Basie, Freddie Green is the pulse of that band," Barney Kessel said in DownBeat (July 14, 1966). "He is the steady force. [Guitarist] Irving Ashby once said: 'Rhythm guitar is like vanilla extract in a cake. You can't taste it when it's there; but you know when it's left out.'"



Eddie Lang

INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES

Lang wrote the book on jazz guitar in the 1920s. His flexible rhythm guitar sparkled with passing tones, chromatic sequences and single-string fills. He played with a firm tone that added harmonic flesh and rhythmic bones to ensembles led by Red Nichols, Frankie Trumbauer, the Dorsey Brothers, Paul Whiteman and Bing Crosby. His tendency was toward an even, four-to-the-bar pulse, often with a new chord position, inversion or alteration on every downstroke of the strings.



Carl Kress

INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES

A pioneer rhythm guitarist in the 1920s, Kress developed into a swinger playing with top ensembles of the era, including those led by Paul Whiteman, Red Nichols, Miff Mole and the Dorsey brothers. His rhythmic and directly stated chorded solos evolved out of Eddie Lang's approach to combine harmony and melody simultaneously. A former banjoist, Kress played guitar with a gentle touch and a bouncy drive that horn players and soloists found inspiring. He relied on a tuning method that allowed him to play chord voicings you can't get on the regular Spanish guitar.





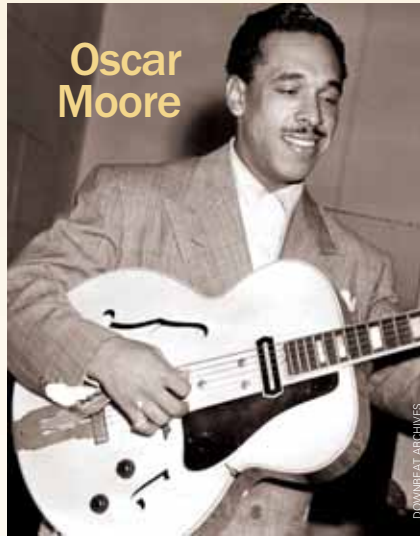
Durham played guitar and trombone throughout his career. He also contributed significantly to the art of early jazz arranging, writing and charting for bandleaders like Bennie Moten, Count Basie, Willie Bryant, Glenn Miller, Harry James and Artie Shaw. An early experimenter with guitar amplification, he was a direct influence on Charlie Christian. Durham was the first to make a recording on electric guitar as a member of the Kansas City Five in 1938. During the 1940s, he worked as musical director for the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. In 1969, after years of freelance arranging, he joined with former Basie-mate Buddy Tate and resumed his playing career.



A banjoist who switched to guitar early in his career, Van Eps emerged in the late 1920s and early '30s playing alongside the likes of Eddie Lang, Benny Goodman and Ray Noble. Known as a chordal specialist, Van Eps' distinctive approach to the instrument influenced every generation of jazz guitarists to follow. "I like to think of it as a harmonic line, rather than as block chords, because block chords rule out the idea of any kind of continuity with contrapuntal effect," he said in *DownBeat* (July 16, 1964). "The guitar is a piano that you hold in your lap."



One of the few jazz guitarists to never take a solo, Condon made his presence felt whenever he picked up his four-string guitar. Based in Chicago, he became associated with members of the Austin High Gang in the 1920s, and later played with Gene Krupa, Red McKenzie and Bix Beiderbecke. Condon's metronomically regular pulse and superb swing became a model of what a guitar should contribute to a proper "hot" rhythm section. A man of many facets and a dry wit, Condon was also known as a club owner, a&r man, promoter, author and TV host.



Nat Cole's original trio from 1937-'47 had an exceptional talent in guitarist Moore, who slipped into relative obscurity after winning the *DownBeat* Readers Poll for four straight years (1945-'48). Strongly influenced by Charlie Christian, Moore played bebop-like single-note solos with a bright, rounded, clean tone. In addition to his work with Cole, Moore performed and recorded with the likes of Lionel Hampton, Art Tatum and Lester Young. "What he got out of the instrument as a whole impressed me—not only in single-line solos but in chords, melody and harmony," Kenny Burrell said in *DownBeat* (Aug. 1, 1963). "He had one of the greatest harmonic conceptions of any guitarist I've ever heard."



A veteran of radio, TV and the musical instruments industry, Paul made significant contributions to jazz guitar before turning his attention toward recording pop hits and inventing early solid-body electric guitars. Influenced by Django Reinhardt, he plays jazz with a mercurial, hard-swinging style that features rapid solo lines and expressive bent notes. The 93-year-old Paul can still be heard to this day on Monday nights at the Iridium in New York. "The guitar is a great bartender, psychiatrist... real therapy," Paul said in *DownBeat* (March 1997). "If I feel depressed, I'll pick it up and it will say, 'Look, I've got something new for you, something to accomplish.'"

## INVENTING BOP



Bauer established himself in the big bands of Woody Herman and Benny Goodman. He went on to join Lennie Tristano's band from 1946-'49, where he graduated from rhythm guitar to playing advanced bebop. Bauer's playing continued to advance in the 1950s and '60s with Lee Konitz, a pairing that allowed him to stretch out into new areas of cool and the avant-garde. He founded the Billy Bauer Guitar School in 1970, and taught lessons until shortly before he died in 2005.



### Tiny Grimes

Grimes sparked rhythm sections with his infectious beat. Whether playing blues or bop, laying down a four-beat swing pattern or executing perfectly timed

riffs and fills, he drove bands and pushed soloists with his four-stringed axe. The fleet-fingered Grimes had the chops to keep up with anyone, including Art Tatum, whose trio he joined in 1943. His style was straightforward, his phrases well shaped and styled with subtle inflections.



The self-taught Kessel first attracted attention as a member of big bands led by Artie Shaw and Charlie Barnet, and later established himself as a small-group bopper with Oscar Peterson's trio. He possessed a smooth and immaculate technique that made him an acclaimed jazz artist as well as a successful studio musician. "I'm not playing what you might call traditional music, nor am I playing 'space' music," he said in *DownBeat* (July 14, 1966). "It's the result of playing for 30 years, keeping my eyes and my ears open and continuing to evolve through all this time."



## Charlie Christian

Christian drastically changed the course of jazz guitar during his all-too-short career. Influenced by Lester Young, he approached the guitar as a solo instrument, focusing on linear development rather than chord placement and voicings like his predecessors. He pioneered the use of electric amplification, a radical concept that made jaws drop when he was installed in the Benny Goodman Sextet in 1939. Christian's sweeping impact on jazz goes far beyond the guitar world: He played an important role in the invention of bebop with Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and Kenny Clarke. He died of tuberculosis in 1942 at age 23.



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

## Herb Ellis



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Texan Ellis established himself as one of the most technically accomplished players in Oscar Peterson's trio in the mid-1950s, and later as an accompanist to Ella Fitzgerald. In the early '70s, after a long stint as a Los Angeles studio musician, Ellis teamed up with Joe Pass; the duo recorded several important albums together and formed the group Great Guitars with Charlie Byrd and Barney Kessel. He venerates the memory and work of Charlie Christian, whose swinging style became the basis of his own inventive melodic and harmonic concept. "Guitar is a naked instrument," he said in DownBeat (July 16, 1964). "Other guitar players not only can hear you playing it—then can see what you're doing. ... I just think that as an instrument, there is more honesty perhaps in guitar playing."

## Jimmy Raney



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Raney was one of the first to grasp the lyricism of Charlie Parker and turn it into long, flowing lines of his own. His flawless technique allowed him to apply the most sophisticated bebop concepts to the guitar. A strong and clean player, Raney kept the volume down on his amp. "I like pure sound, not anything twangy," he said in DownBeat (July 20, 1961). He was known for his work on several Stan Getz recordings; he first played with the saxophonist in Woody Herman's orchestra. In 1954 and 1955 he won first place in the DownBeat Critics Poll.

## Tal Farlow

Skating over the strings with huge hands, Farlow extracted unbelievable things from the guitar. By the time he was voted New Star Guitarist in the 1954 DownBeat Critics Poll, he had established himself as a player of mind-blowing fluidity and tonal purity. The self-taught Farlow was a leading guitarist in the early bop style, incorporating unusual intervals and unorthodox harmonics into his improvisations. A shy personality who was known to duck out of the music scene for years at a time, Farlow became something of a legend during his own lifetime. "I don't push very hard," he said in DownBeat (Dec. 5, 1963). "I never really thought of myself as a 100 percent professional musician. There were times when I would stop and do sign painting."



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES



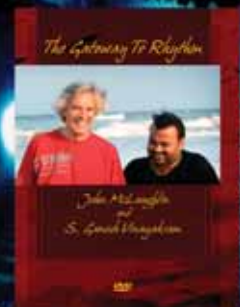
## John McLaughlin



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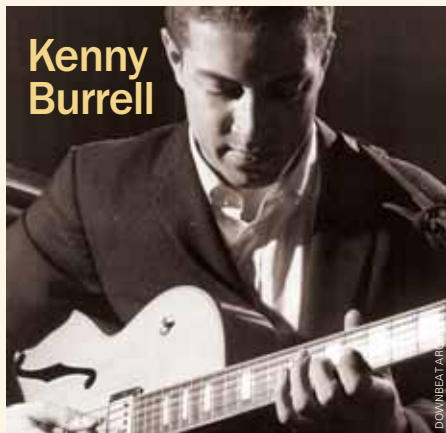
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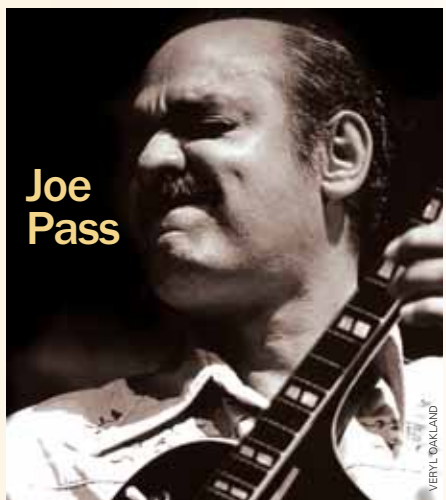
## POST-BOP LEADERS

### Kenny Burrell

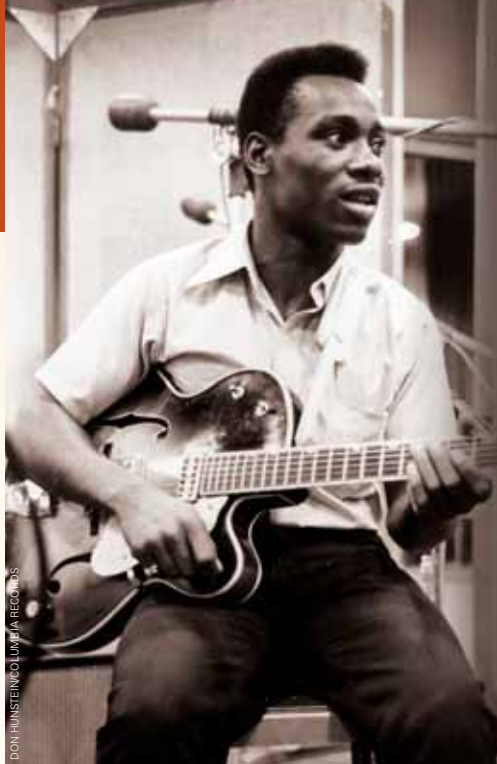


After a short stint with Oscar Peterson in 1955, Burrell's career bloomed as an essential jazz sideman and trio leader in his own right. The 1965 release of the LP *Guitar Forms* revealed the full scale of Burrell's achievements, featuring him on both classical and electric guitar. Burrell played with a conservative approach, favoring mellow melodic lines over flashes of virtuosity. "I'm not going to be preoccupied with trying to do one type of thing, harmonically or melodically," he said in *DownBeat* (Aug. 1, 1963). "It doesn't really make any difference whether you play atonal, polytonal or just tonal—if what you feel inside will come through."

### Joe Pass



When Pass recorded the solo album *Virtuoso* in the mid-1970s, he startled listeners and critics with his comprehensive grasp of instrumental technique. He quickly found himself in great demand for concerts and recording sessions not only as a solo act, but as an accompanist to Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, and as a member of Oscar Peterson's groups. A master of fingerpicking, Pass's playing revealed a refined sense of harmony and variety of complex textures. "When I solo, I'm thinking mostly about my own harmonies, then about the time feel," he said in *DownBeat* (April 6, 1978). "In a duo setting, I'm thinking of counterpoint lines, or movement. I'm listening to the other person and trying to fit; I don't take the lead."



### George Benson

Benson successfully straddles the line between commercial music and conventional jazz. Originally a sideman in Jack McDuff's trio, Benson went on to achieve tremendous popular and financial success as a bandleader and star performer. He is perhaps best known as the guitarist who liked to double his melodies with a skillfully executed scat-sung line. "I'm not interested in being typed," he said in *DownBeat* (June 29, 1967). "It's to a guy's advantage to be able to play a variety of music. You never know when things are going to change, anyway. I quite like the pop field, but I also like to improvise."

### Wes Montgomery



The inventor of the "round sound" of playing lines with the meat of his thumb, Montgomery had an uncanny ability to play melodies in two registers at a time. After emerging from Indianapolis in 1959,

Montgomery won the New Star Guitar division of *DownBeat*'s 1960 Critics Poll. He went on to achieve great commercial success, embracing a melodically dominated approach to improvisation. "When I first came up big on the Billboard charts they couldn't decide whether to call me a jazz artist or a pop artist," Montgomery said in *DownBeat* (June 27, 1968). "I think I originated a new category. ... There is a jazz concept to what I'm doing, but I'm playing popular music."

### Jim Hall



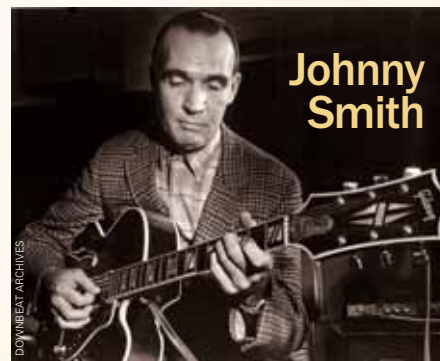
Hall's talent has been kneaded and shaped by musicians of widely different approaches, starting with his involvement with Chico Hamilton, Jimmy Giuffrè, Bill Evans and Sonny Rollins. Often bluesy, Hall's compositional approach to soloing makes use of motivic development. He prefers a natural, mellow guitar sound and eschews long eighth-note lines in favor of wide, broken phrases that evoke a sense of space and pace. "I'm not really a jazz guitarist," *DownBeat* reported him saying in 1958. "I'm a composer who just happens to play guitar."

### Grant Green



Green helped establish the organ trio as a standard ensemble in the 1950s and '60s. A remarkably relaxed performer who was never short on groove, he played with a single-note style. "I don't listen to guitar players much," Green said in *DownBeat* (July 19, 1962). "I dig horn players." Known for his versatility as much as his big, singing tone, Green remained grounded in r&b throughout his career, which included a succession of successful recordings on Blue Note.

### Johnny Smith



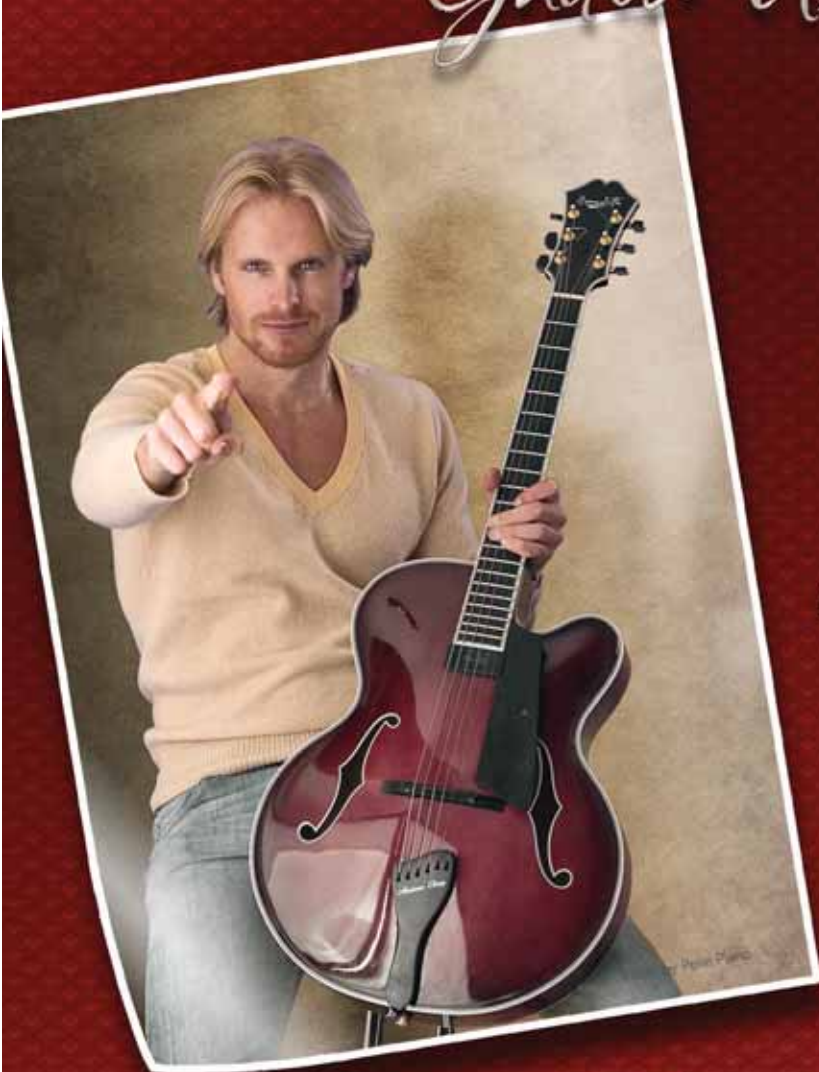
One of the most versatile guitarists of the 1950s, Smith played jazz in big-time nightclubs at night and worked as a studio musician for NBC in New York by day. He was known for the precision and coolness of his technique, which raised the bar for future generations of jazz and studio guitarists. His *Moonlight In Vermont* was named 1952 jazz album of the year by *DownBeat*. He basically left the jazz scene when he moved to Colorado in the 1960s. "Johnny Smith showed us that the guitar is a small orchestra," said Russell Malone.



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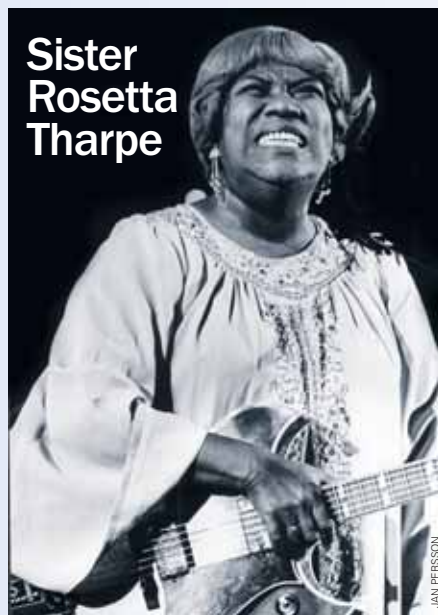
## BLUES MASTERS



### Robert Johnson

A gifted Mississippi Delta guitarist who died tragically young in 1938, Johnson is the most legendary of all blues artists. Having mastered the guitar in an incredibly short time, he was the envy of his contemporaries, incorporating everything from tricky slide techniques to mysterious alternate tunings. Johnson was also a prolific composer who helped bring the idea of song structure to the blues, and was known for his instinctive ability to cue important changes to other musicians on stage. "Robert was so far ahead it was unbelievable," John McLaughlin said. "His playing concepts were radical. He was a mighty influence on me and lot of guitarists, not the least being Eric Clapton."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES



### Sister Rosetta Tharpe

JAN PERSSON

First billed as "Little Rosetta Nubin, the singing and guitar playing miracle," Tharpe began performing at age 4 accompanying her evangelist mother, who played mandolin and preached at tent revivals in the South. After her family moved to Chicago in the late 1920s, Tharpe played blues and jazz in private while performing gospel music in public settings. Her guitar style clearly reflected secular influences, as she used bent notes in the same risqué manner jazz and blues artists did. In the 1930s she performed frequently alongside jazz heroes like Cab Calloway and Benny Goodman.



### T-Bone Walker

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

In the late 1930s, Walker helped pioneer the electric guitar sound that created modern blues and thus influenced all popular music that followed. He transferred traditional blues-lick techniques to the electric guitar by combining them with the jump and swing styles of the day. His 1940s hits "T-Bone Blues" and "Stormy Monday" are blues classics, demonstrating his jazz-based style. His stinging single-string solos influenced bluesmen like B.B. King and such rockers as Chuck Berry, Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan.



### B.B. King

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

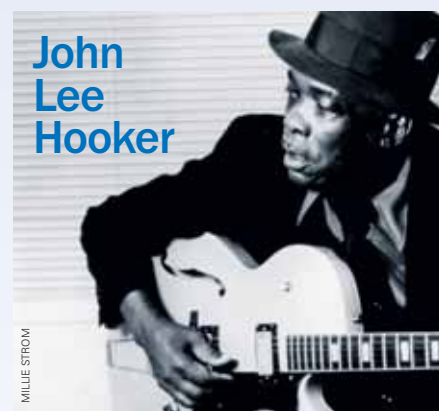
King's guitar technique is an extension of the single-note electric guitar style developed by T-Bone Walker. King added the rhythms of modern jazz and made use of his amp by sustaining notes for entire measures. His most important advances have been various creative ways of punctuating phrases, be it with a barrage of chords or the use of bent notes. King's guitar is the perfect complement to his vocals: It begins where the words leave off. "Sounds are more important than trying to play a lot of notes," he said in *DownBeat* (Oct. 31, 1968). "It's like automobiles. You can have speed or economy, not both."

### Lonnie Johnson

Johnson pioneered the improvised guitar solo—played note-by-note with a pick—on the 1927 track "6/88 Glide." His technique reached the players who applied his approach to electric blues. Many of his early recordings featured him playing 12-string guitar in a manner that influenced Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt. Johnson was the jazziest of early blues guitarists: In 1927, the New Orleans-raised Johnson recorded with Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five, and in 1928 he recorded with Duke Ellington.



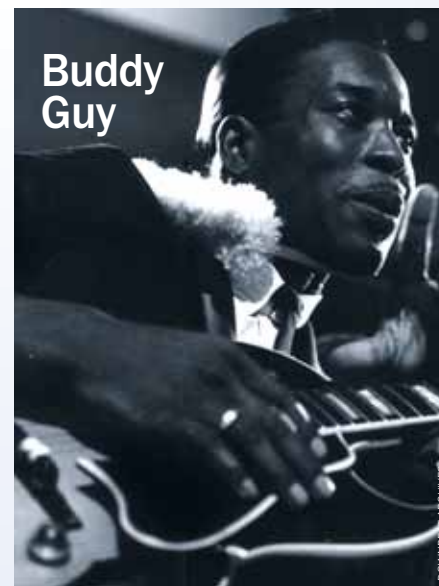
INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES



### John Lee Hooker

MILLIE STROM

Hooker played a droning, one-chord style that tied together the Delta blues with the emerging post-War electric blues. A rhythmically free yet driving guitarist, he rarely played on a standard beat, as he changed tempo to fit the needs of the song. He embodied his own unique genre of the blues, often incorporating the boogie-woogie piano style into his idiosyncratic blues guitar and singing. Described by John McLaughlin as "the essential blues player, a majestic player," Hooker frequently played a walking bass pattern with his thumb, stopping to emphasize the end of a line with a series of hammer-ons and pull-offs. His best-known songs include "Boogie Chillen" (1948) and "Boom Boom" (1962).



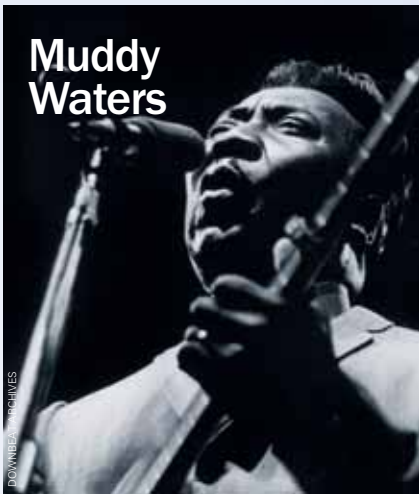
### Buddy Guy

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Guy changed the course of the electric blues with his high-powered live performances and aggressive, stinging, single-note playing style. He takes the music to extremes, employing everything from distortion and feedback to wildly bent notes and wailing cries. A jazz-loving bluesman with a flair for r&b, Guy has influenced an entire generation of rocking blues players, including Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix. "I base everything on audience reaction," he said in *DownBeat* (Oct. 31, 1968). "If a gimmick is necessary, I use it."

## MODERN JAZZ MAESTROS

### Muddy Waters



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Waters dominated the vital Chicago post-war blues scene after transplanting himself to the Windy City from the deep South in 1943. The most influential artist in the amplified blues idiom, Waters mastered the stinging bottleneck and the jagged, pulsating rhythms of Delta guitar to complement his tightly constricted, pain-filled singing. The sound his band projected was loud and brutal, an electrified incarnation of the old Mississippi sound with a straightened-out 4/4 drive. "I always thought of myself as a musician," Waters said in a *DownBeat* interview (Oct. 8, 1964). "If I wasn't a good musician then I felt that sooner or later I would be a good musician. I felt it in me."

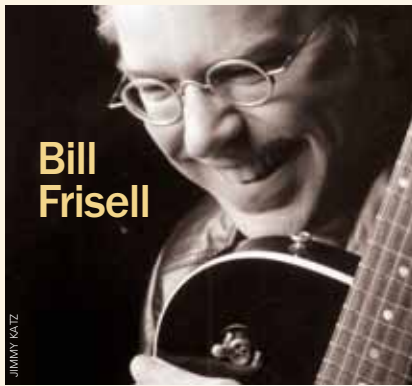
### Albert King



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

One of the premier electric guitarists of the post-World War II era, the distinctive Mississippi bluesman King taught himself to play left-handed, with his fingers instead of a pick, holding a regular guitar upside-down. Over his long career he fashioned a cutting, tone-concentrated sound. Thanks to an unorthodox low tuning method he employed, King could bend strings to produce a tortured blues sound that defined his style and set him apart from his contemporaries. "He bent the notes down, physically toward the ground, as opposed to bending up, which most right-handed players do," John Scofield said of King's playing. "There was a different force of gravity at work, and different muscles working in his right hand, so he got this sound that was so soulful and unearthly."

### Bill Frisell

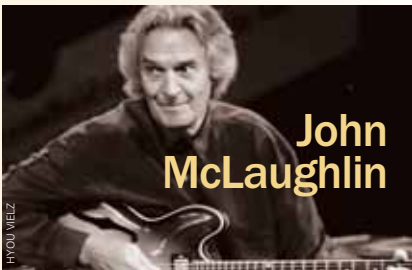


JIMMY KATZ

Frisell combines the finesse of jazz, the thunder of rock, the vast openness of country and the experimental mind-set of the avant-garde in his playing. After studying with Jim Hall in the early 1970s, Frisell helped redefine the function of the guitar in contemporary music. An important part of his sound comes from deft use of a volume pedal, which he uses to give his instrument a floating, breathing quality. Today, his genre-defying music can only be called classic Americana, and his humor is ever present in his art. Off stage, his modesty shines through his gentle personality to reveal a reflective soul who is never content to rest on his laurels.

"I never imagined that I would make a record, or any of the stuff that's happened," he said. "But what's going on internally with me, I still feel like I have as far to go as I ever had to go."

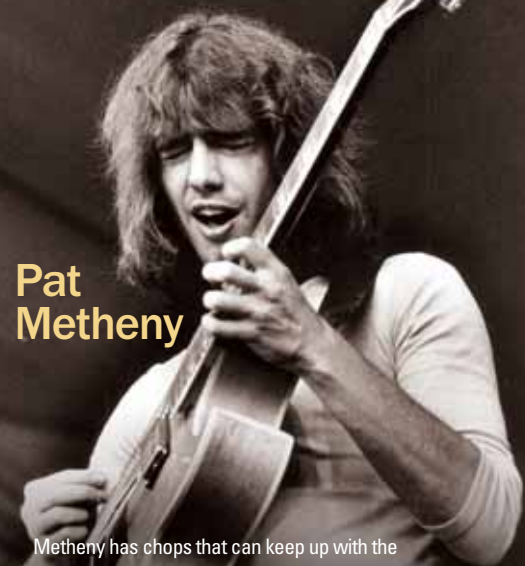
### John McLaughlin



HYUN VIEZ

A man of phenomenal technical capacity and profound spirituality, McLaughlin exudes a commanding presence when he plays. Since his emergence with Miles Davis in 1969, the British-born McLaughlin has achieved guru status on the guitar and remains a towering force in contemporary music, with such pioneering groups as the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Shakti. An avid listener, he continues to absorb world music, jazz, rock and blues influences. McLaughlin describes Wes Montgomery as "one of the greatest guitarists in jazz—his influence can be heard even in the most banal 'smooth jazz' recordings." He calls Jimi Hendrix "a revolutionary on guitar—modern guitar would not be the same without the influence of Jimi," and he refers to Muddy Waters as "the essential acoustic slide blues player from the Mississippi Delta whose recordings in the early 1950s were simply outstanding and a major influence on me."

### Pat Metheny

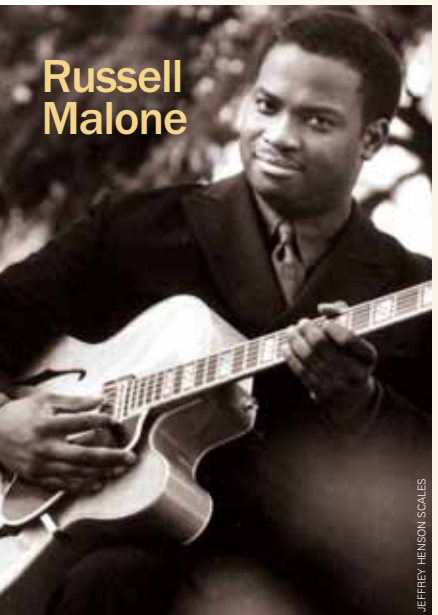


Metheny has chops that can keep up with the fastest and finest guitarists, but his true strength lays in the lyricism he coaxes from the instrument. "I realize that my strengths are not that I can play fast, but that I can play melody over almost any changes presented to me," he said in *DownBeat* (July 13, 1978). "Playing melodies is my number one asset."

Metheny has frequently used guitar synthesizers to get a horn-like or slap-echo sound, giving his playing a distinct contemporary edge. He also has ventured into the avant-garde, having thoroughly digested the music of Ornette Coleman; Metheny collaborated with the celebrated alto man on the groundbreaking album *Song X*, considered one of the most important jazz releases of the 1980s.

VERYL CARLAND

### Russell Malone

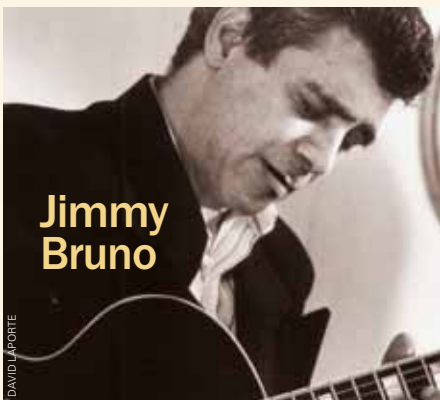


JEFFREY HEINSON/SCALES

Malone has incorporated elements of the blues, rock, jazz, gospel and country into an informed style that is all his own. An alum of Harry Connick Jr.'s orchestra in the early 1990s, Malone has done well as an accompanist—he played with Diana Krall and Jimmy Smith—in addition to recording a nice discography of albums with his own groups. "When it comes to being Russell Malone, I'm the best there is—no one will ever be able to outdo me at that," he said. "I stopped worrying about trying to be someone else's expectation of what a jazz guitarist is. What I am concerned about is being the best musician I can be."



## BEYOND MEN



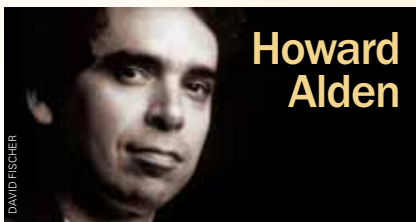
Philadelphia Bruno is a master jazz guitarist and educator. He came to prominence in the 1990s after a successful 20-year career as a commercial guitarist and session man. He developed his dazzling technique by teaching himself to play the violin etudes of Wohlfahrt and Paganini. He counts Johnny Smith, Joe Pass and Tal Farlow among his influences. Bruno travels the jazz circuit, mesmerizing with his chops and his unyielding command of traditional and free-jazz styles.

### John Abercrombie

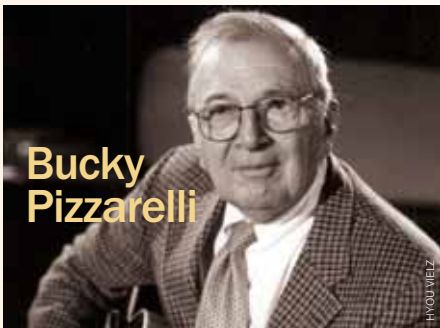
Perpetually walking the fine line between freedom and structure, Abercrombie conjures impressionistic musical imagery that's firmly grounded in the tradition of mainstream jazz. A long association with ECM records beginning in 1974 gave him the freedom and the opportunity to establish himself as a formidable improviser and prolific composer. "I've carried on the tradition, but I've also changed the musical language and opened a few little doors to harmonic and rhythmic approaches that are different from the standard jazz fare," he said.



