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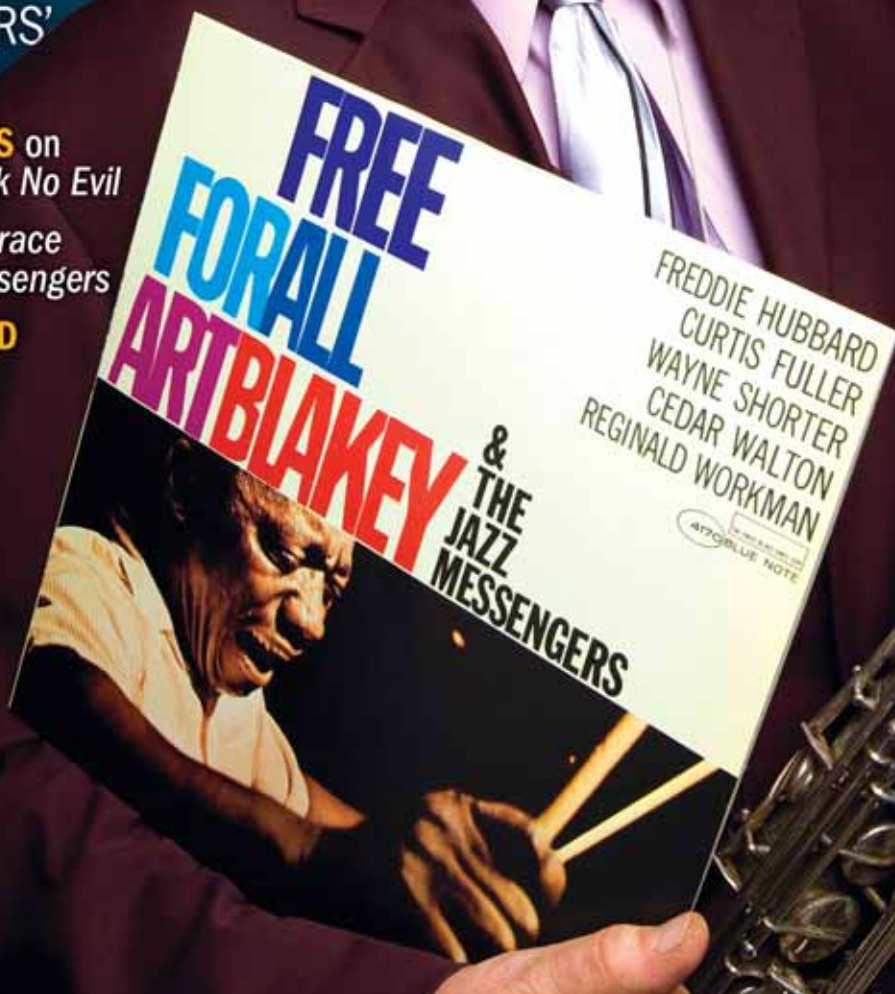
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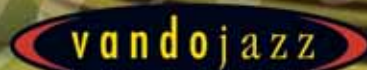
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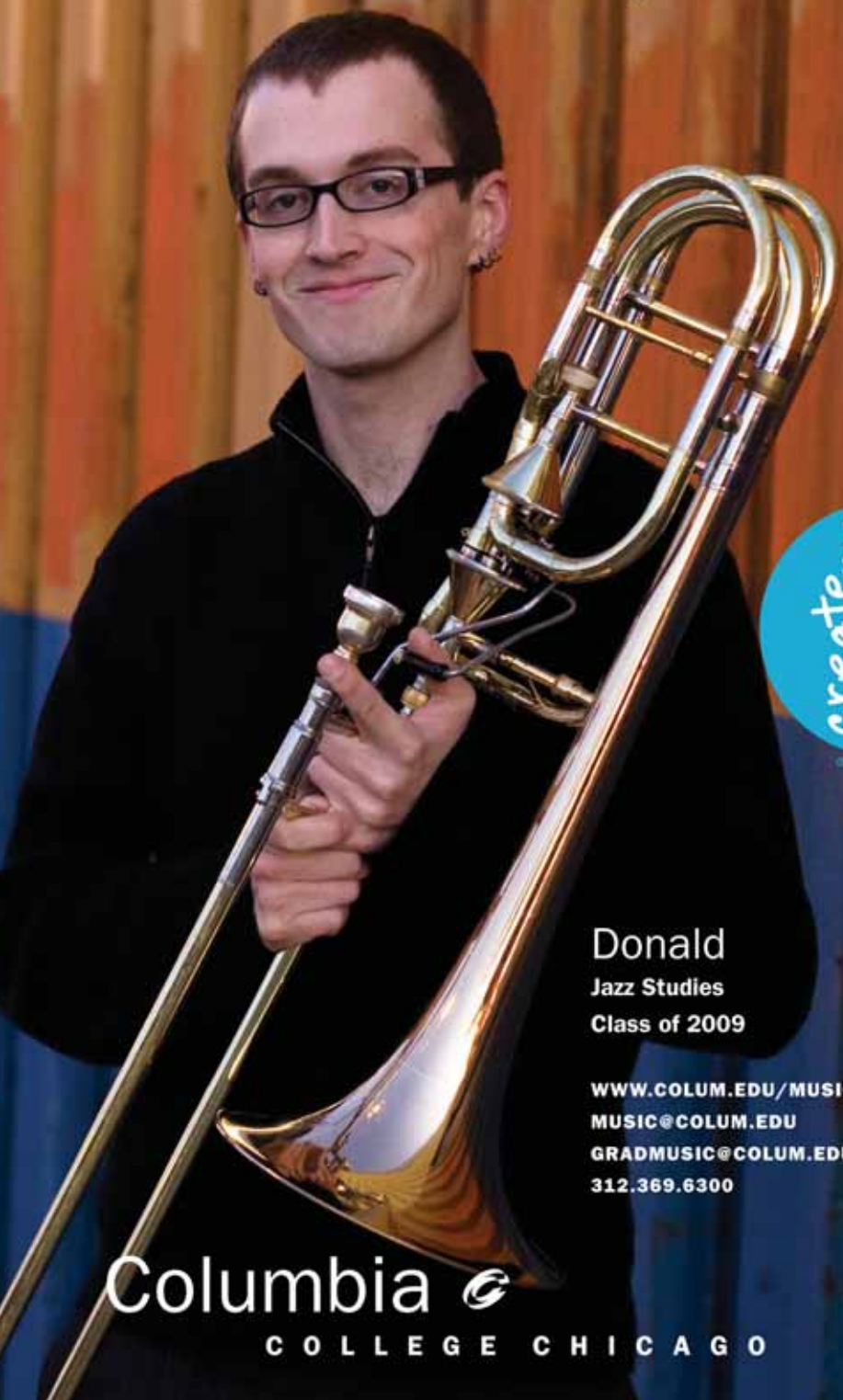


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Chucho & Bebo Valdés

## 26 'My Favorite Blue Note Album'

By Dan Ouellette and Ted Panken

As the most famous name in jazz record labels turns 70, we asked about three dozen musicians—from Joe Lovano, Branford Marsalis and Randy Brecker to Bill Frisell, Christian McBride and Jason Moran—this simple but oh-so-difficult-to-answer question, given the depth and excellence of the music released by the label. Their answers offer a fascinating journey through a few of the masterpiece albums by the likes of Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Art Blakey and Horace Silver that comprise the Blue Note catalog.

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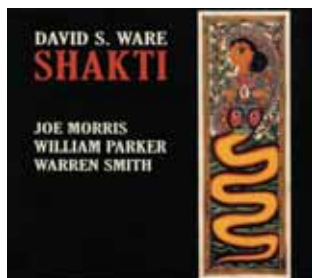
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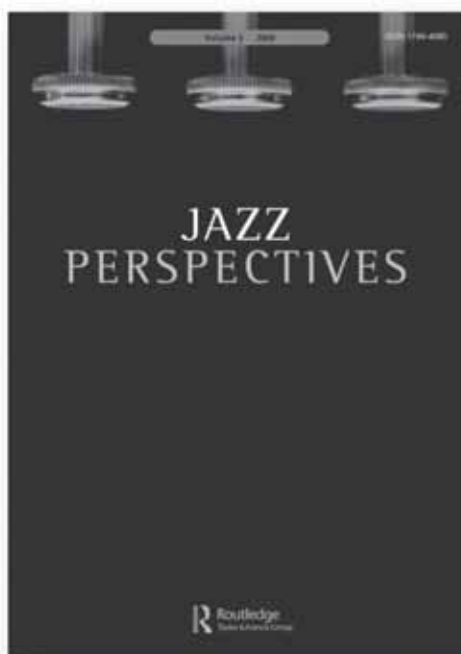
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## First Take

By Jason Koransky

### 'What Would Alfred Have Done?'

For 25 years, Bruce Lundvall has had a thought running through the back of his mind while he has served at the helm of Blue Note Records: "What would Alfred have done?" Alfred, of course, is Alfred Lion, who in 1939 launched Blue Note with Francis Wolff, and proceeded to build one of the most influential labels in jazz history.

Lion fostered a creative environment in which artists had freedom to create. Lundvall has done that. Lion built long-term relationships with artists that led to them recording expansive, influential catalogs. Ditto for Lundvall. Lion did not have much of a taste for signing vocalists, save for Babs Gonzales, Dodo Greene and Sheila Jordan. Lundvall, well, he went another direction, having signed the likes of Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, Patricia Barber, Bobby McFerrin, Rachelle Ferrell, Lena Horne and Norah Jones.

Lundvall recalled a time when this question was put to a huge test. The label had a demo from the British group Us3, which had sampled a number of Blue Note tracks, including Herbie Hancock's "Cantaloupe Island." To decide if this was Blue Note material, Lundvall and Tom Everett, who was the label's head of marketing at the time, drove around Hollywood in a convertible for two hours listening to the music.

"Tom said, 'We should do it,'" Lundvall remembered. "I said, 'Tom, you're right. We should put it on Blue Note.' We went to England, and told them that they could sample the entire Blue Note catalog."

The resulting album, *Hand On The Torch* (1993), which featured the "Cantaloupe Island" remix "Cantaloupe (Flip Fantasia)," sold about 3 million copies, according to Lundvall.

Maybe Lion would not have released the Us3 album, but this was one of many projects that show that Lundvall has more than simply served as a curator of Blue Note's older catalog: He has charted his own path at the helm of the label. From Joe Lovano, Greg Osby and Gonzalo Rubalcaba to Bill Charlap, Don Byron, and Medeski Martin and Wood, recent Blue Note artists have recorded some of the most significant jazz discographies of the past two decades.

"The idea is to find artists who can add to the legacy," he said. "I'm proud of the roster we have. I know it's expanded beyond the borders of jazz. That's not an issue for me. How could you not allow Al Green to be on your label? Or Norah Jones or Anita Baker?"

Lundvall has succeeded in the delicate bal-



Bruce Lundvall

JIMMY GATZ

ancing act of building a vibrant label and promoting the catalog while not leaning too heavily on that catalog. For instance, when asked the question that Dan Ouellette and Ted Panken presented to about three dozen musicians for our cover feature on Page 26—"What is your favorite Blue Note album?"—Lundvall had the same difficulty that many of the artists had: narrowing his pick to one album.

"First and foremost, [Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers'] *A Night At Birdland*," he responded. "It encompasses the essence of this music. Extraordinary performances, an exciting live recording, spontaneous, introducing Clifford Brown and Lou Donaldson, with Horace Silver new on the scene. Then, Bud Powell, *The Genius Of Bud Powell*. He's my favorite pianist of all time. He invented modern jazz piano. Of course, I'd pick Dexter Gordon's *Go*, and I love [Gordon's] *Our Man In Paris*."

Lundvall then turned his attention to the past 25 years. "Gonzalo Rubalcaba is one of the greatest artists alive," he said. "His latest album, *Supernova*, is one of the great records that we have put out. Jason Moran's *Modernistic*. Joe Lovano's *52nd Street Themes*, or any of those nonet records. Everything Bill Charlap does is extraordinary."

Even with the downturn in the music industry (the label has been profitable every year under Lundvall, except in 2008), Lundvall is still looking to expand the roster, to write the next chapter in Blue Note's history.

"I look for originality and a sense of adventure; the artists need a vision and a clearly identifiable sound," said Lundvall, 73. "I want to keep working. We don't sign acts; we sign artists." **DB**

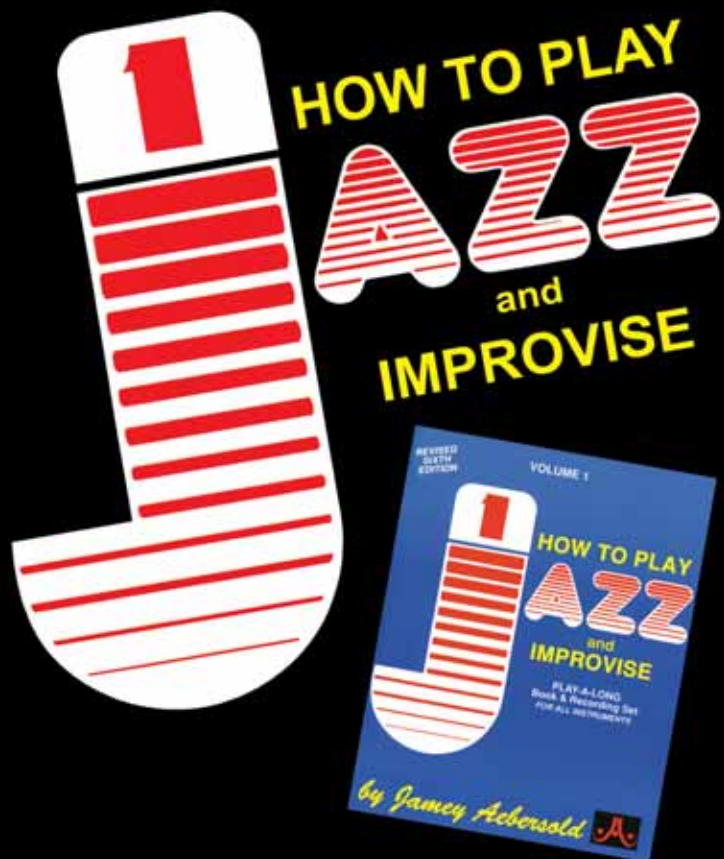


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## Chords & Discords

### Konitz Says Listen, Don't Presume

I just read a review of my *Deep Lee* disc and I want to thank James Hale for some well-chosen observations about it ("Reviews," January '09). I'm always interested in a verbal picture of the music, and pray that it is really listened to—which is not easy when there's a lot to hear. But I take issue with his line that the disc's opening suite is, "starting things off in a subdued mood when most listeners might be expecting a hotter tempo." That's rather presumptuous. He also ended the review by saying that the piece "W 86th" "doesn't hang together." Hale didn't really listen to that piece—it's hangin'!

Lee Konitz  
New York

### 'Giant Steps' Wide Enough for Different Takes

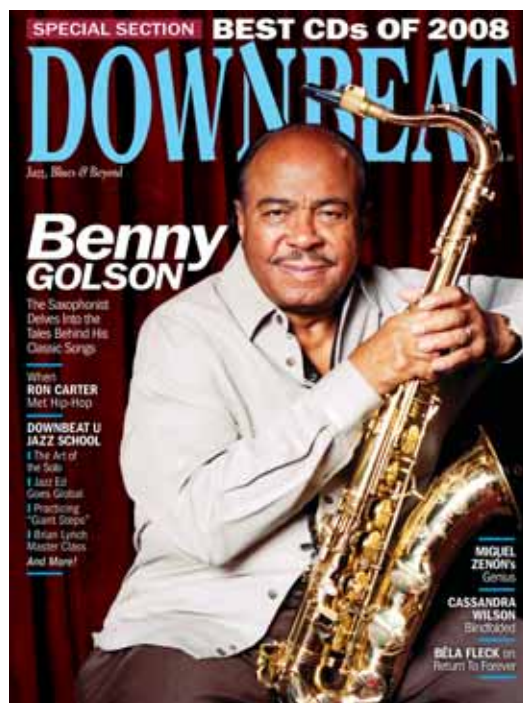
About 15 years ago, I was listening to a local guitar-tenor saxophone duo perform beautiful jazz standards at a Mother's Day brunch in the Washington, D.C., area. As the buffet line snaked by the performers, I thanked them for the quality of their music, and noted that they were playing from a fake book that I also owned. They appreciated knowing that someone in the crowd was listening to them. Then they looked at each other and one said, "OK, let's play something for him." They quickly decided on "Giant Steps."

They launched into a version of "Giant Steps" that was not at all like the John Coltrane approach that most of us know. It was, exactly as David Demsey described in his article ("Jazz School," January '09), a laid back, lilting bossa at just about exactly the quarter note=120 tempo he mentioned. It was melodic, swinging and beautiful, and I wondered why I had never heard anyone play it like this before. Once again, it reminded me that a great piece of music lends itself to a wide range of performance styles. Slowing a piece down—even way down—should not be reserved only for practice.

Stan McLeroy  
Herndon, Va.

### Free-Jazz Aplenty at VCU

Darri Lynn wrote that, "universities don't allow students to learn from the master improvisers and most instructors can't get hip



### Golson's Straight Talk

Amen to Benny Golson for not pulling any punches about the free-jazz movement (January '09). It's just like he said: It's the easy way out. The limited amount of style that I've heard sounds like five or six people playing their instruments as if they were playing by themselves. There's no regard for melody, harmony, chords or their fellow musicians. They might as well be practicing alone in their rooms. Free-jazz is the biggest hoax perpetrated in music. Like Golson said, it's amazing that people fall for it.

Kevin McIntosh  
Roseville, Mich.

to this free-jazz thing, anyhow" ("Chords," January '09). But at Virginia Commonwealth University we host some of the finest improvisers in the world for concerts and clinics, and that includes free-jazz. Joe Morris, Tomas Ulrich, Mark Feldman, Stephen Nachmanovitch, Ayman Fanous and William Parker are a few of the free improvisers here in recent years. Our faculty are well versed in free-improvisation, and several of us performed in that genre at VCU last October. These activities support a healthy atmosphere in Richmond, where free-jazz thrives.

Antonio Garcia  
Director, Virginia Commonwealth University  
Jazz Studies  
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## Riding Storms

### Large jazz presenters seek a way through economic turmoil

As late 2008 and early 2009 brought wave after wave of bad economic news from Wall Street and Detroit, reports from the jazz festival circuit were nearly as alarming. The St. Louis Jazz and Heritage and Quebec's Victoriaville Actuelle Festivals each announced a hiatus for 2009. The Portland Jazz Festival was headed for a similar fate after losing the sponsorship of Qwest Communications, but earned an 11th-hour reprieve from new title sponsor Alaska Airlines. General Motors pulled out of sponsoring the Montreal Jazz Festival. Other events such as the Chicago Jazz Festival have quietly begun shrinking their programs.

"It's not just jazz or even just the arts that's affected, it's everybody," said Adrian Ellis, executive director of Jazz at Lincoln Center. "You have to look at this in the short term and in the medium-to-long term. In the short term, we've seen a sales drop of about 6 percent, which is unpleasant, but manageable."

For the longer term, Ellis and his peers across the presenting field have held intensive talks about the impact of the current recession and strategies for surviving it.