Scofield blends blues, rock and other pop forms with the harmonic sophistication of bebop. He thrives in multiple roles: as bandleader, sideman, composer and improviser. Scofield's approach to the instrument is noticeably funky, even in contexts that lean toward straight-ahead jazz. His harmonic concept is often playfully dissonant, his tone frequently distorted with a soft fuzziness. Hear one riff, and you immediately know it's Sco. "We're all individuals," he said. "And after you've been playing for a while, you kind of do it your own way."



An original virtuoso, Alden worked around Los Angeles playing traditional, mainstream and modern jazz before heading east in 1979 to perform with Red Norvo. Alden's strengths as a soloist and accompanist have been recognized by artists like Joe Williams, Warren Vaché, Woody Herman, Benny Carter, Flip Phillips, Kenny Davern, Clark Terry and Dizzy Gillespie. He can be heard on the soundtrack to the 1999 Woody Allen movie *Sweet And Lowdown*.



Pizzarelli is the most solid rhythm guitarist alive today. Known in jazz circles as an expert comping and swinging time-keeper, he also thrives in a solo role, where he frequently accompanies himself with a walking bass line played on the seventh string of his instrument. Pizzarelli continues to perform into his 80s. "Rhythm guitar is really the most important thing on a recording," he said. "When you hear that after-beat—the bass player hits first note and the second beat is the rhythm guitar—that eludes a lot of great guitar players. You've got to think about it and work on it."



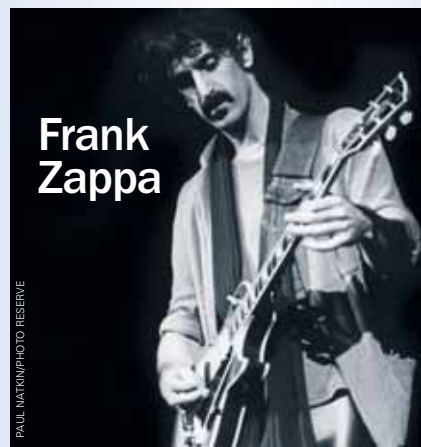
### Pat Martino

As a teenager in the 1960s, Martino earned his reputation as daring improviser with soul to spare. Today, he's known as a superb jazz guitarist and composer who lost—and later triumphantly regained—much of his memory after suffering from a brain aneurysm. Early on, the Philadelphia-based Martino was drawn into the jazz vortex by a holy trinity of guitarists. "I looked at Johnny Smith as the front door into the house, Wes Montgomery as the back door and Les Paul as the

provider of quite a number of things that were functional within the house," he said. "After that my interest turned toward pianists, saxophonists, trumpeters and expanded beyond instrumentation."



Byrd was largely responsible for bringing classical guitar technique to the attention of the jazz world. After an inspiring South American tour in the early 1960s, Byrd came up with the idea for *Jazz Samba*, an album he recorded with Stan Getz that led to the bossa nova craze in the United States. "The very sound of the classic guitar, as opposed to the electric guitar, or as opposed to the steel-string acoustic guitar, is the most attractive thing about the instrument for me ... the timbre of the sound," he said in *DownBeat* (Aug. 1, 1963), during a discussion with other guitarists regarding the ongoing pick-versus-fingerstyle debate. "I used to curse being at the mercy of all those tubes."



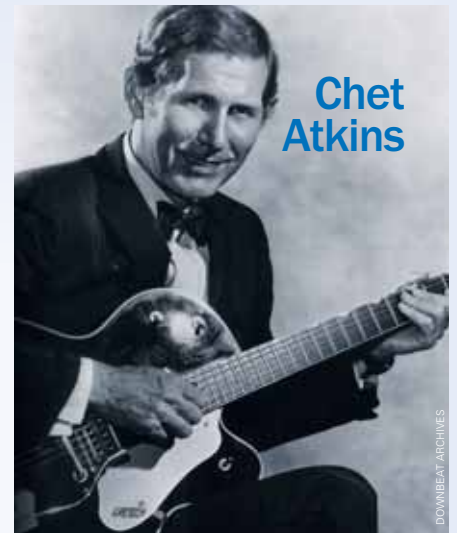
When Zappa shut up and played his guitar, great things happened. A prolific composer and outspoken critic of popular culture, Zappa was also a skilled instrumentalist with a unique, avant-garde style that fit perfectly with the zany, ironic weirdness of his song lyrics. He had a fondness for jazz and classical music that directly affected everything he played and wrote, even his silliest rock numbers. "The more mediocre your music is, the more accessible it is to a larger number of people in the United States," he said in *DownBeat* (Oct. 30, 1969). "That's where the market is. You're not selling to a bunch of jazz aesthetes in Europe. You're selling to Americans, who really hate music and love entertainment."



**Jimi  
Hendrix**



**Jeff  
Beck**



**Chet  
Atkins**

Hendrix was adored by all styles of guitarists—from rockers to bluesmen to even the most studious of jazz players. A high-priest figure whose name was immortalized with his premature death, Hendrix's recordings from the late 1960s reveal a love for improvisation and a grasp of the blues. His innovations were numerous, including the use of feedback and distortion. "Jimi Hendrix is the greatest musician who ever lived," Larry Coryell said in *DownBeat* (Nov. 9, 1972). "The stuff I saw him do in person in jam sessions was some of the heaviest jazz music I ever heard. ... I've never been so jealous of a cat in my life."

Beck started his career by exploring psychedelia and the heavier side of rock before switching gears in 1975 with the groundbreaking instrumental jazz-fusion albums *Blow By Blow* and *Wired*. While many electric guitarists rely on racks of gear to create their tone, Beck prefers a simple, natural approach that emphasizes manual dexterity over gadgets. He plays the entire instrument, using his fingers instead of a pick for greater control over the fretboard and bending notes with controlled cruelty using the whammy bar. Beck adds deft twists of the volume and tone knobs to shape notes as he plays them.

From the time Atkins arrived in Nashville in 1950, his guitar playing combined folk-derived fingerpicking styles with a harmonically advanced, jazzy technique—a seldom heard combination. Indeed, he could be categorized as "1950s jazz" just as easily as "country" or even "semi-classical." Atkins was probably best known among jazzmen for an improvisational approach in which everything seems to be happening at once: bass line, harmony and lead line. "It's similar to stride piano style, like Fats Waller," Atkins said in *DownBeat* (August 1985). "That's what I always wanted to sound like—piano players like Ralph Sutton and Fats, guys who kept that left hand going."

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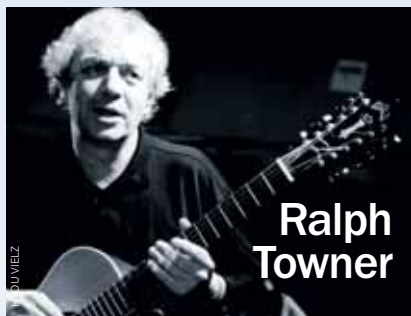
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**Ralph Towner**

Towner has developed a special affinity for the nylon string acoustic guitar. A founder of the band Oregon in 1971, Towner has found creative ways to incorporate elements of classical fingerstyle technique with rock, jazz and world music. He often keeps multiple lines grooving at once. "I would like to be remembered for expanding the vocabulary of the guitar and taking a more pianistic approach," he said. "That, and composition that includes some involved harmony and voicings that you wouldn't hear on the traditional plectrum guitar."

## Steve Cropper

The most well-known and influential soul guitarist, largely due to his ability to adapt to many different styles, Cropper was a major figure in the Southern



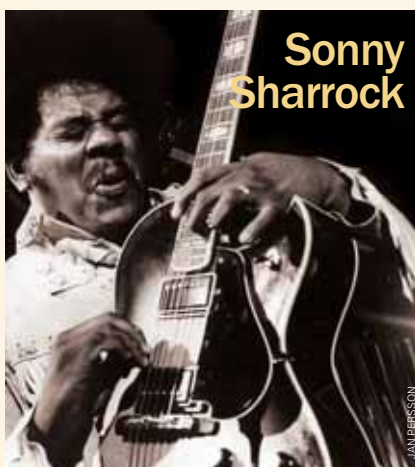
soul movement of the 1960s. He made his mark not only as a player and arranger (on classic sides by Booker T. & the MGs, Otis Redding, Sam & Dave and Wilson Pickett), but as a songwriter as well, co-writing "In The Midnight Hour." In the late '70s, he and Donald "Duck" Dunn became members of Levon Helm's RCO All-Stars, and then they went on to lead The Blues Brothers Band. Cropper continues to be an in-demand musician and producer.



**Vernon Reid**

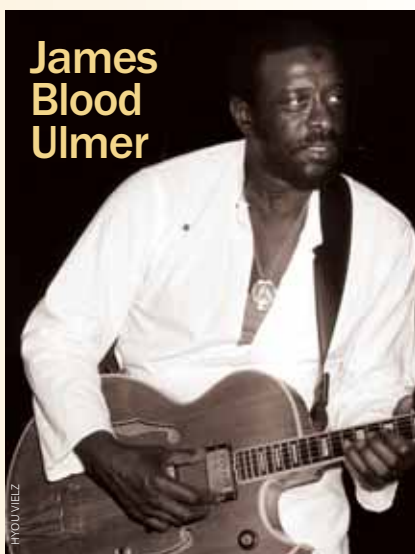
Reid has played and recorded in a huge variety of contexts, from free-jazz to pop to punk. In the mid-1980s, the British-born/Brooklyn-bred guitarist formed his own metal-minded funk/rock band Living Colour, which blended hard-rock energy with heady improvisation. Reid's sound is sharp-edged and wild; he creates a virtual lightning storm every time he picks up his instrument. "I was struck by ... how hard he was playing, how honestly he was playing," Sonny Sharrock said in DownBeat (July 1993) about hearing Reid on record for the first time. "That's always the thing that knocks me out: how terribly hard some people play. I don't get kicked off any other way."

## AVANT STRINGS



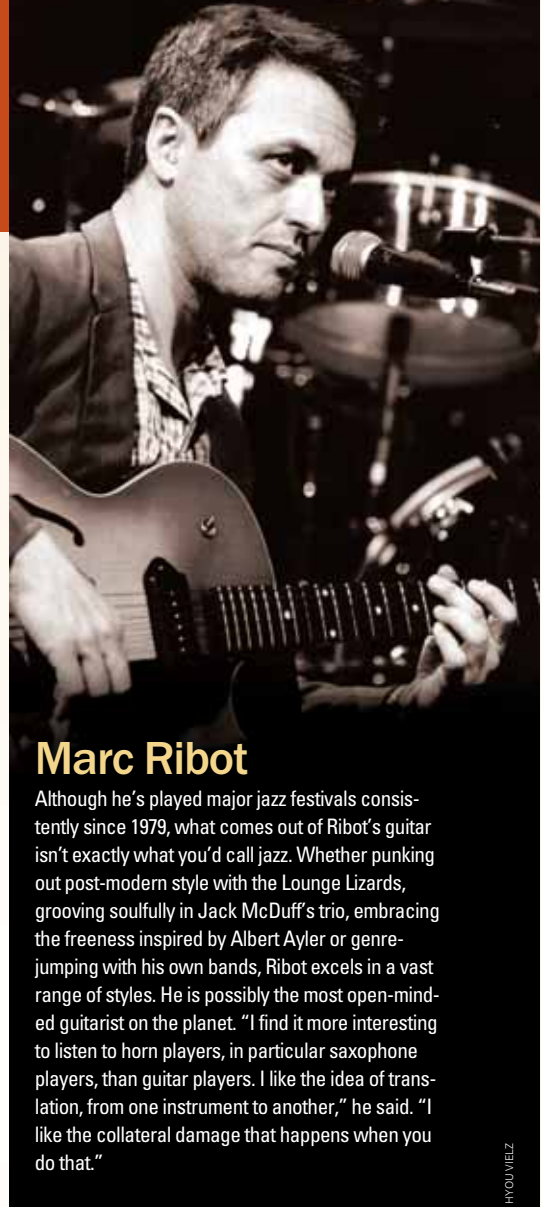
**Sonny Sharrock**

Emerging from New York City in the mid-1960s, Sharrock was the father of avant-garde guitar. An emotional player whose approach was uniquely his own, Sharrock completely ignored the standard jazz concepts of linear solos and chordal comping in favor of a truly "out" style that dealt in textures and gut-level communication. "When you play single lines and notes, you're very limited," he said in DownBeat (June 11, 1970). "You know, there ain't but so many combinations of 11 notes that you can make."



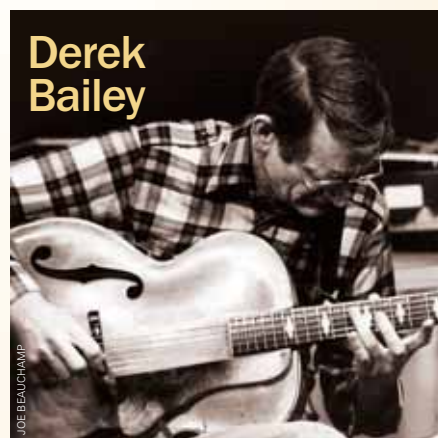
**James Blood Ulmer**

Greatly influenced by Ornette Coleman in the mid-1970s, the always funky Ulmer draws from a free-wheeling harmonic and melodic palette that spanned many tonalities and included elements of jazz, gospel, blues and hard rock. A fearless experimenter, his music comprised contrapuntal lines and confronted listeners with tremendous energy and dissonance. "It's infinitely more interesting for listeners if improvising becomes spontaneous melody instead of just scales and chords," he said in DownBeat (October 1980). "People are pretty hip now and don't want something that's not creative."



**Marc Ribot**

Although he's played major jazz festivals consistently since 1979, what comes out of Ribot's guitar isn't exactly what you'd call jazz. Whether punking out post-modern style with the Lounge Lizards, grooving soulfully in Jack McDuff's trio, embracing the freeness inspired by Albert Ayler or genre-jumping with his own bands, Ribot excels in a vast range of styles. He is possibly the most open-minded guitarist on the planet. "I find it more interesting to listen to horn players, in particular saxophone players, than guitar players. I like the idea of translation, from one instrument to another," he said. "I like the collateral damage that happens when you do that."



**Derek Bailey**

An early pioneer of free guitar in the mid-1960s, Bailey was a highly creative and original improviser whose influence is felt to this day far beyond his native England. "Just from hearing him once, the first few notes he played, wow—this whole other thing split open in my mind," said Bill Frisell of the late Bailey. "The music was so much about that particular moment and never going back to that moment. Derek was that sort of true improviser where it was more about the process and not so much about the actual notes he was playing."





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**I**T ALL STARTED IN ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry... I'd slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. Yet she always shined as our school's star performer. It was frustrating. *What does she have that I don't?* I'd wonder. Linda's best friend, Sheryl, bragged on and on to me, adding more fuel to my fire.

"You could never be as good as Linda," she would taunt. "Linda's got Perfect Pitch."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated about Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name *exact notes and chords*—all BY EAR; how she could sing any pitch—*from memory*; how she could play songs—after just *hearing* them; the list went on and on...

My heart sank. *Her EAR is the secret to her success!* I realized. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But it bothered me. Did she *really* have Perfect Pitch? How could she know notes and chords just by *hearing* them? It seemed impossible.

Finally I couldn't stand it anymore. So one day I marched up to Linda and asked her point-blank if she had Perfect Pitch. "Yes," she nodded aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?" "OK," she replied.

## Now she'd eat her words...

*My plot was ingeniously simple...* When Linda least suspected, I walked up and challenged her to name tones for me—*BY EAR*.

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard and so other classmates couldn't help her. I set up everything so I could expose her Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

With silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play. (She'll never guess F#, I thought.)

I had barely touched the key, "F#," she said.

I was astonished. I played another tone.

"C," she announced, not stopping to think.

Frantically, I played more tones, skipping here and there all over the keyboard. But somehow she knew the pitch each time. She was AMAZING.

"Sing an E," I demanded, trying to mess her up. She sang a tone. I checked her on the keyboard—and she was right on!

Now I started to boil. I called out other tones, trying to make them ever more difficult. Each note she sang perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed.

And that was all I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me like a ton of bricks. Yet from then on, I knew that Perfect Pitch was real.

## I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't everyone, especially musicians recognize tones by ear?

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, it was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it out for myself. I got my brothers and

sisters to play piano tones for me—so I could try to name them by ear. But it always turned into a messy guessing game.

I'd hammer a note over and over to make it stick in my head. But hours later I'd remember it a half step flat.

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't recognize or remember any tones by ear. They all sounded the same after awhile.

I would have done anything to have an ear like Linda. But after weeks of work I realized it was way beyond my reach.

## Then it happened...

Once I stopped straining, I started listening NATURALLY. Then the secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

Curiously, I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not visual colors, but colors of *pitch*, colors of *sound*. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever really "let go" and *listened*—to discover these subtle differences.

Soon, to my own disbelief, I too could name the tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way, while Bb has a *totally different sound*—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization struck me: **this is Perfect Pitch!** This is how Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and know tones, chords, and keys—all by ear!

It was almost childish—I felt sure that *anyone* could unlock their own Perfect Pitch with the simple secret of "Color Hearing."

Bursting with excitement, I told my best friend, Ann (a flutist). She *laughed* at me. "You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch," she asserted. "You can't *develop* it."

"You don't understand how Perfect Pitch works," I countered. I sat her down and showed her how to listen. With a little jump start, Ann soon realized she also had Perfect Pitch.

Way back then, I never dreamed I would later cause such a stir in the academic world. But when I entered college and explained my discoveries, professors laughed at me. "You can't *develop* Perfect Pitch, you must be *born* with it," they'd say.

I would listen politely. Then I'd reveal the simple secret—so they could hear it for themselves. They quickly changed their tune!

In college, my so-called "perfect ear" allowed me to skip over two required music theory courses and made everything easier: my ability to perform, compose, arrange, transpose, improvise, and sight-sing. Because my ears were open, music just sounded richer. I learned that music is definitely a HEARING art.

## What happened with Linda?

Flashback to my senior year of high school. I was nearly 18. In the three-and-a-half years with Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. But my youthful ambition needed one more thing: *to beat Linda*. Now was my chance.

At the University of Delaware's annual performing music festival, the judges gave Linda an A, which came as no surprise. Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out with selections from Beethoven, Chopin, and Ravel's *Toccata*. The judges awarded me an A+. *Sweet victory was music to my ears, mine at last!*

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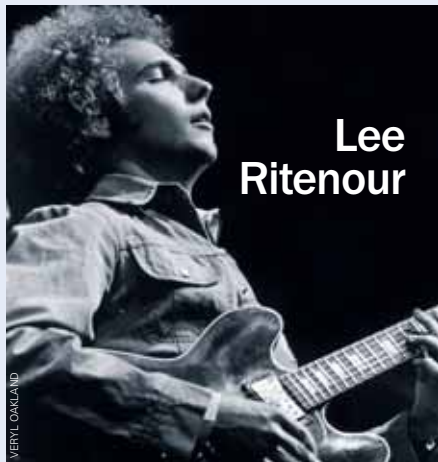
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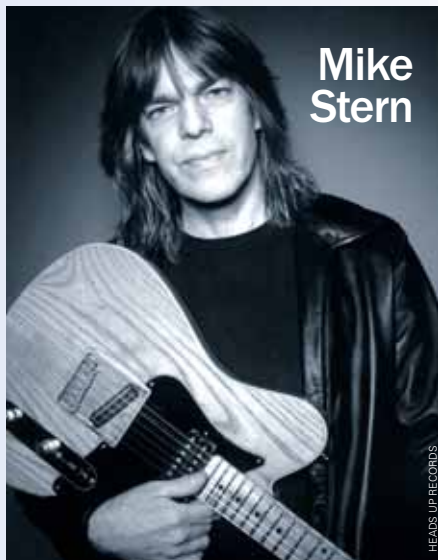


## FUSION & POP MATTERS



Lee Ritenour

The quintessential studio cat, Ritenour became a sought-after session player in the mid-1970s. Known as "Captain Fingers," Ritenour is trained in jazz and classical; he was influenced by the relaxed styles of Wes Montgomery, Joe Pass and Barney Kessel. Starting in 1976, at the age of 24, he began a prolific solo career that now includes upwards of 40 albums and collaborations. He continues to experiment with myriad styles of music, incorporating elements of funk, pop, rock, blues and Brazilian music with jazz.



Mike Stern

A rocker to the core who excels in bebop and fusion contexts, Stern has shared the stage and studio with the likes of Miles Davis, Jaco Pastorius, Stan Getz and Mike Brecker, to name just a few. He has made his most important contributions to jazz since emerging as a bandleader in the mid-1980s. A fluid and intense improviser, Stern acknowledges the powerful influence of horn players on his playing style—which encompasses everything from jazz, rock and blues to funk, world and folk. "The guitar helps you relate to a lot of music because it is in so many kinds of music," he said. "So it tends toward giving you an open mind. That's true with jazz guitar nowadays, most cats have that kind of openness inherent in the instrument."

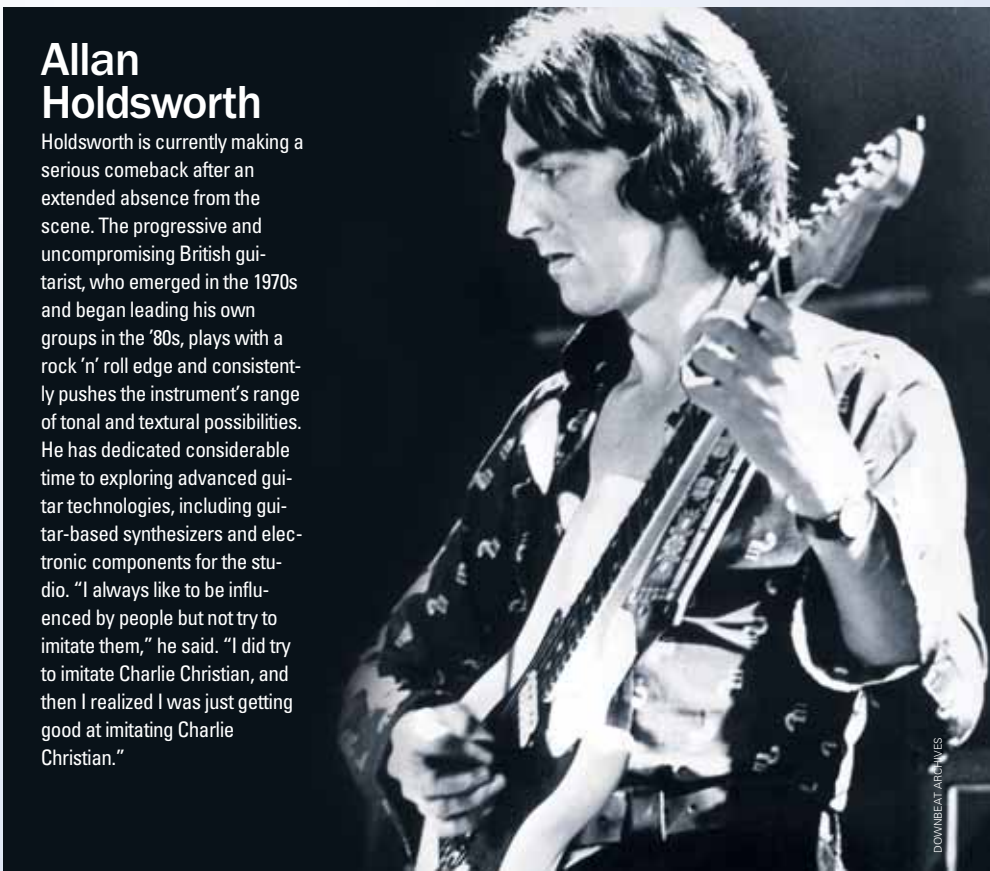
## Stanley Jordan

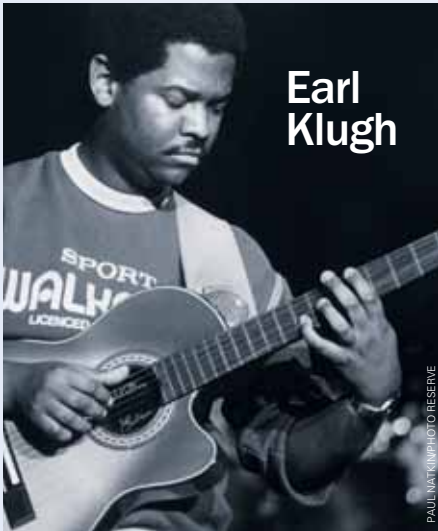
Jordan has developed an astonishing two-handed tapping technique that essentially made a keyboard out of the guitar fretboard. It allows him to accompany himself with chordal voicings and orchestral textures that were previously considered unachievable on the guitar. "I'll take notes and just get them flying around in a cycle, then take that cycle and start transforming it and moving it around," he said in *DownBeat* (April 1985). "It's sort of like working on ... the next level of sound, because instead of listening to each note, you're listening to a whole cycle as being like a [single] note."



## Allan Holdsworth

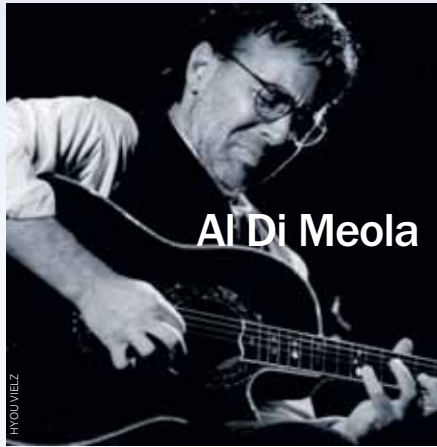
Holdsworth is currently making a serious comeback after an extended absence from the scene. The progressive and uncompromising British guitarist, who emerged in the 1970s and began leading his own groups in the '80s, plays with a rock 'n' roll edge and consistently pushes the instrument's range of tonal and textural possibilities. He has dedicated considerable time to exploring advanced guitar technologies, including guitar-based synthesizers and electronic components for the studio. "I always like to be influenced by people but not try to imitate them," he said. "I did try to imitate Charlie Christian, and then I realized I was just getting good at imitating Charlie Christian."





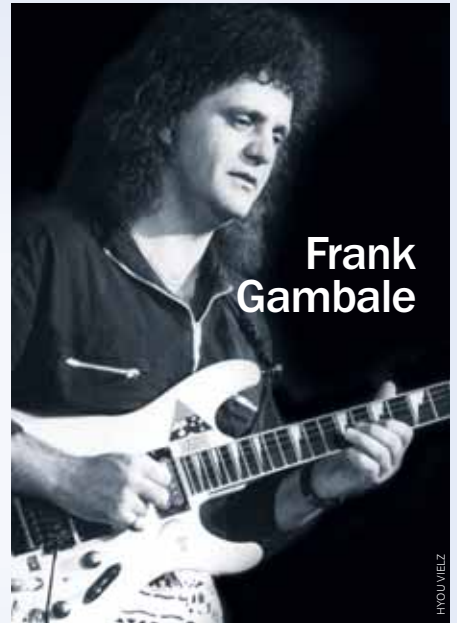
**Earl Klugh**

Influenced early on by Charlie Byrd and Chet Atkins, Klugh is a master of nylon acoustic guitar and finger-style technique. After getting off to an auspicious start in the early 1970s with George Benson, Klugh has found considerable success as a bandleader and soloist in his own right. "When I went on the road with George and played in his band for a year-and-a-half, that was a whole different type of learning experience," he said. "I learned, boy do I have a long way to go before I call myself a guitar player. And as much as I think I'm pushing myself, in order to do this, you've got to put an extraordinary amount of time, effort and thought into it. That moved me on."



**Al Di Meola**

Di Meola's command of guitar styles and scales is mind-blowing. He made his debut with Chick Corea's Return To Forever at Carnegie Hall as a teenager in the mid-1970s before striking out on his own as a recording artist on Columbia. Possessing a fiery flair, he did notable flamenco-style work in the 1980s as a member of a guitar trio with John McLaughlin and Paco de Lucia. Later in the decade, Di Meola began to blend his acoustic guitar with synthesizers, creating his own mind-expanding brand of high-tech instrumental pop. He has worked with some of the heaviest names in the contemporary jazz and pop worlds, including Stanley Clarke, Jean-Luc Ponty, Paul Simon and Carlos Santana. A precursor to the "shred" style, Di Meola is lauded for his velocity on the fretboard and ability to navigate complex syncopation.



**Frank Gambale**

Australia-born Gambale began developing his sweep-picking technique at an early age. In 1986 he started his recording career and was recruited by Jean-Luc Ponty to go on tour. Shortly afterward, Gambale began a six-year stint with Chick Corea that yielded five albums. In 2005 he released the album *Raison D'Etre*, which showcased the "Gambale tuning," a restringing of the guitar that enabled close-voiced chords previously available only to piano players. Gambale continues to tour and write for albums, books and videos.

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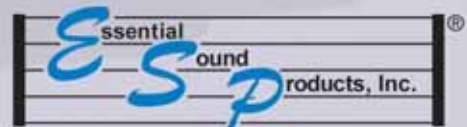


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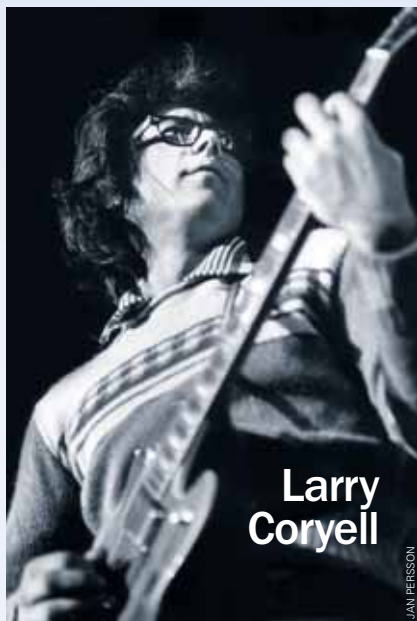
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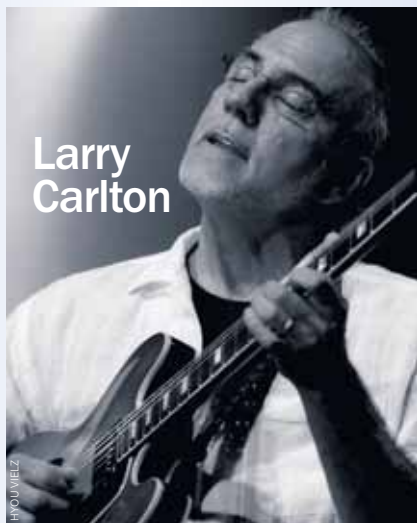


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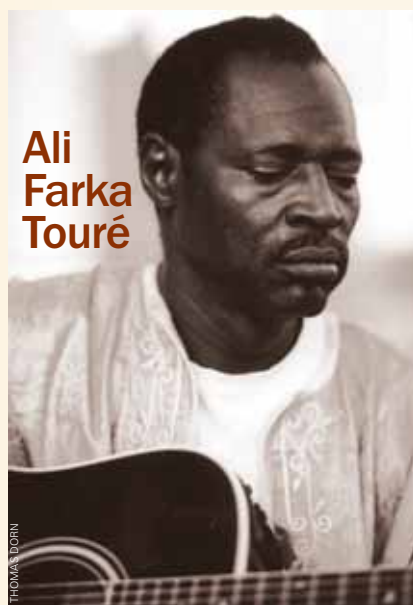


Coryell is one of the most original improvisers and composers to emerge in the 1960s and '70s. A jazz fusion pioneer who played with Gary Burton, Fourplay and Eleventh House, he excels at many styles on the guitar. Coryell has an uncanny ability to sense relationships among the musics of diverse cultures. "If music has something to say to you—whether it's jazz, country blues, western or hillbilly, Arabian, Indian or any other Asian, African, South American folk music—take it," he said in *DownBeat* (June 29, 1967). "Never restrict yourself."



Carlton was an in-demand West Coast session musician in the early 1970s who played with stars from every imaginable genre, including Herb Albert, Quincy Jones, Paul Anka, Michael Jackson and John Lennon. He made his debut as a leader in 1978 after he was recognized for his tastefully funky guitar playing on Steely Dan's *The Royal Scam*. Inspired by Barney Kessel, Wes Montgomery and B.B. King, Carlton has a sweet bluesy sound he coaxes from his Gibson ES-335. He also broke new ground with his trademark volume pedal technique with the jazz/rock group The Crusaders as well as with Joni Mitchell and Tom Scott.

## BEYOND U.S. BORDERS



Touré was a Malian guitarist and singer, one of Africa's most renowned musicians. His music represents an intersection where traditional Malian music meets its North American cousin, the blues. Touré forged connections between the hypnotic modal riffs of Malian songs and the driving one-chord boogie of American bluesmen. He became known as "the African John Lee Hooker," since the many superpositions of guitars and rhythms in his music were similar to the latter's hypnotic style. He pioneered and perfected the adaptation of Sonrai, Peul and Tamascheq styles to the guitar. In 1992 Touré recorded the Grammy-winning *Talking Timbuktu* with American guitarist Ry Cooder.



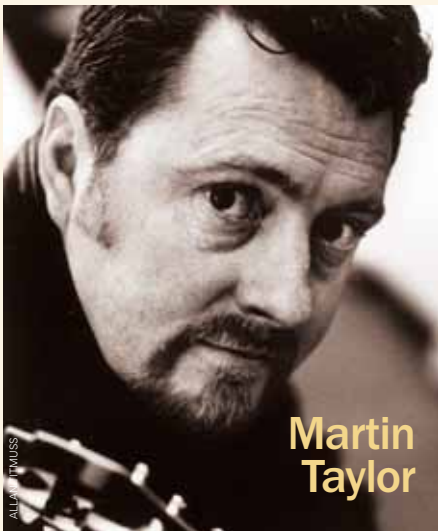
When Gypsy guitarist Lagrène first made the scene as a teenager in the 1980s, he was hailed as the new Django Reinhardt. He plays acoustic guitar with dazzling speed, yet somehow manages to never get ahead of himself. Lagrène used his flawless technique to make inroads in the jazz-rock genre with bassist Jaco Pastorius. "I want to do music my way, but I don't want to forget Django," he said in *DownBeat* (April 1985). "I'll always want people to know my own music, but I'll always be playing this music with Django behind me."



## João Gilberto

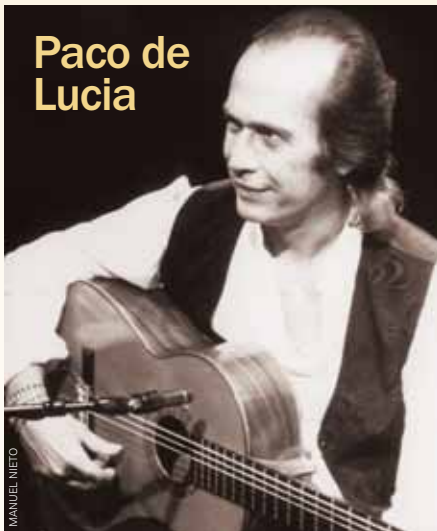
Gilberto single-handedly changed the way people played guitar in Brazil when he helped create bossa nova, a refined version of the samba that did away with drums completely and relied only on his guitar—which he used as a percussion instrument as well. In 1958, Odeon released two Gilberto singles that popularized his new style and marked the start of the bossa nova movement: "Chega De Saudade"/"Bim Bom" and "Desafinado"/"Oba-la-lá." He recorded two tracks with vocalist Elizete Cardoso on her album *Canção Do Amor Demais*, another milestone for the bossa nova. In 1964, Gilberto recorded in the United States with Stan Getz and Astrud Gilberto (his former wife); the Grammy-winning *Getz/Gilberto* album sold more than 1 million copies.





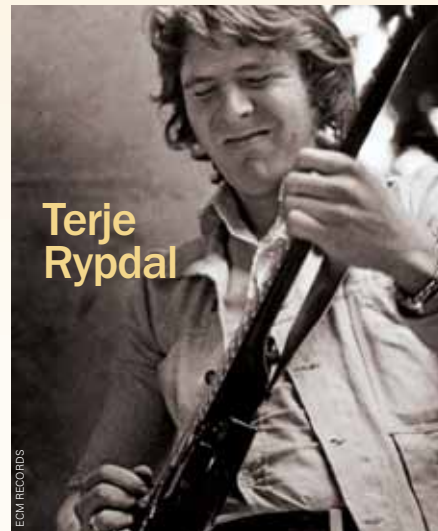
**Martin Taylor**

Self-taught U.K. guitarist Taylor has developed two audiences in his four decades of performing: those who love jazz, and those who love acoustic music. A melodic player who seldom ventures "out," Taylor cites classical guitarists and country pickers as powerful influences in addition to old-time jazzmen like George Van Eps, Eddie Lang and Carl Kress. "My mission has been to develop the guitar as a solo instrument, as a complete instrument that can be played entirely on its own," he said. "In the jazz world, there aren't many guitar players who play solo. It tends to be a group instrument and a single-line instrument as well."



**Paco de Lucia**

Spanish guitar virtuoso de Lucia is recognized as a leading proponent of the modern flamenco style. He has successfully crossed over into other genres such as classical, jazz and world music. He defined his style in 1969 at age 22 with the release of *Fantasia Flamenca*. In 1977, de Lucia performed with guitarists Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin and Larry Coryell, sparking a period of melodic and harmonic searching. In 1981 he set up his own sextet, and in 1982 he met Chick Corea, marking the beginning of a fruitful collaboration. In 1996, de Lucia reunited with Di Meola and McLaughlin to record the landmark *The Guitar Trio*.



**Terje Rypdal**

Norwegian sound sculptor Rypdal is one of the most innovative electric guitarists in European jazz. He combines a rock esthetic with classical knowledge, incorporating everything from bowed-note clusters and atmospheric ethereality to volume pedals and distortion effects into his playing. Rypdal, who continues to evolve as a composer and performer, credits his jazz sensibilities to educator George Russell, whom he first met at a workshop in Oslo. "I don't have a jazz background, but studying with George for two weeks was a big help," he said in *DownBeat* (October 1987). "What I learned from him was how to analyze music."

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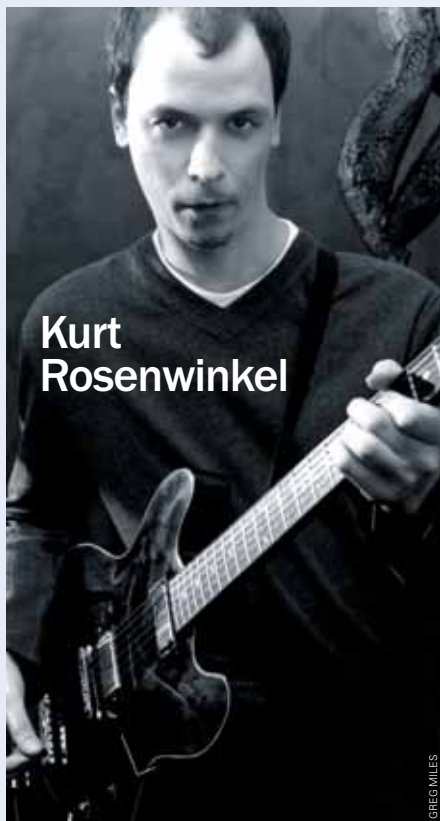
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## NEW-BREED SLINGERS



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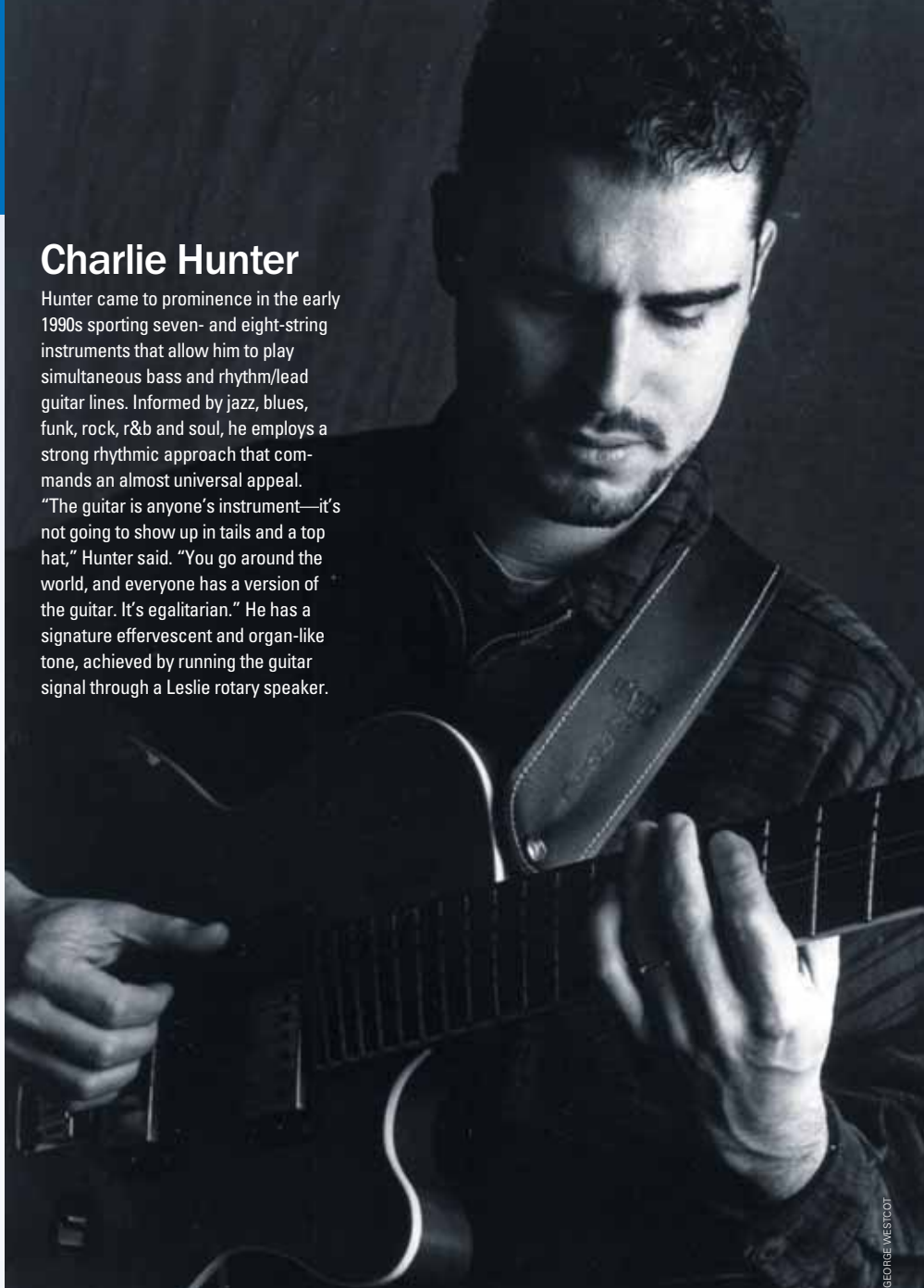
GREG MILES

Rosenwinkel has established an instantly recognizable voice on the guitar with his cascading lines and dark lyricism. An adventurous artist whose playing flows with perpetual melodicism, his signature tone includes touches of overdrive, sustain and echo. The singing quality of Rosenwinkel's instrument is enhanced by the fact that he frequently sings in unison with his single note lines, à la George Benson. He achieves a fluid connectivity with his deft left hand while retaining a sense of rhythmic syncopation with his right.

## Charlie Hunter

Hunter came to prominence in the early 1990s sporting seven- and eight-string instruments that allow him to play simultaneous bass and rhythm/lead guitar lines. Informed by jazz, blues, funk, rock, r&b and soul, he employs a strong rhythmic approach that commands an almost universal appeal.

"The guitar is anyone's instrument—it's not going to show up in tails and a top hat," Hunter said. "You go around the world, and everyone has a version of the guitar. It's egalitarian." He has a signature effervescent and organ-like tone, achieved by running the guitar signal through a Leslie rotary speaker.



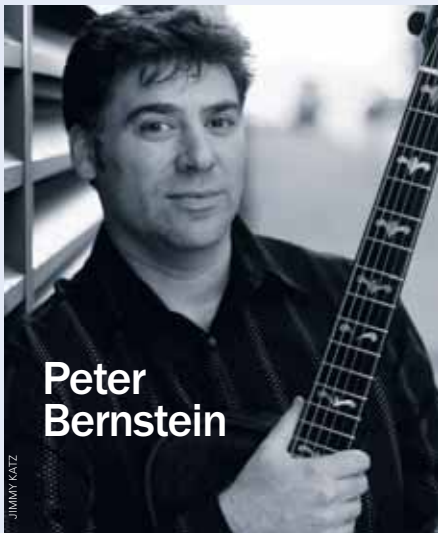
GEORGE WESTCOT



JIMMY KATZ

## Lionel Loueke

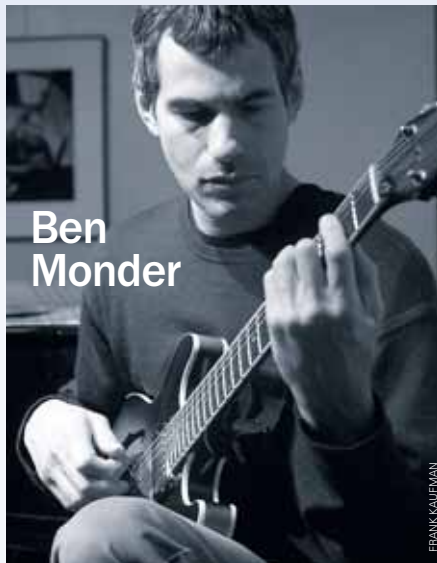
Born in the West African country of Benin, Loueke infuses his native culture with jazz guitar virtuosity. His soulful and organic melodies have thrilled audiences, both as a leader and as a contributor to recordings and tours with Herbie Hancock and Terence Blanchard. Loueke's guitar prowess shines through on *Karibu*, his recent debut for Blue Note, which showcases his skill as a composer and highlights the deft interplay of his long-trio of bassist Massimo Biolcati and drummer Ferenc Nemeth. He was voted Rising Star Guitarist in the 2007 and 2008 DownBeat Critics Polls. "I am representing the part of the world that I am from, which is the African continent," he said. "I see myself as the go-between for African music and jazz."



**Peter Bernstein**

JIMMY KATZ

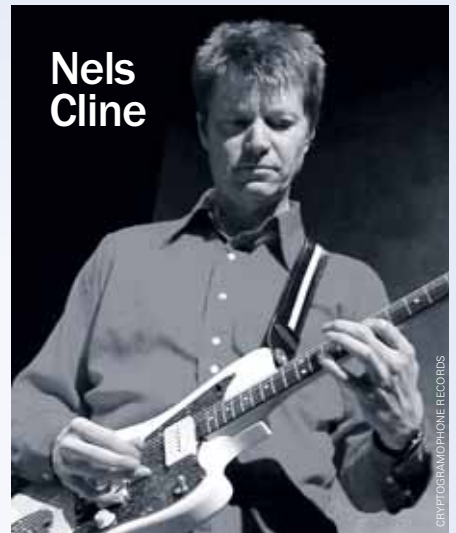
New York guitarist Bernstein has been a part of the jazz scene in the U.S. and abroad since 1989. He has participated in more than 60 recordings and numerous festival, concert and club performances with musicians from all generations, including Lou Donaldson, Jimmy Cobb, Larry Goldings, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Joshua Redman, Diana Krall, Nicholas Payton, Lee Konitz, Tom Harrell and Eric Alexander. Both as a sideman and a leader, Bernstein has become known for his melodic, bluesy approach, his keen sense of swing and overall good taste. His ultra-clean playing style is influenced by Wes Montgomery, Grant Green, Kenny Burrell, Charlie Christian and Jim Hall.



**Ben Monder**

FRANK KAUFMAN

After more than 20 years in New York, renegade guitarist Monder has played with a plethora of jazz notables, including Paul Motian, Guillermo Klein, Tim Berne, Jack McDuff, Lee Konitz and Maria Schneider. He has appeared on more than 100 CDs as a sideman. At the same time, Monder has done adventurous work as a leader, fronting his own trio and quartet internationally and releasing several CDs under his own name. At present, he holds a secure place as one of most sought-after players on the progressive jazz scene, an heir to the legacy of players such as John Abercrombie and Bill Frisell.



**Nels Cline**

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Cline is known for his wild forays into improvised melody and rhythm, as well as his use of guitar effects pedals and looping devices. Born in Los Angeles in 1956 and coming from a diverse musical twilight zone where cultural boundaries were expanded and altered, he has played with jazz musicians Charlie Haden, Gregg Bendian, Wadada Leo Smith, Tim Berne and Vinny Golia. Cline played an important role in the Acoustic Guitar Trio, a free-improvisation group that specialized in microtonal improvisation. He currently leads the free jazz ensemble The Nels Cline Singers and continues to expand his audience as a member of the rock band Wilco, which he joined in 2004. **DB**



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**IT AMAZES ME ...** [ZMR 200809]

Hailed by jazz piano legend Hank Jones as "one of the greatest and most under-exposed musicians in the history of jazz," New York alto saxophonist Bob Mover in a session with Dennis Irwin, Kenny Barron for his Zoho debut, first CD in 20 years.



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**ALLEGRO**



DB ARCHIVES /// July 20, 1961

# Wes Montgomery

By Ralph J. Gleason

Few jazz musicians have had the rise to professional acclaim that John Leslie (Wes) Montgomery, the guitar-playing member of the Indiana Montgomery family, has had in the last two years.

Up until that time almost unknown to the jazz public outside his native Indianapolis, Montgomery was heralded by Cannonball Adderley, Gunther Schuller, and other musicians who heard him, and was brought by Adderley to the attention of Orrin Keepnews of Riverside Records, who promptly recorded him.

Since that debut (his second, for he had toured with Lionel Hampton for two years in the early '40s), Montgomery has run away with the New Star guitar category in DownBeat's International Jazz Critics Poll and today seems a cinch to live up to his billing as the "best thing that has happened to the guitar since Charlie Christian."

For the last year, West has worked with his brothers, Buddy (vibes) and Monk (bass), as the Montgomery Brothers. The other two Montgomerys are half of the original Mastersounds quartet, which, a few years ago, won the Critics Poll as best new small group.

Pinned down recently between rehearsals and pool games (shooting pool is his only hobby), Wes discussed guitar players (including himself) with the ease and familiarity born of years of listening.

I started in 1943, right after I got married. I bought an amplifier and a guitar around two or three months later. I used to play a tenor guitar, but it wasn't playing, you know. I didn't really get down to business until I got the six-string, which was just like starting all over.

"I got interested in playing the guitar because of Charlie Christian. Like all other guitar players! There's no way out. I never saw him in my life but he said so much on the records that I don't care what instrument a cat played, if he didn't understand and didn't feel and really didn't get with the things that Charlie Christian was doing, he was a pretty poor musician—he was so far ahead.

"Before Charlie Christian I liked [Django] Reinhardt and Les Paul and those cats, but it wasn't what you'd call new. Just guitar. For the exciting, the new thing they didn't impress me like that. But Charlie Christian did. He stood out above all of it to me.

"Solo Flight was the first record I heard. Boy, that was too much! I still hear it! He was it for me, and I didn't look at nobody else. I didn't hear nobody else for about a year or so. Couldn't even hear them.

"I'm not really musically inclined. It takes guts, you know! I was 19 and I liked music, but it didn't really inspire me to go into things. But there was a cat living in Indianapolis named Alex Stevens. He played guitar, and he was about the toughest cat I heard around our vicinity, and I tried to get him to show me a few things.

"So eventually what I did was I took all of Charlie Christian's records, and I listened to them real good. I knew what he was doing on that guitar could be done on the one I had because I had a six string. So I was just determined I'd do it. I didn't quit. It didn't quite come out like that but I got pretty good at it, and I took all the solos off the records. I got a job playing just the solos, making money in a club. That's all I did—played Charlie Christian solos and then laid out! Mel Lee—he's the piano player with B.B. King—had the band and he helped me a lot.

"Then I went on the road with the Brownskin Models and later with Snookum Russell. Ray Brown was in the band at that time. I didn't realized he was playing so much bass until I heard him with Diz!

"Hamp was the only big band I went with—1948-'50. I didn't use any amplifier at all. He had a lot of things for the sextet but he never got to record that group.

"I'm so limited. I have a lot of ideas—well, a lot of thoughts—that I'd like to see done with the guitar. With the octaves, that was just a coincidence, going into octaves. It's such a challenge yet, you know, and there's a lot that can be done with it and with chord versions like block chords on piano. There are a lot of things can be done with that. But each of these things has a feeling of its own and it takes so much time to develop all your technique.

"I don't use a pick at all and that's one of the downfalls, too. In order to get a certain amount of speed, you should use a pick. You don't have to play fast, but being able to play fast can cause you to phrase better. If you had the technique you could phrase better, even if you don't play fast. I think you'd have more control of the instrument.

"I didn't like the sound of a pick. I tried it for about two months. I

didn't even use my thumb at all. But after two months time I still couldn't use the pick. So I said, 'Well, which are you going to do?' I liked the tone better with thumb, but I liked the technique with the pick. I couldn't have them both, so I just have to be cool.

"I think every instrument should have a certain amount of tone-quality within the instrument, but I can't seem to get the right amplifiers and things to get this thing out. I like to hear good phrasing. I'd like to hear a guitar play parts like instead of playing melodic lines, leave that and play chord versions of lines. Now, that's an awful hard thing to do, but it would be different. But I think in those terms, or if a cat could use octaves for a line instead of one note. Give you a double sound with a good tone to it. Should sound pretty good if you got another blending instrument with it.

**O**ther guitar players? Well, Barney Kessel. I've got to go for that. He's got a lot of feeling and a good conception of chords in a jazz manner. He's still trying to do a lot of things, and he's not just standing still with guitar, just settling for one particular level. He's still doing all he can, and that's one thing I appreciate about him. He's trying to phrase, also. He's trying to get away from the guitar phrase and get into horn phrasing.

"And Tal Farlow. Tal Farlow strikes me as different altogether. He doesn't have as much feeling as Barney Kessel, but he's got more drive in his playing, and his technique along with that drive is pretty exciting. He makes it exciting. He's got a better conception of modern chords than the average guitar player.

"A lot of guitar players can play modern chords, they can take a solo of modern chords, but they're liable to leave it within the solo range that they're in. They're liable to get away from it and then come back to it, get away from it and come back to it. Tal Farlow usually stays right on it.

"Jimmy Raney is just the opposite from Tal Farlow. They seem like they have the same ideas in mind, the same changes, the same runs, the same kind of feeling. But Jimmy Raney is so smooth. He does it without a mistake, like some cats play piano they couldn't make a mistake if they wanted to. That's the way Jimmy Raney is. He gives it a real soft touch, but the ideas are just like Tal Farlow's to me.

"And then George Henry, a cat I heard in Chicago. He's a playing cat. He asked could he play a tune, and so he gets up there, and that's the first time I ever heard a guitar phrase like Charlie Parker. It was just the solos, the chords and things he used were just like any other cat, you know. And there's another guy from Houston who plays with his thumb.

"And naturally, Reinhardt, he's in a different thing altogether. And Charlie Byrd. You know, I like all guitar players. I like what they play. But to stand out like Charlie Christian. Well, I guess it's just one of those things.

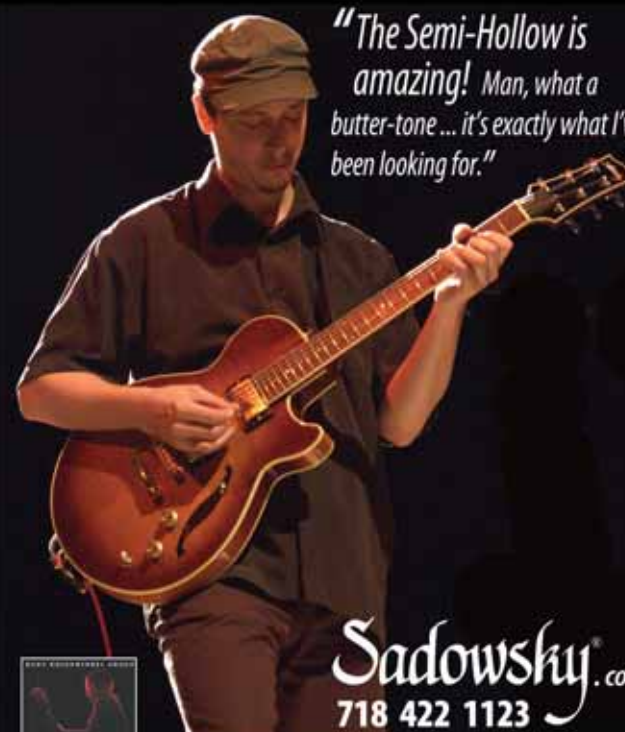
**M**y aim is to be able to move from one vein to another without any trouble. If you were going to take a melody line or counterpoint or unison lines with another instrument, do that and then, maybe after a certain point, you drop out completely, and maybe the next time you'll play phrases and chords or something or maybe you'll take octaves. That way you have a lot of variations, if you can control each one of them and still keep feeling it. To me the biggest thing is to keep the feeling within your playing regardless of what you play. Keep a feeling there, and that's hard to do.

"You know, John Coltrane was been sort of a god to me. Seems like, in a way, he didn't get the inspiration out of other musicians. He had it. When you hear a cat do a thing like that, you got to go along with him. I think I heard Coltrane before I really got close to Miles. Miles had a tricky way of playing his horn that I didn't understand as much as I did Coltrane. I really didn't understand what Coltrane was doing, but it was so exciting the thing that he was doing. Then after I really began to understand Miles, then Miles came up on top.

"Now this may sound pretty weird—the way I feel when I'm up there playing the way I play doesn't match—but it's like some cats are holding your hands, and they'll keep you in there. If you try to keep up to them, they'll lose you, you know. And I like that." **DB**

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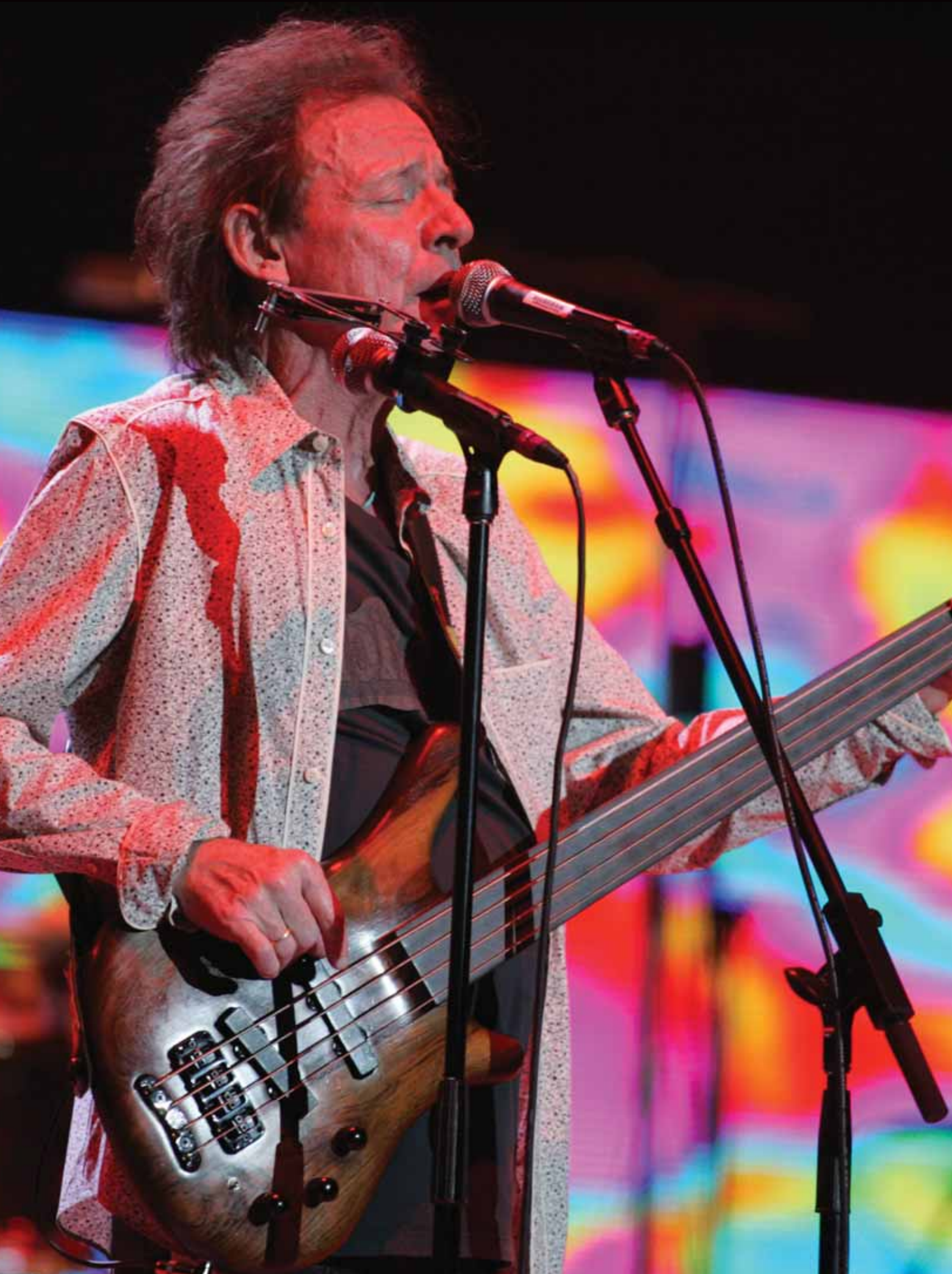
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By Frank-John Hadley

# FAR *from* SLUMMING

## How Rock Legend Jack Bruce Built His Jazz and Blues Bona Fides

Jack Bruce was all smiles backstage. “All right!” he exclaimed, trilling the letter “r” as native Scots always do. The Cream bass player had just learned that the Bergen Performing Arts Center, tonight’s concert site, was in a downtown section of Englewood, N.J., named after a former resident who’s one of his favorite beboppers. Minutes earlier, he was outside the theater with a group of autograph seekers and failed to notice the diamond-shaped street pole sign—Dizzy Gillespie’s Place.

Gillespie’s home turf proved appropriate to the occasion. Sixty-five-year-old Bruce, probably the most accomplished bass player in rock history, as well as one of its most distinctive singers and imaginative songwriters, was in town on a 1960s rock-nostalgia tour called Hippiefest. But he was also there to talk about his longtime, passionate involvement with jazz and blues, which indelibly touched Cream and the idiosyncratic solo career that has existed in the deep shadow cast by rock’s first superstar band. This story’s largely unknown, though long-faithful *DownBeat* readers may recall him placing in the annual polls and his genre-crossing work with Carla Bley, Tony Williams and Kip Hanrahan. Recent generations of music fans have little if any knowledge of Bruce’s role in fathering and developing British blues, r&b and rock. He’s certainly not just another aging rock star.

It’s possible to play catch-up with some of Bruce’s past music thanks to three new releases. The six-CD box set *Can You Follow?* (Enigma) surveys his recording career from the early 1960s to the present decade, with emphasis on his individualized progressive rock style. The triple-disc *Spirit: Live At The BBC, 1971–1978* (Polydor) showcases two of his bands—one jazz-rock oriented, the other a rock outfit with Bley—and a free-wheeling jazz trio of Bruce, John Surman and drummer Jon Hiseman. The album *hr-Bigband Featuring Jack Bruce* (hr-musik) features Bruce with an explosive 19-piece band in a concert of Cream and solo-career tunes in Frankfurt in 2006.

### Was jazz important to you as a young boy in Glasgow?

Yeah, jazz was part of my family. It was a musical family. My mother and father were ballroom dancers and my father was knowledgeable about jazz. He loved Fats Waller, and he played piano in an approximation of Fats. My mother was teaching me Scottish folk songs. There was always a lot of music in the house, mostly live.

### Did you hear any touring American jazz musicians?

We went to see some concerts in the 1950s. I remember Jazz at the Philharmonic, with Ray Brown, and going to see the MJQ with Percy Heath. I was attracted to the bass when I was about 14. The instrument was free at school, an old bass standing in the corner, nobody wanted to learn it. They brought in a teacher for me—an old man, a good teacher—and he said, “You’re not big enough yet, your hands aren’t big enough yet, you’re not tall enough.” So I took up the cello.

### You studied classical music?

That was the first thing I was taught at college. I was always attracted to the more modern aspects of the music: Stravinsky, Messiaen. In those days, they weren’t recognized as having a strict mainstream quality, so being rebellious I immediately went for everything like that.

I’ve always liked to improvise. There was a piano at home—they bought it for my brother Charlie, a promising player in a George Shearing direction—but when there was nobody home I tried things out.

### You took up double bass and started playing in London jazz bands in the early 1960s.

I could make a living out of music. I never thought I’d be famous. I was undiscerning. If somebody asked me to play in a country and western band or a Scottish country dance group, I’d do it for the money and experience. It gave me a wider knowledge than the average rock star.



### When did you first encounter Ginger Baker?

I had this band at Cambridge, St. Johns College, and I heard this amazing band playing in a cellar on campus. That was [saxophonist] Dick Heckstall-Smith with Ginger Baker on the drums. I'd never heard the drums played like that live. It compared to Elvin Jones. Ginger was the loudest drummer I'd ever heard, but also exciting in how he looked and the whole presence. I had to play with him, so I asked if I could sit in. Dick was the bandleader. He must have thought I was a student and said, "No, we don't allow that without prior arrangement." I kept asking him and eventually I brought my

bass and carried it through the crowd to the stage. He tried to cut me. He said we were going to do a ballad, "Lover Man," and said, "You play the melody." He was amazed when I did it. Then we did a blues. They were surprised I could do that. Then I left. Dick spent about a month trying to find me.

### Dick got you into Alexis Komer's Blues Incorporated, your introduction to the blues, right?

Blues Incorporated was like an early fusion band. We were playing blues but applying our own jazz sensibilities, in the same way [Charles] Mingus did with a lot of his records. When I

joined the band had Charlie Watts on drums, Alexis [on guitar and vocals], Cyril Davies on blues harmonica and Johnny Parker, the pianist for the Humphrey Lyttleton Band.