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) held a conference call for its members on Dec. 18, 2008, where a panel of experts tried to get a handle on the situation. APAP President Sandra Gibson cited efforts by some groups to merge box office operations and other backroom expenses. Patricia Egan, an industry consultant, said, "What's hitting the presenters right now is also hitting the music organizations, dance organizations and producing theaters. Everybody's going to be looking for ways to save or combine resources."

But while in a slump, ticket sales are not as weak as one might expect. Gibson suggested that Jazz at Lincoln Center was not atypical in that regard. "We are hearing that folks are generally 5 to 8 percent down in their sales," she said. "But there are some extremes, and others are doing extraordinarily well."

Consumer spending on entertainment actually does not always correlate with other economic indicators. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics'



Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra pianist Dan Nimmer on a 2008 tour

FRANK STEVART/JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

annual consumer expenditure survey, released last November, showed a 13 percent jump in entertainment spending for 2007 compared to a modest 2.6 percent rise in spending overall.

"We saw a freeze in October and November, as the depth of the recession set in and people became worried," Ellis said. "But now, although people are still worried about their jobs, there seems to be a sense that life must go on."

Randall Kline, executive director of SFJAZZ in San Francisco, concurs. "We're not unhealthy at this point," Kline said. "Sales were OK for the San Francisco Jazz Festival in the fall, and the early numbers for our spring season look good. But tickets come from people's discretionary income, so you'd have to be an idiot not to make some kind of adjustment."

The economy's effect on foundations may still be a year away, since many grant-making institutions plan their giving based on a long-term rolling average of their endowment balances. But when they finally come, such cuts will likely be severe.

"The economy is going to remain bad for a while," Ellis said. "The easiest things to cut are dollars from programming or from marketing. But if you do that, there's a danger in the long term. Good programming, well marketed, is the key to long-term success."

This last comment echoes Michael Kaiser, president of Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy

Center for the Performing Arts and author of *The Art Of The Turnaround*, a book that's made waves in presenting circles. Kaiser argues that presenters make a mistake by trimming too much from their programming, diminishing the factor that made them attractive to audiences in the first place. In the APAP call, consultant Richard Evans took up Kaiser's theme: "You may save money in the short term, but then you may lose it quickly at the box office. This may be the time to distinguish yourself by taking a carefully measured risk, and reach out to your audience with imaginative new programming."

Special ticket promotions and discounts, such as JALC's "Hot Seats" program, are one economic response. SFJAZZ is taking a different approach.

"We have an ambitious spring program, but we're also being cautious internally. We're asking every department to look at their expenses and shave where they can," Kline said. "We're trying to be smart about how we spend and how we generate income, not that there's a lot of fat in the arts business at all."

"Our mission is to present all sorts of jazz, so we can't just say we're only going to do the blockbusters," Kline continued. "If we were going to do 40 shows next fall, maybe instead we'll choose 35 and make those 35 as strong as they can be. But you have to stay vibrant."

—Forrest Bryant





Wynton Marsalis

FRANK STEWART/JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

**Crescent City Fest:** Tickets are on sale for the 40th annual New Orleans Jazz And Heritage Festival on April 24–26 and April 30–May 3. Artists include Wynton Marsalis, Aretha Franklin, Allen Toussaint and Erykah Badu.

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

**Blue Addition:** Bassist Avishai Cohen has signed with Blue Note. He recorded his debut for the label in December 2008, and the disc is scheduled for a spring release. Details: [avishaimusic.com](http://avishaimusic.com)

**Cuban Insights:** Guitarist Ben Lapidus has published the book *Origins Of Cuban Music And Dance: Changüi*, an in-depth historical analysis of the eastern Cuban dance music.

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

**Uppity Ending:** Singers Ann Rabson, Gaye Adegbalola and Andra Faye, collectively called Saffire—The Uppity Blues Women, announced that their recent disc, *Havin' The Last Word*, will be the trio's final release. Details: [allig.com](http://allig.com)

**Sister Memorial:** A headstone was dedicated on Sister Rosetta Tharpe's grave at Northwood Cemetery in Philadelphia last Dec. 16, more than 35 years after her death. A memorial service for Tharpe is planned for the spring.

**RIP, Cox:** Pianist Kenny Cox died on Dec. 19, 2008, in Detroit of lung cancer. He was 68. A long-time leader in the city's jazz scene, Cox was known for compositions that drew on his conservatory training and blues feeling. In the year before his death, Cox received more attention with the CD reissue of his two late-'60s Blue Note albums, *Introducing Kenny Cox And The Contemporary Jazz Quintet* and *Multidirection*.

By John Corbett



MICHAEL JACKSON

## London Experimental Jazz Quartet *Invisible Roots*

(SCRATCH, 1973)

When I was given a sealed copy of *Invisible Roots* by the London Experimental Jazz Quartet (LEJQ) a few years ago, my mind immediately filled with speculation about what could be on it. Maybe a lost Trevor Watts date, a session with Evan Parker or Howard Riley? Or could it be a late Tubby Hayes session, Phil Seamen on a free-jazz bender, Barry Guy in a pre-improvisational context? A quick check and the mystery deepened: I didn't know any of the players. I thought I'd heard of most of the major U.K. progressive jazz figures, but this features Eric Stach, a saxophonist and crew touting the flag of experimentalism. A reminder, then, that if there's a Paris, Texas, and a Berlin, Wis., there's also a London, Ontario. I should have known better—that's from where my friend Ben, who gave me the LP, hails.

Quick research revealed that the LEJQ was, in fact, the second-best-known free-music group from the mid-Canadian city, topped only by the great Nihilist Spasm Band, which had predated them by about a decade when Stach formed the band in 1971. The band lasted until the mid-'70s, toured Europe and the United States, and made the Canadian jazz circuit. They had a similar countercultural orientation to the NSB, and perhaps being away from the jazz centers kept them a bit fresh and unjaded. The music doesn't feel routine, although it is almost willfully without polish or guile.

Compiled on a breakbeat CD by Kon & Amir (*Off Track Vol. 1*) in 2007, "Destroy The Nihilist Picnic" is one of a few funky tracks, featuring heavy vamping piano and groovy bass. On the other end of the spectrum, several cuts sport the unmistakable influence of Sun Ra. The flute on "Jazz Widow Waltz" (with no treble time in sight) recalls Marshall Allen's early-'60s Afro-centric modality. On "Edible Wallpaper," strumming on the strings under the lid of the piano is accompanied by Stach's overblown and slurred saxophone, distant flute and sporadic percussion hits, each



submitted to tape delay. "Ron Martin Special With Mustard" presses the joyous noisemaking further, without delay—you can easily imagine people playing it at a party as the weirdest thing they'd ever heard, but the squall's got a playful musicality as well as an appealing crudeness. The band suddenly leaps out of a listless meander in the middle of "My Dog's Tail Is Longer Than Yours" to sprint into an uptempo swing, only to jump right back out of it with a lugubrious baritone sax and arco bass dialogue.

Reportedly improvised freely in the studio, the session is edgy and full of enthusiastic energy. It relies on modal jazz—the looping vamps and ostinati common to many '70s liberated jams—in large part, but the fact of being big free-form fish in a relatively little metropolitan pond rings through clearly. The sound is not revolutionary, despite some jagged shards here and there, but the record remains a great document of an obscure scene. A fan-page established for LEJQ ([ducktape.ca/bit\\_snbobs/lejq/index.html](http://ducktape.ca/bit_snbobs/lejq/index.html)) suggests that *Invisible Roots* will be reissued soon, but this is a promise that's gone long enough unfulfilled that you should make sure and hunt up a copy of the rare vinyl, just in case the economic downturn further delays its resurrection.

DB

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

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





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- Rufus Reid

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## Mercer Centennial Attests to Legacy

The centennial celebrations for Johnny Mercer's birth this year put him in good company, as 2009 will honor the centennials of Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Lester Young and Ben Webster. The Mercer events should serve as reminders of how much he achieved using just his voice and a pen.

The Mercer centennial actually kicked off on Nov. 16, 2008, with a birthday concert in the Johnny Mercer Theater of the Savannah Civic Center in Georgia. The Johnny Mercer Foundation has a lot more planned for 2009.

"There will be a book of Mercer's work compiled by Robert Kimball," said Mercer Foundation Executive Director Frank Scardino. "It's expected by summer and will cover his collaborations with Harold Arlen, Henry Mancini, Duke Ellington and many others. Clint Eastwood is serving as executive producer of a documentary [directed by Bruce Ricker] on Mercer's career. The expectation is that it will be part of the 'American Masters' series this year on PBS."

Along with Mercer Foundation events, the Savannah Music Festival in Georgia, which runs from March 19–April 5, is featuring concerts and educational programs surrounding the composer. The festival also commissioned saxophonist Ted Nash to devise a new arrangement for Mercer's "Blues In The Night."

A great song, such as that one, reinvents itself in perpetuity. Scardino said that the foundation's health attests to how enduring Mercer's compositions have been.

"Half of the revenues that are generated by the Mercer estate go to the foundation," Scardino said. "More than 30 years after his death, his music provides the funds that permit us to do all the charitable works and educational programs that we sponsor. In recent years the charities alone have received approximately \$500,000 annually from the foundation."

Scardino points out that "Dream" was in the soundtrack of the film *Miss Pettigrew Lives For A Day*. "Trav'lin' Light" and "Blues In The Night" are the title songs of recent CDs from Queen Latifah and Ann Hampton Callaway, and "Moon River" is featured in a current MasterCard ad campaign.

"Mercer's songs still have an impact on people's lives," Scardino said. "That's a legacy that will live on through new singers. Part of the Foundation's mission is to propagate the Great American Songbook, because generations to come will know that something was written in another time can have just as much meaning as something contemporary."

The songs began in the 1930s. Mercer the performer also made Mercer the songwriter a celebrity and a personality. His picture often appeared on his own sheet music, a rare distinction for a simple tunesmith. In a time when few composers had either the audacity or the talent to sing their own songs, Mercer had both.

His singing was genial, self-deprecating and colloquial. In the '30s, Mercer recorded with Paul Whiteman, Goodman and Bing Crosby. The rapport with Crosby was deliciously con-



versational, but Mercer's words didn't stop with Crosby. Today, one doesn't have to rack the memory for lines like "set 'em up, Joe," "P.S. I love you" or even the jive-laced "dig you in the land of nod." They were part of the common vernacular long before he picked and planted them perfectly in a sequence of tones. More important, younger singers still perform them.

Once such singer is Daryl Sherman, who has a Mercer collection, tentatively titled *Jeepers Creepers!*, coming out this summer on Arbors.

"So many of Mercer's lyrics reflect his boyhood in Georgia with images of peach trees and huckleberries," Sherman said. "It was his ear for the vernacular, that gave his work such personality. He favored wide vowel sounds and he used onomatopoeia: His words were visual and colorful. But, for a singer, they phrase in a conversational way." —John McDonough

## The ARCHIVES

March 23,  
1955

### R&B Boom Won't Stick: Elgart

Les Elgart, for his first stand at the Hollywood Palladium with the only new band launched in the last couple of years that appears to be going somewhere, sees the current boom in the rhythm & blues market as something that will just have to run its course like an epidemic. "The rhythm & blues form is so limited that kids get over it in a hurry," Elgart said. "It ceases to be exciting to them in no time at all."

### Deejays Pick Frank Over Eddie Fisher

Frank Sinatra displaced Eddie



Fisher as the nation's top recording personality in DownBeat's second annual disc jockey poll.

### Marshall, Bass on Own After Six Years With Duke

By Nat Hentoff

"Those people who heard Jimmy Blanton only on records never really got to hear what he could do, as good as the records were," bassist Wendell Marshall said. "When he had a chance to play at a session for an hour running, he really turned loose."

### Negro TV, Radio Jobs Almost Nil, Survey Finds

By Hannah Altbush

"We found one or two Negro musicians who are employed regularly on the networks," said Odell Clark, vice president of the

New York branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "But outside of guest appearances by some of the bigger names, a Negro musician hasn't much chance of regular employment on the networks."

### Latin Americana

By Oliver Berliner

I always have believed in leaving Latin music to the Latins. Although I favor anything that will make this music more popular to John Doe, even if it takes an American band to do it, I still feel that only a Latin band can interpret this music properly. DB



Avishai Cohen

## Avishai Cohen Creates Multimedia Spectacle Around Seven

Following his recent Anzic release, *Flood*, trumpeter Avishai Cohen collaborated with visual artist Elinor Milchan for the video installation "Seven—A Visual Journey Of Light As A Symbol Of Time." Cohen's new CD, *Seven* (Anzic), comprises the music that accompanies Milchan's presentation at the former headquarters of The New York Times in Manhattan. People who pass through the building's lobby are treated to a day-long audio/visual production that mirrors the cycles of the day and year.

Celebrating light and the seven colors of the visible spectrum, the installation will remain at the location permanently.

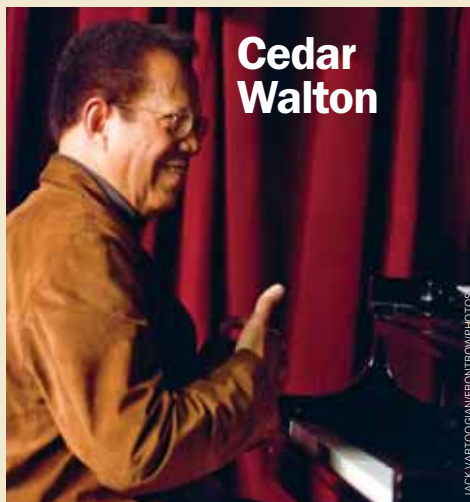
"The music reflects the video," Cohen said. "It's slow and meditative. I like that this meditative piece is set up in the middle of Times Square. It's a contradiction to everything that is going on in Times Square, which is all flashy, fast and commercial looking. It represents something else in the evolution of the day."

"Seven" was composed in a series of seven 21-minute cycles to closely follow the undulating colors on the installation's two 15- by 11-foot screens. Beginning with violet for early morning, the music morphs as the colors unfold. Violet is represented by harp (performed by Sivan Magen), indigo by cello (Dave Eggar), followed by piano (Omer Klein) for blue, bass clarinet (Yoni Silver) for green, trumpet (Cohen) for yellow, electric bass (Shanir Blumenkranz) for orange and electric guitar (Eyal Maoz) represents red. As each new color appears, the prior instrument is replaced by the next.

"I experimented and realized that anything that was too sharp harmonically, volume-wise or rhythmically would distract from the visuals," Cohen said. "There is tension in the music, but the transition is done smoothly. I told the musicians, 'Play your slowest and whatever you feel, play a little slower than that.'" —Ken Micallef

## Backstage With ...

By Ken Micallef



Cedar Walton

couldn't get it. That reminds me of when I brought "Mosaic" to the Jazz Messengers, those guys played it like they were eating cornflakes. "Mosaic" became the title tune of that Blue Note record with Art Blakey. Later, I heard Symphony Sid introduce it as "that was Cee-dar Walton's 'Mosaic,'" pronouncing my name like "radar." I was riding around in this great metropolis listening to my music on the car radio. I thought I was in heaven.

**What does a young gun like Jeremy Pelt, who appears on *Seasoned Wood*, bring to your gig?**

He is capable regardless of his age. Jeremy has great facility, great taste. He can play real slow. I used to call him the king of slow. Usually the youngsters have trouble playing slow, but not him. I met him on a gig abroad, he was surprised that you could go right to the head of the line when flying business class. We have been friends ever since.

**At the Village Vanguard you are working with drummer Lewis Nash, but Al Foster recorded *Seasoned Wood*. Can you contrast their styles?**

Al is a sensitive player who likes to toy with the time, whereas Mr. Nash is the exact opposite. He is precise and full of dynamics, which you need in music, forte and pianissimo. Mr. Foster does a great job, but he does it differently. Overall, he is a little softer—less precise but in a good way. He lets the music carry him.

**Do great musicians literally play their personalities?**

Hank Mobley for instance, was precise, but in a softer way than Trane. That is vividly demonstrated on *Someday My Prince Will Come*. That is the greatest example I have seen of two different styles but both on a high level. Coltrane was a practice-aholic. The drummer Lex Humphries and I went to his apartment two times, both unannounced, and we could hear him in there playing. One time Hank Mobley was there: Coltrane and Hank on the couch, a mutual admiration society. Being in the presence of Trane especially was like God, he was so perfect. But he played all the time!

DB

"Jazz today is a risk," Cedar Walton said backstage at New York's Village Vanguard on Dec. 16, 2008. "That's jazz, period, all the way through history." The pianist himself is a big part of that history, but he continues to chart a new path with his latest release, *Seasoned Wood* (HighNote), which brings together young musicians and veterans on a revisit of his renowned compositions.

**How do you retain such consistency in your composing, piano playing and performance?**

I took direction from people like Thelonious Monk. He'd say, "Play your own shit." That is what I'm doing. If you have guys enjoying you playing your stuff like Ellington did, that is heaven on Earth.

**On *Seasoned Wood* you revisit "Clockwise" (from *Soweto*) "Plexus" (from the late Freddie Hubbard's *Hub Cap*) and "Hindsight" (Junior Cook's *Something's Cookin'*). These songs have a ruminative, even intellectual quality.**

I'm glad you said that. "Clockwise" fits in with that idea. It's symmetrical. It goes around in a logical way harmonically. It puts the normal mind to dozing off while I am playing it because it's too heavy, it's too intellectual. It doesn't have blues, sorrow or pathos in it. "Clockwise" is all, shall we say, egghead.

**What has influenced that style of composing?**

I've finally come upon territory that I own. I had originally tried "Clockwise" with the Jazz Sextet and Art Farmer, and we just



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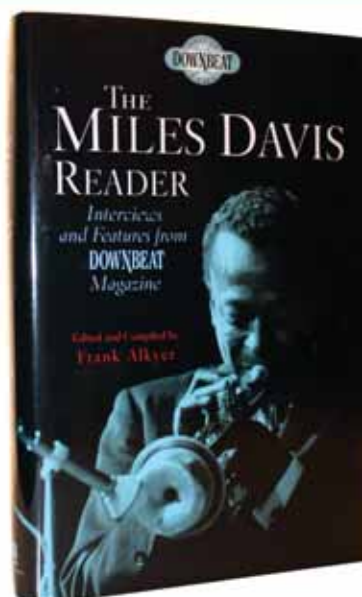
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# The **QUESTION** Is ...

By Dan Ouellette

## What is your favorite duo album?

The most intimate setting for jazz performance, the duo is surprisingly underappreciated and, as Roswell Rudd said, unusual. But it's where some of the best conversations and storytelling appear, where each player has to bear heart and soul for the music to mysteriously arrive.

**Pianist Lafayette Harris:** The record that I used to listen to a lot was Kenny Barron's *1 + 1 + 1* (JDC), which was a duo album with two different bassists, Ron Carter and Michael Moore. I remember in the mid-'80s when it came out, a few piano friends in New York were hip to it, and we used to talk about it. I love the way Kenny plays with the two bassists, each of whom brings out a different side to how he deals with the piano. I liked how Kenny could keep the music so interesting rhythmically without a drummer. Kenny's always been a favorite pianist, and not long after this LP came out I studied with him at Rutgers.



**Drummer Jeff Ballard:** My favorite duo album is *Red And Black In Willisau* by Dewey Redman and Ed Blackwell on Black Saint. The way they each play on their own in these duets is exactly the way I love hearing music being played. I can hear their experiences together—the storytelling, the conversations. There's one tune that I especially love: "Willisee," which has a tiny head before Dewey and Ed go into a full-on improvisation. This is the Ornette world. There's so much rhythmic and harmonic information in this album. Plus the improvisation always has a story connection. Dewey and Ed were masters of this kind of music.