### Did most English jazz musicians frown on Blues Incorporated?

Yeah. All the early British rock records, as with all the early American rock 'n' roll records, had jazz players slumming, playing sessions. But if you were taking it seriously, you were looked down on. The generation before us—Ronnie Scott, Bobby Wellins—as great as they were, never got what we were about. We thought we had our own identity because we had time to absorb a lot of those influences, including the new movement of people like Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy.

### You mentioned Mingus earlier. Were you listening to him a lot?

All the time. I first became aware of Mingus when I worked on an American air force base in Italy when I was about 18. Once a week there was a jazz evening when people would play records. They had an amazing record library, and me being a bass player, one of the guys said, "You got to hear this guy!" There it was, Charles Mingus. That changed the direction of my thinking because he became the person that I wanted to emulate. Before that it was a player like Scott LaFaro, but Mingus was a composer, which was what I wanted to be.

### What about Mingus influenced you?

His approach. Maybe a technical and fast approach didn't interest him or maybe he wasn't technically equipped to do that. I think he played the bass in the same way that I see the bass in my hands: as an adjunct of myself, not as an instrument. When I was young I was [impressed] by technique but now the chops are just part of what I do. When Mingus was younger—*Jazz At Massey Hall*—and listen to *Mingus Ah Um* later on, the bass is possibly under-recorded compared to other jazz records of the time. I'm sure he was involved in the mix. He wasn't trying to put the bass out front.

### Cream formed after you left Manfred Mann, Clapton split Mayall's Bluebreakers and Baker quit Graham Bond. Do you think you revolutionized rock?

Ginger and I were playing a free-jazz improvisational approach within a rock band. When the band started, we all had different ideas about what the band was. Eric thought it was a backing band for his blues guitar, and Ginger—it was basically his band—I don't know what he thought it was. I felt it was a vehicle for my songs.

### There seemed to be jazz motion and spark to several songs you wrote for Cream, and blues underscored everything.

It must all be there because those were the things

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that I loved. A song like "I Feel Free" exists in the air of the time. If somebody invents the television, there are another six people who are about to invent it. That's the same thing with songs. The approach to the pop song that I was trying to do, with Pete Brown's lyrics, was to come up with some surprising approaches, not the traditional song form.

**The commercial success of Cream allowed you to do an acoustic-jazz album, *Things We Like*.**

I had this material, some of which I had written as a child, and hence the title, which was a reading book that you'd get in Britain. It was an opportunity to record with Dick Heckstall-Smith and Jon Hiseman. It started off as a trio, which the record was supposed to be. I'd written material for a trio and then I ran into John McLaughlin after the first day's recording. We'd already recorded the first two tracks. He was a bit down because he wanted to join Tony Williams in New York, but he didn't have the money. So I said, "Why don't you come and play on my record, it'll give you enough money so you can go." He came, and the rest of it is for a quartet.

I was planning my first tour with my first band, Jack Bruce & Friends, with Mitch Mitchell, Larry Coryell and Mike Mandel. The first gig we did in the States was the Fillmore East, two nights there. The first night Jimi Hendrix came down and Carla Bley, too. It was bizarre. The second night, John brought Tony Williams down. Tony said to me, "Do you want to join my band?" This was the opening of my U.S. tour with my first band! I said, "OK, sure man." (*laughs*) Lifetime was just a trio at the time with Williams, McLaughlin and Larry Young. I don't know why they had the idea of luring me in when they did.

**Tony Williams Lifetime sounded like no one else. The albums don't do it justice.**

The problem that we had was trying to get that on record—it was so intense. We never managed to achieve that. The intensity made it almost impossible for the technology to preserve it. The people who actually saw a gig were blown away. I still get people coming up to me, in Europe in particular, saying, "I saw you at such and such and I was never the same again." (*laughs*) It was unbelievable to play with Tony. It was like playing with Baby Dodds. He was the continuation of this tradition.

**After working with Tony, you recorded with Carla Bley and Paul Haines on the three-record *Escalator Over The Hill*.**

I've been listening to that again. I love Carla's writing and her singing makes me laugh. It's vast. There's so much humor in it. I was playing with Don Cherry! Paul Motian! What can you say? It was amazing to be around, and there's some good stuff on there, lots of imagination.

**You crossed paths with Rahsaan Roland Kirk. What a fantastic experience to play with him,**

but even better than playing with him was an astonishing gig at Ronnie Scott's when he was doing his circular breathing thing, and he was playing this one note on one of his saxophones, and at the same time he lifted the bass player in his band, Malcolm Cecil, and threw him and his bass off the stand into the audience. (*laughs*) Wow! He had something out of this world.

**Have you been open to Latin jazz for long?**

I heard the Dizzy Gillespie band with Chano Pozo when I was a kid and I loved the band. I love the rhythms. The reason I got into playing it was because of Kip Hanrahan. When I was liv-

ing in Germany in the 1980s, this cassette arrived with a letter saying, "Please listen to this and if you'd like to come and sing on top of this." It was some of the most beautiful music I'd ever heard. I went to New York and that was the beginning of our relationship.

**Your recent band with Vernon Reid and Bernie Worrell had a Latin rhythm section, yes?**

Yeah. Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Robby Ameen, Richie Flores and occasionally I'd have some other people, but that was the basic touring band. I love playing with those guys, and I find it an exciting approach to rock. **DB**

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## Polyphonic Guitar Music in 24 Keys

My new book and CD, *Etudes For Solo Guitar In 24 Keys*, features compositions that explore the 12 major and 12 minor keys that have served as the basis for Western music since the practicality of the tempered scale first became a reality with J.S. Bach's *Preludes And Fugues For Well-Tempered Clavier* in the 1720s. All instruments have specific keys that offer the widest range of possibilities to them, and the guitar is no exception to this physical reality. However, the guitar functions well in all keys, even those that lay outside the range of ones traditionally favored by guitarists.

Like Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, each of my etudes is composed in one of the 24 keys that the tempered scale makes usable. In addition to exploring a key, and, in some cases, using interrelated harmonic material to pass through harmonic areas that may appear to be only remotely related to the "parent key," each etude also explores specific technical and formal issues germane to guitarists.

"Etude #17" (in A $\flat$  minor) requires the player to maintain the independence of three parts by simultaneously playing a bass part, the melody and the chordal comping in between. This etude is in an AABA form, with an extension of the opening vamp serving as its ending. The rhythmic structure of "Etude #17" is loosely based on a rhythm associated with choro music from Brazil, called maxixe.

The harmonic content of the A section plays off the differences between various types of minor tonalities our music inherited. These range from modal (exemplified by Dorian occurring in the first bar of the intro and the first bar of the first ending) to the suggestion of harmonic minor (in the second bar of the intro and

### ETUDE #17

the first ending). The B section exploits the possibility of multiple harmonic interpretations of several chords. This process is facilitated by the aforementioned interrelated harmonic material, which the tempered scale makes possible.

By using a cyclical bass line beginning on the relative major chord (C $\flat$ ), the piece moves counterclockwise around the cycle of fifths until it arrives at the substitute V7 of the same C $\flat$  major chord that starts the B section (bars

15–18), and then moves to the substitute V7 of the tonic A $\flat$  minor chord (bars 19–20).

My primary concern in each of the etudes is its musical content. My approach to notating the music is rooted in the methods Brahms employed, especially in his late piano works, such as the intermezzi of "Opus 117," "Opus 118" and "Opus 119." This approach illustrates and maintains the polyphonic independence between the voices by indicating each voice's

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rhythmic autonomy and each note's duration.

The fingerings were added well after the etudes were composed, and even after I recorded them. These are not the only workable fingerings. I encourage guitarists to explore other possibilities.

The collection of etudes from which "Etude #17" was excerpted can offer pedagogical guidance to guitarists interested in exploring all 24 keys of the harmonic system that forms the basis

of all Western music, while being musically appealing so that players will actually want to play them. They can also provide some food for thought for non-guitarist composers who long to write imaginatively for what is, after all, the world's most popular instrument. **DB**

Guitarist Ken Hatfield can be reached through his web site, [kenhatfield.com](http://kenhatfield.com).



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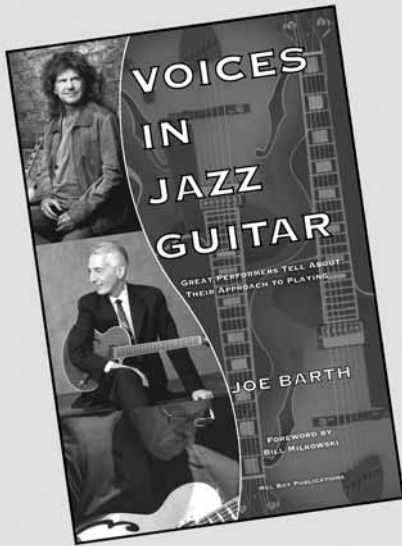
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## Woodshed

### ///GUITAR//SCHOOL String Set Basics

A string set is the number of strings a phrase or chord encompasses. In the example, I created a four-bar II-V-I progression, which starts on the second string and extends down to the sixth string. That phrase encompasses five strings, and since the guitar has six strings, it's logical that this line, using approximately the same fingering, can be played on one other string set.

That string set would also encompass five strings, and would start from the first string and go as far as the fifth string. The first example shows the first string set, and the second example, which is the same phrase, shows the second.

You now have two string sets on which you can play this phrase using approximately the same fingering. I say approximately because of the difference in the interval, which is a major 3rd, between the third string (G) and second string (B). Because the guitar is tuned in fourths from the sixth string (low E) going up, except between the third and second string, you need to make adjustments, but not to a point of changing the fingering of the phrase completely.

Besides being able to play this phrase on

## MASTER CLASS

by Mark Elf



both string sets, it is important to know how these notes relate to the chords. You should physically see some form of the chord while playing the phrase. The more you hear and see what goes on while playing the phrase, the more likely you will be able to change notes later on—mainly by hearing, but also by seeing other options that the chord and chord scale make available for you. The most creative players constantly try to play something different every time, but they must have a language and vocabulary from which to cultivate ideas. **DB**

To delve deeper into more of guitarist Mark Elf's teaching, visit his new online guitar conservatory, [markelfconservatory.com](http://markelfconservatory.com).

#### EXAMPLE: Two String Sets

The analyzations under each note represent what the note functions are based on the chord and chord scale.

You can analyze and hear this from two standpoints—either an extended G7#5 into this measure or the Eb is a chromatic approach note to the second beat or 9th (D) of the CMaj7.

ch = chromatic

The four-bar phrase above uses five strings, the second string or B string to the sixth string or low E string. This is a string set. Because it encompasses five strings, we can play this idea using approximately the same fingering on two string sets. The next string set starts on the first string or high E string, and ends up on the fifth string, or A string.

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**SOLO**  
by Jimi Durso

## ////GUITAR//SCHOOL

### Stanley Clarke's Q&A Solo on 'Desert Song'

Although he is best-known for his innovations in bass guitar playing, Stanley Clarke is also a virtuoso double bassist, as evidenced by his solo on "Desert Song," taken from his 1976 classic *School Days* (Sony). An acoustic duet with guitarist John McLaughlin, this solo showcases Clarke's impeccable technique, tone and time, as well as his imaginative way of creating a compelling statement.

Clarke constructs his phrases in a question-

and-answer format, with the space between the phrases taking up more time than the phrases themselves. Note that the first four phrases resolve to the 9th, root, 9th and root, respectively. This makes the second and fourth licks sound like answers to the first and third. Then, after one phrase (measure 7) resolves to the suspended 4th (the 5th of the D triad), the next four phrases resolve to the F#. Besides being the 9th of E, the F# is also the 3rd of the D triad. By

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repeating this idea, Clarke foreshadows the upcoming chord and allows his melody to bridge this section. His phrases also get longer and more dense, leading up to the string of 16ths and 32nds in measures 16–18.

Clarke plays almost his entire solo within the E Mixolydian scale, which fits the modal nature of “Desert Song.” For the first two-thirds of the solo, the predominant chords are E7sus4 and D/E, enhanced by the E major triads McLaughlin plays, at times, preceding the D/E. E Mixolydian fits these chords well, and the only time Clarke goes outside of this sound is with the G natural in measure 19. This measure, and the following three measures, imply C# minor pentatonic. The G is the flatted 5th of this scale, which creates a bluesy sound. This idea also sets up his ending.

The last section (measure 27 to the end) has the chords E, A and B, which the scale E major would suit better than Mixolydian, due to the D# in the B-major chord. Instead of using this scale, Clarke reverts to pentatonics, playing what could be construed as either E-major pentatonic or C#-minor pentatonic, or even A-major pentatonic, because of all the A chords in this section. He also plays a group of four notes in a sextuplet rhythm, building to a crescendo and producing a spectacular ending for his solo.

Note how his ending hearkens back to measure 16. In that measure, Clarke plays a four-note repetitive phrase, only this one is Mixolydian and is played in 16ths. In measure 18, he double-times the lick, playing the same four notes as 32nds, creating a dramatic increase in energy. Both of these phrases are especially effective juxtaposed against the relatively sparse sound around them.

Another example of sparse playing in the middle of a busy section can be found in measures 23 to 26. Here, the chords deviate radically from E Mixolydian. Curiously, Clarke drops to the pedal tone anchoring all the chords, playing what functions more as a bass line than a solo. It sounds as if Clarke’s solo has finished, which makes the polyrhythmic ending line such a wonderful surprise. **DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist in the New York area. He can be reached at jimidurso.com.

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By Ted Panken Photo by Jack Vartoogian

# FINDING Harmony

## Saxophonist David Binney Assembles His Generational Peers to Inspire New Music

On those increasingly infrequent occasions when alto saxophonist David Binney comes off the road to his Manhattan home, he plays alternate Tuesdays in the cramped back corner of the 55 Bar, the low-ceilinged ex-speakeasy in Greenwich Village.

"I've done the gig for eight years," Binney said before hit time in late August, many times, he noted, with his partners this evening—pianist Jacob Sacks, bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Dan Weiss. "The 55 is why I've had real bands. I used to invite whoever was available, or I'd think of weird mixtures of people."

Binney was no stranger to the friendly confines when he launched this residence in 2000, after working as a sideman for two years of Tuesday nights with Leni Stern. During the early '90s, before the 55 had morphed from its identity as a fusion-oriented "dive bar," he came in occasionally with the collective quartet Lost Tribe. As the decade progressed, he workshopped the music for the albums *The Luxury Of Guessing* (Audioquest) and *Free To Dream* (Mythology) that began to spread his reputation, convening such A-listers-to-be as Uri Caine, Edward Simon, Donny McCaslin, Alex Sipiagin, Ben Monder, Adam Rogers, Scott Colley, Jeff Hirschfield and Kenny Wollesen for his ensembles. After 2001, the late Queva Lutz, who had bought the premises, hired Binney to book the room.

"Queva wanted to clean it up and weed out the stuff she didn't like musically," Binney said. "We became friends, and since she didn't know the jazz scene, she put a lot of responsibility on me to bring in musicians. I brought in a bunch of my friends, and suggested people who I knew would draw."

Those friends included Tim Berne, Ellery Eskelin, Caine and Chris Potter, who used the opportunity to have new bands develop new works. So did Binney, who hired the latter pair as sidemen for his own projects, for which he also recruited, among others, Craig Taborn, Mark Turner, Jim Black, Tim Lefebvre and Wayne Krantz. Binney composed vigorously for his various configurations, including a suite for a sextet comprised of Potter, Caine, Rogers, Colley and Brian Blade, which made *South* in June 2000. That September, each of these emerging stars was in town, and Binney convened them for a multnight run.

"It was so successful that Queva suggested we do it next year," Binney recalled. Annually until 2007, the members of the Welcome to Life Sextet (named after Binney's 2004 album) arranged their schedules to perform Binney's music before overflow crowds. This run would end the following week, but if Binney felt any regrets at this end—or momentary disruption—they were well-disguised.

"Chris lives in Budapest now, and everybody's busy, so we can't keep it going," he said. "I guess I could have booked it at another time, but there's so much other stuff happening."

The next night, Binney, 47, flew to Syria to play with Krantz at a jazz festival. Then it was on to Europe for gigs with his Cities of Desire quintet, on which the Sacks–Morgan–Weiss unit frames a Binney–Mark Turner front line. (A tireless road warrior, Binney's "biggest thing is to get the music out there, create new projects, try to do new things. I push myself because I enjoy it.")

Binney was also preoccupied with mixing and sequencing an all-acoustic quartet session with Taborn,



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BLUE NOTE

Colley and Blade for release on his imprint, Mythology. Fresh from two European road trips, the unit interpreted Binney's repertoire with studio precision and bandstand freshness over two days in August at Systems Two Studios in Brooklyn.

By the middle of day two, all but one of the tunes were wrapped. While Binney attended to some production details, his sidemen discussed the seductions of his music.

"Dave gives you melodies that you can connect to, that give the song character," Colley said. "But he puts them next to open sections to create something over his ideas—to listen, connect, have a real dialogue within the context of these melodies. It's similar to what Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter do in terms of leading in a way that doesn't dictate, setting up an environment where everyone can experiment, hopefully not allowing ego to overshadow any aspect of the music."

Taborn emphasized the harmonic lure of Binney's music. "The way Dave works with chords and harmony is almost patented," Taborn said. "You could play him for a number of people, especially musicians in New York, and they'll identify him. Dave comes from many places—some tunes might have a subtle relationship to Brazilian music, or straight-up pop or alternative rock, some might be funk, fusion or post-bop."

Blade said that the group anticipates working to find new paths into Binney's music. "It's great to wait for the next new batch of writing that he brings," the drummer said. "It can be dense, abstract and harmonically complex, but also transparent. It's great to be in a band that isn't an apprenticeship where you feel like an elder is bringing you along, where you're from the same generation, and inspired by each other."

It's intriguing that Binney, who moved to New York in 1980 from Carpinteria, Calif., a beach community just north of Los Angeles, eschewed the high-visibility apprenticeship-sideman path taken by his younger colleagues.

"I often talk to students about not doing things before you're ready to do them," Binney said. "I'm stubborn, and always thought that if I did things a certain way, I would end up having a career as a saxophone player. I dreamed about being a sideman, but I was shy when I came to New York, and I didn't start to break out of my shyness until my late 20s. I never memorized or transcribed solos, and I didn't know a lot of standards, although I grew up playing standards all the time—I'd get on stage and forget the tunes. You could get vibed off the stage if people didn't like you. I just assimilated all this stuff I was listening to."

As a teenager, Binney attended a "loose California '70s high school, like *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*—we were always in our bathing suits and sitting outside, and people ordered pizzas in class."

He recalled a graduation meeting with his guidance counselor. "She asked what I wanted to be," he said. "I said, 'A musician.' 'What do you want to do for your job, though?' 'I want to be a musician.' She told me that I couldn't do that, that I had to get a real career. I got angry and walked out. It was the best guidance-counseling session I could have asked for. That's when I knew I was going to leave California and come to New York and be a musician."

In the '80s, Binney worked various day jobs and did sporadic journeyman gigs. "I had a Wurlitzer piano, and started composing even though I had no outlet for it," he said. "Then I started to bring out tunes at little sessions."

In 1989, on the strength of a National Endowment of the Arts grant, Binney recorded his opening salvo, *Point Game*, using Rogers and Simon, then an 18-year-old wunderkind, as well as M-Basers Marvin "Smitty" Smith and Lonnie Plaxico.

"When I returned Dave's call, I heard this great music on his answering machine, which I later found out was his," Rogers said. "There was a funk influence, a jazz influence melodically and harmonically, and a bit of an M-Base thing all stirred together—and that mysterious thing you can't put your finger on when you want to hear something again."

Rogers was playing trio with bassist Fima Ephron and drummer Ben Perowsky, and invit-

ed Binney to join them. Rogers noticed that as Binney wrote for this group and several other projects, he "chipped away at the edifice, got rid of superfluous components and came up with a succinct composing style of his own."

"I was an outsider in the M-Base scene, and they definitely let me know it," Binney said. "I didn't change my music deliberately, but I always had that pop thing in my head, and when Smitty got the gig on 'The Tonight Show,' I began to disassociate myself from those players. I started to do all-acoustic stuff. I like the sound of horns and arranging for them. Every once in a while I'll make an electric record, but most of them have been acoustic. I keep the two worlds separate."

On his web site, Binney offers mixed versions of his concerts for download at \$5.99 a pop, placing the proceeds into an account that he uses to produce studio recordings for Mythology. One such download is a June club date with Krantz, Lefebvre and drummer Nate Wood, a band he intends to tour in 2009.

"I'd like to record that band, whether or not it's under my name," he said. "When I was a kid, electric music was Weather Report, John McLaughlin and Return To Forever, and everything was super-composed. Now the most improvisation that I do is the band with Wayne Krantz—we don't have any writing or tunes, but just improvise. Any sound is valid. It may

not be obvious to people, but much of our esthetic comes from people like Tim Berne, Oliver Lake and the Art Ensemble—or Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders, even if I'm not overblowing the horn. It's free."

Always a formidable technician on his instrument, with a dark, tenor-like tonal conception (think David Sanborn meets Gary Bartz and Sonny Fortune), Binney has developed a broad range of improvisational strategies over the past decade, a process facilitated by his two-horn encounters with McCaslin, Turner and Potter.

"Chris and I are good foils," Binney said. "Standing next to him on all these gigs and hearing his monstrous technique has influenced me deeply, and I've influenced him on an emotional level—sometimes I hear him do things that I know he didn't do before we played together."

Potter concurred with Binney's assessment. "That's true," he said. "I learned a lot from Dave, not just music he was checking out that I wasn't aware of, but also the idea that it's OK to like a lot of music and use it in your own music. I think of him in a more compositional way, but the way he plays saxophone is how he puts forth his musical points, the language he expresses is developed—he's checked out a lot of possibilities for using different scales, harmonies and ideas." **DB**



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Jazz can be heard in almost every corner of the world. So, wherever your travels may take you, here are some spots to check out what's best in the worlds of jazz, blues and beyond.

## EAST COAST

### New York

#### 55 Bar

**55 Christopher St. // 55bar.com**

The Prohibition-era West Village bar boasts a thriving jazz and blues menu of under-the-radar artists. It's been a haven for guitarists (Wayne Krantz, Mike Stern), saxophonists (David Binney) and such fine vocalists as KJ Denhart.

#### Barbès

**376 9th St., Brooklyn // barbesbrooklyn.com**

Brooklyn's top neighborhood community cultural center, Barbès hosts a diversity of musical genres in its intimate back room, including opera, African, Brazilian, klezmer and accordion. But it's also home to rising jazz stars.

#### Birdland

**315 W. 44th St. // birdlandjazz.com**

Birdland attracts locals and out-of-towners with its top-notch weeklong acts such as Dave Holland, Roy Haynes, Ron Carter and Pat Martino. The club also hosts weekly jazz orchestras, including those led by David Berger and Arturo O'Farrill.

#### Blue Note

**131 W. 3rd St. // bluenote.net**

You're packed in, and the stage is set up mid-house in the long, narrow room. But the jazz action is impeccable in its programming, whether it's Chick Corea, Cassandra Wilson or the Yellowjackets. In addition to the headliners, the Blue Note features Sunday jazz brunches and a late-night groove series.

#### Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola

**Broadway at 60th Street, 5th Floor // jalc.org/dccc**

Dizzy's offers the best view of any New York club: overlooking Columbus Circle and Central Park. The 365-nights-a-year component of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Dizzy's was designed for jazz. Sight lines are excellent, and after-hours sets with rising stars take place Tuesday through Saturday.

#### Fat Cat

**75 Christopher St. // fatcatmusic.org**

A West Village small space for rising-star locals, Fat Cat usually features two jazz acts a night and a late-night jam that runs until 5 a.m. It's also one of the best billiards hangs in the city.

#### Iridium

**1650 Broadway // iridiumjazzclub.com**

The Iridium draws crowds for its top-flight jazz acts coming through town. The weeklong stints feature a range of hard-core jazz, including recently Pharoah Sanders and Freddie Hubbard. The room has good sight lines and sound. Plus, every Monday night, Les Paul performs.

#### Jazz Gallery

**290 Hudson St. // jazzgallery.org**

The Jazz Gallery is a not-for-profit jazz center that features jazz vets (such as Roy Hargrove) as well as emerging noteworthies (Miguel Zenón). It's also the home base for Steve Coleman's experimentations. Its new innovation is commissioning large ensembles to debut new works there this year.

#### Jazz Standard

**116 E. 27th St. // jazzstandard.net**

The Jazz Standard is one of the most comfortable rooms in New York to see jazz. Downstairs from the Blue Smoke BBQ restaurant, it features acts such as Dave Douglas and Anat Cohen. The club is the home base of the Mingus heritage bands every Monday night.

#### Joe's Pub

**425 Lafayette St. // joespub.com**

The best New York spot to watch live music in a club is Joe's Pub. A part of the Public Theater, it features an eclectic lineup, from pop to world to jazz. The jazz fare includes one-of-a-kind acts unlikely to perform at any other club in the city.

#### Kitano

**66 Park Ave. // kitano.com**

It's no Yoshi's, but this Midtown jazz venue has a Japanese

flair to its setting that features a Japanese restaurant and hotel. The straightahead music takes place Wednesday through Sunday in the upscale 70-person Bar Lounge.

#### (Le) Poisson Rouge

**158 Bleecker St. // lepoissonrouge.com**

The new 800-capacity multi-arts venue occupies the Greenwich Village space of the legendary Village Gate. The music is an eclectic mix that includes jazz, classical, DJ sets, bluegrass and the "Salsa Meets Jazz" series by former Village Gate proprietor, Art D'Lugoff.

#### Smalls

**183 W. 10th St. // smallsjazzclub.com**

Smalls offers superb bookings as well as its own record label. Each night two or three groups perform. Priding itself in featuring cutting-edge music, it also hosts after-hours, all-night jazz jams that often attract jazz stars.

#### Smoke

**2751 Broadway // smokejazz.com**

The Uptown room south of Harlem features straightahead groups, B-3 organ shows and Latin. The inside is antiques—plush velvet curtains, chandeliers—and the club hosts open jam sessions, B-3 groove nights and strong marquee acts.

#### The Stone

**Avenue C and 2nd Street // thestonenyc.com**

The Stone is John Zorn's baby. He serves as artistic director and visionary behind a space that gives 100 percent of the door to the musicians. The Stone features cutting-edge experimental jazz artists presented by guest curators who program the space for a month at a stretch.

#### Sweet Rhythm

**88 7th Ave. South // sweetrhythmny.com**

Sweet Rhythm offers a mix of jazz with world music. Top-drawer acts perform here, and New School University's jazz and contemporary music program presents student ensembles on Monday nights. It features a vocals series on Tuesday and a late-night session on Thursday.



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## Tea Lounge

**837 Union St., Brooklyn // tealoungeny.com**

Another Brooklyn haunt of locally based up-and-comers, Tea Lounge has moved to a new location after losing its rent in its previous space. It features an array of experimental world jazz to complement its wide assortment of tea.

## Village Vanguard

**178 Seventh Ave. South // villagevanguard.net**

The Village Vanguard is a living legend. It's a cramped, triangular basement room that seats 123 that will be celebrating its 75th birthday next year. It continues to be adventurous in its bookings, which range from such regulars as Cedar Walton and Wynton Marsalis to Bill Frisell and The Bad Plus. On Mondays the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra holds forth.

## New Jersey

### Shanghai Jazz Restaurant & Bar

**24 Main St., Madison, N.J. // shanghaijazz.com**

The 85-seat North Jersey club boasts a dining room with an unobstructed view of the stage, a pan-Asian menu and a roster of artists culled from New York's metro area. John and Bucky Pizzarelli, Steve Turre, Russell Malone, Claudio Roditi and Javon Jackson are among the featured performers.

## Boston

### The Beehive

**541 Tremont St. // beehiveboston.com**

In the old boiler room, this bistro with hip decor and a comfort food menu benefits from creative bookings like Alain Bédard's Auguste Quintet (from Montreal), Donny McCaslin and local favorite Leo Genovese. Hot salsa explodes every Sunday.

### Regattabar

**1 Bennett St., Cambridge // regattabarjazz.com**

A favorite of visitors to Harvard Square, this 24-year-old nightclub in the Charles Hotel presents acclaimed national jazz and

blues musicians as well as top regional talent such as the Gilad Barkan Band and Sugar Ray & the Bluetones.

## Ryles

**212 Hampshire St., Cambridge // rylesjazz.com**

Distinct for its two-floor setup, this Inman Square venue features leading locals such as saxophonist Jon DeLucia and guitarist Bruce Bartlett on the ground floor, where Mitch's BBQ gets served, while upstairs, salsa and swing dancing rule.

## Sculler's

**400 Soldiers Field Road // scullersjazz.com**

This upscale listening room in the Double Tree Hotel, with a city view, showcases national musicians, among them The Yellowjackets, James Carter and Beantown's own Laszlo Gardonyi Trio. Room-dinner-and-show packages available.

## Wally's Café

**427 Massachusetts Ave. // wallyscafe.com**

Down the street from Berklee and the New England Conservatory, this local landmark, run by the Walcott family since its founding in 1947, stays open every day with high-quality post-bop, Afro-Cuban and Latin jazz, fusion, funk and blues. Jam sessions take place on the weekends.

## Philadelphia

### Chris' Jazz Café

**1421 Sansom St. // chrisjazzcafe.com**

Chris' offers drinks and Southern-inspired cuisine to a mix of jazzheads and chattering bar-hoppers. Weekends offer touring acts—recent months have seen The Bad Plus, Chris Potter and Joe Lovano—while locals move in during the week. Jimmy Bruno, Bootsie Barnes and John Swana are regulars.

### Ortlieb's Jazzhaus

**847 N. Third St. // ortliebsjazzhaus.com**

A former brewery, Ortlieb's is a boxcar-shaped room with a smoke-filled room ambiance (sans the smoke, thanks to the city's ban). The music is pure Philly, with jam

sessions on Sundays and Tuesdays. Mickey Roker and Sid Simmons are fixtures, as permanent as the piano.

## Washington, D.C.

### Blues Alley

**1073 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. // bluesalley.com**

This once must-go-to jazz haunt located in the Georgetown District has recently eschewed much from its straight-ahead lineup in favor of smooth jazz and r&b acts. Nevertheless, it still attracts many tourists, and on occasion you can see bona fide jazz artists giving rousing performances of yore.

### Bohemian Caverns

**2001 11th St., N.W. // bohemiancaverns.com**

The legendary club that was a part of U Street's historic "Black Broadway" heyday still resides in its refurbished digs as part of the U Street's gentrified strip. D.C.'s Thad Wilson and his Orchestra hold court every Monday. The jazz booking can be spotty, though it can surprise with gigs by the likes of Roberta Flack, Jacky Terrasson and David Sánchez.

### Twins Jazz

**1344 U St., N.W. // twinsjazz.com**

What this small club and restaurant lack in marquee acts, it makes up for in jazz talent, whether it comes from "below the radar" veterans such as Larry Willis or Sonny Fortune or upcoming talents such as Aaron Walker and Lage Lund.

## SOUTH

### Atlanta

### Churchill Grounds

**660 Peachtree St., N.E. // churchillgrounds.com**

Atlanta's jazz stronghold, Churchill Grounds' intimate performance space features local musicians each weekend. Out-of-towners like James Carter swing in after headlining university shows, and Russell Gunn holds court on Thursdays.



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## Austin

### The Elephant Room

315 Congress Ave. // [natespace.com/elephant/](http://natespace.com/elephant/)  
A dark basement club, Texas' leading purveyor of live jazz presents live jazz every night of the year, usually without a cover during the week, tapping into the Austin scene but also showcasing regional and touring acts.

## Fort Worth

### Scat Jazz Lounge

111 W. 4th // [scatjazzlounge.com](http://scatjazzlounge.com)  
Open for a year, the basement club usually features regional talent, including saxophonist Pete Gallio. But the club has also brought in national touring acts like Nnenna Freelon.

## Miami

### Upstairs at the Van Dyke

846 Lincoln Road // [thevandypecafe.com/](http://thevandypecafe.com/)  
The cozy room mostly features local heroes such as Shelly Berg or Ira Sullivan. The new managers know that jazz comes in many shapes and forms, and the place now features songwriter nights and DJs who know the way into a jazz groove.

## New Orleans

### Blue Nile

532 Frenchmen St. // [bluenilelive.com](http://bluenilelive.com)  
The Blue Nile offers a wide variety of jazz, from traditional and New Orleans to Latin and funky. The atmosphere goes from relaxed to sleek. Best bets are Tuesday nights, where the Open Ears Music series has the more experimental jazz.

## d.b.a.

### 618 Frenchmen St. // [drinkgoodstuff.com](http://drinkgoodstuff.com)

Best nights for jazz are Mondays with a variety of local players, Tuesdays feature drummer Johnny Vidacovich, and during Saturday's early set, vocalist John Boutte convinces listeners that he is the most soulful jazz singer in the country.

### Donna's Bar & Grill

800 N. Rampart St. // [donnasbarandgrill.com](http://donnasbarandgrill.com)  
Another comfortable, friendly spot for traditional and modern jazz. Thursdays with Tom McDermott and Evan Christopher take the audience around the whole jazz diaspora from Africa to Europe to the Caribbean.

### Preservation Hall

726 St. Peter St. // [preservationhall.com](http://preservationhall.com)  
This is ground zero for New Orleans traditional jazz. Most musicians here learned the music from their families. The room has a homey, historical vibe. No food, drinks or smoking, and the seating is benches.

### Snug Harbor

626 Frenchmen St. // [snugjazz.com](http://snugjazz.com)  
Snug Harbor features modern jazz seven nights a week with local and national musicians. The vibe is sophisticated, but people still hoot and holler at the stage in their enthusiasm. Trumpeter Irvin Mayfield, pianist Jesse McBride and singer Charmaine Neville all have long-running weekly gigs here.

## MIDWEST

## Chicago

### Andy's

11 E. Hubbard // [andysjazzclub.com](http://andysjazzclub.com)  
A congenial spot just north of Chicago's Loop, nearby workers take advantage of its late-afternoon sets and dinner menu. Still, the club is serious about presenting a range of the city's best local jazz musicians throughout the week and late into the night, including Ari Brown, Frank Catalano and Von Freeman.

## Green Mill

4802 N. Broadway // [greenmilljazz.com](http://greenmilljazz.com)  
This Uptown landmark feels relatively unchanged since the '20s. The mix of jazz artists presented here also looks toward the future. Alongside regularly booking such traditional local favorites as the Deep Blue Organ Trio, this is often the place to catch such innovators as Greg Osby and Ben Allison.

## Jazz Showcase

806 S. Plymouth Court // [jazzshowcase.com](http://jazzshowcase.com)  
Joe Segal's move to this space in Dearborn Station results in what may be his best-sounding room. This is where to see such heroes as Barry Harris—or current stars like Roy Hargrove—on long weekends. Rising Chicago talents, like singer Dee Alexander, perform on weeknights.

## Velvet Lounge

67 E. Cermak Road // [velvetlounge.net](http://velvetlounge.net)  
Saxophonist Fred Anderson sets the pace at one of the world's great musician-run jazz venues. Along with providing audiences the chance to hear his big tone and free-minded harmonies, Anderson also provides space for AACM veterans and upcoming musicians to test their mettle at regular jam sessions.

## Cleveland

### Cleveland Bop Stop

2920 Detroit Ave. // [clevelandbopstop.com](http://clevelandbopstop.com)  
The Bop Stop began life as a small storefront in 1991. The current venue claims 3,000 square feet of space and seating for 120. Owner Ron Busch opens the club to upcoming college performers and some of Cleveland's prominent jazz artists.

### Nighttown

12387 Cedar Road // [nighttowncleveland.com](http://nighttowncleveland.com)  
Current owner Brendan Ring started the live music policy in 2001 with nightly sets including locals and national acts. Brian Auger, Joao Bosco and The Mahavishnu Project have recently helped broaden the range of styles beyond mainstream jazz.

## Detroit/Ann Arbor

### Baker's Keyboard Lounge

20510 Livernois Ave. // [bakerskeyboardlounge.com](http://bakerskeyboardlounge.com)  
This Detroit landmark nearing its 75th anniversary has the distinction of being one of the world's oldest continuous jazz clubs. A low-priced soul food menu and extensive bar, along with top local and regional jazz, make this place essential.

### Firefly Club

207 S. Ashley // [fireflyclub.com](http://fireflyclub.com)  
This downtown Ann Arbor destination features a diverse assortment of local and national acts from mainstream to Latin. Host Susan Chastain is a singer herself. The upscale, non-pretentious atmosphere is inviting.

## Kansas City

### The Blue Room

1616 E. 18th St. // [americanjazzmuseum.com](http://americanjazzmuseum.com)  
The Blue Room, which opened in 1997 with the American Jazz Museum, showcases national acts as well as ear-grabbing regulars like Charles Perkins, Ahmad Alaadeen and Max Groove. This hip room showcases memorabilia from Basie to Bird.

### Jardine's Restaurant & Jazz Club

4536 Main St. // [jardines4jazz.com](http://jardines4jazz.com)  
Cozy and warm, Jardine's combines the intimate pleasures of jazz and fine dining with low-key Midwestern hospitality. Local heroes with national reps include chanteuses Angela Hagenbach, Karrin Allyson, Marilyn Maye and Carol Comer.

Chicago's Green Mill

Green Mill  
Cocktail Lounge

MARK SHELDON

## Indianapolis

### The Jazz Kitchen

5377 N. College Ave. // [thejazzkitchen.com](http://thejazzkitchen.com)

The Kitchen has expanded its dining space so more fans can have the combo of excellent food and some of the best live local (Frank Glover, Rob Dixon, Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra, Cynthia Layne), regional and national jazz acts.

## Minneapolis/St. Paul

### The Artists' Quarter

408 St. Peter St., St. Paul // [artistsquarter.com](http://artistsquarter.com)

The Artists' Quarter's intimate basement is a favorite among local and national acts. Saxophonist Eric Alexander has a standing Memorial Day gig. Roy Haynes enjoys regular stints, as do local saxophone legends Dave Karr and Irv Williams.

### Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant

1010 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis // [dakotacooks.com](http://dakotacooks.com)

The Dakota crafts cuisine, wine and musical pairings that span the globe. Jazz, blues and beyond collide with formidable instrumentalists and story-telling vocalists—both national and local. The venue has an open atmosphere, with a wood and brick interior as the backdrop for the enthusiastic crowd.

## St. Louis

### Jazz at the Bistro

3536 Washington Ave. // [jazzstl.org/jazz-bistro](http://jazzstl.org/jazz-bistro)

Jazz at the Bistro's season runs September through May, showcasing top-name artists ranging from Charlie Hunter to Les McCann Wednesdays through Saturdays—with up-and-coming national and local talent on alternate weekends. The intimate 150-seat club also has music in June and July on a reduced basis. There's a full dinner menu and wine list.

## WEST

### Albuquerque

### Outpost Performance Space

210 Yale S.E. // [outpostspace.org](http://outpostspace.org)

The non-profit arts organization combines more than 100 shows a year—jazz includes the likes of The Claudia Quintet, Javon Jackson and the local Albuquerque Jazz Orchestra—with numerous educational programs.

### Bay Area

### Kuumbwa Jazz Cener

320-2 Cedar St., Santa Cruz // [kuumbwajazz.org](http://kuumbwajazz.org)

The non-profit Kuumbwa Jazz Center has an open-minded vibe. From the diverse headliners to the organic and vegetarian offerings, there's a broad coalition of tastes. Typically, touring artists are booked on Mondays with local and road warriors presented on Thursdays.

### Yoshi's (Jack London Square)

510 Embarcadero West, Oakland // [yoshis.com](http://yoshis.com)

The tiered nightclub still impresses by offering shows that Yoshi's San Francisco doesn't, including Wayne Shorter's first club appearance in decades and McCoy Tyner with Marc Ribot. The club offers selections from the adjoining bar and nouveau Japanese restaurant.

### Yoshi's (Fillmore Heritage Center)

1330 Fillmore St., San Francisco // [yoshis.com](http://yoshis.com)

Just more than one year old, Yoshi's west still has that glamorous, new club feel. The ground floor restaurant and upstairs lounge have become destinations in their own right, while the tiered venue has hosted everyone from local vocalist Sony Holland to the Pat Metheny Trio.

## Denver

### Dazzle Restaurant and Lounge

930 Lincoln St. // [dazzlejazz.com](http://dazzlejazz.com)

Dazzle celebrated its 10th anniversary with a lineup that included Kenny Garrett, Donald Harrison and Monty Alexander. Along with presenting touring groups, the 100-seat club fleshes out its schedule with regular visits from area-based bands such as the Chie Imaizumi Jazz Orchestra and the 9th and Lincoln Orchestra.

## Los Angeles

### Baked Potato

3787 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Studio City // [thebakedpotato.com](http://thebakedpotato.com)

In 1970, pianist Don Randi opened this fusion stronghold, making it L.A.'s longest-running jazz club. Although the club can only hold 100, it's usually jammed. Headliners like Larry Carlton have played here, and Randi's house band has gestated lions like bassist Ric Fierabracci.

### Catalina Bar & Grill

6725 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood // [catalinajazzclub.com](http://catalinajazzclub.com)

This is where the biggest names this side of the large concert stages play L.A. club engagements. The spacious, L-shaped club serves continental cuisine while names like Chick Corea, Kenny Burrell and the Yellowjackets work out here.

### Charlie O's

13725 Victory Blvd., Valley Glen // [charlieos.com](http://charlieos.com)

Co-founder Charlie Ottaviano's passing hasn't dampened the straightahead menu. Great senior players like Pete Christlieb, Chuck Berghoffer, Don Menza and Lanny Morgan are regulars, as are youngbloods like Rickey Woodard, Nolan Shaheed and Benn Clatworthy.

### Jazz Bakery

3233 Helms Ave., Culver City // [jazzbakery.org](http://jazzbakery.org)

Artists love Ruth Price's intimate recital hall because the audiences are there to listen. She books headliners like Benny Golson and Mose Allison, makes room for worthy up-and-comers like Tessa Souter, locals like Billy Childs and students.

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Ralph Towner

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Uri Caine

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Wayne Horvitz

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2009 - Twenty Years of Jazz

**TODAY'S JAZZ**

5 FEBRUARY MARIA PIA DE VITO  
"SONGS FROM THE UNDERGROUND"  
Maria Pia De Vito voice Claudio Filippini piano  
Francesco Bearzatti tenor sax Luca Bulgarelli c.bass  
Walter Paoli drums

9 FEBRUARY ROBERTO GATTO  
"TRIBUTE TO PROGRESSIVE ROCK"  
Roberto Gatto drums John De Leo voice  
Luca Mannutza piano Maurizio Giannarco tenor sax  
Francesco Petrella trombone Fabrizio Bossio trumpet  
Roberto Cecchetto guitar Francesco Puglisi bass

15 FEBRUARY 13 p.m. BRUNCH & JAZZ  
PLANET FOUR  
Frank Locrasto piano Chris Cheek tenor sax  
Lorenzo Conte c.bass Elliot Zigmond drums

19 FEBRUARY GIOVANNI GUIDI Q.TET

26 FEBRUARY CARLO MAVER SEXTET  
"DODICI NODI"

5 MARCH ROBERTO GATTO TRIO  
Roberto Gatto drums Michele Papadia Hammond organ  
Daniele Scannapieco tenor sax

6 MARCH ROBERTO GATTO QUARTET  
Roberto Gatto drums Luca Mannutza piano  
Daniele Tittarelli alto sax Rosario Bonaccorso c.bass

**ROOTS** BEBOP AND BEYOND  
JAZZ CONCERTS PLUS JAM

2 FEBRUARY MICHELE VIGNALI 4ET feat. Nico Mendi

16 FEBRUARY THE BOOGALOO SITUATION

23 FEBRUARY LUIGI E PASQUALE GRASSO 4ET

2 MARCH ANDREA PAPINI TRIO



## Spazio

**14755 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks // spazio.la**

Singer Judy Chamberlain made this Italian restaurant a great place for jazz with her bookings. John Pisano's Tuesday night guitar showcase attracts some great players, while the other nights are jammed with top locals like Bob Sheppard.

## Steamers

**138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton // steamerscafe.com**

This herb/eatery is the best thing to happen to jazz in Orange County. Owner Terence Love snags touring greats like Karrin Allyson, regularly features big bands and Latin jazz, and gives showcases to promising locals like singer Julie Day.

## Vibrato Jazz Grill

**2930 Beverly Glen Circle, Bel Air // vibratogrilljazz.com**

This Herb Alpert-owned restaurant has sumptuous food, but Pat Senatore books great jazz every night. He often anchors the bands for soloists like Houston Person and Bob Sheppard, or turns it over to leaders like John Proulx.

## Portland

### Jimmy Mak's

**221 N.W. 10th Ave. // jimmymaks.com**

This club showcases a diverse menu of jazz from hard-bop to funk performed by primarily Portland artists, including residents from drummer Mel Brown and guitarist Dan Balmer. Knowledgeable fans welcome occasional national artists.

## San Diego

### Anthology

**1337 India St. // anthologysd.com**

This supper club features some enticing jazz. The 3,000-square-foot room has featured Dave Liebman, Peter Escovedo and Tuck & Patti, tucked into a roster of pop and r&b. The exceptional dining and a digital sound system are bonuses.

## Seattle

### Dimitriou's Jazz Alley

**2033 Sixth Ave. // jazzalley.com**

This restaurant has high ceilings, a wraparound loft and descending tiers of booths with great sight lines and pristine sound. It can seat more than 400, yet feels intimate with only 75. The program is top of the line, from Roy Hargrove to Bill Frisell, with some world music and smooth jazz.

### Tula's

**2214 Second Ave. // tulas.com**

Seattle's local beboppers' hang is the kind of club every town should have. Owned by ex-Navy band trombonist Mack Waldron, Tula's is long and narrow, with dimensional railings around the stage and a challenging, if cozy, layout. The music is almost all local, though sometimes a touring act comes through, often with a local rhythm section.

## CANADA

### Casa Del Popolo

**4873 Boulevard St-Laurent, Montreal // casadelpopolo.com**

Located in the funky Mile End neighborhood, the Casa is as well known as the launching pad for Montreal's vibrant indie rock scene as for being the local home of artists like Hamid Drake and Ken Vandermark.

### The Cellar

**3611 W. Broadway St., Vancouver // cellarjazz.com**

Vancouver's answer to the Village Vanguard, this small (70-seat) club/restaurant presents the best local jazz, as well as some touring acts. Great sound, which has been used to enhance the club's record label, Cellar Live.

## The Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar

**194 Queen St. West, Toronto // therex.ca**

A large, open room with the vibe of a working-class tavern, the Rex has been showcasing 18 bands a week for almost 20 years. The music runs the gamut from inside to out, and the Tuesday night jams draw a broad mix of listeners.

## Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill

**1254 MacKay, Montreal // upstairsjazz.com**

Joel Giberovitch has been building the jazz cred at his comfortable downtown club since 1995. Featuring a diverse fusion menu, Upstairs strikes a balance between local stars like saxophonist Christine Jensen and New Yorkers like Bill Stewart.

## Yardbird Suite

**11 Tommy Banks Way, Edmonton // yardbirdsuite.com**

For more than 50 years, the Yardbird has been a stop for touring artists in the middle of Canada. But in addition to the touring U.S. and Canadian artists, the volunteer-run club serves as the hub of the local scene, with regular jam sessions.

## EUROPE

### Austria

#### Jazzland

**Franz Josefs-Kai 29, Vienna // jazzland.at**

This 34-year-old club, in a 200-year-old cellar, hosts mainly local gigs, but American musicians play frequently. Photos of past performers adorn every wall.

#### Porgy & Bess

**Riemergasse 11, Vienna // porgy.at**

This 15-year-old room can take in up to 500 patrons. It features jazz from the United States and Europe, including some of the more adventurous improvisors in Europe, with regular jam sessions and a willingness to stage numerous big bands.

### Denmark

#### Copenhagen JazzHouse

**Niels Hemmingsensgade Gade 10, Copenhagen // jazzhouse.dk**

Denmark's leading club is cozy for big bands or combos like drummer Ed Thigpen's and vocalist Katrine Madsen, plus passers-through like Joe Lovano and Chick Corea.

### France

#### Duc Des Lombards

**42 Rue Des Lombards, Paris // ducdeslombards.com**

The new Duc des Lombards boasts an elegant and intimate atmosphere with sophisticated food. Special focus has been brought to a solid programming of international straightahead jazz stars (Freddy Cole, Terrell Stafford, Sheila Jordan). It's less of a hang and more of a posh club.

#### New Morning

**7-9 Rue Des Petites Ecuries, Paris // newmorning.com**

After 28 years of action, the New Morning's 500-seat room still displays a festive sense of what jazz clubs should be.

With an eclectic sample of the contemporary scene, it is the place for the big names, although local heroes and forays into world music often get a better share than jazz acts.

#### Sunside/Sunset

**60 Rue Des Lombards, Paris // sunset-sunside.com**

This club has a double program with two rooms (upstairs/downstairs). While the Sunside specializes in acoustic jazz, the Sunset is more inclined to promote electric or world-music acts. The club has quality music every night and plenty of artistic variety.

## Germany

### domicil

**Hansastr. 7-11, Dortmund // domicil-dortmund.de**

Having moved into a new location a few years ago, domicil has continued the progressive booking policy. Steve Lacy, Chet Baker and Myra Melford have played here along with homegrown heroes such as Alex von Schlippenbach.

### Quasimodo

**Kantstr. 12a, Berlin // quasimodo.de**

The lively jazz-cellar holds 400 when busy, which it often is. Prog and kraut-rock are on offer here along with blues and world music; it buzzes during the Berlin Jazz Festival.

### Unterfahrt

**Einsteinstrasse 42, Munich // unterfahrt.de**

Presenting mostly European musicians nightly that range from the best in the avant-garde to vocalists to straight-ahead instrumentalists, Unterfahrt has offered adventurous programming for more than 25 years; every month, a different artist leads a regular jam session.

## Great Britain

### 606 Club

**90 Lots Road, Chelsea, London // 606club.co.uk**

The intimate basement restaurant, which seats about 125, is a favorite for musicians who stop by late and butt in on the action. It's popular with vocalists, inner-circle jazzers like Lee Konitz and the cream of British straightahead and post-bop.

### The Jazz Café

**5 Parkway, Camden, London // jazzcafelive.com**

Conveniently situated right next to the Tube stop in a former bank building, the Jazz Café has always been the fashionable hang, tipped toward the soul and funk end of jazz. The music menu has a broad appeal.

### Ronnie Scott's

**47 Frith St., Soho, London // ronniescotts.co.uk**

The hallowed haunt that the late tenor saxophonist opened in 1959 is now owned by theater impresario Sally Greene. A must-stop for the international jazz epicurist, Ronnie's is an institution in cleaner-but-still sexy Soho. The upstairs portion of the club has gained notoriety for late-night jam sessions.

### Vortex Jazz Club

**11 Gillett St., London // vortexjazz.co.uk**

Vortex reopened in 2006 in the Dalston Culture House and presents choice jazz seven nights a week, including hip Stateside visitors and happening U.K. acts like Polar Pear, Acoustic Ladyland, Zoe Rahmann and Gwilym Simcock. Guitarist John Russell's free improv series has been running since 1991.

## Italy

### Alexanderplatz

**Via Ostia, 9, Rome // alexanderplatz.it**

Italy's oldest jazz club attracts its own breed of pilgrims: lovers of fine food, vintage wine and great music. It has presented Art Farmer, Archie Shepp, Wynton Marsalis, Joe Lovano and Lou Donaldson among many others.

### Cantina Bentevoglio

**Via Mascarella, 4/b, Bologna // cantinabentevoglio.it**

Located in the historic center of the city, this popular wine bar and restaurant presents jazz nightly in the restored cellar of a medieval palace. It presents a veritable who's who of Italian, European and American artists.

### La Palma

**ViaGiuseppe Mirri, 35, Rome // lapalmaclub.it**

This trendy club can seat 500 comfortably. It presents veteran modernists like Enrico Rava, Charlie Haden, Dave Holland and

Roscoe Mitchell, as well as visionaries like Marc Ribot, Tim Berne and Uri Caine.

## La Salumeria della Musica

Via Pasinetti 2, Milan // [lasalumeriadellamusica.com](http://lasalumeriadellamusica.com)

The keeper of the jazz flame in Italy's media, fashion and finance capital is also a delicatessen serving some 25 types of salamis, sausages and cheeses alongside a musical menu ranging from Phil Woods, Diane Schuur and Cedar Walton to Metheny, Frisell and Motian.

## Netherlands

### Bimhuis

Piet Heinkade 3, Amsterdam // [bimhuis.nl](http://bimhuis.nl)

It moved to a new and improved multi-use arts facility in 2005, where it maintains the progressive booking policy, mixing the best of the Dutch scene with other European and U.S. artists, that it started in 1974.

## Norway

### Bla

Brenneriveien 9C, Oslo // [blx.no](http://blx.no)

Ensnored in a former factory, Bla is Oslo's No. 1 source for jazz discoveries. The 300-seat club knits a multitiered daily offering of domestic and international jazz and related sounds, theater, film and literature.

## Portugal

### Hot Club de Portugal

Praça da Alegria, 39, Lisbon // [hcp.pt](http://hcp.pt)

Jazz started in Portugal during the late '40s in this small basement in Lisbon. It's open nightly from Tuesday through

Saturdays. Many musicians, from Dexter Gordon to Lee Konitz and Max Roach or generations of Portuguese performers have played here to a young, tourist-oriented audience.

## Spain

### Café Central

Plaza del Angel 10, Madrid // [cafecentralmadrid.com](http://cafecentralmadrid.com)

For more than 20 years this informal art deco café close to the Plaza del Angel has been one of few European clubs offering extended engagements for journeyman U.S. musicians; Ben Sidran is a regular.

## Sweden

### Fasching

Gamla Brogatan 44, Stockholm // [fasching.se](http://fasching.se)

Fasching's excellence lays in the eclecticism of the programming, while retaining a solid base in reflecting the whole spectrum of the Stockholm jazz scene. It encourages visiting musicians, and is supportive of young musicians.

## AUSTRALIA

### The Basement

29 Reiby Place, Sydney // [thebasement.com.au](http://thebasement.com.au)

The Basement is situated in prime real estate in Sydney's Circular Quay, thus it is not adverse to booking blues, funk, cover bands and DJs. It has hosted all the big names, as well as local acts that can draw.

### Bennetts Lane

25 Bennetts Lane, Melbourne // [bennettslane.com](http://bennettslane.com)

Bennett's Lane is a bona fide, revered jazz haunt. Run by former bassist Michael Tortoni since 1993, the 200-capacity

backstreet joint has hosted Harry Connick, Jr. and Wynton Marsalis, but heavily supports local heroes like Paul Grabowsky, Joe Chindamo, Mike Nock and James Morrison.

## JAPAN

### Alfie Jazz House

6-2-35 Roppongi, Tokyo // [homepage1.nifty.com/live/alfie/index.html](http://homepage1.nifty.com/live/alfie/index.html)

This club in a high-rise in the heart of Roppongi perceives itself as sophisticated and not just the hang for jazz "otaku" or nerds, but its clientele usually know who they have come to hear. Choice Latin groups play regularly and Japanese jazz notables like trumpeter Terumasa Hino.

### Blue Note Tokyo

Tokyo 107-0062 // [bluenote.co.jp](http://bluenote.co.jp)

The club is a large, theater-like jazz cabaret (300 seats), and it serves as one of the most popular nightlife attractions in stylish Aoyama area. Everything is super here (music, food, wine), with some of the top jazz artists in the world.

### Body and Soul

6-13-9 Minami-Aoyama, Tokyo // [bodyandsoul.co.jp](http://bodyandsoul.co.jp)

Situated not far from the upscale Blue Note, Body and Soul is the place many jazz greats and young guns go to hang out for the late shift. Cecil Taylor, Don Cherry and Stevie Wonder have made impromptu appearances, and Cassandra Wilson first performed in Japan here. **DB**

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- 71 Jazz
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## Nels Cline

*Coward*

CRYPTOGRAMPHONE 141

★★★★★

Pivotal question for today's multistylistic musician: How do you keep versatility from turning into superficial eclecticism? Nels Cline long ago proved his versatility—look what a galvanizing effect his presence has had in the group Wilco, remarkable when compared with his other music from pop session work, jazz (including John Coltrane covers) and free improvisation to noise and his hard-to-describe band Nels Cline Singers. In his gibbon swings from one genre to another, and in the process of blending them together, Cline retains his center of gravity. Perhaps that's because he has a healthy sense of humility and a funny bone—refreshing, given that with chops like his he could justify being a self-righteous, self-serious creep.

But the good humor—coupled with great taste—keeps Cline in check. On *Coward*, the centrifugal force of the guitarist's many interests never seems haphazard or unmotivated. There's a bit more ECM to the overall mix than I might have expected, evoking Ralph Towner and Egberto Gismonti in their halcyon days; unlike ECM, though, the sound is never unnecessarily bathed in reverb. Cline doubles acoustic guitar notes with multitracked “autoharp/zither things” on the epic 18-and-a-half minutes of “Rod Poole's Gradual Ascent To Heaven,” producing a density of string textures and shimmering just-off-pitch harmonies pierced by brilliant single-note runs. With her recent string fixation, PJ Harvey should consider deploying Cline.

Some pieces, like the slide-intensive “The Nomad's Home,” have a more song-like organization. Elsewhere, there are more ambient, droning excursions, including the bookends that open and end the disc (“Epiphyllum” and “Cymbidium”), while the episodic “Onan Suite” (there's the self-deprecating sense of humor) sports some open vent-like, thwacking noise passages, mixed with radiant strumming and '60s psych and progressive rock (Pink Floyd looms large in the dreadnought chording), and a hilarious, ripping finale that begs to be heard. On the post-Branca electric romp “Thurston County,” Cline nods at Thurston Moore with chiming strums beyond the nut, crystalline slide and a great anthemic jam that might be the bed for a vintage Sonic Youth song. —John Corbett

**Coward:** Epiphyllum; Prayer Wheel; Thurston County; The Androgyne; Rod Poole's Gradual Ascent To Heaven; The Divine Homegirl; X Change(s); The Nomad's Home; Onan Suite: Amniotica, Lord And Lady, Dreams In The Mirror, Interruption, The Seedcaster, The Liberator; Cymbidium. (72:32)

**Personnel:** Nels Cline, acoustic and electric guitars, effects, shruti boxes, autoharp/zither things, Megamouth, Quintronic Drum Buddy, Kaossilator.

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



## Joshua Redman

Compass  
NONESUCH 510844  
★★★★½

Jazz loves the unexpected and uncharted because it feeds the music's sense of itself as alive, organic, open and reactive. It can be all

these things, of course, when contained within a context of common expectations. But full faith in total spontaneity is inclined to be a dangerous love, often sadly naïve and rudely unrequited.

Joshua Redman's stated intent here seems to test that love. Rather than go in with "too clear a plan," which he feels his last CD was guilty of, this time the plan is no plan, "an embrace of the unfamiliar." What this means is a program of mostly Redman originals—really, more sketches than compositions—opened up for the first time in the studio and performed cold with only the muse of the moment and lady luck to sustain them. His format of choice is the trio, an extension of last year's *Back East* CD, properly inspired by Sonny Rollins' 1957 LP, *Way Out West*. The slight twist this time is that there are two rhythm sections in play. They double up on five of the 13 cuts and mix and match in various configurations on the other eight. But for all the fuss, unless you're packing headphones, the music all sounds pretty much like a trio.

The no-plan plan is less risky than Redman pretends, in part because he has surrounded himself with well-known musicians, each skilled at looking around each other's corners. The precision of some of the ensembles does not just happen. This doesn't entirely supplant the CD's interludes of rather mournful down time in



which the music seems snagged in its own uncertain splendor. Redman often sounds like a man quietly revving his motors at a series of red lights that refuse to turn green. But the music is what he intends it to be, even down to the little references to "Little Drummer Boy" in "Faraway." The brief opening cut foretells some of the CD's glum lyricism, which

is, by its own admission, "brooding" and "ruminative." Those who enjoy tracking the processes of the search may find a satisfactory narrative here. I wish the shake-down work was done on the players' time.

Happily, Redman is too great a talent (and too take-charge a player) to let it all coast on the slopes of chance. "Hutchhiker's Guide" is a scintillating and swinging minuet between Redman and drummer Gregory Hutchinson's brushes, the kind of concert opener that makes audiences sit erect in their seats. "Round Reuben" is a mischievous reflection on "Moose The Mooche." "Moonlight" offers a luscious and leisurely incantation on Beethoven's sonata. "Just Like You" moves through a warm interlude of balladry before colliding into the '60s, and the tension between Redman and his two drummers is alive on "Identity Thief."

The lesson is: When the whole is less than its parts, enjoy the parts. —John McDonough

**Compass:** Uncharted; Faraway; Identity Thief; Just Like You; Hutchhiker's Guide; Ghost; Insomnomaniac; Moonlight; Un Peu Four; March; Round Reuben; Little Ditty; Through The Valley. (72:41)

**Personnel:** Joshua Redman, tenor, soprano saxophone; Larry Grenadier (1–6, 8, 10, 12, 13), Reuben Rogers (1, 3, 4, 7–13), bass; Brian Blade (2–4, 6, 8–13), Gregory Hutchinson (1, 3–5, 7, 8, 10, 12), drums.

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

## Biréli Lagrène

Electric Side  
DREYFUS JAZZ 36922  
★★★

Biréli Lagrène no doubt played some scintillating gigs with bass genius Jaco Pastorius in the mid-'80s, but hearing him take a trip down that retro road—as obviously skillful and apparently heartfelt as it is—feels more like a mid-life crisis than a good vehicle for making genuine music. How can anyone really feel this way in 2009—so willfully cheerful, so muscularly exuberant, so insistently, rhythmically melodic? Adding Andy Narell's steel pans on three of the tracks somehow just makes the whole thing sound that much more implausibly delirious.

That said, there's no question that this band rocks with spectacular cohesion and Lagrène continues to be one of the more stunning guitar



players on the planet. With his instantly identifiable sound—strings twanging high off the fret board—the French guitar slinger is all over his instrument, slashing double-time arpeggios, roiling over dizzying pairs of triplets at the top of a phrase then tumbling down, plinking out har-



## Mostly Other People Do The Killing

*This Is Our Moosic*  
HOT CUP 082  
★★★★½

Humor should always be welcome in jazz. The music is tacitly intellectual, so an injection of wit can be helpful, whether coming in the form of whimsical exchange or wiseacre glee. Moppa Elliott's band is built on the latter, but does its best work when the former is in full play. With fluid banter central to the action, the bassist and his Killing cohorts use a steady stream of quips to make their points on *This Is Our Moosic*. They may be serious improvisers, but they know from droll.

Part of this playfulness is shtick. The New York quartet's pieces are named after towns in Pennsylvania (Fagundus, Dunkelbergers, Belfry), and the CD cover is a nifty replica of Ornette Coleman's similarly titled original. But a more important part is Mostly Other People Do The Killing's willingness to grant its brainy maneuvers enough wiggle room to make space for some slapstick. The group

monics, bending notes with a bluesy twist and driving through time with that obsessive echo and fuzz of a younger guitar hero—Derek Trucks.

Though the band's speed-demon version of Herbie Hancock's "Jack Rabbit" will dazzle guitar heads, the haunting and gorgeous ballad "Clair Obscur," North African vibe of "Foreign Affairs," sparse interaction of "Josef" (for Zawinul?) and lightly brushed bossa of "Berga" are equally notable. Lagrène emboldens the ensemble texture with samples of voices, scratching and other electronic doo-dads, including a comically distorted voice repeating "Here I go again" on "Josef" and a surprisingly fresh scratch solo by DJ Afro Cut-Nanga on "Hips." Narell rings (and pings) true on "Berga" and has no trouble keeping the pace on "Jack Rabbit," either. But it is, of course, 24-year-old bass phenom and Weather Report/Jaco fanatic (and sometime John McLaughlin sideman) Hadrien

# The HOT Box

runs an “ancient to the future” esthetic here, kicking ersatz boogaloos, mock jump tunes and Raymond Scott echoes to infinity and beyond. As trumpeter Peter Evans filters a blues vocabulary through an extended technique lingo of blasts and squalls, alto saxophonist Jon Irabagon (who recently won the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition) chirps and spirals to punctuate Elliott’s ditties. Throughout, they specialize in the kind of free-bop that puts the fun up front.

Of course, the silliness would scan as trite if the playing lacked weight. It doesn’t. The band’s signature trait is a splashy collective oomph that’s reliant on genuine poise. Even while flying around the wild blue yonder they’re terrifically tight. Drummer Kevin Shea loves him some Han Bennink (check his percussion solo/puppet show during “A Night In Tunisia” on YouTube), and he’s a firestarter throughout; there’s not a measure of *Moosic* where he doesn’t sustain the action with rattling swing. Along with his mates, he concocts an atmosphere of controlled flamboyance.

Always brash, often giddy—no wonder pundits are saying MOPDTK is making jazz more entertaining. True, they probably couldn’t exist without “Chippie,” the Art Ensemble, Sex Mob, “Eat That Chicken” and The Bad Plus, but as they sort through the good stuff that came before them, they generate some pretty good stuff themselves. Call ’em Old and New Dreams for the MySpace generation, and realize that their wit is the red blood that fuels their gray matter. —*Jim Macnie*

**This Is Our Moosic:** Drainlick; Two Boot Jacks; Fagundus; The Bats In Belfry; East Orwell; My Delightful Muse; Biggertown; Effort, Patience, Diligence; Allentown. (52:32)

**Personnel:** Moppa Elliott, bass; Peter Evans, trumpet; Kevin Shea, drums; Jon Irabagon, saxophone.

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

Féraud who, literally, drives this streamlined ship—careening, popping, sliding, chugging, skipping, dancing and whirling—with whatever the music calls for, and often more.

But there are so many clichés here—the wordless vocals chiming over the instrumental voices, the sudden orchestral synthesizer hits that repeat and repeat a simple riff, the quick changes in tempo and volume, the punctuations of electronic squiggling, the scratching, even the exhibitionist instrumental virtuosity—haven’t we heard this all before? Enough already with ’70s electric nostalgia. Can we just move on? —*Paul de Barros*

**Electric Side:** Hips; Incertitude; Thimothée; Jack Rabbit; Clair Obscur; Foreign Affairs; Josef; Berga; Hips House. (57:53)

**Personnel:** Biréli Lagrène, guitar; Hadrien Féraud, bass; Franck Wolf, soprano and tenor saxophone; Andy Narell, steel pans (4, 5, 8); Damien Schmitt, drums; DJ Afro Cut-Nanga, DJ, turntables, samples, effects; Michael Lecoq, keyboards.