**Pianist Fred Hersch:** My favorite duo album is one of the first duo albums I purchased: *Duet!* with Earl "Fatha" Hines and Jaki Byard [recorded in 1972 for MPS]. There is so much mutual respect between the two pianists, and they seem to bring out the best in each other without being competitive. There is also a palpable sense of good humor throughout—a spontaneous yet somehow "together" encounter that was successful. Two of my other faves are *Undercurrent* by Bill Evans and Jim Hall and *Red Lanta* by Art Lande and Jan Garbarek.

**Bassist Christian McBride:** I have several favorites, but my knee-jerk first reaction is any of the three Ella Fitzgerald-Joe Pass duo albums (*Take Love Easy*, *Fitzgerald And Pass ... Again* and *Speak Love*, all on Pablo). Just hearing Ella sing anything is wonderful, but with Joe Pass it's all so gorgeous, so sparse and pretty. But then there's *The Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Album* (OJC) that was just great.

**Trombonist Roswell Rudd:** I'm going to have to talk about an outstanding duet instead: Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy on the tune "What Love" that also featured Ted Curson and Dannie Richmond. When Ted and Dannie stopped and let Charles and Eric solo, it's like listening to them talk to each other. I first heard it when I was working with Cecil Taylor on his Candid album *Jumpin' Punkins*. While we were recording at the studio, in another room they were editing the Candid album *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus*. We took a break and I went into the hall and overheard the duet on "What Love." I thought, God, this is what we're trying to do. It felt like a seamless transition from Cecil to Charles and Eric. They created a revelation that sometimes two people get. **DB**

Got an opinion of your own on "The Question"? **E-mail us:** [thequestion@downbeat.com](mailto:thequestion@downbeat.com).



## Blue Turns Golden

Miles Davis' family and colleagues celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Kind Of Blue* at the Ford-Brady Showroom in Los Angeles on Dec. 11, 2008. Davis' son Erin Davis (left) joined the trumpeter's daughter Cheryl Davis, drummer Jimmy Cobb and Davis' nephew Vince Wilburn, Jr., at the event. Cobb is the only surviving musician who performed on the album.

## Montreal Jazz Fest Loses Chief Sponsor

As it approached its 30th-anniversary celebration this summer, the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal (FIJM) was planning to unveil a new outdoor site for its free concerts. It wasn't planning on the meltdown of the North American automobile industry. The economic crisis prompted General Motors to announce in mid-December that it would not extend its contract as FIJM's principal sponsor beyond 2009.

"GM's decision not to renew won't affect our plans for this year's festival," said FIJM founder and President Alain Simard. "Although we lost Best Buy as a sponsor last year, they were a fairly minor one. Our other sponsors are all under multiyear contracts."

While Simard won't put a dollar figure on the loss of GM, estimates place it in the range of several million dollars against an annual operating budget of about US\$20.5 million. Putting the best face on it, Simard said he sees the loss as an opportunity. "This will be only the fourth presenting sponsor in our history, and we hope to find an international sponsor that we can announce during this year's festival," he said.

John Ratoff, senior vice president of corporate sponsorships for TD Bank Financial Group, sees an opportunity, as well. Under its brand TD Canada Trust, the bank is already title sponsor of several Canadian jazz festivals, including those in Vancouver and Toronto, and has been a major sponsor of FIJM for five years. "[The title sponsorship] is definitely something we're interested in," he said. **—James Hale**





Caught



Bill Charlap (left),  
Peter Washington and  
Kenny Washington

JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

## Charlap Trio Highlights Leonard Bernstein's Jazz Side

Encompassing the entire fall arts season, from September through December 2008, Carnegie Hall and the New York Philharmonic jointly presented 50 events commemorating the 90th anniversary of renowned composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein's birth. After retrospectives of his various projects—from such popular musicals as *On The Town* and *West Side Story* to sacred music and his *Mass* choral anthems—another musically quintessential New Yorker, Bill Charlap, gave Bernstein's tunes the jazz treatment. The pianist, with his long-time trio of bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington, performed a potent set of rousing and sublime tunes by the composer and classical maestro at Carnegie's Zankel Hall on Dec. 10.

The one-hour performance featured tunes from the Broadway-rooted pianist's 2004 Blue Note disc, *Somewhere: The Songs Of Leonard*

*Bernstein*. Loose and relaxed, Charlap was at home at Carnegie, playing Zankel without mikes on his piano as if he were giving a playful recital in an East Side living room.

While Charlap reinvented Bernstein's works, he never strayed far from the songs' lyricism. The music could best be described as classy jazz, but there was an abundance of sprightly enthusiasm that sparked him to take flight across the keys. The best example of the trio's exuberance came late in the set when the trio leaped into Bernstein's "Jump" for a caffeinated romp teeming with Kenny Washington's drum clangs and the pianist's frenzied, hand-over-hand arpeggios.

The evening jolted off with "America," Bernstein's mixed-meter tune from *West Side Story*, into which Charlap bounced with a staccato flair, followed by a swinging parlor jazz rendering of "Lucky To Be Me" from *On The*

*Town*. The tempo slowed for another number from the show, "Lonely Town," played with a gentle sobriety as Charlap hunched his back and bent his head low over the keys.

Charlap flew through other Bernstein favorites, including his two-fisted pounce into "It's Love" (from *Wonderful Town*), the refined reading of "Glitter And Be Gay" (*Candide*) and one of the best performances of the evening, the bluesy "Big Stuff" (to which Billie Holiday wrote the lyrics and recorded as one of her Decca sides in the '40s) with its quiet loping shape and catchy bass line by Peter Washington. But the crowd-pleaser was *West Side Story*'s classic melody "Somewhere," delivered with chordal grace. That stood in contrast to another *West Side Story* gem that immediately followed, "Cool," treated to a free-spirited take with tumbles of cubist rhythms and Thelonious Monk-like angles. —Dan Ouellette



Wayne Shorter and Valerie Coleman

MAC ALEXANDER/EARL GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY

## Shorter, Imani Collaboration Celebrated at L.A. Homecoming

When the fascinating pairing of the Wayne Shorter Quartet and Imani Winds premiered at the Montreal Jazz Festival in 2007—predating a short run on the European festival circuit—curiosity and anticipation ran high. Would this be another interesting, fleeting experiment in Shorter's musical life, or the start of a beautiful new relationship?

It ended up being the latter: a rare and lasting jazz-meets-classical triumph. By fusing the open-ended strategies of his quartet with the scored but hip formality of Imani Winds, Shorter's alternating personae as a free improviser, ensemble sit-

uation-maker and his secret life as a closet classicist merged with artful logic and no small amount of pure joy. While the project is still in a formative state, it has reappeared in celebratory situations throughout 2008, including what amounted to a grand and layered homecoming at Los Angeles' Walt Disney Concert Hall on Dec. 10, 2008.

Shorter has recently moved back to the city after living in Florida for several years. The return concert also allowed Shorter to bask in the glow of borrowed classical aura of the Frank Gehry-designed orchestral room. The evening began with Imani Winds' set. Flutist Valerie Coleman, oboist Toyin Spellman-Diaz, clarinetist Mariam Adam, horn player Jeff Scott and bassoonist Monica Ellia comprise a daz-



zling New York-based ensemble steadily forging a solid reputation for livening up the classical wind ensemble format. After playing Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos' folk-modernist "Quintette En Forme De Choros," they delved into Shorter's "Terra Incognita." The piece headed confidently in a classical direction while also bearing Shorter's signature harmonic palette, gestural twists and occasionally rascalish musical behavior.

Next came a short set from Shorter's ongoing quartet with pianist Danilo Pérez, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade. Sometimes, Shorter's attempts to dial up the muse fall flat, leaving Pérez to over-fill the spaces. But on this night, everything clicked. Shorter was on fire: tender, cryptic and wail-some on tenor, and more tart and fiery on soprano. The saxophonist's kindred spirit in the group is Blade, whose slippery poetic spirit and ecstatic outbursts—impulsive and implosive missives from within—reach out across the stage to Shorter's distinctive voice.

Once Imani Winds returned to the stage, Shorter stuck to the soprano and gladly sat down with the front line of wind players. On material including a cool new arrangement of "On The Milky Way Express" (from *High Life*), a fully engaged Shorter read with and cued scored parts for the winds. Five years ago at the Hollywood Bowl, in a concert honoring his 70th birthday, Shorter was featured in one of several orchestral concerts that season. But this intimate and ground-hugging chamber context proved a more fleet and interactive semi-classical mode.

The jazz players onstage wove in and out of the strictly structured, cued wind parts, which also more fully fleshed out and clarified the melodic contours of Shorter's quixotic lines. Sounding energized by the fresh and symbiotic setting, Shorter summoned up rich solos that seemed to lean more than usual into the neighborhood of classical propriety, mixed with all the blustery jazz intensity long-time listeners expect of him on a hot night out in a complementary room.

—Josef Woodard

## Ponta Delgada Drifts From Cool, Free

It may seem odd to visit the Old World capital of Portugal's Azores Islands for break-through jazz. But the 10th annual Ponta Delgada Jazz Festival, which ran from Oct. 22–26, 2008, proved once again that intense music draws the global ear.

American alto saxophonists Lee Konitz, Marty Ehrlich and Daniel Carter had contrastingly conceived ensembles. The Septet of the Hot Club of Portugal demonstrated jazz developments outlined by lecturer Bernardo Moreira; pianist Joachim Kühn stormed through a solo recital. All were received with enthusiasm by the listeners at the Teatro Micaelense.

The fest's first notes were New Orleans-born, as the Hot Club paraded onstage blowing "Didn't He Ramble." The seven gamely offered bits of repertoire by icons from Louis Armstrong through Joe Zawinul, faring best with themes from Miles Davis' *Birth Of The Cool* and *Kind Of Blue*. The band's concluding episode was uncertain—but the earnestness of their attempt set the crowd up for more.

Konitz fulfilled that promise as he led the much younger Minsarah trio—pianist Florian Weber, bassist Jeff Denson and drummer Ziv Ravitz—who recorded *Deep Lee* last year. Ignoring the album, though, Konitz let loose a sigh, question, suggestion or wonderment through his horn, and the trio created roomy grooves to frame his breaths. In a phrase or two Konitz revealed that he was abstracting standards, like "Stella By Starlight" or "All The Things You Are." What he thought up, cast



Erik Friedlander (left), Marty Ehrlich, Pheeroan akLaff and James Zollar

from unhurried intervals and seldom-repeated variations, became the focus.

The gritty scrimmage of New York saxophonist Carter offset such cool along with his group of trumpeter Demian Richardson, pianist John Blum and drummer Federico Ughi. Working without preset material, these four bounced off each other's gestures, expressions and energies like colliding billiard balls flying in all directions. But more guidelines and less repetition might have served them well. Richardson emerged as a rip-snorter and Carter was soulful, but form would have heightened their affects.

Form was functional in the brilliant debut of Ehrlich's Rites Quartet with trumpeter James Zollar, cellist Erik Friedlander and drummer Pheeroan akLaff. An imaginative composer and infallible soloist, Ehrlich unveiled seven distinctive compositions by himself and his mentor Julius Hemphill. Zollar and Friedlander lent every note meaning and akLaff's hard rhythm, tambourine, medium swing and waltz upheld Hemphill's aching ballad "For Billie" and funkified the 11/16 meter of "Dogon A.D."

—Howard Mandel

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## Players

### Dee Alexander Intangible Midwestern Air



MICHAEL JACKSON

One night last December, singer Dee Alexander announced that her Evolution Ensemble's first set at Chicago's Morse Theatre would end on a different note. As if the group's performance hadn't been unusual enough—few jazz quartets include a harp and cello. But she did deliver on the unexpected. After singing saxophonist "Light" Henry Huff's songs about spiritual healing, she directed the not-so-delicate strings to nail the rhythms of James Brown's "Licking Stick."

"I just take a chance, and that's my mantra," Alexander said. "At least try it and see what happens. If it doesn't work, then, 'Next!'"

What's next for Alexander includes her recent debut, *Wild Is The Wind* (Blujazz). On the CD, she blends free-flowing phrasing and writing with the resourcefulness and swing that comes from singing weekly at Chicago's Jazz Showcase and numerous jobbing gigs around her hometown.

"You hear Chicago all up in her style," said bassist Harrison Bankhead, who collaborates with Alexander on the disc and at the Showcase. "It's intangible, but you know it's part of the city."

Growing up on Chicago's West Side, Alexander absorbed the city's musical traditions that surrounded her. She sang gospel since grammar school while her mother would play jazz vocal records at home. As a singer, Alexander was content to remain in the background until deciding to be out in front in the late '70s.

"I started off singing r&b, but trying to sing like Chaka Khan was a joke—my voice is totally different from hers," Alexander said.

Huff noticed her qualities and asked Alexander to join his group when he introduced himself at a gig. Her time as a vocalist and interpretive dancer in his communal free-jazz ensemble, Breath, during the '80s became transformative. Alexander has devoted herself to performing his compositions since his death 15 years ago.

"He told me not to be concerned with what people think," Alexander said. "You have to be uninhibited and try things. So I did. When I listen to those recordings from back then I think, 'What was I doing?'"

Huff also introduced her to the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, which was a world apart from anything she had experienced in her hometown.

"I loved that these women had their hair free and their dresses were in

these bold colors, their big jewelry, and they were doing all these unusual and interesting things with their voices," Alexander said. "I loved that they had that nerve, they're not thinking about what people think about them: 'Do I look silly? Do I sound strange?' It's almost like I was always a part of it, but didn't know it. I finally caught up to it."

AACM members have remained Alexander's core collaborators. Last summer, she performed two songs with saxophonist Ed Wilkerson's Eight Bold Souls at the Chicago Jazz Festival. The late trumpeter Malachi Thompson was another mentor: Their time together could be stormy, but respectful enough that she interprets his "Surrender Your Love" on *Wild Is The Wind*.

"Malachi and I used to fight all the time," Alexander said. "Like we were brother and sister. He'd never give me an advance copy of anything. He wanted me to be fresh and not develop any ideas about the song until we went into the studio. He wanted me to think off the top of my head."

To keep food on the table, Alexander has also worked in Chicago's advertising industry, singing numerous jingles. A different sort of ongoing gig is with R. Kelly, though she added, "I get called to sing on the inspirational music, not the booty music."

Throughout the past five years, Alexander has been called on to sing in bigger venues. In December, she performed in Poznań, Poland, where she led her own jazz groups and taught a choir of Polish children a couple gospel standards. Alexander is also working with Blujazz to book a European tour for this year.

Still, it was usually the Midwestern stages where Alexander and her band came up with ideas for songs that appear on *Wild Is The Wind*. Bankhead said that while he was warming up by playing a series of perfect fifths before a show in Saugatuck, Mich., she began writing lyrics to his exercise, which became "The Long Road Ahead."

"Dee is a master improviser and has such a strong ear, she can hear things in the air," Bankhead said.

Alexander added that her ideas, and career, often depend more on the people around her.

"I've seen what happens with some artists, why some rise, some fall," Alexander said. "I'm watching my steps and surrounding myself with good people who have my back."

—Aaron Cohen



## John Escreet Consequences of Curiosity

Pianist John Escreet's recent debut, *Consequences* (Positone), signals the jumpstart of a new voice in jazz. The British-born, New York-based Escreet and his quartet reconcile a multitude of idiomatic styles, ranging from early stride and Third Stream to soul jazz and the avant-garde. His compositions nod to Charles Mingus, Henry Threadgill and Cecil Taylor, but Escreet embraces all of these influences without resulting in pastiche.

Escreet, at 25, became interested in music early on, at age 4, when he was growing up in Doncaster, a small English town north of London. While most children his age would have run from the prospect of taking piano lessons, Escreet begged his parents for them.

"It's strange," Escreet said. "I don't know what it was. I played piano about as far back as I can remember. I had a natural enthusiasm for doing it."



His childhood musical pursuits didn't end with the piano. Escreet also explored the French horn, cornet, violin and saxophone.

"I just had a curiosity to try out different instruments," he said. "There was no doubt that the piano was at the forefront of everything. Everything else was like an additional hobby."

Escreet continued his musical education at Manchester's Cheatham School of Music then at London's Royal Academy of Music. Nestled in London's jazz scene, he worked with saxophonist Steve Williamson, trumpeter Gerald Presencer and trombonist Dennis

Rollins, but his ambitions laid across the Atlantic.

"I saw limits to what was possible to achieve if I were to remain in London," he said. "I don't want to dog the London scene, because there is a tremendous amount happening right now. But in New York, there are more performance opportunities for a wider variety of people. There seems to be less barriers in New York."

A scholarship to attend the Manhattan School of Music provided Escreet with an entry point to New York's jazz scene. It also afforded him lessons with two commanding if different mentors: Kenny Barron and Jason Moran.

"Both of those guys are two of my favorite piano players," Escreet said. "It was good for me to study with two different musicians, from two different generations."

He described his lessons with Barron as less instructive and more of a "human experience," as he recalled the piano duets he played with the veteran. Escreet felt a closer bond with Moran, because he's closer in age and because Moran also attended the Manhattan School of Music.

"Jason's main concern is finding your own voice on your instrument," Escreet said. "That's what he emphasized with me. I was trying to do that anyway. He always challenged me, no matter what I did. It didn't matter if I was to go into a lesson and play terribly or amazing. He would always have something constructive and helpful to say. He saw the struggles that I was facing with certain aspects of college life. One of the things that I struggled with was that there were few teachers who were concerned about me finding my own voice."

—John Murph

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## Stryker/Slagle Band 🌟 Two Decades to Brighter Days

Two days after Barack Obama was elected president, saxophonist Steve Slagle and guitarist Dave Stryker met at a restaurant in Harlem to discuss arrangements for a flurry of upcoming gigs celebrating the release of *The Scene* (Zoho), their newest CD together as co-leaders of the Stryker/Slagle Band.

Before getting down to business, though, Stryker proudly mentioned that “Brighter Days,” a swinging track from *The Scene*, was included in a set highlighting the news of Obama’s achievement on WBGO, Newark’s jazz radio beacon.

“I haven’t been this happy and positive in a long time,” said Stryker, who penned the song, “and hearing our music in this context was perfect.” Slagle smiled and said, “It all shows that the strongest statements do get heard.”

At a time when too many bandstand alliances are dictated by everyone except the musicians themselves, the Stryker/Slagle Band has stood out as a unit based on a steady evolution since their first tandem leap as dual leaders in 1986. *The Scene* is the fourth release from the duo’s co-named band and the 19th CD that the two



Dave Stryker (left) and Steve Slagle

GEORGE KOPP

have worked on together, counting their separate solo careers and Stryker’s Trio Mundo project.

“We are stronger musically when we’re together,” Stryker said. “There’s good chemistry between us, and although our exchange of ideas can cause disagreements, it doesn’t get disagreeable.”

Both musicians also share an old-school approach of learning on the bandstand.