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

| CDs  | CRMCs » | John McDonough | John Corbett | Jim Macnie | Paul de Barros |
|--|---------|----------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Nels Cline</b><br><i>Coward</i>                                     |         | ★★             | ★★★★         | ★★½        | ★★★★           |
| <b>Joshua Redman</b><br><i>Compass</i>                                 |         | ★★★½           | ★★★★         | ★★★½       | ★★★            |
| <b>Mostly Other People Do The Killing</b><br><i>This Is Our Moosic</i> |         | ★★★            | ★★★½         | ★★★½       | ★★★★½          |
| <b>Biréli Lagrène</b><br><i>Electric Side</i>                          |         | ★½             | ★½           | ★★         | ★★★            |

## Critics’ Comments

### Nels Cline, *Coward*

Solo, with plenty of help from effects, Cline probes guitariness—perhaps luteness is more appropriate, because there are intimations of koto, oud and other stringed boxes—with a curiosity and fearlessness that takes him from the most delicate plinks to ferocious loops and flurries. Sometimes his electronic vocabulary is hackneyed, but this often meditative, gorgeous journey reveals surprise after surprise. —*Paul de Barros*

Intimate, laid back, fragile and in no particular hurry, Cline’s acoustic guitar twinkles on cuts two–eight like a clear night sky in the desert. “Onan Suite” and cut one bring on a procession of switched-on storm clouds, stings and minimalist drones—all avant and daring, if one dares to take it seriously. —*John McDonough*

Both tedious and gorgeous, this solo strings program moves from Henry Kaiser rhapsodelica to Jerry Douglas twang drones. In its most incisive moments, Cline makes his rambling improvs resound with art, but there are several ho-hum passages. —*Jim Macnie*

### Joshua Redman, *Compass*

His trios are all about pliability, and this impressive date adds a new depth to the music. The aptly named “Ghost” seems like a step forward in the simplicity department—his editing process has advanced the cause of his tunefulness in the last few years. When the group does get animated, it’s tight as hell. —*Jim Macnie*

Redman is playing seriously now, with no overthinking. Pared down to the single horn, with uncluttered multiples in the rhythm section and no chordal instrument, *Compass* updates the classic saxophone trio. Particularly imaginative writing and adventurous improvising—this is a work to be proud of. —*John Corbett*

Nice idea, augmenting the trio on several tracks to a double bass and/or double drum ensemble. It creates some fascinating textures, especially on the quiet, somber tunes, but Redman is such a careful, deliberate player, I never get the feeling he’s speaking, only thinking, as if improvisation were a challenging game, rather than an expressive joy. —*Paul de Barros*

### Mostly Other People Do The Killing, *This Is Our Moosic*

The relentless jokiness doesn’t overwhelm the brass-knuckles musicality, which is a thing of joy. Love the group dynamic, the formal shenanigans, the breaking down and building back up (more Art Ensemble than Ornette). Trumpeter Peter Evans is a scary monster, as his cadenza on “Two Boot Jacks” proves; having heard him in a different solo context, I now have a fuller, if weirder, sense of his m.o. —*John Corbett*

If you haven’t heard young trumpet lion Evans yet, you could do worse than by starting with this quartet, which also features lithe, Ornette Coleman-inspired saxophonist Jon Irabagon. Condensed and inscrutable as dark matter, MOPDTK’s music bristles with angular humor and tossed-off virtuosity, at once referencing tradition and collapsing it. Post-modern, yes, flip about genre (boogaloo, smooth jazz, rock), yes, but somehow no smirk—just driving, urgent and earnest. —*Paul de Barros*

Familiar timbres pushed to new places and purposes that span Preservation Hall to the Knitting Factory and beyond. The music has a multiple personality syndrome, most disarming when all jostle simultaneously for space. One can’t help thinking that behind the lively pushing and shoving, it’s all irony and winks. For the moment, fun stuff. —*John McDonough*

### Biréli Lagrène, *Electric Side*

Fans who’ve flocked to Lagrène for his brilliant *Gypsy Project*, *Standards* and other albums will not welcome this hairball of amped-up kitsch. The virtuosity is evident, but largely smothered in the ersatz clatter and warped sonics. One can understand his desire to escape a beat he’s pounded since 1980, but slumming in fusion is not the answer. —*John McDonough*

This thing is hokey and heavy handed. The grooves are predictable and the action is too flashy. Echoes abound, too. Weather Report phrases waft by, and something tells me the guitarist caught Return To Forever on tour last summer. His obvious dexterity is wasted in the service of trite material. —*Jim Macnie*

Pardon me for thinking that this happy-go-lucky jazz-funk was a thing of the past. That it is slickly played and purports to show another aspect of the Django Reinhardt partisan doesn’t make me think more highly of it. The smart, sprinting take on Herbie Hancock’s “Jackrabbit” aside, this is artistically weak. —*John Corbett*



## String Trio Of New York

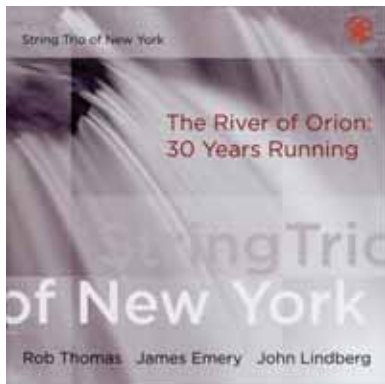
### The River Of Orion

BLACK SAINT 120178

★★★★

If the String Trio of New York hasn't been recognized as one of the most vital small jazz combos in existence over its 30-year history, that's most likely because it doesn't exactly look like a jazz trio. Bluegrass pickers, chamber ensemble, folk act—that's more the image and, at times, the sound of this genre-hopping threesome. But anyone who lets those labels get in the way misses out on one of the most exploratory units out there.

The trio's latest CD, featuring mainstays James Emery (guitar) and John Lindberg (bass), with Rob Thomas returning to the oft-changing violin chair, is primarily taken up by "The River Of Orion." An expansive composition by Emery, the piece has a nine-movement structure, five of which are largely composed, the other four more improvisational, though improv figures throughout. The piece has a staggering breadth, encompassing not just a variety of styles, but such a range of sounds and textures that it seems hard to believe they come from three acoustic instruments.



Looked at as the "cosmic river" that inspired it, "The River Of Orion" suite is a journey, at times idyllic, at others rough. The theme serves as the centerpiece, an insistently flowing bossa surrounded on either side by choppy waters—the foreboding dramatics of "The Trapezium" and the harsh attack of "Alnitak." The exotic "E. Eridani" has Emery's strings sounding

like African thumb piano and Lindberg evoking a hollow log with his percussive bass, while Thomas swoops and wails. "The Eridanus Supervoid" builds to near-industrial severity before the trio breaks out into abstract-Hot Club swing for the finale.

Lindberg's much shorter five-part "Journey Platz" suite of tense improvisations trades the elegance of Emery's composition for sheer intensity, as all three venture into the furthest ranges of their abilities.

—Shaun Brady

**The River Of Orion:** The River Of Orion—Aquarian Waters (Part One), Aquarian Waters (Part Two), E. Eridani, The Trapezium, The River Of Orion (Theme), Alnitak, Stellar Coronae, The Eridanus Supervoid, East Of Mintaka; Journey Platz—Parts One-Five. (66:08)

**Personnel:** Rob Thomas, violin; James Emery, guitar; John Lindberg, bass.

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



## Alex Cline

### Continuation

CRYPTOGRAMPHONE 140

★★★★★

Anchored by two 18-minute pieces and filled with atmospheric resonance and meditative movements, *Continuation* is not a listening experience that can be rushed, but what a satisfying and varied journey Alex Cline and his four collaborators take you on.

Word of "atmospheric" recordings tends to push potential listeners in one of two directions, but whatever side of the ledger you fall on you're likely to make the supposition that the recording will have much scraping of strings, sawing at cymbal edges and disregard for time. Cline throws those assumptions overboard. Just when you get comfortable with the long, acidic tones from Jeff Gauthier's violin and Peggy Lee's cello on "On The Bones Of The Homegoing Thunder," the piece explodes with the entrance of a hard-swinging piano trio, with Myra Melford whipping around the keyboard with tight flurries of notes and Cline and bassist Scott Walton riding madly behind her. The composition continues to unfold in stages, raising and lowering the temperature as it goes.

The other long piece—written to accompany a pair of Japanese dancers—is also filled with movement and sweeping gestures, highlighted by a beautiful section with Gauthier and Lee sliding together and apart. Lee is also engaging on "Nourishing Our Roots," the dark cry and rasp of her instrument set in contrast with the exceptionally dense tone of Walton's bass, and on "Open Hands"—the most straightforwardly reflective piece on the recording.

Melford, though, grabs your ear time and again, whether with her minimalist piano on "Fade To Green," her rhapsodic soloing on "Steadfast" or, especially, through the effective use of her harmonium—as an additional textural element and as an evocative melodic lead on "Clearing Our Streams." Moving from dramatic solo bass to an ancient-sounding anthemic ensemble, that composition best defines Cline's sense of evocative mood setting.

—James Hale

**Continuation:** Nourishing Our Roots; Clearing Our Streams; Fade To Green; Steadfast; SubMerge; On The Bones Of The Homegoing Thunder; Open Hands. (77:02)

**Personnel:** Alex Cline, percussion, kantele; Jeff Gauthier, violin; Peggy Lee, cello; Myra Melford, piano, harmonium; Scott Walton, bass.

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

## Igor Butman

### Magic Land

BMG RUSSIA 88697190152

★★★★½

The somewhat cheesy cover art and suggestion of kids music in the track listing, coupled with my barely nominal familiarity

with Igor Butman, put me off this CD when it arrived in the mail, although the blue-chip band heightened curiosity. Turns out I embarrassed myself. Butman is an amazing saxophonist and one of Russia's most celebrated jazz musicians, and this is an impressively virtuosic, yet unforced session.

The material celebrates themes from Russian movies and cartoons, which one might like to learn more about, in addition to the laundry list of Butman's accomplishments that comprise the liner notes. Jack DeJohnette produced the date and is clearly having a ball behind the drums, notably on the burning "Chunga-Changa," which is stoked mightily by John Patitucci's virile bass. On "Friends Song," these two replicate one of those fatback hot-gospel grooves DeJohnette specializes in with Keith Jarrett.

Butman, like Chris Potter, has protean chops.



There's a sense he can play anything with secure pitch, rhythmic ingenuity and that extra gear in reserve, but the sense of joy in his sound wins one over here. Some of the ditty-like tunes will have you whistling them later on; "Summer Song," which features Butman's cheery soprano, recalls "Surrey With The Fringe On Top," or maybe Randy Brecker's solo just suggests this.

At the back-end of the CD, the blowing gets more bruising with "Lullaby Of Mommy Bear," a killer groove metrically diced by Patitucci, threatening to wake the baby. Given a sextet this heavy, the competence of the ensemble is assured. But highlights occur during illustrative passages, such as Chick Corea's brilliant, animated fills during the Bud Powell-meets-Buster Keaton jollity of "Water Skis," on which his bouncing fingers evoke the skier as he bobs atop the wake from a cartoon boat.

—Michael Jackson

**Magic Land:** Br-ra-ti-no; Amazing Far; Friends Song; Water Skis; Song Of Little Lion And Turtle; Lullaby Of Mommy Bear; Summer Song; Golden Sun Ray; Chunga-Changa; Lullaby. (73:48)

**Personnel:** Igor Butman, tenor, soprano saxophone; Randy Brecker, trumpet; Stefon Harris, vibes; Chick Corea, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

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

## Traveling Guitars

**Chico Pinheiro and Anthony Wilson's *Nova* (Goat Hill 001; 69:30) ★★★★★** is a storied, two-guitar outing that includes many top-flight players. Except for two duos (and two trios with Swami Jr. joining in on acoustic guitar), every one of the 12 cuts has drums, bass, electric keyboards, horns, percussion and the kitchen sink thrown in. Pinheiro plays mainly classical guitar next to Wilson's hollow-body across an essentially Brazilian program that mixes in some fusion-like 5/4 with "Tempestade," ballads such as "Laranjeiras" and Wayne Shorter's jazzy "When You Dream" (with Ivan Lins). A great pairing.

Ordering info: [myspace.com/novapinheirowilson](http://myspace.com/novapinheirowilson)

**Gene Bertoncini and Roni Ben-Hur's *Smile* (Motéma 18; 48:30) ★★★** is big on covers, including a winning, bouncy arrangement of "Killing Me Softly." Like *Nova*, it features a classical guitar (Bertoncini) sidled up next to a hollow-bodied electric (Ben-Hur). Some of the playing seems routine, like a background-music lounge act ("I Concentrate On You," a sleepy "Smile"), but Bertoncini's Latin flair mixes well with Ben-Hur's more boppish approach. There's some jazzy heat ("That's Earl, Brother"), engaging sweetness ("You Are A Story") and an imaginative, alternately dreamy and driving reworking of "Out Of This World."

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

Clever reworkings of well-known songs come by way of **Royce Campbell's *Roses And Wine* (Philology 364; 62:48) ★★★**. With pianist Hod O'Brien and (separately) bassists James King and Pete Spaar, this program takes Duke Ellington's "Take The 'A' Train" and turns it into "Take A Train," Henry Mancini's "Days Of Wine And Roses" becomes "Roses And Wine" and "Lover Man" is "Lover Guy." Campbell uses the same chord progressions with new melodies, bringing new meaning to the words "cover tune." An easygoing, swinging affair, the leader has an engaging hollow-bodied guitar style and fun attitude.

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

**The Hot Club of San Francisco's *Bohemian Maestro: Django Reinhardt And The Impressionists* (Azica 22241; 59:12) ★★★★★** walks the familiar ground of Django Reinhardt's Hot Club of France. Through 16 songs—some originals and others by Debussy, Reinhardt and "The Pearls" by Jelly Roll Morton—guitarist/banjo player Paul Mehling leads his quintet of guitarists, bassist, violinist/theremin player and guests



Will Bernard: probing hollow-body

COURTESY WILL BERNARD

in a convincing set that retains the rhythm, feel and bounce of the original Club, with classical asides. Reinhardt's "Diminishing Blackness" (with pianist Jeffrey Kahane) offers a relaxed, swinging delight, and Debussy's material is full of delicacies.

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

**Shan Kenner Raw Trio: *Brooklyn Sketches* (Shan Kenner 0253; 75:49) ★★** There's lots of energy to this recording of originals along with covers of Miles Davis and Bill Evans' "Blue In Green" and Chick Corea's "Windows." Guitarist Kenner, bassist Ryan Berg and drummer Rudy Royston form a cohesive unit that puts a premium on small-group swing. Kenner's ballad "Substance" and the title track reflect pleasing, meditative sides while most of the longer, uptempo numbers become overwrought improvising exercises in need of editing.

Ordering info: [myspace.com/shankennerguitar](http://myspace.com/shankennerguitar)

**Will Bernard: *Blue Plate Special* (Palmetto 2137; 56:09) ★★★★★** Funky and fun in the spirit of Medeski Martin & Wood, some John Scofield and various Wayne Horvitz incarnations, Bernard's smooth yet probing hollow-body guides this program. John Medeski's greasy keyboards and Stanton Moore's bang-on-a-can drums kick things along with snappy bassist Andy Hess. From the lively opener, "Baby Goats," until the closing solemn spiritual, "How Great Thou Art," things cook and crawl as Medeski spars with Bernard in this mostly originals outing. The playful, inventive title track could be the theme song to a spy-thriller spoof. **DB**

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

# GREG REITAN SOME OTHER TIME

**GREG REITAN**  
**SOME OTHER TIME**  
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IN STORES  
JANUARY 13, 2009

*Some Other Time* is an expansive twelve track trio recording featuring compositions by Reitan, standards by Cole Porter and Leonard Bernstein, and jazz numbers by Pat Metheny, Bill Evans, Vince Guaraldi, and John Coltrane.

Greg Reitan: piano  
Jack Daro: bass  
Dean Koba: drums



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





## Multiple Personalities

**Bill Abel: *One-Man Band* (Blue Skunk 4504; 55:10) ★★★** Abel is that rare breed of self-sufficient performer who simultaneously sings, plays guitar and uses his lower extremities for action on snare, bass drums and hi-hat. A Mississippian for life, this bearded busker creates a holy mess slamming out original stomps, traditional fare like "John Henry" and the grime-crustured "Rob And Steal," a song from his late friend guitarist Paul "Wine" Jones. Album cover guarantee: "Recorded live, no overdubs."

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

**GravelRoad: *Shot The Devil* (Uncle Larry's 2008; 43:06) ★★★** These three Seattle-based alt-blues provocateurs gouge the air with a hard electric sound, summoning the ghosts of Junior Kimbrough and R.L. Burnside and glorifying their drinking buddy T-Model Ford. They draw on tradition to achieve their own dark identity. As lyricists, they traffic in bullet-in-the-brain malarkey ideal for the specter of Jim Morrison to sputter at the crossroads.

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

**Sleepy John Estes: *On 80 Highway* (Delmark 797; 57:35) ★★★** Recording in 1974, guitarist Estes and his sidekick Hammie Nixon on kazoo and harmonica bring an emotional authenticity to Memphis jug band music, spirituals and country blues that hadn't wavered in their half century performing together. Seventy-something Estes "cries" the blues with diminished strength but still manages to put across "Corrine Corrina," "Potato Diggin' Man" and a dozen others.

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

**Boo Boo Davis: *Name Of The Game* (Black & Tan 033; 49:48) ★★★½** Raised in the hardscrabble life of a Delta farming family, and a fixture on the St. Louis blues scene in more recent years, Davis doesn't lack for skill or conviction blowing harp and singing about personal concerns on his fifth import album. Ditching bass guitar, he joins first-rate guitarist Jan Mitterdorp and strong drummer John Gerritse in showing a more-than-casual appreciation of groove. To their advantage, they play all original material. Pride of place goes to "Why You Wanna Do It," a strong wind of love anguish, or the guitar-distorted ear-slammer "Dirty Dog."

Ordering info: [black-and-tan.com](http://black-and-tan.com)

**Bo Diddley: *Road Runner—The Chess Masters, 1959–'60* (Geffen 0011076; 73:46/76:37) ★★★★★** Continuing where the hit-studded first volume *I'm A Man* left off, *Road Runner* provides additional proof of the majesty of the rhythm patterns concocted by the rock 'n' roll pioneer on his square-bodied electric guitar with help from his maracas shaker Jerome Green, rhythm guitarist Peggy Jones, and drummers Clifton James and Frank Kirkland. Steeped in blues, Diddley delights whether heard on a first take or second or third: 52 tracks in all, 17 not released before.

Ordering info: [hip-oselect.com](http://hip-oselect.com)

**Pam Baker & The SGs: *The Blues Won't Wait* (Klarity 244; 48:04) ★★★** Along the southern coast of Maine, Baker can be counted on for a fun night out in one club or another. The new album may not come up to her live notices—studios rarely flatter good regional acts—but the singer has spirit in reserve and guitarist Steve Bailey shows himself to be the equal of many a more famous player in technique and taste.

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

**Matthew Stubbs: *Soul Bender* (VizzTone 1001; 37:09) ★★★** With his blues credentials secured from his road work with Janiva Magness and Charlie Musselwhite, Stubbs debuts with an all-instrumental record that has the 25-year-old guitarist's creative



Bo Diddley:  
rhythmic majesty

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

motor running on the high-test gas of 1960s blues, soul, r&b and surf music. (He's listened hard to lots of old records—among them, probably, Freddie King's and Memphis soul-dance ace Willie Mitchell's.) With the tenor saxophone of Gordon Beadle shouting with characteristic fervor, Stubbs finds the right combination of tone and phrasing to make his tunes sound fresh. "Sticky Bunz" dishes out Bo Beat fun and "Jacksonville Jerk" enters fast with hallucinatory guitar flourishes that don't quit.

Ordering info: [matthewstubbs.net](http://matthewstubbs.net)

**Family Meeting** (Ruf 3017 DVD; 85:00) ★★★½ From Finland, director Heikki Kossi's commendable documentary film addresses the camaraderie among American and European musicians who come together for a music hall gala honoring the Wentus Blues Band's 20th anniversary. Grand old men Eddie Kirkland and Louisiana Red reconnect after a 50-year lapse—they were once part of "Uncle John" Lee Hooker's crowd in Detroit. Lover-not-fighter Lazy Lester offers pearls of wisdom to all in earshot. Among the other "family members" filmed in preparation for the show and on concert stage: r&b shouter-toastmaster Barence Whitfield, harmonica virtuoso Kim Wilson and Swedish guitarist Sven Zetterberg.

Ordering info: [mvdb2b.com](http://mvdb2b.com)

**Bex Marshall: *Kitchen Table* (House Of Mercy 001; 38:28) ★★★½** A former croupier with Irish Gypsies in her family tree, Marshall makes memorable music that patrols the transgenre zone where blues, folk and rock mingle. Just two albums into her career, the young Londoner showcases an outstanding singing voice—her prowess includes sure phrasing and clear enunciation—and a well-handled acoustic steel-top resonator guitar on substantial self-penned tunes laden with moments of awe, urgency or reflection. The tension she builds in the modern blues "Black Guitar" culminates in a slide guitar clamor Derek Trucks would be pleased to call his own. **DB**

Ordering info: [houseofmercy.net](http://houseofmercy.net)

## Avishai Cohen

**Flood**  
ANZIC 5102  
★★★



Given the subject of this second part of Avishai Cohen's *The Big Rain Trilogy*, *Flood* is tepid. The music can be likened more to a pinhole in the plumbing than a deluge; you will be somewhat refreshed by the spray, but you won't be swept away. Usually, modesty in jazz is not a virtue, a rule largely reinforced by the trumpeter's writing and his performances with pianist Yonatan Avishai and percussionist Daniel Freedman. The ensembles are sleek almost to the point of being skeletal, and the solos have a determined straightforwardness. While the pieces support a perceptible dramatic arc, the emotional payoff is only partial.

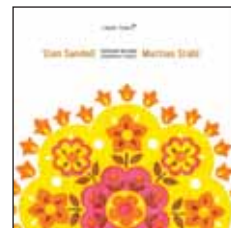
The inviting pentatonics and lyricism of much of Cohen's writing evokes the multiculturalism of Don Cherry, except that the late trumpeter's rhythmic effervescence is replaced with a slightly antiseptic feel. The robust piano of Karl Berger or the bustling hand drumming of Colin Walcott would have elevated the proceedings, not to mention Cherry's penchant for sudden bursts of energetic, tangential phrases. Instead, Cohen plays immaculately, beautifully at times. Subsequently, the album is largely shaped by even-keeled, crystalline lines, which makes the passages of increased intensity stand out like high-water marks. —Bill Shoemaker

**Flood:** First Drops; Heavy Water: Prologue; Heavy Water; Nature's Dance; Flood; Sunrays Over Water; Cycles: The Sun, The Moon And The Awakening Earth. (57:28)  
**Personnel:** Avishai Cohen, trumpet; Yonatan Avishai, piano; Daniel Freedman, percussion.

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

## Sten Sandell/ Mattias Ståhl

**Grann Musik**  
CLEAN FEED 109  
★★★



Piano and vibraphone risk mutual cancellation. Each on its own can overwhelm musical content with volume of sound, so it takes discipline for them to be heard in each other's presence. Swedes Sten Sandell and Mattias Ståhl are up to that task. Each modulates his approach to ensure the music's balance. The vibraphonist favors a tart tone that emphasizes strike over reverberation, and the pianist forgoes the blocks of sound he has wielded so well in other combos like Gush, the Paal Nilssen-Love Quartet or his own trio. Sandell tends to be the rock around which other players surge and recede like ocean currents, but here he exercises such restraint that he and Ståhl sound like they are overlapping complementary patterns. Combined, their contributions never blur.

Rapid change is the watchword on "Olle Engkvist." Their figures creep up on each other, then each man opens gaps where the other can elaborate for a moment; then they spiral intricately together before pulling up short in a sparse, apprehensive denouement. On the hushed "Galjonbil" they select a much more circumscribed zone and work it for all they can, adding details until the piece shines like a constellation in a cloudless night sky. Far from being a blur, it's the exactitude with which the music is rendered that registers strongest. —Bill Meyer

**Grann Musik:** Lundbergs; Gröndals Deli; Olle Engkvist; Albert Och Herbert; Sjöfortet; Vinterviken; Galjonbil; Varning För Tög. (40:29)

**Personnel:** Sten Sandell, piano, prepared piano; Mattias Ståhl, vibraphone, marimba, glockenspiel.

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



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### Andrew Hill and Chico Hamilton

**Dreams Come True**

JOYOUS SHOUT! 10010

★★★★★

### Chico Hamilton Trio!

**Live @ Artpark**

JOYOUS SHOUT! 10011

★½

*Dreams Come True*, a stunning session cut in 1993, not only presents a grouping only a handful of fans ever witnessed, but the creative sparks that fly right out of the gate reveal two iconoclasts refusing to go through the motions. Pianist Andrew Hill and drummer Chico Hamilton performed as a duo in 1990 at the Charlotte Jazz Festival; it was strong enough that they entered a recording studio together a few years later. Inexplicably, the tapes sat dormant until now.

The set opens with Hill navigating the brooding melody of “Ohho” with typical mercurial grace when after a few phrases Hamilton drops some bombs that invoke the wonderful disruptive spirit of Han Bennink, while on “Watch That Dream” the drummer conducts a veritable clinic on the possibilities of the tambourine. Hill refuses to bend to the percussionist’s fierceness and snap, and likewise Hamilton doesn’t surrender the frenetic power of his own attack, yet rather than sound like two veterans digging in their heels for battle, they quietly find an effective middle ground, subtly drawing ideas and asides from one another. This serves as a major addition to the discographies of both artists.

The same can’t be said for *Live @ Artpark*, a live recording from 1994 of Hamilton fronting a fusionoid trio with guitarist Cary DeNigris and electric bassist Matthew Garrison. Hamilton’s irrepressible energy gives the proceedings a positive charge, electrifying the performance without laying it on too thick. Sadly, his cohorts smother the leader’s pithy originals in post-Jimi Hendrix noodling.

—Peter Margasak

**Dreams Come True:** Ohho; Three Notes And A Brush; Watch That Dream; And The Drums Sing; Clifford’s Gone; Shaw Nuff; Bless That Dream, Maybe Hope; Composition B. (55:59)

**Personnel:** Andrew Hill, piano; Chico Hamilton, drums, tambourine.

**Live @ Artpark:** Ain’t Nobody Calling Me; A Little After Twelve; First Light; These Are The Dues; Denise; Tickle Toe; Sculpture; C&C. (64:20)

**Personnel:** Hamilton, drums, vocals; Cary DeNigris, guitar; Matthew Garrison, bass.

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

### Sonny Rollins

**Road Shows, Vol. 1**

DOXY B0012165

★★★★★

It’s a virtual jazz mantra that the onstage Sonny Rollins is vastly superior to the in-studio Rollins, with the former tragically under-represented on record. One reason for the lack of live Newk on shelves is that the Saxophone Colossus is his own worst critic and has deemed too many of his performances unworthy of release. So the promise of 71 minutes of handpicked Rollins material is enticing, and its promise is fully met on this collection.

Rollins’ producer/trombonist/nephew Clifton Anderson has wisely sequenced the decade-hopping selections as if they’re a single concert, kicking off with the rip-roaring “Best Wishes” before cooling off with a bluesy rendition of “More Than You Know.” He then moves into a true find, the previously unreleased mid-tempo original “Blossom.” No Rollins show is complete without a calypso, and here we get “Nice Lady,” which feels like a closer before the encore of “Some Enchanted Evening,” from the much-discussed 2007 return to Carnegie Hall.

While that Carnegie show was originally intended for release in its entirety, Rollins again deemed it unsatisfactory except for this single standard. The leader’s playing is at its most tenderly emotional, while Christian McBride’s meaty bass provides backbone and a surprisingly restrained Roy Haynes seems to breathe in time with Rollins.



Know,” the album is the Sonny Show. The opener is breathtaking, with Rollins pulling and twisting the melody like taffy, adorning and rethinking it for a jaw-dropping stream-of-consciousness stretch. He tears into a fierce “Tenor Madness” and digs deep into “Easy Living” with raw confession.

It’s almost exhausting keeping up with Rollins’ leaps of imagination and courage. This collection is probably best enjoyed like fine wine, sipped and savored, letting the flavors develop and the finish resonate before going back for more. Best of all is the *Vol. 1* in the title, bringing with it the promise of more to come.

—Shaun Brady

**Road Shows, Vol. 1:** Best Wishes; More Than You Know; Blossom; Easy Living; Tenor Madness; Nice Lady; Some Enchanted Evening. (71:40)

**Personnel:** Sonny Rollins, tenor saxophone; Clifton Anderson, trombone (1, 2, 5, 6); Mark Soskin (1, 4), Stephen Scott (5), piano; Bobby Broom, guitar (1, 2, 6); Jerome Harris (1, 3, 4), Bob Cranshaw (2, 5, 6), Christian McBride (7), bass; Al Foster (1, 3, 4), Victor Lewis (2), Perry Wilson (5), Steve Jordan (6), Roy Haynes (7), drums; Kimati Dinizulu (2, 6), Victor See-Yuen (5), percussion.

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

### Lisa Hilton

**Sunny Day Theory**

RUBY SLIPPERS PRODUCTIONS

★★½

Lisa Hilton is not a jazz pianist; she’s a jazzy pianist. With a number of stylistic devices at her disposal, Hilton doesn’t play noteworthy compositions so much as musical moods. She applies rhythmic vamps—some compelling—with a firm, steady attack. Her pieces reference soul jazz, gospel jazz, funk and the blues without fully executing those forms.

Chord changes are minimal and most of the tunes amble, slightly shifting their harmonic weight. The treatment of Joni Mitchell’s “Ladies Of The Canyon” is emblematic of this album: strong rhythm on one chord, with shifting tempos. Like the tide, there are no big developments



with these tunes, just a steady back and forth. Hilton plays the venerable “Skylark” at a singsong gait before tying it off too quickly.

With the help of bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Lewis Nash, Hilton’s rhythmic assets are strengthened. She prefers to let saxophonist Brice Winston solo, and he renders competent statements on the funkier, although nothing terribly new. This is one of those albums whose target demographic is unclear.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Sunny Day Theory:** Heat Wave; Melt Down; So Blue; Ladies Of The Canyon; After The Fire; Sunny Day Theory; Skylark; So This Is Love; Where Have All The Flowers Gone?; Malibu Morning; Sunset On The Beach; Mercy, Mercy, Mercy. (52:40)

**Personnel:** Lisa Hilton, piano; Brice Winston, tenor saxophone; Larry Grenadier, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

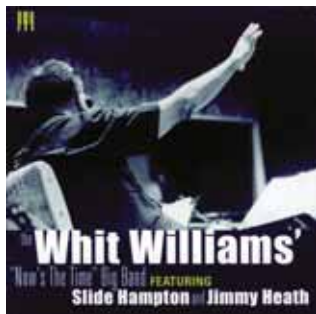
» Ordering info: [lisahiltonmusic.com](http://lisahiltonmusic.com)

**Whit Williams' "Now's The Time" Big Band**

Featuring Slide Hampton And Jimmy Heath

MAMA 1033

★★★★½



If there were previous releases by this fine Baltimore jazz orchestra, they slipped under the national radar. Tenor saxophonist Whit Williams has augmented his big band here with legends Jimmy Heath and Slide Hampton. Saxophonists Gary Thomas and Charlie Young also guest, and the collective firepower makes for an exhilarating aggregation. The tunes and charts, though, make the album particularly special. Williams creatively showcases many varieties of swing; the two Williams pieces, arranged by Vince Norman, stand admirably with those by Heath and Hampton.

The album checks in on two gifted writers whose orchestral writing doesn't have nearly enough outlets. Heath's chart on Kenny Dorham's "Una Mas" is a model of clever section movement. The poignant ballad "Losing Game" excels at melodic counterpoint between brass and reeds. Hampton's bright,

well-crafted "Copenhagen" has plenty of swinging tension between reeds and brass. The well-appointed solos—unattributed in the liner notes—include a sinewy but undermiked flute statement by Thomas. Vibrant drummer Harold Summey shines on this tune.

Hampton's soft-toned trombone is featured on Williams' wistful waltz "Radiator Man." The Mat Belzer

chart floats with burnished brass writing. Hampton's groove-rooted treatment of Thelonious Monk's "Little Rootie Tootie" ingeniously layers brass in ever-higher configurations on the ensembles. The unnamed high-note trumpet solo is cleanly executed, though a tad stilted in its phrasing. The ensemble work is similarly unified and well-rehearsed.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Featuring Slide Hampton And Jimmy Heath:** This Is What It Is; Una Mas; I Remember Tangle; Losing Game; Without You, No Me; The Radiator Man Is Well; A Day In Copenhagen; Diana; Get Home Before Dark; Little Rootie Tootie. (59:35)

**Personnel:** Don Junker, Joe Palonzo, Michael Thomas, Eli Asher, trumpet; Jay Gibble, Richard Ore, Bill Holmes, Slide Hampton, trombone; Bernie Robier, bass trombone; Jimmy Battallata, Jimmy Kearns, Russell Kirk, Charlie Young, Howard Burns, Gary Thomas, Jimmy Heath, Steve Swann, woodwinds; Charlie Etsel, piano; Earnest Barnes, bass; Harold Summey, drums.

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



**Giovanni Maier Technicolor**

Featuring Marc Ribot/A Turtle Soup

LONG SONG 105

★★★

It's old news by now that the '70s are back in a big way. Italian bassist Giovanni Maier has boned up on the fusion masters, and this two-disc set featuring his Technicolor quartet displays the lessons he has learned. But while he has been an attentive student, he hasn't heeded the cautionary tales his forebears provide, and there is much here that stumbles over the familiar obstacles of excess and indulgence.

Aside from three group improvisations, all of the tunes were penned by Maier, and the Weather Report influence is never out of mind for long, even when the music visits the outer-space orbit of Sun Ra's Arkestra. The tunes split fairly evenly between atmospheric jams and pop-funk grooves, the former ending up the more successful; Maier's melodies strive for Joe Zawinul-style hummability but veer toward anthemic simplicity, resulting too often in bubblegum-prog that cloy rather than catches.

On disc one, *Featuring Marc Ribot*, Maier creates settings for the Downtown guitar virtuoso and Italian counterpart Simone Massaron to roam free, for better or worse. Ribot gets the chance to show off several of his familiar guises, from bludgeoning metal gymnastics to mournful folk-sure twang. He pairs well here with Alfonso Santimone, whose laptop conjures a decaying industrial landscape, which frames some of the guitarist's harshest explorations.

The second disc, *A Turtle Soup*, foregoes the guest stars and lets the quartet come to the fore. Throughout both discs, Maier cedes the spotlight, especially to his dual-keyboard frontline: Giorgio Pacorig on Rhodes and Farfisa and Santimone on a variety of modern and retro devices. But the leader's subtle work is the group's backbone, at times beating in lockstep with drummer Zeno de Rossi, at others scything melodic paths through the synth-drone undergrowth.

—Shaun Brady

**Featuring Marc Ribot/A Turtle Soup:** Disc 1—Segovia; El Matador; This Is My Voice; L'Inafferrabile Fascino Dell'Incompletezza; Fiff; Old File; Miss T.; Manarola Song; Villa Santina; Marc's Mark. (66:06) Disc 2—Aeropagods; San Giovanni; Grandi Speranze; Prometeus; Arpeggi; One Long Song. (57:42)

**Personnel:** Giovanni Maier, bass; Zeno de Rossi, drums; Giorgio Pacorig, Alfonso Santimone, keyboards; Marc Ribot, Simone Massaron, guitar (disc 1).

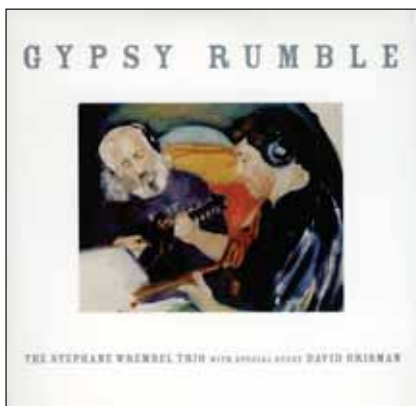
» Ordering info: [longsongrecords.com](http://longsongrecords.com)

**Stephane Wrembel Trio**

Gypsy Rumble

AMOEB A 0003

★★★★



Stephane Wrembel is a favorite guitarist of Djangoaphiles. Now, thanks to a song on the soundtrack of Woody Allen's latest film, listeners not ordinarily in the Gypsy swing of

things are noticing this Frenchman who first became enamored with Django Reinhardt's arpeggiated lines as a music student in Paris and for a time traveled with a Gypsy caravan.

Not unlike Jimmy Rosenberg and other Gypsy jazz virtuosos, Wrembel works the strings with hard confidence at a delirious pace on an album where he's joined in the front line by guest David Grisman, a brilliant mandolin player fluent in the related languages of Reinhardt and bluegrass (traditional and progressive). The pair's unerring musicianship, quick-wittedness and huge capacity for swing rush along Reinhardt repertoire like "Swing 48" and "China Boy." Trio members Jared Engel on bass and Eric Rodgers on rhythm guitar provide additional drive and texture without causing string overload.

Wrembel and Grisman are most successful at personalizing the music when they cool their jets and show sensitivity to dynamics. "Blue Drag," originally done in the 1930s by the Quintette du Hot Club de France, receives a wonderful reading, with a quietly thrilling depth informing every note. Playing "Big Brother" (from Allen's talky romantic comedy

*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*), the 30-year-old guitarist and Grisman find a resonance with the Roma people of southern Spain. "Les Deux Guitares" is another example of their songful authority in a temperate mood.

The two tracks closing *Gypsy Rumble* with Bay Area singer Brandi Shearer and clarinetist Ralph Carney are entertaining trifles compared to the creative art that came before.

—Frank-John Hadley

**Gypsy Rumble:** Jimmy's Bar; Les Deux Guitares; China Boy; Swing Gitane; Swing De Bellevue; Buster Swing; Swing 48; Supplique; Mabel; Big Brother; Blue Drag; Milko; David; Belleville Rendezvous; Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams. (61:11)

**Personnel:** Stephane Wrembel, Eric Rodgers, Robin Nolan (14, 15), Kevin Nolan (14, 15), guitar; David Grisman, mandolin; Jared Engel, Simon Planting (14, 15) bass; Brandi Shearer, vocals (14, 15); Ralph Carney, horns (14, 15).

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



## Blue Note 7

**Mosaic: A Celebration Of Blue Note Records**

BLUE NOTE 28123

★★★

When Blue Note launched in 1939, it leaned in a traditional direction, with artists such as Sidney Bechet and Earl Hines. But

within a few years, with Ike Quebec spearheading A&R, it blossomed into a bouquet of bop, hard-bop and post-bop innovation. With time, Blue Note became harder to pigeonhole in terms of sound but easier to recognize as a harbor for players and writers whose mission was to cultivate a personal style, expand the boundaries of the music and yet keep it accessible.

If that wasn't articulated specifically during the planning and recording of the Blue Note 7's *Mosaic*, these arrangements and performances nonetheless reflect this aspect of what the label came to represent. Assembled specifically for this project and a subsequent three-month tour, this all-star septet tackles eight familiar works from the Blue Note songbook,



each with the finesse and flair one would expect. This is clear from the top, as they herald Cedar Walton's title track with a brassy fanfare that sets up not just Lewis Nash's establishment of the groove for the tune but the spirit of the entire set.

That spirit is less about pushing envelopes than adhering to preconceptions of the theme of this project. There are standout moments, in particu-

lar Bill Charlap's ability to reference Thelonious Monk without abandoning his own smoother, lyric style on "Criss Cross." And it goes without saying that everyone in the group improvises and interacts with supreme virtuosity.

Still, *Mosaic* is ultimately about looking backward rather than moving forward. Nostalgia is embedded now in this material; it has become classic, and deservedly so, with all of the paradox that implies.

—Robert Doerschuk

**Mosaic:** Mosaic; Inner Urge; Search For Peace; Little B's Poem; Criss Cross; Dolphin Dance; Idle Moments; The Outlaw (57:41)

**Personnel:** Nicholas Payton, trumpet; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone, flute; Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Bill Charlap, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

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

## Hilario Duran & Perspectiva

**Encuentro En La Habana**

ALMA 12122

★★★½

The joy of reunion is woven into every seam of pianist Hilario Duran's 2005 return to Cuba, where he performed with three former bandmates for the first time in eight years. Duran toured the world with trumpeter Arturo Sandoval in the company of guitarist Jorge Luis Chicoy, bassist Jorge Reyes and conguero Reynaldo Valera, and after their leader's defection to the United States, they remained together as *Perspectiva* for several years. Eventually, Duran left, too, landing in Canada as one of saxophonist Jane Bunnett's Cuban imports.

When the rhythm section locks in behind guest saxophonist Roman Feliu's liquid alto lead on "Perspectiva," you get an idea of how tight this quartet must have been in its prime. There are also shadows of the band's past on the slick-themed "Havana City," which has a unison alto/piano/guitar head that points back to *Perspectiva*'s fusion days. Midway through, though, something interesting happens, as Duran's solo expands the group into more har-



monically interesting territory. While his Cuban heritage is always evident—nowhere more so than on "Gandinga Y Sazon," his powerful tribute to one of his mentors, Frank Emilio—Duran has grown into a multidimensional player who has the muscular approach of McCoy Tyner and the lyrical breadth of Oscar Peterson. His robust technique shines on "No More Cha Cha" and "Descarga En La EGREM," both of which also feature the well-articulated, biting sound of Chicoy, while his soulful side rises on the brief solo "Farewell."

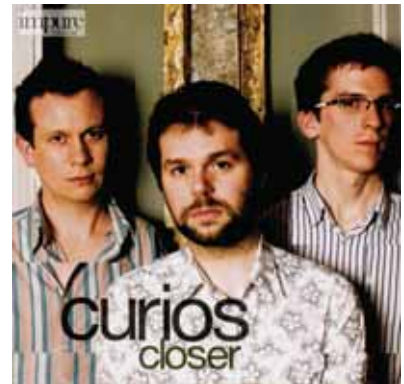
But this reunion is too brief—44 minutes—and there's a dearth of variety beyond the aforementioned solo closer and the relaxed intro section of "Danzon Para Los Amigos." More of the blazing intensity and sense of surprise that lights up "Bluesette" would have made this a stronger outing.

—James Hale

**Encuentro En La Habana:** Perspectiva; Gandinga Y Sazon; Bluesette; Danzon Para Los Amigos; Havana City; No More Cha Cha; Perla Marina; Trio Influenciado; Descarga En La EGREM; Farewell. (44:28)

**Personnel:** Hilario Duran, piano; Jorge Reyes, bass; Jorge Luis Chicoy, guitar; Reynaldo Valera, Pedro Martinez, conga; Emilio Del Monte, timbales; Roman Feliu, alto and soprano saxophone; Ernesto Simpson, drums; Emilio Del Monte, Jr., bata drums.

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



## Curios

**Closer**

IMPURE MUSIC 003

★★★½

Piano trios have sprouted up like weeds, becoming the dominant jazz instrumental setting for this decade. Distinguishing the interchangeable weeds from the wildflowers becomes all the more difficult. But from one listen to *Closer*, it's safe to call Curios one of the more noticeable flowers of the bunch.

Based in London and winner of the 2008 BBC "Best Jazz Band" award, Curios centers on pianist Tom Cawley's evocative compositions, which can be autumnal and poised or rambunctious and rambling. Regardless of temperament, Cawley's improvisations have a zest and clarity as he draws upon modern jazz history, namely the impressionistic touches of Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock and the rhythmic jolt and humor of Thelonious Monk and Jaki Byard.

Drummer Joshua Blackmore and bassist Sam Burgess provide the ideal foil for Cawley's compositions. The empathic rhythm section sublimely underscores the quieter moments with the needed suspense following Cawley's writhing passages with enormous ease and alertness as the pianist shifts tempos. Burgess has his shining moments on "Trackside View" and "Song For Greta," which showcase his serene arco-bass melodies that sometimes recall Stanley Clarke's early-'70s ballads. Without dispensing any grandiose solos, Blackmore's restive, interactive drumming keeps Cawley's compositions from being too placid.

What impresses most about Curios, though, is the tremendous communal empathy it possesses. Matched with each member's improvisational zeal and Cawley's compositions, Curios positions itself alongside other great modern piano trios such as The Bad Plus and those led by Robert Glasper and Brad Mehldau. The best thing about this is that Curios sounds nothing like them.

—John Murphy

**Closer:** Little Sharks And Baby Dolphins; The Tiling Song; Closer; Curious; Trackside View; Roebuck; Song For Greta; Jensen; Bradford; Truce. (50:13)

**Personnel:** Tom Cawley, piano; Sam Burgess, bass; Joshua Blackmore, drums.

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

Fredrik Nordström  
quartet: breaking free



JANI PERSSON

## Scandinavian Soundscape

With his new band Angles, Swedish reedist Martin Küchen struts some mean free-bop chops. ***Every Woman Is A Tree* (Clean Feed 112; 59:00) ★★★★★** is a wordless political protest against war, and specifically, the Iraqi occupation, but its muscular, post-Mingus propulsion embroiders big-boned melodies with so much style and energy that no back story is needed. His excellent band (trumpeter Magnus Broo, trombonist Mats Åleklint, vibraphonist Mattias Ståhl, bassist Johan Berthling and drummer Kjell Nordeson) rides the six originals hard, and each improvisation meets the sextet's raucous articulation head on.

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

As a member of Supersilent, keyboardist Ståle Storløkken exerts remarkable restraint, keeping his mostly electronic input meticulously pitched to the spontaneity of the music's real time. But with his trio Elephant9, he truly lets loose. Joined by the explosive drummer Torstein Lofthus and electric bassist Nikolai Eilertsen on ***Dodovoodoo* (Rune Grammofon 2075; 48:29) ★★★½**, he rips into organ-stoked fusion with breathless glee. The two closing tracks are Joe Zawinul tunes, and while Storløkken's love for richly colored synth textures is a salute, the real template here sounds like Tony Williams Lifetime.

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

Saxophonist Trygve Seim and accordionist Frode Haltli carve out a gorgeously serene space on ***Yeraz* (ECM 2044; 68:45) ★★★½**, their first duo recording. Using a disparate repertoire that makes room for moody, lyric originals, pieces by Gurdjieff, Bob Marley and even a traditional Armenian song, the focus is on the sensitive interplay between their wind instruments, which here sound as simpatico as I've heard them, as the pair swap various roles with striking fluidity. The improvisations unfold with exquisite care, in lines steeped in melancholic beauty and, sometimes, glimmering hope.

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

Bassist Jonas Westergaard has emerged as one of Denmark's most exciting new artists, a pivotal figure in the vibrant new jazz scene that's exploded in Copenhagen. He's made his name in small group projects with folks like Michael Blake, John Tchicai and Jacob Anderskov, but on his first album as a leader he opts for a much larger, luxuriant sound. ***Helgoland* (Stunt 20812; 49:34) ★★★½** looks to Duke Ellington not only in its gorgeous voicings and elegant movement, but also in the bassist's care in writing specifically for the eight other members of the ensemble. Westergaard's tunes, however, are his own.

Ordering info: [sundance.dk](http://sundance.dk)

Swedish saxophonist Fredrik Nordström dials down the energy on his recent quartet outing ***Blue* (Moserobie 058; 73:30) ★★★½**—his group usually traffics in post-Ornette excursions by way of classic Blue Note sounds—probably in deference to the record's veteran pianist Bobo Stenson. The influence of John Coltrane and Charles Lloyd is plain, but he can break free. On the brisk, stuttering "Late Sunday Flight Home," his rapid-fire soprano flurries sound contemporary. Most of the pieces are ballads that approach an ECM esthetic without the chilly production style. Bassist Mattias Welin and drummer Jon Fält do an excellent job with the hovering, weightless pulse, and the lyric grace of Stenson is stunning as usual.

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

***Camel Walk* (Jazzland 0602517800601; 43:15) ★★★½** is the second recording pianist Maria Kannegaard has made with bassist Ole Morten Vågan and drummer Thomas Strønen, but the unity the group reveals might lead you to think they've been working together for decades. The elucidation of her warm melodies are inextricably linked to an ensemble sound. She does step out with some extended strands of improvisation, but most of the time her pieces develop in big chords or mesmerizing, slowly morphing patterns. **DB**

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

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## Forward March

Despite the drubbing he took in the 1990s from Wynton Marsalis and pals, in the '70s reedist Anthony Braxton was one of jazz's brightest hopes. Signing with major label Arista, he cut three terrific quartet albums with Dave Holland on bass, Barry Altschul or Jerome Cooper on drums, Kenny Wheeler on trumpet or George Lewis on trombone. The records were teeming with ideas he'd continue to develop: pulsing horns, asymmetrical stoptime passages for bass and drums, slippery higher-'tuplet rhythmic subdivisions in themes and solos, and minimalist repetitions. (The downside: harsh, compressed bass sound.)

Those albums and six more, spanning 1974-'80, make up *The Complete Arista Recordings Of Anthony Braxton (Mosaic 242; 73:28/76:05/78:12/70:19/63:50/63:28/53:52/58:15)* ★★★★★<sup>1/2</sup>, music of extraordinary variety, little of it on CD before. It includes a solo alto sax recital (where the focused originals trump "Red Top" and "Giant Steps"), the spectacular *Creative Orchestra Music 1976* (big band mutating into new music ensemble), duets with Muhal Richard Abrams (including rare glimpses of the pianist on standard material: Eric Dolphy's "Miss Ann" and a "Maple Leaf Rag" energized by Braxton's two-bar blastoffs) and a sax quartet number corraling three-fourths of the future World Saxophone Quartet.

Braxton loves parades as community rituals, and a good march for big or small units: the orchestra's celebrated Sousa take-off "Opus 58"; the Lewis quartet tromping out a left-right-left-right-left "street beat" on a stirring "6F." As always, Braxton gives pieces graphic, not verbal, titles: pictograms that occasionally resemble a cooling tower, designer faucet or pawnshop balls.

His hesitations, leaping zigzag intervals and sputtery attack (on various big and small saxes and clarinets) drive his detractors batty, but shouldn't faze anyone who appreciates Dolphy, a major forebear: a zigzagging multi-instrumentalist who could be gainfully ungainly, sometimes played unaccompanied and delved into new composed music. The gusto with which Braxton tackles melodic variations on "You Stepped Out Of A Dream," in duo with Holland, unexpectedly conjures Sonny Rollins. (Not that he sounds like Sonny.)

Musicians looking for fresh material can find it on those quartet dates: the ever-expanding melody line of "23C" (annotator Mike Heffley notes the parallel to "Twelve



Anthony Braxton: alternate priorities

JAN PERSSON

Days Of Christmas"), the stuck-record groove of "23G," the cool struttin' "23D" and neo-Dolphian "40M."

The album *For Trio* featured two multi-instrumental trios, with Henry Threadgill and Douglas Ewart or the Art Ensemble's Joseph Jarman and Roscoe Mitchell—genre-blurring Chicago AACMers all. In either version, the mysterious, wide-open texture, where silence is weighted like sound, harks back to Braxton's early co-op trio with Leo Smith and Leroy Jenkins. Alongside "Opus 63"—Braxton and Lewis improvising over chamber orchestra—it's also a bridge to the most controversial Arista stuff: through-composed music for multiple pianos or orchestras.

Braxton likes to juxtapose layers of complex information in musical space: a spinning-top horn line over off-kilter, unison bass and drums is two coded messages arriving at once. "Composition 82" for four orchestras and "95" for two pianos also exploit physical space: left and right pianos call and respond; lines pass within and between orchestras, an effect imperfectly rendered in stereo. (It's time for a second sharper recording.) The textures shift between dense and lean, waves and particles, with their own idiosyncratic Braxtonian flow.

Heffley suggests those projects demolished any jazz cred he'd built up (thus setting the stage for all that drubbing). But Braxton knew how rare his Arista opportunity was—major label backing and budgets, sympathetic producers—and pushed to get his whole broad program documented. (His jazzier stuff had always found a home.) Play it narrow to save jazz cred? This composer always had other priorities. **DB**

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



## David Liebman & Ellery Eskelin

*Renewal*  
HATOLOGY 654  
★★★★

For those not conversant with science fiction jargon, "steampunk" refers to a subgenre where past and future collide. This second teaming of saxophonists David Liebman and Ellery Eskelin could be tagged as "steampop," a vision looking backward and forward and landing not in the middle but far afield on a divergent branch of the musical timeline. That's not to suggest anything so simplistic as Liebman representing the past and Eskelin the future, but the former is known for his tenure under pioneers from Miles Davis to Elvin Jones and for his structured compositions, the latter for his associations with the Downtown scene and free experimentation. But as steampunk creators apply archaic beauty to their flights of whimsy, so this group finds the means to playfully nod to their forebears without becoming mired in homage.

Despite their seeming differences in approach, Eskelin and Liebman complement each other fluidly, pushing and compelling one another into the unexplored corners of the material. They're aided by a strong set of compositions, from Eskelin's ever-evolving "The Decider" and winking-at-Ornette "IC" to Liebman's airy ballad "Renewal" and sultry "Dimi And The Blue Man," inspired by his travels in Mauritania.

As on the saxophonists' prior CD, *Different But The Same*, bassist Tony Marino and drummer Jim Black complement the quartet; they each also contribute a tune. One of the most consistently inventive drummers on the scene, Black manages to surprise with eccentric punctuation and a sense of space that allows pieces to seemingly break down into a clattertrap rumble before suddenly surging ahead with a forceful backbeat. Marino responds with muscular playing, though his delicate solo on "The Decider," over Black's clouds of percussion, is a highlight.

—Shaun Brady

**Renewal:** Cha; The Decider; Out There; Renewal; Palpable Clock; Dimi And The Blue Man; IC; Free Ballad; Out There. (62:26)  
**Personnel:** David Liebman, Ellery Eskelin, tenor saxophone; Tony Marino, bass; Jim Black, drums, percussion.

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

## Gilfema + 2 »

OBLIQSOUND 512

★★★

## Ablaye Cissoko & Volker Goetze

*Sira*

OBLIQSOUND 106

★★½

Only someone confined to a cave over the last few decades would not be aware that jazz is an international music nowadays. But many listeners still don't know that its global reach has long eclipsed the yearning of foreign musicians to imitate the music invented here in the United States.

The most exciting development has been a rapid progression of jazz where far-flung players bring their own native traditions into the fold. Purists may scoff, but this phenomenon has injected the music with new energy and ideas. Although the trio known as Gilfema is based in the U.S., its members all hail from the other side of the pond. Singer and guitarist Lionel Loueke is from Benin, drummer Ferenc Nemeth is from Hungary and bassist Massimo Biolcati is Swedish-Italian. They all work together in Loueke's acclaimed trio, but whereas that project sticks to its leader's repertoire, here they all



bring in material and more freely range outside of the jazz tradition—although its sensibility provides the music's guiding force.

The melodies are buoyant and celebratory, the rhythms danceable and spry, neatly blending African and European sources into a winning

hybrid that can't be easily unraveled. But the focus is on the point where the cultures and these individuals come together. Located within the accessible grooves is a steady stream of high-level interaction and extended harmony. Loueke's knack for adding vocals to his fluid guitar lines sounds freer here than with his own trio. For the group's second album, the lineup was extended to a quintet, with the clarinets of Anat Cohen (an Israeli, upping the international quotient) and John Ellis. Their lines were clearly added to pre-existing tunes, but the arrangements add new twists to the tunes (or carry them on something like the tender "Morning Dew"), and their solos feel connected to the overall sound.

The fusion of traditional African music and jazz improvisation practiced by Senegalese

singer and kora player Ablaye Cissoko and the German trumpeter Volker Goetze isn't without precedent. Within the last decade trombonist Roswell Rudd embarked on a super project with the kora master Toumani Diabaté, and in previous decades jazzers like Randy Weston, Don Cherry and Chris McGregor have explicitly explored cross-cultural connections. In some ways this history renders *Sira* a bit less special than it might have been, but it remains striking for its lyric tenderness and empathy.

All but two of the pieces are either traditional African pieces or Cissoko originals, and it's definitely the trumpeter adapting his breathy, frequently muted improvisations to the cascading arpeggios and hypnotic vocal melodies spun by Cissoko. The intimacy of the recording and the clear rapport and respect the two musicians hold for one another is impressive, but ultimately this is less a dialogue than a monologue with Goetze making restrained asides. —Peter Margasak

**Gilfema + 2:** Twins; Question Of Perspective; Your World; Salomé; LonLon Gnin; Morning Dew; Festa; Cove; One's Mind's Eye; Master Of The Obvious. (52:48)

**Personnel:** Lionel Loueke, vocals, guitar; Ferenc Nemeth, drums; Massimo Biolcati, bass; Anat Cohen, clarinet; John Ellis, bass clarinet, ocarina.

**Sira:** Sira; Domain Domain; Lountang; Gorgorlou; Faro; Badingwo; Bouba; Bamaya; Sakhadougou; Manssani Cisse. (53:51)

**Personnel:** Ablaye Cissoko, vocals, kora; Volker Goetze, trumpet.

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

## Kot Kot

*Alive At Tonic*

AWDR/LR2 002

★★★½

The problem with a lot of jazz-rock fusion is that it doesn't rock. Put it down to bad taste in rock bands compounded by bad instincts about which aspects of each music to include and which to leave out.

Kot Kot does a better job than most because they get one thing straight—they rock. The quartet, helmed by Israel-born drummer Amir Ziv, maintains the episodic existence endemic to Downtown New York bands; most of *Alive At Tonic* was recorded four years ago at the now-defunct venue and they've only sporadically come together since then. The combustible combination of tension and ease—exemplified by the way begrimmed Grant Green licks unfurl over a manic drum-'n'-bass-derived groove, only to dissolve into a stomping funk as effortlessly as Miles Davis' *Dark Magus*-era band—requires listening of a high order. But the gasoline that makes the group's fire rage is its willingness to channel rock's purer brute impulses.

"Let's Surf" kicks off the record with a splendid Dick Dale riff over a breakneck-paced snare beat. Marc Ribot alternates between machine-gun stutters and loopy feedback excursions while Cyro Baptista's effects-laden voice wafts out of the mix like the ghostly utterances of some surfer who bought it while catching the



big one. Baptista's wiggled-out ululations make more sense here than they do in his own band. Ziv uses them as a sort of real-time dub effect as well as an electronic texture derived from over-driven circuits. Even so, Baptista occasionally gets a bit out of hand. That, and a somewhat sluggish detour into Bill Frisell territory on "Told You So," are *Alive At Tonic*'s main faults. But they're momentary distractions on one fun record.

—Bill Meyer

**Alive At Tonic:** Let's Surf; Won't U Be My Porcupine; My Dentist In Hawaii; Let There Be Light; Told You So; Mono Dream; Mute; Makanda; Bring Them To Their Knees. (76:13)

**Personnel:** Amir Ziv, drums; Marc Ribot, guitar; Cyro Baptista, percussion, voice; Shahzad Ismaily, bass.

» Ordering info: [awdrtr2.com](http://awdrtr2.com)

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## Joey DeFrancesco

Joey D!

HIGHNOTE 7190

★★★★

*Joey D!* offers no grand conceptual statement. It's just good, solid organ-tenor sax swing from start to finish. It's also a nice reminder of the talents of saxophonist Jerry Weldon.

Joey DeFrancesco holds his effects in reserve for the right moments. He often stays at middle or low dynamic levels, so when the organ ends "If Ever I Should Leave You" with a Technicolor sunset burst, it's near breathtaking. DeFrancesco features some of his best playing with his comping. He recasts "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" as a simmering waltz groove. After a typically climactic DeFrancesco solo, the organ plays under Weldon's tough and febrile tenor in sly and unpredictable ways. On "Besamé Mucho," the organ brushes color swaths behind the tenor. As Weldon bops through his "Dig" solo, DeFrancesco judiciously drops truncated chords and delivers puckish comments—all surrounded by spatial gaps.

Weldon is stellar throughout. His lines sing, with a tough, blues-drenched sound. He can suggest a more modern Ben Webster (on "Come Dance With Me") or draw from the well of Gene Ammons in his lower register ("Nancy (With The Laughing Face)"). With DeFrancesco almost deferential to Weldon as far as solo space, the well-oiled rapport they achieve bodes well for them.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Joey D!** Dig; Lament; Take Me Out To The Ballgame; If Ever I Should Lose You; Besamé Mucho; Come Dance With Me; Nancy (With The Laughing Face); Blues Up And Down. (60:21)

**Personnel:** Joey DeFrancesco, organ; Jerry Weldon, tenor saxophone; Byron Landham, drums.

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



## Charlie Parker

Washington, D.C.,  
May 23, 1948

UPTOWN 27.55

★★★★

## Dizzy Gillespie Big Band

Showtime At  
The Spotlight:  
52nd Street,  
New York City,  
June 1946 »

UPTOWN 27.53/54

★★★★½



Add *Washington, D.C., May 23, 1948*, to the corpus of location recordings that capture alto saxophonist Charlie Parker in stellar form. The album comprises the "modern jazz" component of a Sunday matinee dixieland vs. bebop concert. Complemented by such solid local A-listers as tenor saxophonist Ben Lary, trumpeter Charlie Welp, and trombonist Rob Swope, and propelled primarily by Buddy Rich and a competent local bassist and pianist, Parker uncorks a series of impeccable solos, reaching heights of inspiration on "These Foolish Things," "Ornithology" and a breakneck "KoKo," on which he reimagines his virtuosic introduction from his 1945 Savoy studio recording of the "Cherokee" variant.

On the final track, jamming with "moldy figs" Benny Morton, Tony Parenti and Wild Bill Davidson, Parker unleashes his inner-city Kansas City blues shouter on an attenuated "C Jam Blues," which fades out during an excellent follow-up solo by Parenti.

Exemplary production values enhance the package. The original acetates, sold contemporaneously around D.C. as pirate bootlegs, receive an excellent digital remastering, and three authors contribute program notes. Ira Gitler pens an overview memoir of Bird, jazz historian Ron Fritts writes a detailed essay on the post-war D.C. scene and Ross Firestone, who attended the concert as a teenager, contributes rich memories of the event. While the proceedings do not reach the take-to-the-desert-island level, the package still contains many delights for Parker devotees.

*Showtime At The Spotlight* is a seminal historical recording of Dizzy Gillespie's pathbreaking '40s big band. Comprised of digital transfers of acetates recorded with Gillespie's consent well into an eight-week run, it is the only document of the band in its original incarnation, before John Lewis replaced Thelonious Monk in the piano chair. Monk's unmiked piano is mostly lost in the mix, except for brief, characteristically idiosyncratic solo turns on "Round Midnight" and "Second Balcony Jump." However, recording engineer Jerry Newman positioned his equipment to capture the band's breathe-as-one, clarion sound with depth, crispness and resonance. Gillespie is in transcendent form, constructing a series of spectacular solos in language that 21st century trumpeters, 60-plus years later, are still trying to match.

—Ted Panken

**Washington, D.C., May 23, 1948:** Tiny's Blues; Bernie's Tune; These Foolish Things; Scapple From The Apple; Ornithology; Buddy Rich, "We Have Requests"; KoKo; C Jam Blues. (51:59)

**Personnel:** Charlie Parker, alto saxophone; Sam Krupit, piano; Mert Oliver (1-3), Art Phipps (4-8), bass; Joe Theimer (1-3), Buddy Rich (4-8), drums; Earl Swope, Benny Morton (8), trombone; Ben Lary, tenor saxophone; Charlie Welp, trumpet; Tony Parenti, clarinet (8); Wild Bill Davidson, cornet (8).

**Showtime At The Spotlight:** Disc 1—Shaw 'Nuff/I Waited For You; Our Delight; Groovin' High; The Man I Love; Ray's Idea; Cool Breeze; Oop Bop Sh'bam; Round Midnight; Second Balcony Jump; Day By Day; Convulsions; Woody 'N You; Lazy Mood; One Bass Hit; Things To Come; I Waited For You. (63:53) Disc 2—Shaw 'Nuff/I Waited For You; Our Delight; Second Balcony Jump; Things To Come; Man I Love; Intermission: Don't Blame Me; Grosvenor Square; One Bass Hit; Things To Come; I Waited For You. (37:04)

**Personnel:** Howard Johnson, John Brown, alto saxophone; Ray Abrams, James Moody, tenor saxophone; Sol Moore, baritone saxophone; Talib Dawud, Johnny Lynch, Dave Burns, Dizzy Gillespie, Elmon Wright, trumpet; Alton Moore, Leon Comegys, Gordon Thomas, trombone; Thelonious Monk, piano; Milt Jackson, vibraphone; Ray Brown, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums; Sarah Vaughan, vocals (disc 2, track 6).

## Larry Gray

1, 2, 3 ...

CHICAGO SESSIONS 01V01

★★★★½

Chicago veteran bassist Larry Gray offers airy, intimate chamber trio sonics on his latest recording as a leader, a warmly recorded showcase for his smart post-bop compositions and imaginative solo work. The album is marked by sophisticated arrangements, gorgeous acoustic and electric string textures by Gray and guitarist John Moulder, and sensitive trap-set work by Charles Heath IV. The tunes are sturdy and the playing inspired.

The trio, turning in work occasionally reminiscent of the early albums of Pat Metheny, opens tricky with the speedy melody of "No Doubt," built on the changes of the standard "You Stepped Out Of A Dream." It sets the pace—and standard of excellence—with nicely matched sonorities and conversant interplay, exemplified by the trading-fours section and the way the tune subsequently opens up.

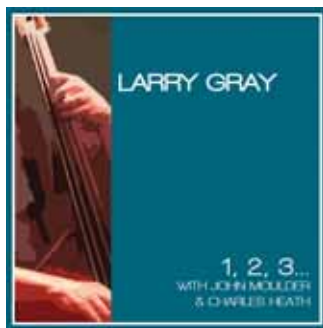
Other highlights of this hefty set of well-conceived music include the start-stop ballad "Monk And Duke," apropos of both titular influences; the unaccompanied bass piece "Song Of The Innocents," with Gray incorporating harmonics and below-the-bridge plucking; "Who Is The Drummer?" and "Meditation In D"; the bossa "One Look," topped with the leader's bowed melody; and rambling, fusion-edged closer "E-E-E-lectricity."