Slagle, 56, grew up in Los Angeles and Long Island, N.Y., learning music from his father, an amateur trumpet player. Early gigs with big bands led by Woody Herman, Cab Calloway and Lionel Hampton brought him recognition

and additional high-profile stints with Carla Bley, Joe Lovano’s Nonet and the Mingus Big Band, where he was a driving force through most of the 1990s. Stryker, meanwhile, moved to New York City in 1980 after an apprenticeship in the music scene around his native Omaha, Neb. Later, he landed a job with Jack McDuff before spending nine years working for Stanley Turrentine. He first encountered Slagle at a jam session in 1984, when both were living in Brooklyn, then called on him two years later when he was recording his solo debut, *First Strike*. Afterward, the two musicians worked regularly together, and in 1998 formalized their

## Stephen Gauci 🌟 Contemporary Roots Voyage

After quitting a gig aboard a cruise ship in 1994, tenor saxophonist Stephen Gauci arrived in Seattle with a couple of bags and little money. The onetime bop player wound up spending six years in the Pacific Northwest, where he discovered a different scene. Befriending musicians who broadened his scope, Gauci performed free-jazz, African music and alternative rock.

“Even though I was playing all the time and gigging, I was still absorbing the bebop lessons,” Gauci said. “After doing it for all that time, I got burned out. Seattle was like another world. Small city. Beautiful mountains. Water. It didn’t feel like bebop to me at all. It was the perfect situation to let everything go.”

This contrasts with Gauci’s current reputation in Brooklyn’s strong jazz scene. He leads several groups that perform at the Tea Lounge in Park Slope and Zebulon in Williamsburg. Gauci’s 10 albums since 2005 eschew chordal instruments. His recent releases include *Nididhyasana* (Clean Feed) and *Stephen Gauci’s Stockholm Conference Live At Glenn Miller Café* (Ayler). *Red Feast* (Cadence Jazz), due out in 2009, is an exception, as it features guitarist Nels Cline.

But it was in Seattle where Gauci conceived

of how to bring his jazz sensibilities into a new context. He performed on downtown street corners, sometimes attracting small crowds with his fluid readings of standards. After sundown, he shunned clubs like Dimitriou’s Jazz Alley in favor of smoky taprooms. Gauci’s music from this period conveyed a newfound passion for rock, and he built a loyal following.

He celebrated the release of his group’s self-titled album *Manah* (1997) at the OK Hotel, a club in Seattle’s Pioneer Square neighborhood that booked Nirvana in the heyday of grunge. “‘Make it intense,’ that’s what he’d always say,” said percussionist Elizabeth Pupo-Walker, who performed with Gauci in Seattle. “‘It’s got to be intense.’ He was just trying to get something out that was a departure from his jazz roots.”

“Inevitably,” Gauci said, “the focus gets drawn in again. At that point I wanted to do what people my age were doing. I wanted to do what was contemporary at that particular time. Now I’m not so concerned about any of that. Whatever I do is contemporary.”

Gauci grew up in New Jersey, where he earned a music performance degree in 1990 at William Paterson. He spent six months with the Glenn Miller Orchestra, followed by a two-year

stint performing on cruise ships. Gauci tired of this circuit and moved to Seattle.

He enrolled in a master’s program in 2000 at New York University after hearing pianist Matthew Shipp and bassist William Parker at Seattle’s Earshot Jazz Festival. “I came back to myself as a jazz player,” Gauci said. “Pretty much everyone I play with now is a jazz player.”

Gauci’s affinity for free-jazz is hardly one-dimensional—his admirers speak of his Ben Webster-inspired tone, and knack for bringing structure to free situations and freedom to compositions where harmonic boundaries exist. Shipp praises Gauci’s restraint and avoidance of “energy music” clichés on the tenor player’s 2005 album, *Long Night Waiting* (Cadence Jazz), a trio date featuring bassist Michael Bisio.

What also makes all of this so striking is that Gauci has transcended a hearing disability that originated from a childhood virus that damaged nerves in both of his ears. “Even though he’s the guy with the worst hearing, you get the feeling that he is picking up everybody else’s stuff,” said trumpeter Nate Wooley, who has worked in Gauci’s bands since 2005.

Gauci’s position onstage varies from venue to venue, and he adjusts his hearing aids accord-



partnership in the Stryker/Slagle Band.

"Our work together has evolved over the years," said Stryker, 52. "We have improved as players and songwriters, which has allowed us to create more concisely. Paying dues, traveling all over—it enriches the way you play and think."

Regarding *The Scene*, Slagle said, "We went into the studio after a week of playing at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York, and so all the new songs for the recording were tight. Even after all these years, our sound keeps getting more and more defined. Dave and I have put together an orchestration between us, so the guitar and sax roll in it."

*The Scene* starts with Slagle's "Skee," a tribute to bassist Dennis Irwin, who died in early 2008 from cancer. The mood of the album was also influenced by the premature death of Slagle's brother Stuart, a guitarist; a ballad written in his memory, "Hopewell's Last," appears on the set. His band's endurance attests to how they've absorbed what they've learned from such mentors, and what they see today.

"Keeping a unit together and seeing how it evolves and grows is not something everybody can do," Slagle said. "Dave has learned a lot from all the elders, like Pat Martino, so his work comes at you from a lot of places. I grew up playing duos with my brother, and then later got to play with John Scofield and Mike Stern quite a bit, so I like the format and feel comfortable in it. Our writing is different, though we enjoy working things out together."

—Thomas Staudter



RODRIGO AMADO

ingly. He compares these rites to the manner in which guitarists manage their sound gear. "I'm not even aware that my hand is moving up to my ear to make an adjustment. It's all natural," he said. "Essentially, it's how well you use what you have."

—Eric Fine

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# 'MY FAVORITE BLUE NOTE ALBUM'

BY DAN OUELLETTE AND TED PANKEN  
PHOTO BY JIMMY KATZ

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**AS THE LABEL CELEBRATES ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY,  
DOZENS OF ARTISTS WEIGH IN ON THE CLASSICS  
THAT FORM ITS VENERABLE CATALOG**

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**C**hick Corea found it impossible to pick just one album in the Blue Note catalog as a "favorite."

"In fact," Corea e-mailed, "there are so many Blue Note recordings that I grew up with and continue to listen to for inspiration, that I would have to make a long list."

Instead, Corea, whose late-'60s recordings for Solid State came out as Blue Note CDs in the '90s, and who recorded for the label as a sideman with Blue Mitchell, free-associated a listeners' feast that included everything in the catalog by Miles Davis, Horace Silver, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, Joe Henderson and Wayne Shorter, as well as Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*, John Coltrane's *Blue Train*, and Tony Williams' *Lifetime* and *Spring*.

Many of the other artists presented with the question, "What is your favorite Blue Note album?" shared Corea's sentiments about the difficulty in choosing just one album from the label's 70-year catalog. And even with dozens of artists weighing in on this question, many historic classics and near-classics—among them both volumes of *The Genius Of Modern Music* by Thelonious Monk and *The Amazing Bud Powell*, and the entire Blue Note leader oeuvres of Davis, Williams, Jimmy Smith, Dexter Gordon, Jackie McLean, Kenny Dorham, Lee Morgan, Mitchell, Hank Mobley, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor and Stanley Turrentine—do not appear in their collective testimony.

The results do show that Shorter—here represented by *Adam's Apple*, *Night Dreamer*, *Schizophrenia*, *JuJu* and

*Speak No Evil*, as well by Art Blakey's *Free For All*, all recorded between 1964 and 1967—may be the most influential Blue Note musician, with Silver, Hancock, Sonny Rollins and Blakey trailing by a healthy margin.

Predictably, Shorter declined to state a single favorite. But he had strong views on how this once two-man operation founded and operated by a pair of German-Jewish émigrés could produce so many consequential recordings that crystallized the ethos of their times and foreshadowed the shape of things to come.

"Alfred Lion and Frank Wolff had the perception and vision to stick to their guns, as Monk would say, with something that was almost doomed to be the low man on the totem pole, or the marketplace, or even some people wishing it would fail," Shorter said. "I don't think they set out to be billionaires. But who is like that now? Who's the Lone Ranger? Who's sticking their neck way out there, in the middle of a falling economy?"

"Whatever music was done on the Blue Note label expressed the challenge of change," the saxophonist continued. "None of the artists they had were doing 'On The Sunny Side Of The Street.' Blue Note had its finger on something—that you need that overwhelming resistance to commercial stuff to be used as fuel. It takes resistance for an airplane to take off. So we can thank the Madison Avenue marketing machine for all the fights that they put up against originality. Blue Note managed to capture a lot of the things that these musicians saw in life."

—Ted Panken



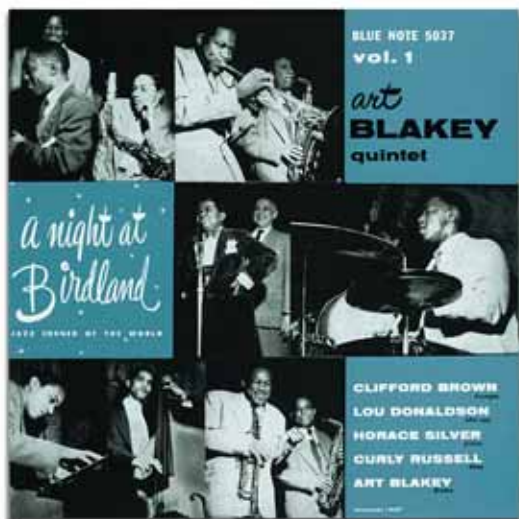


## Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers

*Free For All* (1964)

**Saxophonist Joe Lovano:** I heard *Free For All* in my late teens. I grew up with a lot of the Blakey Messengers records, especially the early stuff with Clifford Brown, Lou Donaldson, Hank Mobley and Kenny Dorham. But this band—Freddie Hubbard, Curtis Fuller, Wayne Shorter, Cedar Walton and Reggie Workman—was a powerful source of inspiration. I can imagine being in the studio after they made those takes. The raw energy of this recording and the way Blakey called the spirits, how he fed everybody and they fed him, gave me a sense of ensemble and playing together. It was something to listen to a record that sounded like a real performance, live in the studio.

The records with Lee Morgan and Wayne had a great energy and spirit also, but when Freddie Hubbard came in after Lee, he brought something different into the band. They developed more openness and flow in the way they were playing, moving out of the hard-bop sound and concept and stepping into new directions. It broke me out of playing within one school or another, gave me something to reach for past the more formulated concept from the earlier records. It made me realize the power and art of improvisation. (T.P.)



## Art Blakey

### *The Art Blakey Quintet—A Night At Birdland, Vol. 1* (1954)

**Trumpeter Randy Brecker:** *A Night At Birdland* communicated to me. I had just started playing the trumpet when I heard it for the first time. You could hear the enthusiasm of the crowd. It was my introduction to Birdland and to the concept of playing in front of an audience. It was also my introduction to Clifford Brown, Horace Silver, Lou Donaldson and Curly Russell. They were all in their early 20s. These were compositions that sounded rehearsed, but you could hear the flubs in the melody at times. It was not tightly produced. It was loose. The album was so swinging and there was a depth to the music. The solos were unique in how they went way inside the tunes. It brought me into jazz, and I continue to go back to it. (D.O.)

## Wayne Shorter: *JuJu* (1964)

**Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington:** I stumbled upon *JuJu* from a fellow musician when I started going to Berklee. It was a time when I was listening to a lot of John Coltrane, and was checking out Elvin Jones, so I loved the way the trio of McCoy Tyner, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones played with Wayne.

The haunting melodies spoke to me, particularly on “Deluge,” which is my favorite on the date. It features the sweet spot of his sound in that register of his horn, which is his signature, which no one else could get. Elvin is swinging so hard, and I love the voicings McCoy used in the B section, that walking, ascending comping thing he did on the quarter notes. “Yes Or No” is a masterpiece compositionally—a great tool for teaching and on so many fronts. What I find striking is Wayne’s detachment from that CD, or any of his earlier CDs. When I was on the road with him in Europe, I talked to him about *JuJu*. He didn’t remember the names of the songs. Great composers do that. They write it, it comes through them and it’s gone. (T.P.)

## Wayne Shorter

### *Speak No Evil* (1964)

**Saxophonist Branford Marsalis:** I heard *Speak No Evil* when I was at Berklee in the late ’70s, and I listened to it constantly, all the time. Elvin is swinging his behind off. Herbie, Freddie, Ron ... everybody’s killing. It makes it clear how Wayne used the jazz tradition as a launching pad.

When I was in school, jazz songs had become more lick-oriented, like post-bop in the ’50s, which was about writing a bunch of chords that you think are hip, then turning them into a fill-in-the-blanks melody for blowing solos. Wayne’s songs are strong melodically—they’re actually compositions, with little wrinkles that force you to change your preconceptions about soloing. The bargain-basement patterns don’t work. For example, “Witch Hunt” has the changes, but the tempo is daunting—you can’t resort to eighth notes and 16th notes. Or the melody on “Dance Cadaverous”—you don’t know where to place it. At the time, I thought that music is finding your voice.

Hearing Wayne with Miles and with Blakey and on his own stuff moved me quickly out of that idea. It helped me understand that all of the great players have one foot in and one foot out of the tradition, and the foot outside the tradition is more a gradual departure than a forced radical change. (T.P.)

### **Trumpeter Nicholas Payton:**

*Speak No Evil* is a moody record in the sense that there’s a vibe threaded through all the pieces. It’s cinematic. I can see things when I listen. The music is also lyrical. This album comes from that era when things were taking a turn in the music. It was modern but rooted at the same time. There were strong elements of the blues and soul, which was different from other records made at that time.

I was into Wayne’s music when I was starting to write. I transcribed his tunes and Herbie Hancock’s voicings. When I pulled the music out, it always sounded fresh. I was also into Freddie Hubbard. I figured if I ended up sounding like him, I’d feel fine. Here’s his album that also had Elvin, who worked with Trane, and then Wayne, Herbie and Ron Carter from Miles’ band. This album represents a hybrid of those great groups. The solos are so memorable that it’s almost as if all the players are talking with each other. It’s almost like vocalese, like you could write words to the music. (D.O.)

**Saxophonist David Sánchez:** I first heard *Speak No Evil* during my first year at Rutgers. I was listening to a lot of Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins and Dexter Gordon, and I had come from Puerto Rico, with the music that comes from there, so my ears weren’t ready. I can’t say honestly that I completely understood it. It sounded different than the jazz I’d been hearing, but I could relate to the catchy melodies and the writing. The compositions are like an axis—everything revolves around them. They have such a strong character that everyone is in tune and focused about playing around the concept of the recording—and that makes it sound like a group. I always think about a unit, and that makes the recording timeless.

On “Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum,” “Speak No Evil” and “Infant Eyes,” Wayne isn’t playing the changes, but plays around the composition—he’s creative within the composition, distinct from a lot of other Blue Note recordings of the period on which, generally speaking, people would improvise on the changes once the head or theme was over. And the quality of the recording is unbelievably clear. If you have a decent stereo, you close your eyes and it’s almost like you’re right there. (T.P.)



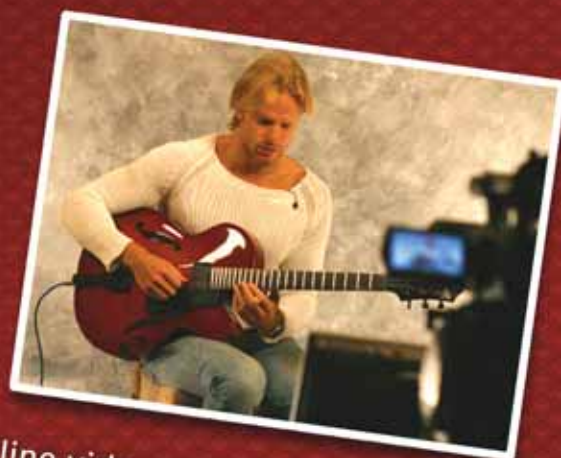


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# Wayne Shorter

*Schizophrenia* (1967)

**Saxophonist Greg Osby:** *Schizophrenia* is the first Wayne Shorter recording I heard. I was about 14, in my pre-jazz days, playing funk and soul and starting to get into the organ. My mother worked for a record distributor, so I got all the Blue Notes for free, and this is the one I played more than anything else.

Since my hearing then wasn't that advanced, it became the soundtrack for my early years. All of its markings were etched into my brain. It's one of Wayne's most advanced outings, a beacon for small-group composition. He knows how to make a small combo sound expansive with personalized and advanced arranging techniques, unorthodox couplings of instruments—euphoniums and trombones, tenor saxophones, flutes and altos. It sounds big and rich, and you don't miss the sections—not to mention his penchant for tight voicings, with his unmistakable tone in the middle. He studied chamber music and classical composition, and understood how to use hybrid structures and synthetic harmonies to get his point across. A good example, in terms of saxophone playing, is a passage on "Kryptonite" where he's triple-tonguing—it sounds like a waterfall, which is appropriate for that piece. Even "Tom Thumb," which is a toe-tapper, is stylized and twisted in a way that makes it stand out. (T.P.)



*Adam's Apple* (1966)

**Saxophonist Chris Potter:** When I was 14, I heard Wayne Shorter's *JuJu* and *Adam's Apple*. Before that, I hadn't heard anything by Wayne that I liked—I didn't get it. As much as I love *JuJu*, with Elvin [Jones] and McCoy [Tyner] playing those great tunes, *Adam's Apple* is a bit more developed. All the tunes are amazing. "Footprints" is on it, and "Chief Crazy Horse" is great. I always loved "El Gaucho," too, which is difficult to play over. Toward the end of Herbie's solo there are moments where they are clearly in three different places, but their reaction to that somehow

winds up being one of my favorite parts of the album. I also

recall a phrase toward the end where Joe Chambers goes nuts. Maybe

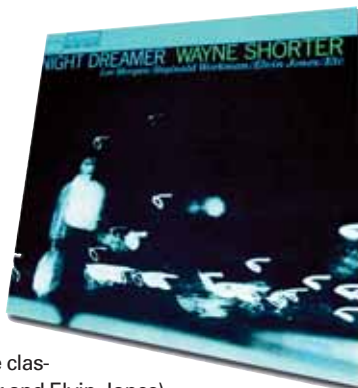
he's mad because everyone's losing the form. Who knows? But it works musically.

Wayne is grounded in the era before him, but something about his approach, writing and interaction with Herbie felt like it was pointing toward the future. He didn't seem to have an agenda to be radical, to be self-consciously, jarringly avant-garde, but rather to make something beautiful and true to what he wanted to express. (T.P.)

*Night Dreamer* (1964)

**Vocalist Kurt Elling:** On *Night Dreamer*, Wayne Shorter is at such a profound and beautiful moment of his writing life. He had written all those tunes for Art Blakey, but not with the space and intellectualized, far-searching sensibility that he later wrote when he was with Miles Davis. So, with all the vestiges of Blakey and hard-bop, Wayne steps into more treacherous territory on *Night Dreamer*, even while making these songs so hummable and singable. There's a deep, brooding soulfulness to this album.

You can compare this album with *Speak No Evil*. The classic rhythm section is heavy (Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones), and everyone plays so beautifully. But *Speak No Evil* is joyful. There's an emotional bounce. *Night Dreamer* is heavier, broodier. The notes sound inevitable. The album sounds new and in the moment. I've listened to it 100,000 times. I'd love to try to write a lyric to "Armageddon," which sounds so mad. What I'd like to do is create a vocalese version of *Night Dreamer* and *Speak No Evil*, Jon Hendricks-style. It would be two epic tales. I'd do all the songs in order, but I'd have to write like a madman to pull it off. (D.O.)



# Herbie Hancock

*Maiden Voyage* (1965)

**Pianist Geri Allen:** I heard *Maiden Voyage* when I was at Howard University, right after I graduated from high school. My first simultaneous experience with Herbie's music as it was being released to the public had been *Chameleon* and the music from *Headhunters*, which was informing a lot of the younger musicians in Detroit. I was rediscovering Herbie's prior work, to see where this artistry originated.

I was affected by the entire ambiance of *Maiden Voyage*—the nuance and the beauty, how it felt so through-composed from the first piece to "Little One," on which there's a structure, a tune, but it feels free in the way Herbie constructed the harmony, the moving lines or counterpoint, and how Ron [Carter] improvised throughout. To hear that openness, that balance of improvisation and pre-composition, was a breakthrough in what I wanted to accomplish as a composer. It established another coloristic implication, another way to think about ensemble sound. I connected to the idea that this man accessed the early sources of the language of this music and came up with this individual and innovative orchestrational approach to the instrument. (T.P.)

**Trumpeter Sean Jones:** *Maiden Voyage* is my favorite for a couple of reasons. First, it's a concept record that takes you on a journey from beginning to end. That was one of the first small-ensemble records that did that. The concept is laid out in the title, and the rest of the music follows that all the way through. Every composition on this album is killing. They all serve a purpose, and they all flow together. Plus, the players are all amazing: Freddie Hubbard, George Coleman, Ron Carter, Tony Williams and Herbie. They all feed off each other, and together they make the album get to the point of the concept without belaboring the point. They get to the essence of the pieces that Herbie wrote. Second, the way it's recorded sounds terrific. Each time I listen to it, I hear something new. For example, I'm thinking about the drum-bass dialogue that Tony and Ron had. (D.O.)





## *Speak Like A Child* (1968)

**Trumpeter Terence Blanchard:** I just finished a 10-week tour with Herbie Hancock, so *Speak Like A Child* stands out as my favorite Blue Note album. On the tour we did a new arrangement of "Speak Like A Child," so Herbie explained to us what he had done for the record, which was so sophisticated. He talked about the way he dealt with orchestration so that his group wouldn't sound like a small jazz ensemble. He wanted to make the sound bigger. On the title song, he wrote all these horn parts to play the melody so you get the counter lines. He wanted to support the melody in the best possible way.

Listening to the album again, I can hear Herbie's attention to composition as well as allowing for room to improvise. It has a classic sound unlike records from other labels. I listened to a lot of Miles before that and paid attention to Herbie's playing in the quintet, but on *Speak Like A Child* Herbie was so totally different. I could hear his approach to music outside of Miles' influence. When I was younger, I'd deconstruct tunes as a way of learning about them. But to be with this person whose music meant so much to me and to see and hear about his development as an artist was a revelation. I can appreciate *Speak Like A Child* in a new way. (D.O.)

**Pianist Kenny Werner:** I haven't listened to *Speak Like A Child* in a long time, so I can't discuss the tunes. I made a record in 1990 called *Paintings* that was modeled after it. I was so impressed that composition was the primary force on the album, with interesting arrangements for Herbie to solo over on the piano—a perfect blend of Herbie the player and Herbie the writer.

As on all his Blue Note records, Herbie plays the tastiest lines and changes, played in the grooviest fashion with a beautiful touch. It was almost delicious, the way his stuff laid in the time and swung, but with an almost funky groove that foreshadows the feeling of his later playing. It started there, in a non-rushed fashion, from a place that you didn't feel the effort or ego in the way he melted into the groove. Now he's close to 70, and more than ever, he's the Zen master on the piano. In this era of incredibly technical young players, he sits down at a piano and blows me away. There's no intention to do anything, so what comes out is pure music, pure magic. On *Speak Like A Child*, you see the evolution. (T.P.)

## *The Prisoner* (1969)

**Pianist Uri Caine:** *The Prisoner* combines a lot of elements. Joe Henderson has some great solos, especially on the title track, but he's burning through the record. So is [trumpeter] Johnny Coles, somebody who played a lot in Philadelphia and worked with Herbie during that period. The arrangements work with fresh and unexpected harmonies and orchestration to serve as backdrop, a context to frame and set off the great solos, which are free and open.

"He Who Lives In Fear" and "Promise Of The Sun" are harmonically adventurous and difficult to solo on, and I love how strongly Herbie plays on those open harmonic forms. I also like the way he combines the piano and electric piano. Then, the open rhythmic feel of Buster Williams' "Firewater," and the way Joe Henderson's and Herbie's solos weave in and out of free playing, then over the changes. Herbie seems much more focused on orchestration than on earlier recordings—though he was always interested in arrangements. Also, it's more open and complex than those records in that he's trying to combine different styles, swinging but also using different rhythmic feels, playing harmonically but also setting up free-zone situations to access the feeling of outness that was then part of the music. (T.P.)

# Horace Silver

## Horace Silver And The Jazz Messengers (1954)

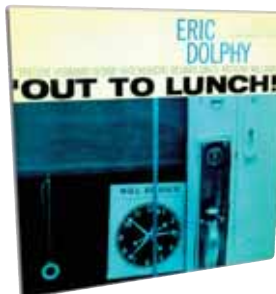
**Pianist Bill Charlap:** It's one of probably 100, but what rises to the top quickly is *Horace Silver And The Jazz Messengers*, with the blue cover. I got it in my early teens, and it's one of the first Blue Note albums that I was aware of. One of the great things that Alfred Lion did was to give these great improvisers and composers a canvas to write these pieces that are now a huge part of our library. I love Horace's compositions, and his solos are so well-structured and thought-out, almost compositions—shout choruses—in themselves.

His solo on "Room 608" is one of the first I learned—I didn't transcribe it, but I could sing every note. I also love the way Horace comps for the band, jabbing like a boxer. That left hand is like another snare drum; those low notes are incredible. Plus, the group esthetic of Horace, Doug Watkins, Art Blakey, Hank Mobley and Kenny Dorham: The way they play is so intense and strong, but also light. It tap dances. The rhythm section is so tight and so loose at the same time. The rhythmic approach is still timely. (T.P.)



## Eric Dolphy: *Out To Lunch* (1964)

**Drummer Matt Wilson:** I listened to records on Friday afternoons in the music library at Wichita State, and *Out To Lunch*, along with *This Is Our Music* and *Black Fire*, is one of the first that was a little out of the box. I was listening to standards then. What drew me in, as much as the playing, was the way the weight of the ensemble is spread around, with no comping instrument per se, no piano or guitar, so that the instruments don't always have definable roles, and then sometimes have them. All the tunes have so much personality.



*Out To Lunch* has a chamber feeling, and you can tell how committed everyone is to playing them.

Everyone seems equal. In an interview with Ben Sidran, Tony Williams said that everyone's love for Eric

Dolphy and the music

made them want to give it their all. Eric's sound is amazing in that room. Tony plays time wonderfully, but he also plays like he's a horn player, and his sound with Richard Davis is amazing. Freddie Hubbard, too. I love the sound of Bobby Hutcherson getting that low F when he hits the bar on "Hat And Beard," or the sound at the beginning when Tony hits the bell of the hi-hat. (T.P.)



## The Cape Verdean Blues

(1965)

**Trumpeter Dave Douglas:** There are too many classics, but I'm going to go with Horace Silver's *The Cape Verdean Blues*, featuring J.J. Johnson, Woody Shaw, Joe Henderson, Bob Cranshaw and Roger Humphries. The tunes are so clear and solid, the groove is so smooth and all the solos are classics. There's early Woody on "Nutville," and one moment in Joe Henderson's solo on "The African Queen" makes me want to

scream every time I hear it. What makes it so

special is the care that Horace takes in putting together the long arc of the arrangement. This record is filled with little things that you almost don't notice, but have a profound effect on the expressiveness of the music. (D.O.)

## Song For My Father (1964)

**Vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater:** The first time I heard the song "Song For My Father" was on a jukebox when my father took me out for dinner when I was growing up in Flint, Mich. I heard it, and I said, "Oh my God, daddy, who is that?" He said that it was a pianist named Horace Silver. I said, "What is that? This is the jazz that I love." When we got home, I asked my father if he had an album with that song on it. He didn't, so I asked him if he would buy me an album with it. So *Song For My Father* was my first jazz record.

Horace is still my favorite jazz composer. I got *Song For My Father* at the same time that Motown was big. I loved Motown, but when my girlfriends came over, I'd play them *Song For My Father*. I made them sit down and listen. They said, "Oh, that's nice." But I could tell they didn't care. *Song For My Father* was as good as Motown, and it was more sophisticated. I loved the melodies. That was funky and hip. I remember growing up hoping to meet Horace Silver one day. That's what started the love affair I have for Horace that exists to this day. His music also got me deeper into drum and percussion music and into African music. That was a seed for me discovering my roots. (D.O.)



## Joe Henderson

### Mode For Joe

(1966)

**Bassist Christian**

**McBride:** One Blue Note favorite? It's impossible.

*Speak No Evil* is a perfect album that has become a standard of modern jazz that rivals *Kind Of Blue*. I know at least 20 musicians who know all the solos on that album.

Then there's Art Blakey's *Moanin'* and Paul Chambers' *Whims Of Chambers*, which are also perfect. But Joe Henderson's *Mode For Joe* is a sentimental pick because it was one of the first records I bought when I was learning how to play the bass.

I love *Mode For Joe* because of the writing, and hearing Ron Carter and Joe Chambers playing together. Joe's way of swinging hard on the drums was special. A lot of modern drummers play too much and fill up all the space. Joe Chambers always left space to dance around in, but every once in a while he'd throw a bomb in there. Everyone on that album was just coming up—Cedar Walton, Bobby Hutcherson. I was 13 when I first heard this album and had just been playing jazz for a couple of years, but I knew by looking at the personnel that you could bet the house on them. (D.O.)





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## J.J. Johnson *The Eminent Jay Jay Johnson, Vol. 2* (1954)

**Trombonist Steve Turre:**

As a trombone player, *The Eminent Jay Jay Johnson, Vol. 2* is my favorite. For trombone playing, you don't get any better. Artists like J.J., who were such huge contributors, didn't get the press that they deserved, and now that they're gone, it's as if they didn't exist. It was uncanny how great he played the instrument.

*The Eminent Jay Jay Johnson, Vol. 2* is better than the first volume because it has congas on it, so there's more of a Latin flavor. Plus, J.J. stretches more on *Vol. 2*. I first heard this album when I was in college. It was an epiphany. Up to that point, I didn't realize that a trombone could be played at that level. And what a soulful period that was. (D.O.)

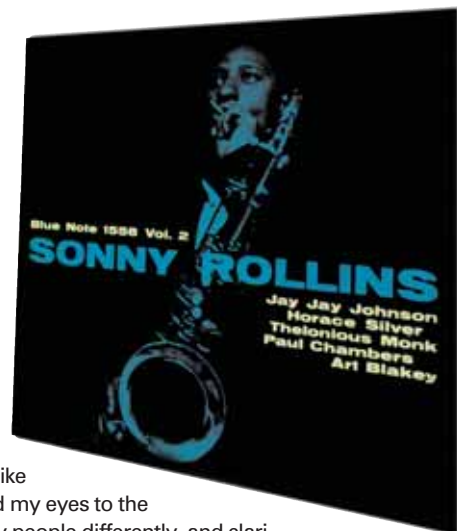


## Sonny Rollins

*Sonny Rollins, Vol. 2* (1957)

**Saxophonist Gary Bartz:** For Christmas when I was a senior in high school in Baltimore, in 1957, my girlfriend got me *Sonny Rollins, Vol. 2*, which has Horace Silver and Thelonious Monk on piano, with J.J. Johnson and Art Blakey. It was an eye-opener. One track,

"Misterioso," on which Monk and Horace both play—I think J.J. didn't like the way that Monk comped—opened my eyes to the fact that different pianists accompany people differently, and clarified what I like in piano accompaniment. At the time it was my favorite Sonny Rollins record. I learned all the songs on it. I wore it out. I was an ear guy then, and I learned all of Sonny's solos note for note, and then started playing my own solos, which helped me in my ear training. Also, by playing along with Sonny, I was trying to emulate his big, strong, muscular sound, and I began to go for a tenor-edged sound on the alto, like Charlie Parker. (T.P.)



## Paul Chambers/ John Coltrane: *High Step* (1956)

**Bassist Marcus Miller:** Paul Chambers and John Coltrane made such a beautiful sound together. The whole album sounded good and natural. This session sounded like a Blue Note record—like they rehearsed these songs a couple of times, then recorded them in a way that made their talent shine through. A session like this one opens a window on how good the players are. The music allowed them to blow, but there was so much intelligence, heart and soul in that blowing. The first time I heard this album was at Kenny Washington's house on Staten Island, N.Y., where we grew up. We sat there all day listening to Blue Note albums. I still feel Paul Chambers was never fully appreciated. Wynton Kelly was my cousin, and I'm sure when I was just a young kid I was taken to a club to hear Wynton's trio with Paul and Jimmy Cobb. (D.O.)



## *A Night At The Village Vanguard* (1957)

**Bassist Larry Grenadier:** The thing about Blue Note albums that distinguished them from Prestige and Columbia releases was how rehearsed they sounded, but also how they came off sounding spontaneous. Even though a lot of the Blue Note albums had the artists recording their own compositions, my favorite, Sonny Rollins' *A Night At The Village Vanguard*,

was mostly standards that Sonny, Wilbur Ware and Elvin Jones played. These guys were at the height of their playing. The music feels so live, so off-the-cuff. I love hearing Sonny, how his ideas were just spilling out. It was conversational.

This trio was the perfect band. Wilbur was playing exactly what was needed. His bass lines were creative, melodic. They set up a counterpoint to what Sonny was playing. I wouldn't change a single bass note Wilbur played. And in 1957, there was the fully formed Elvin. All three guys were playing with complete technical proficiency. They were in the midst of creating their own individual ways of playing. Plus, what was unique about the Blue Note records of that era was the sound that Rudy Van Gelder captured. (D.O.)



## Sonny Clark: *Cool Struttin'* (1958)

**Drummer Kenny Washington:** I heard *Cool Struttin'* 30 years ago and became a Sonny Clark fan. It caught everybody—Sonny, Art Farmer, Jackie McLean, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones—at the peak of their powers. Sonny always played super-hip, clean lines, melodic, swung, and he and Philly Joe were a match made in heaven. Philly Joe didn't have a complete drum set—snare drum, floor tom-tom, bass drum, hi-hat, no ride cymbal and no mounted tom-tom. But rhythmically they were in synch throughout the record, and hearing it helped me start thinking about interacting and playing with and comping with the piano.

On "Cool Struttin'," Paul Chambers plays a two feeling against Joe's four feeling for a chorus on Sonny's opening solo, before Paul shifts to playing four beats in the measure. They do the same thing at the beginning of Jackie's solo and Art's solo. Sonny Clark is one of my favorite compers—so loose and free, but organized at the same time, and he'd swing his ass off. The hookup with Philly Joe's left hand—his snare drum accents and bass drum playing—is amazing. With Rudy Van Gelder's great sound, you can hear everything that Joe is playing, and that's how you learn how to comp, how you learn how to accompany an ensemble. (T.P.)



## John Coltrane *Blue Train* (1957)

**Drummer Antonio Sanchez:** I grew up in Mexico City, and during those years I was not a huge jazz fan, I was more a rock, Latin and fusion guy. I started discovering a lot of jazz recordings when I moved to the States in 1993 to go to Berklee, and *Blue Train* was among the first. I'd heard things like it before, but hadn't paid much attention because I wasn't ready.

*Blue Train* was incredible, powerful-sounding music, so visceral and raw, with such emotion. The whole band is stellar. Lee Morgan is ridiculous on it, then Curtis Fuller, Paul Chambers, Kenny Drew on piano and Philly Joe Jones, who remains someone I try always to emulate. At the time I was into this virtuosic fusion playing, and Philly was a consummate drum virtuoso—organic, super-crisp and precise. The sound was so well-rounded. A lot of jazz records from that time sound unbalanced, but on the Blue Note records, the rhythm sections sound good, which made them easier to listen to for someone who wasn't yet completely into jazz. (T.P.)



## Herbie Nichols *The Complete Blue Note Recordings Of Herbie Nichols* (1955-'56)

**Pianist Ethan Iverson:** In high school, I heard *The Complete Blue Note Recordings Of Herbie Nichols*. It had a profound impact on me. Nichols connected early jazz, which was my first love, to modern jazz. It was the left hand, the growls in the lower register of the piano, moving around in the low octaves—it had something to do with stride piano. I've always loved people who are idiosyncratic but still profound, and that's Nichols all the way.

I have to credit Alfred Lion for getting canonical performances from his artists. Pianists of that era like Oscar Dennard, the Legendary Hassan and Dick Twardzik made a few things, but we don't have a good idea of who they are. I'm not saying that Herbie Nichols' Blue Note recordings are his whole story, but they are a singular document. (T.P.)



## Andrew Hill: *Black Fire* (1963)

**Bassist Ben Allison:** It's a hard thing to pick my favorite of Andrew Hill's early Blue Note records because they were all great—*Point Of Departure*, *Smoke Stack*, *Judgment!*, *Andrew!!!* I've always been a huge fan on Andrew Hill's music and playing, and I liked him as a person. I look back and all these Blue Note records were recorded within eight months.

Even though the first of those early-'60s Blue Note albums that I came to was *Point Of Departure*, my favorite is

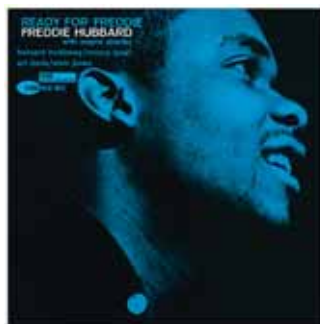
*Black Fire*, which set the ball rolling for that spurt of creativity.

I listened to it so much that I thought I was listening to it too much, that I would always be thinking in Andrew Hill's compositively way. But I loved listening to Andrew's enduring compositions and the improvisations of all the musicians. They were all connecting and dripping with personality. Andrew's piano sounded like he talked. I transcribed the compositions that were all strong and fun to play. That started my love affair with Andrew Hill's music. It is amazing how all of those albums were recorded so close to each other, which was a product of Andrew's creativity as well as Blue Note's ravenous desire to document at that time. (D.O.)

## Freddie Hubbard *Ready For Freddie* (1961)

**Pianist Mulgrew Miller:** When I got to Memphis State in the early '70s, I was only interested in the sound of the piano and the way it was played, so I was drawn to trio records. *Ready For Freddie* was one of the earliest records that I heard with horn players that I liked. I was a euphonium player in the marching band, and Bernard McKinney played euphonium on it. More importantly, I was moving away from whatever vocabulary I was trying to learn, and looking into what was happening in the now—and players like Freddie Hubbard, McCoy Tyner, Wayne Shorter and Elvin Jones were contemporary then.

All the soloists play so creatively, exceptionally linear and melodic. I've heard so many trumpet players quote Freddie's solo on "Birdlike" at different jam sessions through the years. I once counted how many choruses Freddie played, and though I forget the exact number, it was something like 17. Also, Freddie's writing is fantastic—he doesn't get enough credit for his compositional ability. Like Wayne and Joe Henderson, he was a man of compositional and improvisational vision. (T.P.)



## McCoy Tyner *The Real McCoy* (1967)

**Trombonist Robin Eubanks:** *The Real McCoy* is one of my favorites. There was McCoy with Joe Henderson and Ron Carter—and Elvin Jones, so that was half of John Coltrane's classic quartet. It's hard to get a better band than that. And the compositions are now classics. I grew up playing funk and rock and was into heavy metal and jazz fusion like Mahavishnu Orchestra and Return To Forever. But *The Real McCoy* provided the energy for me to switch to jazz. I found the same energy of electric fusion in McCoy's acoustic music, which I was first introduced to when he played live in Philadelphia. I was in the front row with my head almost underneath the piano. That got me into checking out jazz. When I first came to New York, I went to see McCoy at the Village Vanguard, which made me want to play with him—which finally happened and it was magical, playing in his big band. (D.O.)