—Philip Booth

**1, 2, 3 ...:** No Doubt; Family; Song Of The Innocents; Monk And Duke; More Than A Few; Reflect; Who Is The Drummer?; One Look; Soffia's Dream; Meditation In D; Far And Away; Portals; E-E-E-lectricity. (72:27)

**Personnel:** Larry Gray, bass; John Moulder, guitar; Charles Heath IV, drums.

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



## Rudy Linka

Songs

JIRI VANEK

★★★

Under a federating theme, Czech guitarist Rudy Linka proves once again that he is a sensitive and thoughtful player. He is never heavy-handed, keeps his solos to the point and can subtly weave blues- or bossa-tinged elements into the fabric of his music. Such endearing and memorable pieces as “Folks Close To Our Farm,” “We All Are In It” and “Right Here Right Now” indicate that Linka is showing some growth and maturity as a composer. All three songs share a folk and even a pop sensibility that, in addition to the guitarist’s strong interest in Americana, leads to comparisons to Bill Frisell. But Linka favors a more direct and dynamic approach.

Linka could not have picked a better rhythm section to support him. Bassist Larry Grenadier lets his most melodic side come through while Paul Motian’s resourceful inventiveness brings a singing quality to his drumming, which meets the guitarist’s needs. Their playing does not show any trace of self-indulgence and the two musicians never engage in pointless virtuosic gestures. Their main concern is always to use their skills to benefit the music. This also suggests that the trio is arguably the most suitable and fruitful format for Linka.

Only a few lackluster songs prevent this well-balanced effort from being an all-around winner.

—Alain Drouot

**Songs:** Just For You And Few Others; Blues For Paul; More South; We All Are In It; Folks Close To Our Farm; I Remember You; As The First Dance; Right Here Right Now; The Times We Live In; Our Place In The Hills; Just About Here. (59:40)

**Personnel:** Rudy Linka, guitar; Paul Motian, drums; Larry Grenadier, bass.

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



## Joe Magnarelli

Persistence

RESERVOIR 194

★★★

Trumpeter Joe Magnarelli’s latest, which features a crack lineup that includes baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan, is a strong and spirited hard-bop set of standards and originals reminiscent of the albums made by Donald Byrd and Pepper Adams. “I Had The Craziest Dream” is played over a playful two beat, accentuated by Kenny Washington’s hi-hat, that settles into a medium swing for the solo section. Magnarelli’s solo, which at times hints at the head, balances lyricism with virtuosic bebop lines nicely.

The 24-bar blues “D Train Boogaloo,” written by Magnarelli for this session, features a funky “Sidewinder” groove, until it unexpectedly and deftly changes into a swing feel midway through Smulyan’s solo. On “Haunted Heart,” Smulyan offers melodicism, mastery of the horn’s range, insane chops and a fat sound.

Peter and Kenny Washington are a joy to listen to. Peter’s bass lines provide strong, unwavering support. Kenny’s creative fills drive the music and sometimes imply another tempo, meter or are just barely out of time. Their playing stands out on the uptempo “You And The Night And The Music,” on which pianist David Hazeltine lays out. The bassist and drummer are so locked in that they sound welded together. The album’s high level of playing and twists and turns keep it fresh, interesting and make it more than another generic bebop record.

—Chris Robinson

**Persistence:** Persistence; The Village; I Had The Craziest Dream; D Train Boogaloo; Haunted Heart; You And The Night And The Music; Ballad For Barretto; Soul Sister. (57:20)

**Personnel:** Joe Magnarelli, trumpet; Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; David Hazeltine, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

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



## BOOKS

by Eric Fine

### Homespun Folkways Captured the World

Richard Carlin’s *Worlds Of Sound: The Story Of Smithsonian Folkways* (Collins) follows a significantly different course than studies of such labels as Chess, Stax and Blue Note. A big, colorful hardback, it credits Folkways’ owner, Moses Asch, for creating America’s first significant independent record company. The book portrays Asch as beloved, ferocious, benevolent, brusque and indomitable. Rather than competing for talent with major labels like Columbia and RCA Victor, Asch scoured for artists who had unique voices but less commercial value. His collaborators included Samuel and Ann Charters, Alan Lomax and Delmark Records owner Bob Koester. Folkways limited its distribution to record shops located in large cities. The roughly 2,200 releases featured rough-hewn packaging and production. Asch’s acumen allowed him to stay in operation from 1940 until his death in 1986; the Smithsonian Institution purchased Folkways the following year.



“The front ‘cover’ [of Folkways’ album jackets] consisted of a paper wrapper glued over a plain sleeve, the black cardboard textured like aged leather,” writes Carlin, an independent producer who worked for Folkways from 1975–’80. “Sometimes the pressings were noisy; or the photos in the booklet notes were printed too dark and were hard to decipher; sometimes the central hole in the record was miscalibrated so the recording sounded wobbly.”

Still, as Carlin writes, the label’s influence far surpasses many once-successful pop labels. Folkways became synonymous with Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger; Piedmont blues and Appalachian bluegrass; the indigenous music of Haiti, Africa and Latin America; spoken-word recordings that included Langston Hughes and the late Studs Terkel. Harry Smith’s *Anthology Of American Folk Music* (1952) is perhaps Folkways’ crowning achievement. The original release led to the rediscovery of Depression-era artists such as bluesmen Mississippi John Hurt and Blind Willie Johnson and bluegrass player Dock Boggs.

The label functioned as a jazz imprint, as well. Its roster boasted Mary Lou Williams, James P. Johnson and Baby Dodds, in addition to lesser-known artists with roots in the early 1900s. Asch also entered into a distribution deal with Norman Granz for the release of the first Jazz at the Philharmonic album in the mid-’40s. “To me there was no difference between jazz and folk music,” Asch said. “It is all part of the contemporary scene.”

*Worlds Of Sound* should not be read straight through like a novel. Better to absorb it piecemeal: a chapter devoted to international music here; a sidebar about Greenwich Village there. The book would have benefitted from less effusiveness—particularly in its nonstop praise of Asch. Carlin could have also tethered the narrative to a significant milestone. However, the writer makes up for this with an abundance of profiles, history, discographies and photographs.

DB

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



## Sadowsky Semi-Hollow Model Guitar: Best of Both Worlds

Custom guitar builder Roger Sadowsky has been turning out finely crafted handmade guitars and basses since 1979. The new Semi-Hollow Model is his latest offering; it features the impeccable craftsmanship and excellent playability that we have come to expect from this respected luthier.

Sadowsky, who had built a strong reputation with his solid-body instruments, entered the jazz world with the introduction of his first archtop guitar, the Jim Hall Model. With one successful jazz box under his belt, Sadowsky later added the smaller-bodied Jimmy Bruno Model to his lineup. "The Semi-Hollow was the next logical step after the Jim Hall and Jimmy Bruno," Sadowsky said. "My goal was to design a versatile guitar that would appeal to the [Gibson] 335 enthusiasts and jazz players alike."

In developing the new prototype, Sadowsky distinguished his axe from the standard Gibson 335. "I did not want to build another 335-style guitar, as there are already plenty of those out there," he said.

Much of the Semi-Hollow guitar specs are based on the Bruno design. It features the same custom maple laminate top and 14<sup>3/4</sup>" bout, but with a narrower 1<sup>3/4</sup>" body thickness and a deeper cutaway. One of the unique aspects of the guitar's construction is the use of a carved-out spruce center block inside the body as opposed to the maple blocks found in most 335-style guitars. According to Sadowsky, this reduces the mass of the guitar and increases its resonance.

The guitar is beautiful, with a highly flamed maple body finished in an attractive sunburst

and bound with five-ply binding. As with the other Sadowsky archtops, the design is simple yet functional. There are two DiMarzio Virtual PAF pickups mounted into the top along with a Tune-O-Matic bridge and stop tailpiece. In wiring the guitar, Sadowsky once again made a decision to stray from the 335 template.

"I never liked the wiring configuration on the 335," he said.

Gibson used a four-knob setup with separate volume and tone controls for each pickup, which makes it difficult to adjust overall volume without affecting the guitar's tone when playing through both pickups. Sadowsky kept the three-way toggle switch but streamlined the controls down to a two-knob configuration featuring a master volume and tone control.

The Semi-Hollow plays great, with a comfortable 22-fret mahogany neck and Amazon rosewood fingerboard. The extended cutaway allows for easy access to the higher frets. Unlike a 335, this guitar is surprisingly

resonant and produces acoustic tone without amplification. After plugging in, I had no trouble producing a variety of great tones. The neck pickup is thick and lush—perfect for a fat jazz sound. The bridge pickup delivers the bite for rock and blues, and the dual pickup sound is warm, with a powerful in-your-face punchiness. Sadowsky wanted this guitar to be capable of performing at higher volumes without feedback issues, and there is no doubt that he achieved his goal. In both clean and over-driven settings, I could crank it up to past 11 with no problems.

Sadowsky has set a standard of excellence with his guitars, and the Semi-Hollow Model is no exception. Everything about this guitar screams quality, and with its exceptional versatility it is the perfect addition to his archtop line. It's no surprise that premier guitarists like John Abercrombie and Kurt Rosenwinkel endorse this model. Retailing at \$3,495, the Sadowsky Semi-Hollow is a great guitar capable of delivering the goods in a wide range of musical situations.

—Keith Baumann



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

## Paul Reed Smith Prism Guitar: Meeting Di Meola's Vision



Al Di Meola plays the PRS Prism

When Al Di Meola had a vision about a new guitar design, he took it to his longtime friend, guitar-maker Paul Reed Smith.

"I had an esthetic dream, which incorporated the blending of colors, running together in a rainbow-like fashion," Di Meola said. "When I presented the idea to [Paul] and his staff, I was amazed that they had never attempted to make anything like this. Paul likes challenges. He said it was not going to be easy, but I knew that the challenge posed was one he was going to conquer."

Smith and his team at PRS Guitars worked through several prototypes, and eventually Paul Miles of the PRS private stock depart-

ment devised the method to create the distinctive color pattern of the Prism, Di Meola's first signature-model PRS guitar.

"Think about having some red, blue and yellow dye, with a rag doing that design," Smith said. "It's almost impossible. How are you going to do that evenly? It almost looks like a painting. Nobody has ever attempted anything like it. I've never seen anything like it, and frankly, I still don't know how to do it."

In addition to the guitar's stained top, the Prism has a curly maple custom top with mahogany back, 25-inch scale length, a custom neck carve, grommet-style locking tuners, standard abalone bird inlays, a tremolo bridge

## Peavey Vypyr 75 Modeling Guitar Amplifier: Broad Processing Choices

Since 1965, Peavey has dedicated itself to producing quality products at affordable prices. Founder Hartley Peavey has come a long way since building his first amp in his dad's basement. With the Vypyr 75, the company has stepped into the modern age of digital modeling technology, and in true Peavey style, you get a big bang for your buck.

The Vypyr 75 is part of a line of modeling amps, which include 15, 30 and 100 watt solid-state models plus 60 and 120

watt units with a tube power section. Competing with the popular Line 6 amplifiers, Peavey has upped the ante with a powerful 32-bit processor, 24 amp models, 11 pre-amp stompboxes, 11 rack effects, built-in tuner and a USB interface.

The Vypyr 75 features a 12" Blue Marvel speaker and straightforward user interface. Red and green indicator lights provide quick visual feedback of current levels, selections and modes. First on the control panel is the stompbox selector. The Vypyr provides 11 choices and a quick tap of the knob gives access to the edit mode where two parameters can be customized for each. Next in line is the amp encoder, and Peavey provides 11 classic USA and British choices, each with a clean and overdriven channel option. The effects encoder is up next with 11 choices, and once again a tap on the knob enters the edit mode.

The remainder of the panel contains the standard analog amplifier options such as pre-gain, two-band EQ, post gain and a mas-



ter volume. Peavey adds a unique feature that it calls the power sponge, which allows you to turn down the output section of the Vypyr for a full-cranked sound at lower volumes. Completing the front panel is an auxiliary in for CD and MP3 players, a studio-quality headphone/record out jack and a USB 2.0 interface for direct recording to a computer.

I found the Vypyr 75 to be a very respectable modeling amp and a good value for its \$300 street price. The stompboxes and effects sound good and the amps are quite decent, particularly the clean Fender selections. The small type on the control panel is a little difficult to read and only 12 user presets can be stored in the unit, but with the optional Sanpera II foot controller you could store 400. The Sanpera dramatically increases the Vypyr experience, offering quick access to most amp functions at the tap of a toe and adding a volume and wah/pitch pedal and a looper unit.

—Keith Baumann

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

and a 22-fret Mexican rosewood fingerboard.

"Al has a specific neck shape and fret feel he likes, and Mexican rosewood is a hard wood that gives a thick but bright tone to the guitar," Smith said.

"We targeted a full and rich sound when playing up high, and when I go down low, it retains a treble bite," Di Meola said.

The guitar also features the PRS 1957/2008 pickups, made out of wire being produced on the machine that made the magnet wire for the pickups in the 1950s. "We have an exclusive on the wire, and it sounds exactly the same," Smith said.

Smith first met Di Meola about 25 years ago, when he showed him a guitar backstage at a Return To Forever show.

"He played it, looked down, played it some more, and said, 'I need a 12-string. Can you make me one and put a phase shifter in it?'" Smith said. "I made the guitar, he played it and signed a document that allowed me to use his name on my advertising if he could have the guitar. It was the first artist endorsement I did. He's an extraordinary musician"

Di Meola has played PRS guitars ever since, including three or four of the original curly maple-top guitars that Smith made. Di Meola played the Prism on the Return To Forever reunion tour last summer.

"I'm proud to be playing it," he said. "It exceeds my vision."

—Jason Koransky

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

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## 1» True Tone

VOX has expanded its line of Valvetronix tube-powered modeling amplifiers with the new VT Series, including 15 watt VT15, 30 watt VT30, 50 watt VT50 and 100 watt VT100 combos. The amps feature VOX's Valve Reactor technology, which uses a 12AX7 tube circuit to create an analog power-amp circuit that delivers true tube amp sound. Based on VOX's AD series, the models deliver even more advanced modeling and effects. Twenty-two amp models deliver everything from the latest high-gain amps to vintage and boutique amplifiers. Amps also feature 12 high-quality effects, 66 preset programs and eight foot-switchable user programs.

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

## 2» Natural Comfort

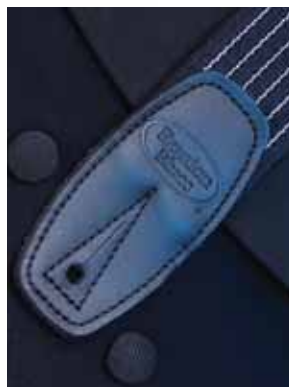
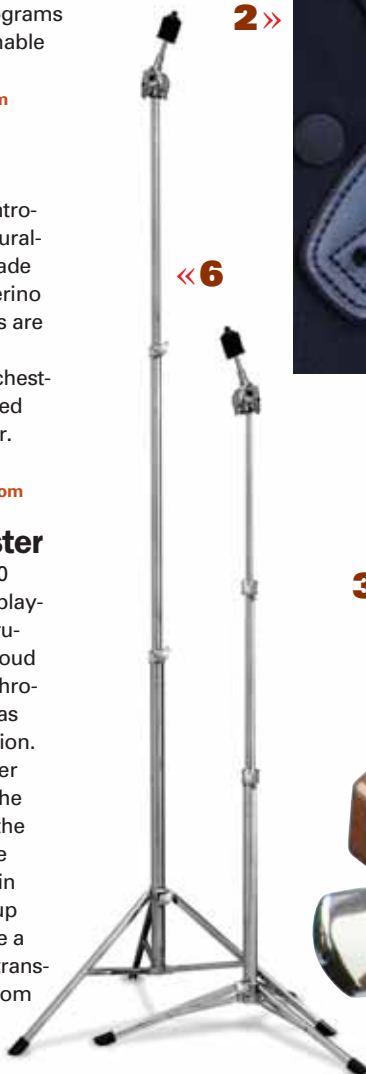
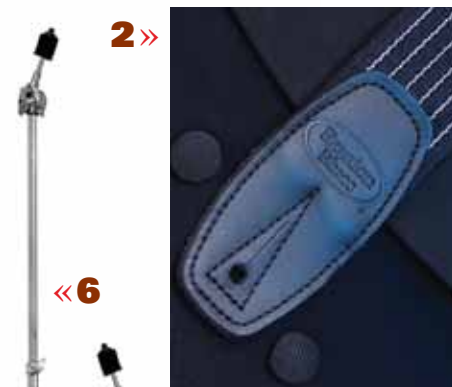
Reunion Blues has introduced three new natural-fiber guitar straps made from 100-percent merino wool. The new straps are available in designer black, pinstripe and chestnut brown, all trimmed with full-grain leather. MSRP: \$50.

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

## 3» Noise Buster

Sabine's ZOID Z-1000 clip-on tuners allow players to tune their instruments cordlessly in loud environments. The chromatic ZOID Z-1000 has instant note recognition. In clip mode, the tuner senses the notes of the instrument through the clip. In mic mode, the Z-1000 uses its built-in microphone to pick up notes. Tuners include a flat tune function to transpose guitars down from standard tuning. MSRP: \$39.95.

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



## 4» Signature Wail

Fender's Kenny Wayne Shepherd Stratocaster guitar—based on a 1961 model—blends vintage style with modern features. The guitar features an alder-body and maple neck with a 12-inch-radius rosewood fingerboard and 21 jumbo frets, vintage-style synchronized tremolo bridge with Graph Tech saddles, and vintage-style tuning machines. Three custom-voiced pickups give the axe a wailing voice.

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

## 5» Cool Connections

Blue Microphones' Icycle in-line USB converter and preamp makes connecting XLR microphones directly to a Mac or PC simple and effective. Designed for musicians who work with analog and digital technology, the Icycle bridges these worlds without the need for complicated drivers, I/O boxes or converters. Icycle works with dynamic and condenser microphones, providing connectivity for recording, podcasting, voiceovers and more. MSRP: \$59.99.

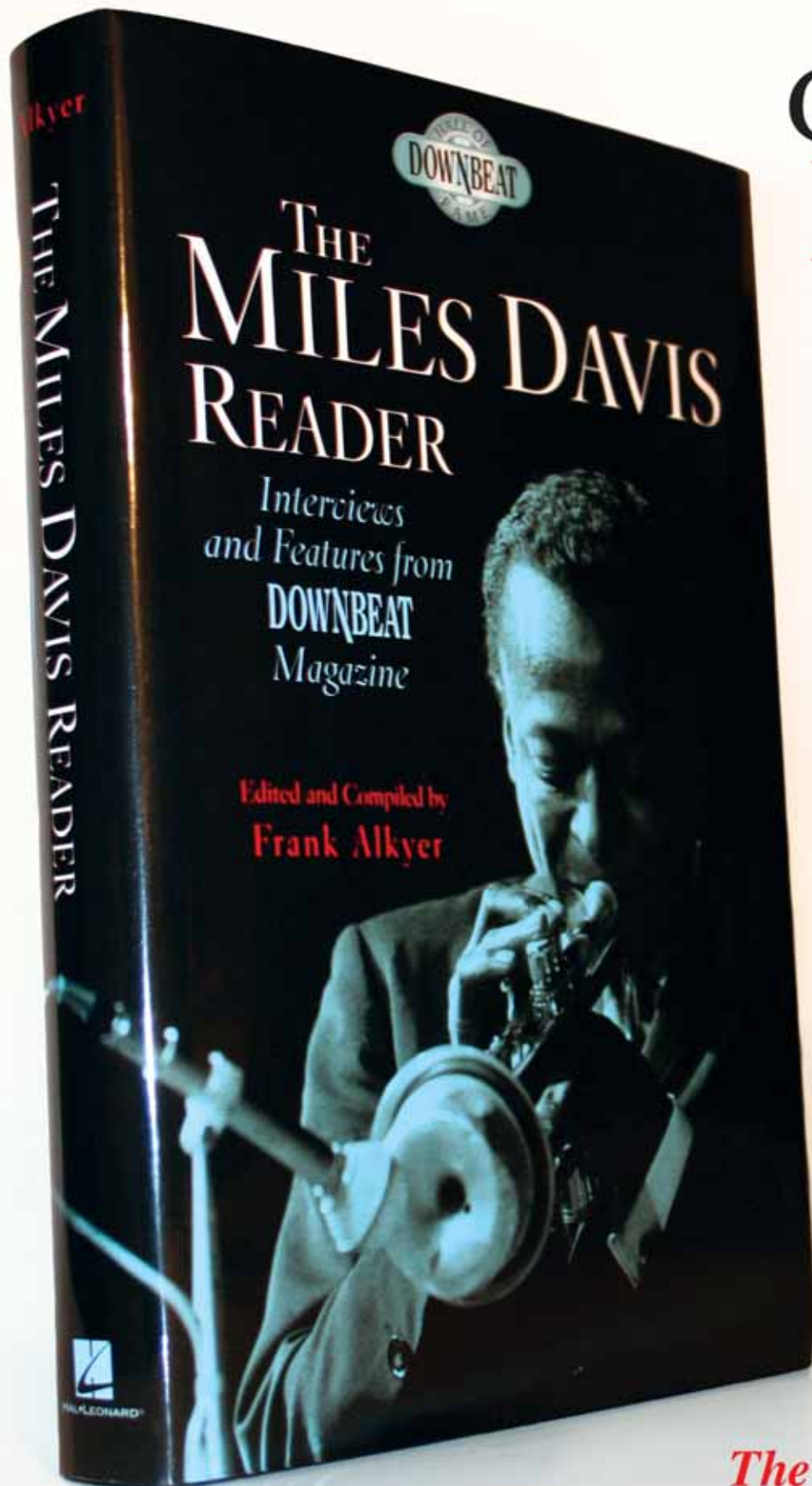
More info: [bluemic.com](http://bluemic.com)

## 6» Light Stands

Incorporating engineered U-channel legs and braces, Hamilton's new KB225 and KB245 cymbal stands are lighter in weight than their predecessors. The channel design provides stability while allowing for easier transport for gigging drummers. The KB225 features a vintage-looking flat-base design for placing close-in to the drummer and folds to 24 inches. The KB245 offers a larger footprint A-shape base and folds to 32 inches. MSRP: KB225, \$65; KB245, \$85.

More info:

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



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## Goines, Cash Infusions Ramping Up Northwestern Jazz Program

On a Friday afternoon last fall, Andrew Haynie, a saxophone student at Northwestern University, saw his professor, Victor Goines, to work out issues with his intonation. The visit included a talk about Lester Young and ended with Goines pulling out his saxophone to demonstrate what he learned from his years working alongside Wynton Marsalis in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Not only did Haynie improve right away, he left Goines' office looking fortunate.

"I'm a hands-on guy, I like to get in the trenches," Goines said. "I take out my horn and play with my students because that's the tradition I learned. It's an opportunity for our students to get an idea what it's like in the real world."

Goines' September 2008 arrival on the Evanston, Ill., campus to become director of jazz studies at the university's Bienen School of Music signaled a revitalization of its program. So, too, did the other musicians he brought to join the jazz faculty. Then, in November, the Owen L. Coon Foundation granted Northwestern \$1 million to enhance its jazz program. All of this is in addition to the jazz department's place in the planned \$90 million building that will house the music school when it opens in 2012.

"We're looking forward to doing great things," Goines said. "With Music School Dean Toni-Marie Montgomery, I saw dedication to music, performance and education. When she and I had our conversation about me coming aboard, I looked at the community and felt this was the right place to be."

Two years ago, many former students didn't see it that way, as they launched a web site protesting the university's suspension of its jazz degree. Coordinator Don Owens had retired in 2005 and no new majors were entering the program. But during this time, Montgomery's process for selecting a jazz studies director was kept low key, and there were numerous job requirements, all of which added up to a lengthy search.

"I feel I know every jazz player who teaches at universities," Montgomery said. "I've spoken to many of these people because I was trying to find that ideal person who has the experience and the name recognition who would garner the respect of his or her colleagues. It was a combination of having the talent, interest and experience in training young talent, and putting down



Victor Goines with the Northwestern University Jazz Orchestra

MIKE MUSZANSKI

roots at a school."

With Goines, Montgomery found a musician who has that educational and professional experience. He held saxophone and clarinet chairs in Marsalis' bands since 1993. Goines also built the jazz studies program at New York's Juilliard School in 2000, where he taught for seven years.

"I've always been interested in getting in at the front end of programs, and I see this as the opportunity to be at the front end," Goines said.

Along with Goines, other jazz faculty were hired: Drummer Herlin Riley, bassist Carlos Henriquez, pianist Peter Martin, trombonist Elliot Mason and saxophonist Christopher Madsen have worked with him in Marsalis' groups. Goines is equally enthusiastic about guitarist John Moulder, who was on the faculty before his arrival.

"It's like a big family, and I have dialogue with them on certain things that I may not have with other people," Goines said. "We can get beyond the surface aspect of what it means to teach here. I can call Carlos and say someone is having problem on the bass, and he should talk to him about how to play montunos."

The school's recent foundational support will also provide students more opportunities. Plans for the Coon Foundation grant include inviting more guest jazz musicians, tours and community outreach efforts. Montgomery said the new music school building will include a 400-seat recital hall, and that she is using Jazz at Lincoln Center as a model for how it will look.

"This recital hall will take advantage of this symbolic theme of seeing Chicago," Montgomery said. "It's fashioned after Jazz at Lincoln Center's use of circle and glass. From the back of the recital stage will be glass so you can look on Lake Michigan and see the Chicago skyline."

—Aaron Cohen

## School Notes



Melvin Rhyne

JON IRONS

**Indy Jams:** Organist Melvin Rhyne joined Butler University Jazz Ensemble 1 on Nov. 13, 2008, for a performance saluting Indianapolis' contributions to jazz. The concert, held in the campus' Clowes Memorial Hall, also paid tribute to J.J. Johnson, Wes Montgomery and Freddie Hubbard. **Details:** [butler.edu](http://butler.edu)

**Oklahoma Brass:** Robin Eubanks joined the jazz ensemble at Northeastern State University of Tahlequah, Okla., for its new self-released CD, *Global Citizen*. The disc features all Eubanks compositions. **Details:** [nsuok.edu](http://nsuok.edu)

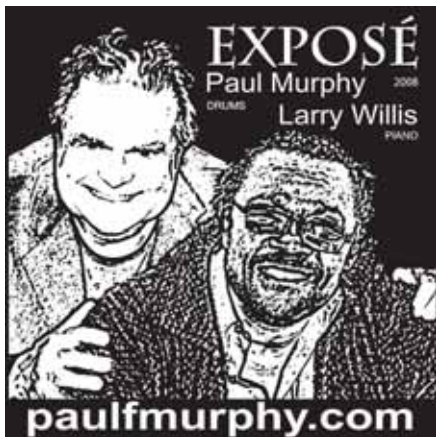
**Rockies Fest:** The University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colo., has announced the lineup for its UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival, which will run April 23–25. Performers include Dee Dee Bridgewater, Chris Potter, the Mingus Big Band and UNC Jazz Band 1. **Details:** [uncjazzfest.com](http://uncjazzfest.com)

**Duke Bash:** The University of California, Los Angeles will hold a series of concerts and events on April 4–5 to celebrate Duke Ellington's 110th birthday. Faculty members Kenny Burrell and James Newton will perform, and the weekend will also include a new arrangement of Ellington's "Music For A String Quartet" and the West Coast premiere of excerpts from Ellington's folk opera, "Queenie Pie." **Details:** [ucla.edu](http://ucla.edu)

**Legal Learning:** A new series of books from Music Law Press provides guidelines for students, musicians and professionals who want to learn more about the legal aspects of the music industry. The five books in the series by Robert Nathan and Burgundy Morgan will cover contracts, licenses, agreements and other legal issues. **Details:** [musiclawpress.com](http://musiclawpress.com)

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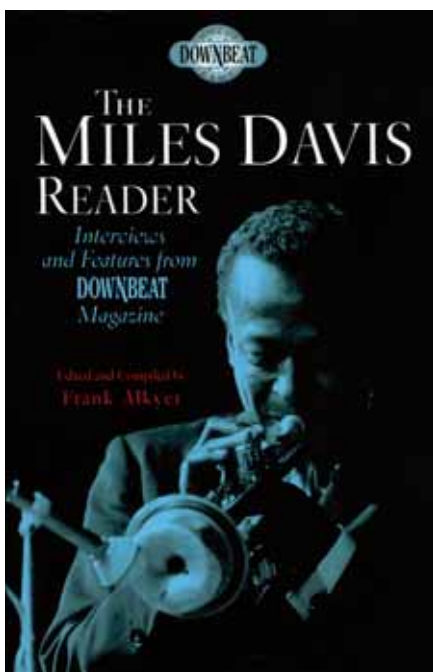
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Known to the jazz public for his tenures with Ray Charles, Danilo Pérez, Chick Corea, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Brad Mehldau and the collective trio Fly, drummer Jeff Ballard exemplifies the pan-American rhythmic sensibility that marks 21st-century jazz, as revealed in his first “Blindfold Test.”

### Antonio Sanchez

“Inner Urge” (from *Migration*, CamJazz, 2007) Sanchez, drums; Chris Potter, David Sánchez, tenor saxophone; Scott Blonde, bass.

The way that the bass is so much louder than the drums in the recording—not the playing—bothers me, because that doesn’t happen when you play. The tenor player has a lot of ability. It could be Chris Potter, but I don’t think so—he has a different edge. For a second, he sounded like Josh Redman. At first, the drums had Jeff “Tain” Watts’ deep sound, but not quite the same low tone Tain gets. His things weren’t pattern-oriented, but came out of the drums themselves, single strokes instead of doubling or tripling up, or multiple strokes in each hand, tricks of bouncing and snapping back. It’s phenomenal to get such speed in that rooty playing, pulling the sound out of the skin rather than bouncing off it. The drums were a big couch for everybody to play the melody together in time, they were in time. 5 stars.

### David Binney-Edward Simon

“Twenty Four Miles To Go” (from *Océanos*, Criss Cross, 2007) Binney, alto saxophone; Simon, piano; Luciana Souza, voice; Scott Colley, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

Beautiful tune. It sounds influenced by Kurt Rosenwinkel—or vice-versa. The drummer sounds like Brian Blade. The alto player has a soulful edge like Kenny Garrett, biting off things. Oh, that’s not Kenny. Myron Walden? Brian’s choices are amazing. What he plays is all for the composition; his matching of texture and tonality to what’s going on in the placement is perfect for that moment. He has patience. He forces things not to be automatic. 5 stars.

### Tyshawn Sorey

“Template IV” (from *That/Not*, Firehouse 12, 2007) Sorey, drums; Ben Gerstein, trombone; Corey Smythe, piano; Thomas Morgan, bass.

That huge room sound is great, and the drum sound is astounding. I love music with a frame where anything can go in a lot of ways—you can break the frame but it can also contain the whole thing. There was a framework of pace, a tempo, a meter even. It was a round, with the piano playing block chords—actually, not so much block chords, but several intervals going on at a time. 5 stars.

### Manuel Valera

“So You Say” (from *Vientos*, Anzic, 2007) Valera, piano; Joel Frahm, tenor saxophone; James Genus, bass; Ernesto Simpson, drums.

This kind of playing and writing proves that elements of rhythm are now coming to the fore. Melody and harmony have gone all the way out, and all the way back in. It’s still going back and forth, but it’s fully explored. Now it’s rhythm’s turn. It’s like a tune Chris Potter would do, where you can do anything you want. 4 stars.



JAN PERSSON

### Scott Amendola Band

“Oladipo” (from *Believe*, Cryptogramophone, 2005) Amendola, percussion; Jenny Scheinman, violin; Nels Cline, Jeff Parker, guitar; John Shifflett, bass.

I dig the groove and the layers—the sounds of the wah-wah and the samples. Nice mix. Not much to the melody. I like the drummer, who has the big, flabby open sound that drummers these days have for all their drums, almost like they’re in a big room. Joey Baron introduced it. But the guitar is derivative, sound-wise and line-wise. Why do I want to hear that again? 3½ stars.

### Han Bennink-Evan Parker

“The Empty Hook” (from *The Grass Is Greener*, Emanem, 2000) Bennink, drums; Parker, tenor saxophone.

Man, that’s the way to play some drums! Milford [Graves]. No? Just for a minute, that weird gong. That single-stroke playing, getting around the thing, one right and one left, with that velocity and fluidity is an interesting way to play. I love this open playing. It’s got a line. It’s got evolution. It’s got well-played interaction, a cohesive, communal quality of encountering something for the first time, in the moment, and then working it, investigating it, tearing it apart or nurturing it or egging it along. 5 stars.

### Tain and the Ebonyx

“Seed Of Blakzilla” (from *Folk’s Songs*, Dark Key, 2007) Jeff “Tain” Watts, drums; David Kikoski, piano; Marcus Strickland, tenor saxophone; Christian McBride, bass.

That’s Tain. Tain comes on with tons of weight. He’s got finesse, but he’s a huge force, the youngest old cat, coming with a youthful fire. He inhaled Elvin and put his own language in that. He has a school, a following. He changed the way guys play drums, put a slant, a color into it. Brian Blade is doing the same thing. Jeff writes great tunes; this one is tricky, but beautiful for playing. Jeff owns this clave he’s got going. 5 stars. **DB**

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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