## Various Artists

### *Blue Note's Three Decades Of Jazz, Vol. 2: 1949-'59* (1969)

**Guitarist Bill Frisell:** There are so many great Blue Note albums, but I have a slightly easy way out. My favorite was the first Blue Note album I bought, *Blue Note's Three Decades Of Jazz, Vol. 2*. It had two LPs. I think the years were from 1949-'59, and it was a gold mine of musical information, with tunes by such artists as Clifford Brown, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Percy Heath, Art Blakey, Bud Powell, Jimmy Smith, Kenny Burrell and John Coltrane. The album contained so much of what I needed to know of the high moments of all the greatest musicians.

Back at that time I had no money, so I was buying all these cut-outs like my first Wes Montgomery record for 89 cents. That's where I bought Sam Rivers' *Fuchsia Swing Song*, only because it was on Blue Note. I trusted the label. I had heard of Tony [Williams] and Ron [Carter], but I didn't know Sam or Jaki Byard. Jaki is one of those guys who was so huge but is now overlooked. Because of that best-of album, I started buying records by all those guys. I'd buy another Blue Note record, like a Lee Morgan or a Sonny Rollins, within a few weeks of each other. They all fed off each other. That was such an amazing discovery. (D.O.)

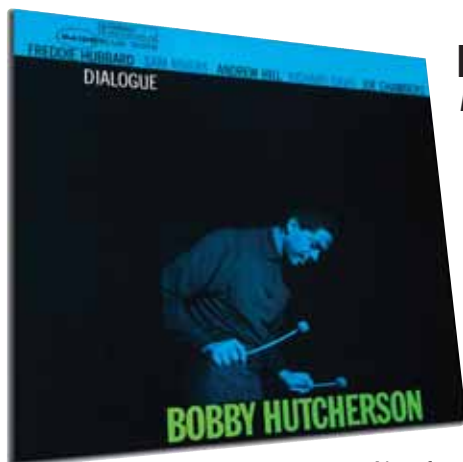


## Sheila Jordan

### *A Portrait Of Sheila* (1962)

**Vocalist Patricia Barber:** *A Portrait Of Sheila* is one of my favorite Blue Note records. On the phone today, Sheila explained to me that it was controversial at the time. History, however, has shown that it was no mistake to bathe Sheila Jordan in the prestigious Blue Note album light. She put forth an individual voice with spirit and courage. Sheila controls the air when she sings, the air within her phrasing and the air in the room. She sings like a bird, a hip bird—not like Charlie Parker, but utterly like Sheila Jordan. She asks us to hold this warm-blooded bird in our hands and makes us complicit in a shared vulnerability. This is the most recognizable trait of her singing. She breaks our hearts.

Her vocal tool on *A Portrait Of Sheila* is a deft and whispered soprano that wobbles a full whole step. The vibrato in combination with a lighter timbre is unusual, at least artsy, at most provocative. She isn't staying within the rules, the narrative or the pitch. She is singing outside, and out there she finds something more. When she widens the wobble into a minor third, skipping and diving by intervals, this is the second most recognizable trait of her singing. (D.O.)



## Bobby Hutcherson

### *Dialogue* (1965)

**Pianist Jason Moran:** Bobby Hutcherson's *Dialogue* lumped together all these crazy people—Bobby, Andrew Hill, Sam Rivers, Joe Chambers, Richard Davis and Freddie Hubbard. The compositions on there were by Andrew and Joe, not Bobby, and they show the gamut of where music was at that point—some free stuff, and the first song, "Catta," has a Latin feel. The playing is phenomenal. It's a well-rounded cast and a well-rounded record. These musicians represent a thread of how Blue

Note functioned, with which I hope I'll be associated in the long term. It's like a football team, and Andrew, Sam, Bobby and Freddie represent the offensive line, who push the defense back further and further, while other people catch touchdowns and get the hoo-rah.

I love *The Real McCoy*, but the music on this and on *Contours*, the Sam Rivers record, is biting in a way that *The Real McCoy* is, not in how they approach the use of dissonance and melody. A lot of my ideas about a format or a sound to play free come from *Dialogue*. How Joe Chambers plays this march drum sound in the middle of the space. It's so mystifying. It's a record you can't grasp. Often black artists who choose abstraction are considered a sellout to their race because they aren't doing anything representative of African or African-American culture. I don't know whether they thought about taking a chance. They were just doing it because it's what was ready to be done. (T.P.)

## Larry Young: *Unity* (1965)

**Trombonist Conrad Herwig:** Larry Young's *Unity* was a cult record for me. Anything with Larry Young was great because I love jazz organ. I got *Unity* in college. I had lots of other Blue Notes, but nothing turned me on like *Unity*, with Larry and Woody Shaw. It was ear opening. At college, Jim Snidero and I made these T-shirts with the picture of the cover, and we sat around wearing them and listening to it. It was Larry taking all the innovations of John Coltrane on the saxophone and applying it to the Hammond B-3.

I was in awe of Elvin Jones. The greatest duo of all time was Larry and Elvin on "Monk's Dream." It was so hard-swinging and off the charts. Then add Joe Henderson, who plays incredibly here, and Woody Shaw, who was a trumpet master. Woody was something like 22 then, and he wrote three songs that are on the album: "Moontrane," which was probably the first recording of it; "Beyond All Limits," which was in a killer post-bop uptempo; and "Zoltan," which was written for Zoltán Kodály, who was a contemporary of Béla Bartók. On that tune Elvin plays the snare drum on top and Larry plays ostinatos. I make sure all my students listen to it. I have two copies of *Unity*. Bob Belden got me a sealed copy—it is still sealed. (D.O.) **DB**





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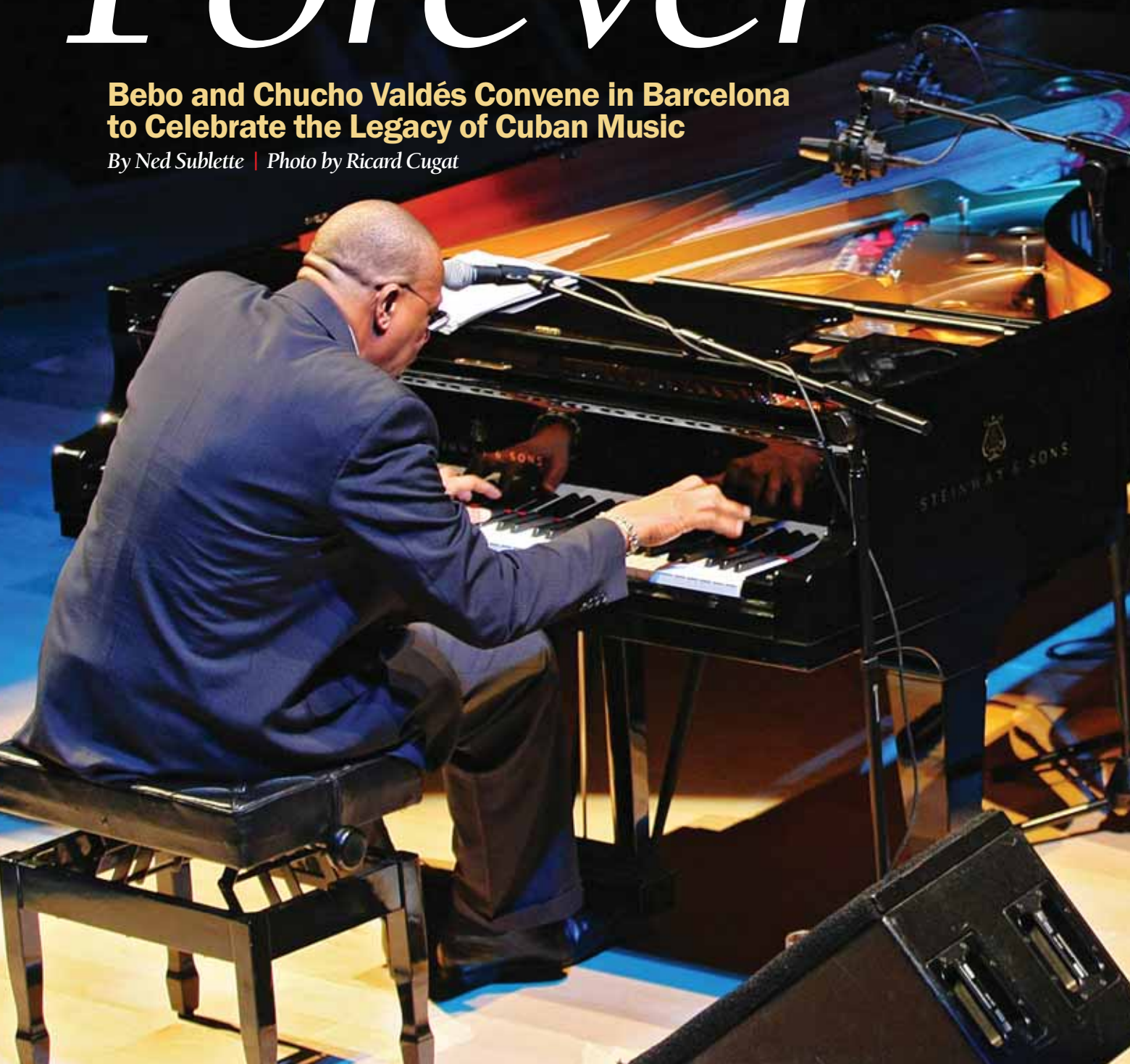
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# Together Forever

**Bebo and Chucho Valdés Convene in Barcelona to Celebrate the Legacy of Cuban Music**

*By Ned Sublette | Photo by Ricard Cugat*







The Auditori of Barcelona had been sold out for days—some 2,200 fixed seats in the concert hall, plus 100 extra chairs squeezed onto the stage.

The mayor was there to say a few words, not about to miss the chance to associate himself with the stellar inaugural concert of the Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival last October. Having been held 40 times in 42 years, the venerable festival is now a 60-event marathon that lasts for weeks.

Ninety-year-old Ramón “Bebo” Valdés walked out on stage to a shouting, cheering, standing ovation, followed soon after by his son, Jesús “Chucho” Valdés. They form an imposing pair: Bebo is 6 feet 2 inches tall, though he’s a little shorter now with the curvature of age, while Chucho stands 6 foot 4 inches.

The tumult continued as the two men hugged in the spotlight. Bebo took his seat at the near piano while Chucho strode over to the far one, and he already had the bass line going while Chucho adjusted his chair. It was *that* bass line, one of the most famous in Cuban music: Ernesto Lecuona’s “La Comparsa,” the 1912 Cuban piano landmark that has become something of a signature piece for father and son. To make their two-piano version of the one-piano composition, they swapped off phrases. They didn’t play it the way classical musicians would play it, note-strict, but the way jazz musicians would play it, altering the phrasing as they felt it, turning a paper piece into an ear piece.

You won’t ever hear the piece performed more authoritatively—Bebo played piano with Lecuona. As they faced off across twin Steinways, the two made an old-school/new-school duo that stretched through the 20th century into the 21st, clasping hands across the rupture occasioned by the Cuban Revolution on Jan. 1, 1959.

They didn’t see each other for 18 years after Bebo left Cuba in 1960, vowing never to return until the revolutionary regime had left. Meanwhile, Chucho continued living in Havana and based his career there, with the endorsement of the state’s institutions. There seemed not to be a person in the concert hall who didn’t know this. There couldn’t be anyone who didn’t at least feel it in the way they passed the phrases of “La Comparsa” back and forth.

This concert could not have taken place in the United States. No musician living in Cuba and planning to return has been given an entry visa since the Bush Administration put the hammer down at the end of 2003. The last Cuban musician to come into the United States was Chucho, who led a quartet at the Village Vanguard the last week of December that year. Since then, only Cuban musicians living in third countries have come in, and the United States has gone without music from the island nation.

In Spain, Bebo and Chucho are stars. Barcelona has played an important role in the



PEDRO PORTAL

late flowering of Bebo’s career that culminated in this historic concert, the first of nine sold-out performances the duo gave in Spanish cities during November. The concert tour, like the studio album it supported, was called *Juntos Para Siempre (Together Forever)*.

They have the same birthday, Oct. 9, so the day Bebo turned 90, Chucho, by now a grand old man of Cuban music himself, turned 67. “Find me another example of a pianist playing like Bebo at the age of 90!” said Chucho at the press conference the day before the concert. Bebo responded that Chucho long ago surpassed him: “He can play anything.” They were both right.

Cuban music had *contratiempo* (counter-time) before Cachao, but not syncopation,” Bebo said over breakfast in Barcelona.

He was speaking of bassist Israel “Cachao” López, who died last March at the age of 89. Asked to explain, he got Chucho to sing a typical *danzón* bass line from across the breakfast table. Bebo started singing a familiar lick over it, a rhythmic one-note melody that emphasizes the upbeats. Most people know it as the opening of Tito Puente’s “Oye Como Va,” but Puente nicked it from Cachao’s “Chanchullo.” Cachao was playing that lick in 1937. “That’s mambo!” Bebo exclaimed.

Bebo worries out loud that his memory is failing—“I fight with myself,” he said, but it would be a lot more convincing if he didn’t fret about it after going on in some detail about things that happened 50 years ago. Bebo was a central figure during a golden age of Cuban music, and he seems to remember it all.

Growing up in Quivicán, a small town in

Havana province, he breathed the air of the *danzón*, the dance form that dominated Cuban music in the late 19th and early 20th century. His experience with the piano began with Antonio María Romeu, who brought the instrument into the Cuban dance orchestra. “I was 3 or 4,” Bebo said, recalling a story his mother told him, “and they knew I liked the piano because whenever Antonio María Romeu would come to play [in Quivicán], I always sat next to him on his piano bench and I didn’t move from that spot all night.”

From his earliest days he heard the *tres*, the modified three-pairs-of-strings guitar that provides the harmonic-rhythmic spine of the Cuban *son*, and he learned to sing the harmonies of the son sextet. “The Septeto Habanero was all the rage, and I liked the Trío Matamoros a lot,” he said. “When they would come to Quivicán to play, I was there. I started to play *clave* and sing *segundo* (harmony voice). They say I was a natural *segundo*, imitating singers like Ciro, the *segundo* singer of the Trío Matamoros.”

Bebo was already a confirmed jazz fanatic by 1936, when he began attending music conservatory in Havana. He became fast friends with Cachao, his neighbor in the *barrio* of Luyanó, and in 1937, when they were jamming together, Cachao was inventing the mambo. Beginning in 1943, Bebo worked as an arranger at Mil Diez, the radio station at 1010 AM that made a heavy investment in Cuban national culture and helped start the careers of Celia Cruz, Olga Guillot and many others. As music director for the too-little-remembered bandleader Julio Cueva, Bebo was a founding father of big-band mambo. His first hit, in 1945, was with Cueva, and it was a mambo:



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“La Rareza Del Siglo” (“The Strangeness Of The Century”), that declared its strangeness with a montuno figure of alternating seconds and sevenths.

In late 1947/early '48, Bebo spent about four months in Haiti, playing with and arranging for Palestinian-descended clarinetist/art dealer Issa el Saieh, and listening carefully to Haitian rhythms. He returned to Haiti a number of times, making him the only major figure of Cuban music who did that. After he came back from Port-au-Prince, he found himself standing in the street during the last Sunday of carnival 1948 when a comparsa came banging along, carrying with it the biggest star in Cuba: soprano Rita Montaner, for whom Bebo had done many arrangements. “Bebo! You fell from the sky! Don’t go away! Stay right there!” she yelled as the comparsa romped down Calle Dragones. “I waited there,” Bebo said. “They came back to get me, I got in the car with Rita and her husband, and they took me to the Tropicana to meet with [Víctor de] Correa,” the Tropicana’s owner. Montaner wanted Bebo to be her pianist and arranger at the Tropicana, and what Montaner wanted, she got. He began work the next night, remaining at the Tropicana during its period of splendor.

In 1952, Bebo recorded “Con Poco Coco,” the first descarga (Latin jam), and created a rhythm called batanga, which didn’t take off as he had hoped but which did occasion Bebo hiring the century’s greatest popular Cuban singer, Benny Moré, luring him back to Havana after years away. Bebo started his own orchestra in 1958, Sabor de Cuba, promoting the careers of a number of singers, including future Buena Vista Social Clubians Pío Leyva and Omara Portuondo. When Nat “King” Cole recorded an album in Havana that would be his biggest-selling record to date, the piano player insisted on Bebo Valdés.

Bebo didn’t get along with the revolutionary government that took over in Cuba. When one of his band members told him that he could stay on as director, but that now the band would be a cooperative, Bebo told him, “Over my dead body. Who wrote the arrangements? Who bought the music stands? Who has the contracts with the radio, with Gema Records?” Nor was he keen on showing up in the plaza along with a million cadres. He had charts to write.

Bebo’s biggest hit, “Sabor A Mí,” recorded with singer Rolando Laserie in 1959, was still on the radio when Bebo, Laserie and Laserie’s wife, Gisela, boarded a plane for Mexico on Oct. 26, 1960, knowing they weren’t returning but not realizing they would never return. Bebo couldn’t get into United States, the natural place for a jazz player to go; ironically, the State Department thought he was a Communist. Instead, he went on tour. In Stockholm, the 44-year-old Bebo met an 18-year-old beauty queen. They’re still married 46 years later, and Rose Marie was at his side in

Barcelona in 2008. These days, they divide their time between Stockholm and Spain’s Costa del Sol.

When Bebo departed Cuba, 18-year-old Chucho was already a busy working musician. “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t play the piano,” said Chucho, who began at the age of 3. His debut with a dance band was in 1955, at the age of 14, with the charanga of Elio Revé. Two years later, he worked as a staff arranger at Radio Progreso, and he formed a jazz trio the same year in which, he recalled, “I played pure American style,” working through the influences of Wynton Kelly, Red Garland, Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson. When Bebo started working with a quartet, Chucho took over the piano chair in Sabor de Cuba.

Chucho remained in Havana through the difficult decades that followed Bebo’s departure. But, though it wasn’t the most advantageous base for an international career, there was much to gain musically by remaining rooted in Cuba, where the traditional percussion and song repertoires of various African religions are alive and well. You can hear it in Chucho’s playing. Possessed of a formidable technique that includes a stunningly independent left hand, Chucho became the key figure in post-revolutionary Cuban jazz. He’s best known for having co-founded Irakere, a band that revolutionized the revolution—musically, at least. At a time when jazz was considered “ideological diversionism,” Valdés and his colleagues came up with a politically palatable way to play jazz by synthesizing it with Afro-Cuban roots music and avoiding the use of the J-word. In doing so, they invented something of lasting value: a new way of playing Afro-Cuban jazz.

The members of Irakere—formidable virtuosi, including Paquito D’Rivera and Arturo Sandoval—wanted to play jazz, but the band also played dance music, which was what the mass of Cubans wanted, and from the beginning the band had a dual identity. “It was the first group that used pentatonic and 12-tone scales in Cuban dance music,” Chucho laughed. “We brought in the batá drums, which Bebo had previously done in the batanga.”

Those sacred Yoruba drums appeared in Irakere’s first hit, “Bacalao Con Pan” (1973), which was the Book of Genesis of a new, physically intense style of Cuban dance music that 25 years later would be known as timba. Together with what Los Van Van was doing, and the members of the musical think-tank Grupo de Experimentación Sonora del ICAIC, it was part of a new wave of post-revolutionary Cuban music that rose up out of the ashes of an entire society that had been pulled to the ground and rebuilt.

United States record labels are presently prohibited from signing Cuban artists, and it has been that way since President Kennedy

imposed the embargo of Cuba in 1962. But during a brief thaw in U.S.–Cuban relations during the Carter Administration, Bruce Lundvall signed Irakere to Columbia Records. When they played at Carnegie Hall in 1978, Bebo flew to New York from Stockholm for the occasion, the first time he’d seen Chucho since 1960.

Chucho credits Joe Zawinul with encouraging him to take the next step. “‘The band is great, but you ought to play more piano!’” Chucho recalled Zawinul saying to him at the Havana Jam concerts that brought Weather Report and other Columbia Records artists to Cuba in March 1979. They ran into each other again in 1997, at a festival in Martinique when Chucho was working with Roy Hargrove in the group Crisol. “‘What are you doing now?’” Chucho remembered Zawinul asking. “‘Playing with Roy Hargrove, and I still have Irakere.’”

“‘You play! Yourself! Trio! Quartet!’” Zawinul shouted.

“That provoked me,” Chucho said. “I worked with Irakere for 25 years, but I realized I wasn’t playing piano. I was writing and directing. I had put the piano in second place.”

For more than 10 years now, Chucho has been leading a quartet with bass, percussion and drums, generating a string of albums on Blue Note. After making it a quintet with the addition of his sister, singer Mayra Caridad Valdés (the youngest of Bebo’s Cuban offspring), he’s added four horns to make it a nonet. He brought that new group for its European debut in two sold-out concerts at the same Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival he kicked off with Bebo.

After years of living a quiet life in Stockholm, where he played hotel bars and toured on occasion near the Arctic Circle, Bebo retired in 1983. When a stroke in 1986 left him nearly paralyzed, he brought his muscles back through intensive piano exercises. He was coaxed out of retirement in 1994 by D’Rivera, who produced the album *Bebo Rides Again* for the German label Messidor, and Bebo began one of the most remarkable second-act careers any performer has ever had.

Bebo’s watershed event came in 2000 with the Spanish film *Calle 54*, Fernando Trueba’s feature-length movie featuring uncut performances by an elite of Latin-jazz artists from various countries, shot at a soundstage in New York. The highlight of the film was Bebo’s duo with Cachao on Miguel Matamoros’ “Lágrimas Negras.” But there was another high point, and Trueba let it be a surprise. “Trueba came to Stockholm for *Calle 54*,” Bebo said, “and he told me I had to go to New York to play a duo with Cachao. But he didn’t tell me that I was going to play with my son! He never said anything about it!”

The result: Bebo and Chucho played “La Comparsa” together in the film.

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one in it, especially in Spain. Jerry González moved from New York to Spain after his star turn in the film. A club called Calle 54 opened in Madrid. Trueba and producer/musicologist Nat Chediak started a label, Calle 54, on which they have released, among other things, a string of new Bebo albums.

"Bebo already had an audience in Barcelona before *Calle 54*," said Joan Anton Cararach, who manages Bebo and is also the artistic director of the Barcelona International Jazz Festival. He sold out the 400-seat Luz de Gas hall in 1998 when he appeared with Eladio Reinón's big band. But now Bebo's audience is considerably larger.

The big hit came in 2004: *Lágrimas Negras*, the flamenco-meets-Cuba album that teamed Bebo with singer Diego El Cigala. BMG Spain "hoped to sell 15,000 copies of it," Chediak recalled. Instead, it moved more than 1 million units, about half of that in Spain. With *Lágrimas Negras*, Bebo became a major concert attraction at the age of 86. Last year he was the subject of a superb, if bittersweet, biographical film: *Old Man Bebo*, produced by Trueba and directed by Carlos Carcas, which is currently making the rounds of the film-festival circuit.

*Juntos Para Siempre*, the Bebo and Chucho Valdés duo album (out in Spain on Calle 54, it has no U.S. distributor as of this writing) didn't cost a lot in studio time; they recorded all but two of the tunes the first day. "Everything was a first take," Chediak said, "except for a couple of numbers where Chucho called for a second take," during which he dialed down his characteristic eruptive nature to fit better with his

father's style.

"*Juntos Para Siempre*, for me, is not a record," Chucho said. "It's more than a recording. It's a dream. If you had told me 20 years ago I would record a duo with Bebo, I would have laughed. It seemed impossible. And that we could be making an album together and playing a concert tour? It's a gift from God."

No one coughed. It seemed like no one breathed. Approximately 2,300 people focused on the two grandmasters in twin spotlights. Because they were so well matched, the differences between them were all the more fascinating. Bebo tapped his foot, Chucho stomped his. Bebo was restrained and contrapuntal, more economic in his expression, whereas Chucho was volcanic and polyrhythmic, more demonstrative in his gestures. Chucho usually dominates the proceedings. Not that night.

Bebo played with authority, accuracy and agility, with all the power he needed and no discernible memory lapses. There was some talk that these concerts would be his farewell appearances, but don't bet on it. The music has kept him going all this time, and keeps him sharp now. "La Rareza Del Siglo," his 63-year-old tune, sounded modern.

Chucho brought the house down in his solo segment with an explosive series of theme-and-variation inventions on the Mexican romantic standard "Bésame Mucho." Bebo knew the song's composer, Consuelo Velázquez. When Chucho said, "I am proud to be the son of Bebo Valdés," it didn't come off like stage patter.

Bebo spoke, softly as always, saluting his heroes, Lecuona and Art Tatum, before playing a solo version of Lecuona's "Para Vigo Me Voy" with a tango congo rhythm. Chucho sat at his keyboard, listening raptly. For the rest of the concert, they continued carving out a space that was at once Cuban, jazz and classical music. After about two hours, Bebo took the second encore by himself: a version of the adagio movement of Joaquín Rodrigo's guitar concerto *Concierto De Aranjuez*, which originally premiered in Barcelona.

The high point was their four-hands version of Bebo's long-ago No. 1 hit, "Sabor A Mí." Hundreds of thousands of Cubans left the island in the years after the Cuban Revolution. This won't last long, they told their families. The Americans won't permit it. Forever after, in Miami or Union City, N.J., or Albuquerque or Stockholm, "Sabor A Mí" stayed with them, converted into a standard.

The song's lyrics express a nostalgia for the present, as if the singer were looking back from the future and wishing he could relive the moment of beauty he was experiencing at that moment. That was how it felt in the concert hall that October night in Barcelona. Bebo and Chucho affirmed that, as the lyrics say, "1,000 years might pass by, maybe more," but the sabor—the flavor, the essence—of Cuba would continue.

"I haven't left Cuba," Bebo said, although he hasn't set foot on the island in 48 years. "I keep on being Cuban."

Nor did Bebo and Chucho ever stop being father and son.

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# 'GET OUT THERE AND LIVE'

*Virginia Mayhew's Tenor  
Saxophone Sounds as Strong as  
Ever After She Beats Cancer*

*By Eric Fine Photos By Bill Douthart*

Virginia Mayhew celebrated a pair of milestones in the spring of 2005. The tenor saxophonist released her fourth album, *Sandan Shuffle* (Renma), and earned an advanced belt in karate. Then she made a discovery that took the joy out of both achievements—a lump in her breast. That May, she could ill-afford health problems, with her high hopes for the album and a busy summer and fall schedule that would include touring, teaching and a gig aboard a cruise ship. Even after doctors determined the lump was malignant, she honored nearly all of the bookings.







Mayhew caught the disease in its early stages before it could spread. She had a lumpectomy, in which doctors removed a breast tumor and only a small amount of the adjacent normal tissues. As a precautionary measure, a separate procedure was performed to remove lymph nodes from under her arm. She embarked on a brief West Coast tour in June '05 and taught at the Monterey Jazz Festival Summer Jazz Camp before returning to New Jersey and enduring chemotherapy from July to September. In early November she traveled to the Caribbean on a jazz cruise, and then underwent a regimen of

five-day-a-week radiation therapy through Christmas.

"I did take some time off," Mayhew said. "But I did about two-thirds of my gigs while I was going through chemo. And that was pretty good."

Even better, doctors told her she was "cancer free." Her body showed no traces of the cells responsible for the disease. A striking black-and-white portrait from that summer provides a keepsake. It hangs in her living room, and also serves as the cover shot for *A Simple Thank You* (Renma), one of two new albums she released

last March. In the photograph, her hairless head is tilted slightly back, her eyes closed, her face serene.

"She kept it fairly quiet," said trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, who has worked with Mayhew for nearly 20 years. "She's a private person, but she's one of the strongest people I know; I would never expect her to quit on any level. The music is definitely a gift that she has, and she uses it to rise above any negative distraction. In this case, it was the cancer. And she just clobbered that."

About a month shy of the three-year anniversary marking the onset of the illness, Mayhew sat on the front porch of her home in West Orange in Essex County, N.J. She not only has regained her strength, but also her brown hair. Over coffee, she discussed the significance of her new albums. *A Simple Thank You* features a bopish septet, while *Thank You Uncle Edward* showcases another mid-sized group called the Duke Ellington Legacy revisiting the repertoire of its namesake.

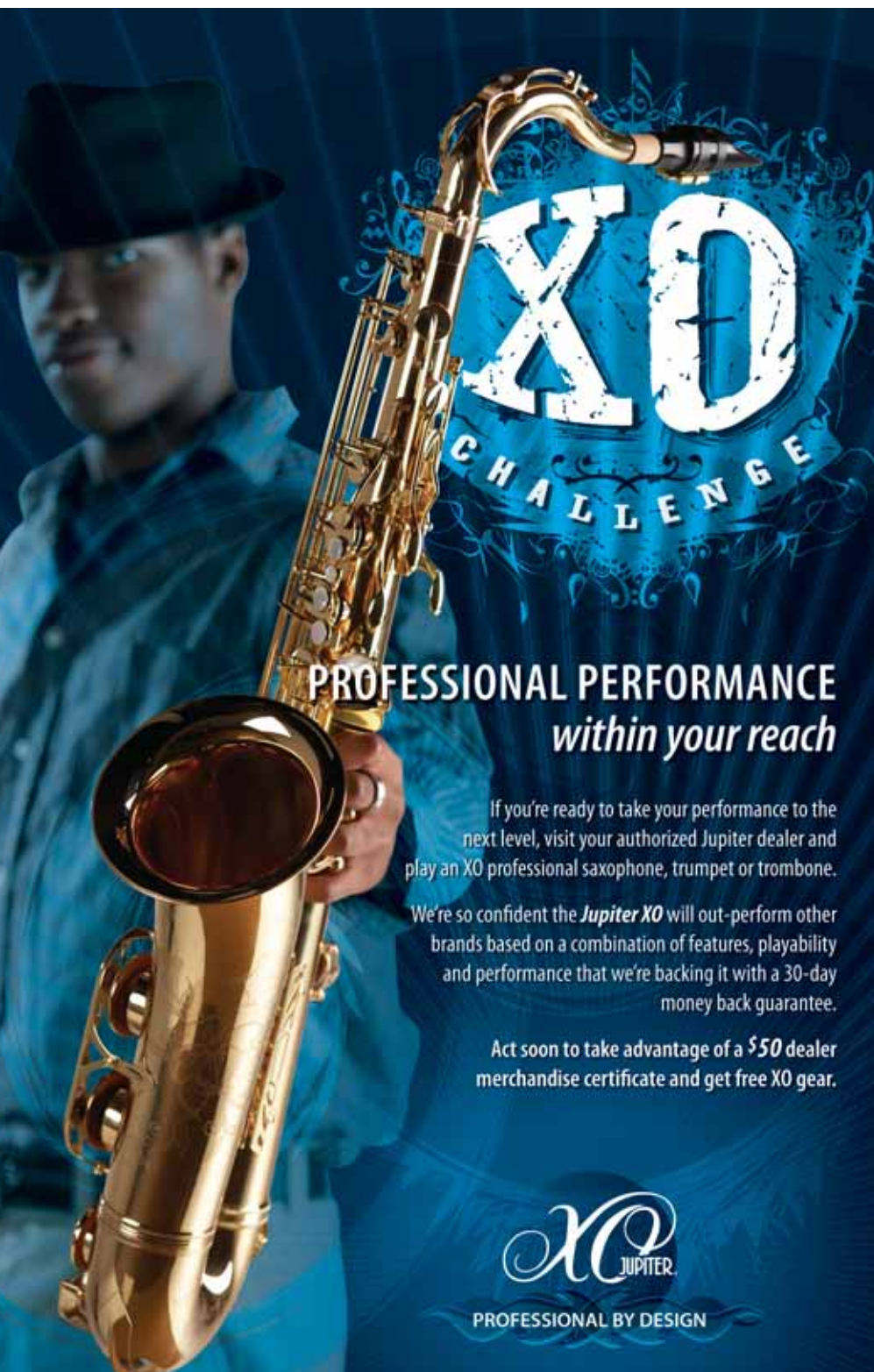
"It is the end of that period of my life," said Mayhew, who's in her late 40s, "or maybe it's the beginning of the next period of my life. I'm clearly back on track. I'm healthy and strong, and I'm doing a lot of music. My recovery is complete."

The "thank you" in both titles is happenstance, she insisted, and added, unsurprisingly, "I didn't realize it at the time, but it has changed my perspective on life a little bit."

Mayhew became less hard on herself while going through chemotherapy. Battling weakness and fatigue, she barely practiced and often performed while seated. Her hair was falling out, so she wore different wigs onstage. "It was hard in a physical sense because chemo makes you feel sick," she said. "Basically, it's poisoning you. And I was out of shape from not practicing. But it was freeing because I played and cut myself a lot of slack. It was fun to not be judging myself as much. It was a turning point in my development to trust myself, keep working at it and 'play me.' I feel better about my playing than I ever have."

Once healthy, Mayhew picked up where she left off. The septet recording grew out of a booking in April 2005 at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center in New York. Mayhew created repertoire for a larger group inspired by her years performing in big bands and a newfound penchant for compositions in odd meters. The septet features a young horn section backed by guitarist Kenny Wessel, bassist Harvie S and drummer Victor Jones. "It rekindled my love of playing with four horns and having arrangements," Mayhew said. "We always have a great time playing, but financially it's difficult to book."

In this regard, Mayhew has had more success with the Duke Ellington Legacy, a nonet that appears at Trumpets Jazz Club and Restaurant in Montclair, N.J., and other venues in New York's metropolitan area. The band,



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which began around 2003, updates Ellington's work, notably "Caravan," "Cottontail" and "In A Sentimental Mood." The lineup includes Ellington's grandson guitarist, Edward Kennedy Ellington II, and pianist and arranger Norman Simmons, best known for backing singers Carmen McRae, Betty Carter and Anita O'Day.

**M**ayhew grew up outside of San Francisco in Redwood City, Calif., where she studied clarinet and alto saxophone. She spent a year at the University of

Colorado at Boulder and another at San Francisco State University. Neither university offered many classes pertaining to jazz. Mayhew dropped out but continued to study privately with John Coppola, whom she met at San Francisco State.

Coppola, a former lead trumpet player with Stan Kenton and Woody Herman, worked with Mayhew on her tone, and on playing fluid, swinging lines and phrases. Mayhew performed during the 1980s in a big band Coppola co-led with tenor saxophonist Chuck Travis in the Bay Area. (Mayhew's big band credits include work

with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Earl Hines, Sahib Shihab, DIVA and the Howard Williams Big Band.)

"She gets that big, open sound," said Coppola, 79. "She reflects a lot of different eras in the music; she's not locked into one scene."

Coppola attributed much of Mayhew's talent to an extraordinary capacity for practice. "She had one of the greatest gifts you can have, and that was the gift to work," he said. "She was a practicing fool. She practiced all day long. Not many people can do that. It wasn't that it came that easily. She put in the hours."

Mayhew moved to New York in 1987 to attend the New School. After completing her degree, Mayhew frequently hired her former instructors—who included Simmons, bassist Victor Gaskin and drummer Keith Copeland—as sidemen. Mayhew became close to Simmons, who recommended her to trombonist Al Grey. Grey called Mayhew for a recording session for his 1990 album, *Fab* (Capri), but wanted to limit her to just the ensemble parts. Mayhew's alto work not only convinced the late Grey to change his plans, but also to add Mayhew to his band.

"The significant thing was that Al called her in as a sub, and told her that someone else was going to overdub her solos," Simmons said. "When he heard her solo, no one overdubbed anything—that's how good it was."

The gig coincided with the invitation to join DIVA, which is led by drummer Sherrie Maricle. In both cases, the bandleaders asked Mayhew to play tenor, a transition she was reluctant to make. "I never had the guts to play tenor because all my heroes were tenor players," Mayhew said. "There were so many more great tenor players at every level [in the 1980s] than there were alto players. I had a decent lead alto sound, and I knew how to do it. But when people said they'd pay me to play the tenor, then I got my nerve up to start playing. I'm so glad I did. It's the horn I love the most."

Mayhew was still playing alto when she made her recording debut on *It's Time For...* (Philology), a 1988 date co-led by trumpeter Rebecca Franks. By the time Chiaroscuro released *Nini Green* (1996), tenor had become Mayhew's primary horn. *No Walls* (2000) appeared on another small label, Foxhaven. *Phantoms* (2003) marked the first album on Mayhew's imprint, Renma Recordings; she reissued *No Walls* on the label in 2004, and *Sandan Shuffle* shortly before the illness struck.

Drummer Victor Jones heard Mayhew for the first time in the early 1990s, and said she made an immediate impression. "I had come from playing with Stan Getz and James Moody, and frankly I wasn't even interested in playing with any sax players after playing with Stan Getz," Jones said. "Every sax player to me sounded like crap. I heard Virginia and was like, OK, there's still hope."

Mayhew's tone, particularly in the lower register, is robust. She requires only a couple of choruses to make compelling statements. In

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addition to the influence of modern standard bearers such as Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane, Mayhew harks back to the stylistic benchmarks of Coleman Hawkins, Don Byas, Ben Webster and Lester Young. "That was the first era I got into," Mayhew said. "I think Lester Young said, 'It's what you can't play that creates your style.'"

"[With] so many of the younger players," she added, "they can play anything, but it's hard for me to tell a lot of them apart. But you could identify Coltrane in one note. I've always wanted to have my own voice. That's been one of my goals all along. Finally, I feel like I'm getting there, but it has been a slow process."

Jones, who has performed and recorded with Mayhew since 2003, attributes her progress in part to her growth as a composer. "I can listen to a record and tell it's Virginia," he said.

Jensen agreed. "She's writing tunes in odd meters, but she preserves that traditional thing while having a groove and strong harmonies," the trumpeter said. "She's one of those people who's constantly studying and learning more about music."

**O**n a warm night last May, Mayhew joined roughly 50 people on the hardwood floor at the World Seido Karate Organization in New York's Chelsea neighborhood. Since 1987 Mayhew has trained at the



karate school, attending up to four classes a week. In 2005 she earned a third-degree black belt and the title of senpai, a position of seniority at the school. Mayhew's years of training inspired the name of her record label: "ren ma," in Japanese, means "constant polishing." The school's founder, Tadashi Nakamura, poses with Mayhew in karate garb for the photographs that accompany *Sandan Shuffle*.

During the hour-long class, Mayhew shifted from position to position and from stance to stance, holding many for a count of 10. She executed a full complement of kicks, punches and blocks. She jogged in place and performed pushups, abdominal exercises and stretches in between these choreographed movements. She attended the school's summer camp a week after beginning chemotherapy, and the training helped restore her strength and stamina.

"If you get knocked down seven times, get up eight times," she said, quoting Nakamura after the class. "All these things that he's been saying for so many years came into focus when I got sick. After I finished the chemo and the radiation, I was exhausted. My body was depleted. The karate training helped me get my stamina back, which I need to play the saxophone."

She also credited music for keeping her active during her recovery. "The people who hired me were so supportive and encouraging. I was lucky," she said. "When you're playing, you forget about your problems. And then after the gig I might be physically tired, but emotionally I'd be a lot stronger and happier. I feel bad for people who have a lot of self-pity. They sit home and cut themselves off from the world. It helps to get out there and live." **DB**

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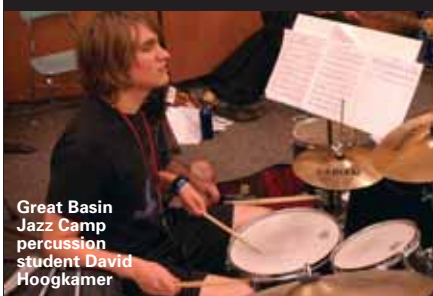
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# HOT SUN, HOT TUNES!

## DownBeat Summer Camp Guide

Great Basin  
Jazz Camp  
percussion  
student David  
Hoogkamer



Bryan  
Galligan  
at Camp  
Encore-Coda



## EAST

### Berklee College of Music Summer Programs Boston, Massachusetts

**July 11–August 14 (five-week program) & June 19–21  
(brass and saxophone workshop weekends)**

**Highlights:** The five-week program includes classes in brass, guitar, saxophone and music production. The brass and saxophone weekends feature intense instrument immersion focusing on all aspects of the music. For students age 15 and up.

**Faculty:** Berklee College of Music faculty members.

**Cost:** Five-week program is \$4,090; \$560 tuition, \$310 housing for the weekend sessions.

**Contact:** (877) 237-5533; [berklee.edu/summer](http://berklee.edu/summer).

### Camp Encore-Coda

Sweden, Maine

**July 24–July 19 & July 19–August 9**

**Highlights:** Attendees play and learn music in a woodsy, traditional camp setting. Music styles include jazz, rock, classical, pop and theater. About 150 campers, age 9 to 17.

**Faculty:** Includes Trent Austin, Kevin Norton and Brent LaCasce.

**Cost:** First session, \$4,200; second session, \$3,850.

**Contact:** (617) 325-1541; [encore-coda.com](http://encore-coda.com).

### College of Saint Rose Summer Jazz Program Albany, New York

**June 29–August 7**

**Highlights:** The program lets area school musicians develop their musical skills throughout the summer. Student musicians rehearse and perform

with others who don't want to neglect their musical skills during the summer.

**Faculty:** Includes Paul Evoskevich, Matt Cremisio and Danielle Cremisio.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$295.

**Contact:** Paul Evoskevich, (518) 454-5195; [paule@strose.edu](mailto:paule@strose.edu); [strose.edu](http://strose.edu).

### COTA CampJazz

Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania

**June 27–August 2**

**Highlights:** The program offers small-group improvisation training, big-band workshops, ear training, theory and history, lunchtime faculty concerts, master classes, a recording session, and final concert. About 60 campers, age 14 to adult.

**Faculty:** Includes Jim Daniels, Phil Woods, Rick Chamberlain, Evan Gregor and 10 others.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$450. Adult room and board available upon request.

**Contact:** [campjazz.org](http://campjazz.org); (570) 424-2210.

### Eastern U.S. Music Camp at Colgate University

Hamilton, New York

**June 28–July 12, July 5–19, July 12–25 (two-week sessions); June 28–July 19, July 5–25 (three-week sessions) & June 28–July 25 (four-week session)**

**Highlights:** The camp teaches jazz education, performance, improvisation, theory, harmony, composition, arranging and conducting.

About 200 students, age 10–18.

**Faculty:** Includes Thomas Brown, Tom Christensen, Rick Montalbano, David Brown and more.



**Cost:** \$799–\$3,923, depending on session length.  
**Contact:** (866) 777-7841; easternusmusiccamp.com.

### Eastman Summer Jazz Studies

Rochester, New York (University of Rochester)

**June 28–July 10**

**Highlights:** A two-week session for serious high school jazz students. The program includes large and small jazz ensembles, improvisation, theory, and instrumental master classes.

**Faculty:** Includes Harold Danko, Clay Jenkins, Jeff Campbell, Bob Sneider, Dariusz Terefenko, more.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$1,060; \$1,810 with room and board.

**Contact:** (800) 246-4706; esm.rochester.edu/summer.

### Jazz in July

Amherst, Massachusetts

(University of Massachusetts)

**July 6–17**

**Highlights:** The instrumental program emphasizes improvisation within small-combo and big-band settings. The vocal program explores jazz phrasing and rhythms, preparing lead sheets, and improvisation. About 70 students, age 15 and up.

**Faculty:** Geri Allen, John Blake, Steve Johns, Ray Gallon, Chip Jackson, Sheila Jordan, more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$600 per week.

**Contact:** (413) 545-3530; jazzinjuly.com.

### KoSA International Percussion Workshops & Festival

Castleton, Vermont (Castleton State College)

**July 29–August 2**

**Highlights:** A week of intensive, hands-on classes with professional drummers and percussionists for students of all ages and levels. Attendees work with mentors, perform with rhythm sections and attend nightly faculty concerts.

**Faculty:** Past faculty has included John Riley, Dafnis Prieto, Arnie Lang, Aldo Mazza and more.

**Cost:** \$1,150 for double occupancy, \$1,395 for single occupancy; includes tuition, evening concerts, room and three meals per day.

**Contact:** (800) 541-8401; kosamusic.com.

### Litchfield Jazz Camp

Kent, Connecticut (The Kent School)

**July 5–10, 12–17, 19–24 & 26–31**

**Highlights:** Courses include combo, improvisation, jazz history, theory and music business. Students also choose electives in composition, recording, piano for non-pianists, Latin big band and more. About 150 students per week, age 13 to adult. All students can perform at the Litchfield Jazz Festival. New location at The Kent School.

**Faculty:** Don Braden, Karrin Allyson, Dave Stryker, Jeremy Pelt, Jimmy Greene and more.

**Cost:** Tuition ranges from \$810 (day student, one week) to \$4,075 (four-week, resident).

**Contact:** (860) 567-4162; litchfieldjazzfest.com.

### Maryland Summer Jazz

Rockville, Maryland

**July 22–24 & July 29–31**

**Highlights:** Three-day sessions include theory and

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\*Jazz Improv Magazine

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July 5-10

**SESSION 2**  
July 12-17

**SESSION 3**  
July 19-24

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technique classes for instrumentalists and vocalists, with plenty of small-combo playing and improvising. Camp is geared toward adults (gifted amateurs, semi-professionals), high school students 16 and older and college students.

**Faculty:** Jeff Antoniuk, Dave Ballou, Drew Gress, Ingrid Jensen, Tim Miller and more.

**Cost:** One session is \$480 before May 1, \$544 after; two sessions are \$840 before May 1, \$900 after.

**Contact:** (410) 295-6691; marylandsummerjazz.com.

**New York State Summer  
School of the Arts  
School of Jazz Studies**

Saratoga Springs, New York

**June 28–July 11**

**Highlights:** A two-week program for 25 New York high school musicians chosen by audition. Held in conjunction with the Skidmore College Jazz Institute and the Saratoga Performing Arts Jazz Festival.

**Faculty:** Ed Shaughnessy, Todd Coolman, John and Pat LaBarbera, Bobby Shew, more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$1,100.

**Contact:** (518) 474-8773; emsc.nysed.gov/nyssa.

**New York Summer Music Festival**

Oneonta, New York

**June 28–August 8**

**Highlights:** Fifty advanced ensembles and classes play more than 30 concerts each summer. Includes three jazz ensembles, jazz choir, up to 10 small mixed jazz combos and classes in improvisation, jazz history and more. Up to 200 students per two-week session, age 10–25.

**Faculty:** Includes Mike Holober, Sherrie Maricle, Jason Rigby, Bob Sabin, Brenda Earle and more.

**Cost:** Resident students: \$1,600 for two weeks, \$3,000 for four weeks, \$4,400 for six weeks.

**Contact:** (607) 267-4024; nysmf.org.

**School for Improvisational Music**

Brooklyn, New York

**July 27–August 7**

**Highlights:** Intense sessions develop improvisation skills through close interaction with some of the most creative artists on the modern jazz scene.

**Faculty:** Includes Ralph Alessi, Tyshawn Sorey, Ravi Coltrane, Vijay Iyer, Jason Moran and more.

**Cost:** See web site for details.

**Contact:** (212) 631-5882; schoolforimprov.org.

**Summer Jazz Institute**

Purchase, New York (Purchase College)

**July 12–17**

**Highlights:** A week of performance training in small-combo improvisation includes master classes, ensemble rehearsals, faculty concerts, jam sessions and a field trip to a NYC jazz club. Students receive a DVD of final concert. For age 14–18.

**Faculty:** Includes Charles Blenzig, Todd Coolman, John Fedchock, Richie Morales and more.

**Cost:** Resident tuition, \$1,525; commuter, \$1,125.

**Contact:** (914) 251-6500; purchase.edu/jazzinstitute.

**Summer Jazz Stamford**

Stamford, Connecticut

**June 22–July 3**

**Highlights:** Two-week session focuses on ensembles, master classes, music history, improvisation, reading skills and performance. All levels are accepted, from fifth grade through adult.

**Faculty:** Includes Joe Corsello, Rick Petrone, Ralph Lalama, Peter Bernstein, John Hart and more.

**Cost:** First week only, \$350; second week only, \$300; both weeks, \$600.

**Contact:** summerjazzstamford.com.

**Summer Music Camp at Penn State**

State College, Pennsylvania

**July 12–18**

**Highlights:** Students participate in ensemble and sectional rehearsals and master classes while attending classes at the School of Music. Students must have completed eighth grade.

**Faculty:** Includes Dennis Glocke, Christopher Kiver and David Stambler.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$595; day tuition, \$425.

**Contact:** (814) 863-5100; outreach.psu.edu.

**Tritone Jazz Fantasy Camps**

Rochester, New York; Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin

**July 26–31 (New York) & August 9–14 (Wisconsin)**

**Highlights:** Designed for adult jazz musicians who want to learn in a personal, supportive setting. Campers play in small combos, big bands and nightly jam sessions. About 40 students each.

**Faculty:** Includes Gene Bertoni, Janet Planet and John Harmon.

**Cost:** Rochester tuition is \$745 (\$1,200 with room and board); Wisconsin tuition is \$845 (\$1,600 with room and board).

**Contact:** (585) 218-9950; tritonejazz.com.

**Vermont Jazz Center**

Putney, Vermont

**August 9–15**

**Highlights:** Intermediate and advanced jazz students of all instruments study with professional educators and musicians. Activities include three levels of jazz theory, master classes, faculty-led ensembles, jam sessions and concerts. Includes about 40 instrumentalist participants; concurrent vocal program run by Sheila Jordan has 20 students.

**Faculty:** Pete Yellin, Marcus McLaurine, Howard Brofsky, Eugene Uman, Gene Rush and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$1,350 (includes room and board).

**Contact:** vtjazz.org.

**William Paterson University**

**Summer Jazz Improvisation Workshop**

Wayne, New Jersey

**June 19–25**

**Highlights:** A week of small-group performance, improvisation, arranging and jazz history, along with nightly jazz concerts and master classes. About 90 campers, age 14 and up.

**Faculty:** Dr. Billy Taylor, Jim McNeely, Steve LaSpina, Marcus McLaurine and many more.

**Cost:** Non-resident tuition is \$689; resident tuition



is \$989 with room and board.  
Contact: (973) 720-2354; wpunj.edu/cpe.

## MIDWEST

### Birch Creek Music Performance Center

Egg Harbor, Wisconsin

**July 20–August 1 & August 3–15**

**Highlights:** Students get advanced training and the opportunity to perform alongside professionals. Percussion and symphony sessions also available. Enrollment limited to 50–54 students age 14–19. Campus residency is required.

**Faculty:** Jeff Campbell, Tom Garling, Reggie Thomas, Clay Jenkins, Bob Chmel and more.

**Cost:** Tuition, room and board is \$1,675.

**Contact:** (920) 868-3763; birchcreek.org.

### Drury Jazz Camp

Springfield, Missouri (Drury University)

**June 14–19**

**Highlights:** Students play in big bands and combos, join master classes on each instrument, and are instructed in theory and improvisation. About 90 campers age 13–81 (most are high schoolers).

**Faculty:** Includes Tina Claussen, Rob Tapper, Brian Hamada, James Miley, Ned Wilkinson and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$295; (\$535 with room and board).

**Contact:** Tina Claussen, cclaussen@drury.edu; (417) 873-7296; music.drury.edu.



Jason Moran (right) works with students at the Stanford Jazz Workshop Jazz Residency

SCOTT CHERNIS

### Illinois Summer Youth Music

Urbana, Illinois

**July 5–11**

**Highlights:** High school level features improvisation in small-group and combo settings. Students play in a faculty-led combo and daily classes that include jazz theory, master classes and jazz listening. Junior high level focuses on the big band experience. About 125 campers, grade 6–12.

**Faculty:** Includes Chip McNeill, Jim Pugh, Dana Hall and Chip Stevens.

**Cost:** Resident tuition, \$595; commuters, \$375.

**Contact:** (217) 244-3404; music.uiuc.edu/isym.

### Interlochen Arts Camp High School Summer Jazz Program

Interlochen, Michigan

**June 20–August 3**

**Highlights:** High school students experience a variety of jazz offerings to boost their improvisation and performance skills to a new level. Students grade 9–12 focus on ensembles, improvisation, theory, composition and history.

**Faculty:** More than 1,000 faculty members.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$6,670.

**Contact:** (800) 681-5912; interlochen.org/studyjazz.



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### Iowa Lakes Summer Jazz Camp

Estherville, Iowa (Iowa Lakes College)

**June 14-18**

**Highlights:** Includes big bands and combos, private lessons, instrument and master classes, improvisation, theory workshops and faculty concerts. Open to anyone going into 7th grade and older.

**Faculty:** Kirk Garrison, Joey Gulizia, Tony Gulizia, Andy Hall, Scott Hesse, Roger Neumann, more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$250; room and board is \$175.

**Contact:** (712) 330-3647; iowalakes.edu/music.

### Janice Borla Vocal Jazz Camp

Naperville, Illinois

**July 19-24**

**Highlights:** Fosters the solo jazz vocalist's artistic concept, musical knowledge and jazz performance skills. Curriculum includes vocal jazz techniques, styles and repertoire, improvisation, vocal jazz history and music theory. Features 36-40 attendees, age 14 through adult.

**Faculty:** Includes Janice Borla, Jay Clayton, Judy Niernack and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$575 for commuters (\$425 for educators); \$825 for residents (\$675 for educators).

**Contact:** jborla@aol.com; (630) 416-3911; janiceborlavocaljazzcamp.org.

### Jazz Combo and Improv Camp

St. Louis, Missouri (University of Missouri, St. Louis)

**July 12-17**

**Highlights:** High-level camp focuses on improvisation in a small-group setting. All students play in a faculty-led combo. Sessions range from theory to master classes. About 200 students, grade 7 and up, with a required one year of experience on their instrument.

**Faculty:** Dave Pietro, Dave Scott, Scott Whitfield, Ken Kehner, Jim Widner and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$299.

**Contact:** (314) 516-5948; smithss@umsl.edu.

### Keith Hall Summer Drum Intensive

Kalamazoo, Michigan (Western Michigan University)

**July 14-19**

**Highlights:** Jazz drum set camp where middle and high school drummers learn concepts of jazz drumming and perform with a drum set choir. Students work with NYC rhythm section and have two nights of student performances at the local jazz club. Limited to 12-20 students.

**Faculty:** Keith Hall, Matthew Fries, Phil Palombi.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$400; room and board, \$325.

**Contact:** (201) 406-5059; keith@keithhallmusic.com; keithhallmusic.com.

### McNally Smith Summer Jazz Workshop

St. Paul, Minnesota

**June 27-July 2 (Jazz, Guitar and Hip-Hop Workshops) & August 16-21 (Summer Music Camp)**

**Highlights:** Three weeklong workshops in July focus on jazz, guitar and hip-hop. The August camp gives students a snapshot of the music industry from a faculty of professionals. Both are for high school-aged students.

**Faculty:** Includes Pete Whitman, Terry Burns, Gary Gratz and other McNally Smith faculty.

**Cost:** Visit mcnallysmith.edu.

**Contact:** (800) 594-9500; mcnallysmith.edu.

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### Northern Illinois University Jazz Camp

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**July 19-24**

**Highlights:** Rehearsals, seminars, master classes, jam sessions, sectionals and group lessons, all taught by NIU jazz faculty, alumni and students. Concerts, optional private lessons and recreational activities fill the evening hours. Approximately 90 campers, grade 8-12.

**Faculty:** Includes Ron Carter, Rodrigo Villanueva, Steve Duke and more.

**Cost:** \$445 before June 1 and \$505 after.

**Contact:** (815) 753-1450; niu.edu/extprograms.

### Northwoods Jazz Camp/Jazz Party

Rhineland, Wisconsin

**May 13-16**

**Highlights:** Jazz professionals will teach instrumental master classes, improvisation, jazz listening, combo and big band playing, with combo concerts each night where advanced students sit in with professionals. The big band performs on the final night. Students are all musical levels, from college age to seniors. Maximum 25-30 students.

**Faculty:** Kim Richmond, Clay Jenkins, Scott Whitfield, Jeff Campbell and more.

**Cost:** Tuition, meals and lodging range from \$590-\$795.

**Contact:** (715) 369-1500; northwoods jazzcamp.com.

### Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Camp

Cleveland, Ohio (Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music)

**July 12-17**

**Highlights:** Camp includes group and private instruction, sectionals, full-band rehearsals, improvisation, history, theory, recital concert, field trip and one-on-one with Bobby Sanabria. Students grade 8-12, all instruments and levels (plus a college-age/professional master class).

**Faculty:** Bobby Sanabria and many more.

**Cost:** \$500 resident (includes room and board, instruction, and materials for five days).

**Contact:** (440) 572-2048, robertoocasiofoundation.org.

### Simpson College Jazz Camp

Indianola, Iowa

**June 7-10**

**Highlights:** A combo camp for middle and high school students. Camp participants have daily master classes, improvisation, composition and theory classes, and jazz combos. Students need to be 13 years or older, with a minimum of one year of study on their primary instrument.

**Faculty:** Includes Dave Camwell, Jim Oatts, Jason Danielson, Dave Altemeier, John Kazilermut, John Benoit and others.

**Cost:** Tuition ranges from \$340-\$480.

**Contact:** (515) 961-1575; simpson.edu.

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**Cost:** \$350.

**Contact:** (216) 987-4256; [stephen.enos@tri-c.edu](mailto:stephen.enos@tri-c.edu); [tri-c.edu](http://tri-c.edu).

## Twin Cities Jazz Workshop

Minneapolis, Minnesota

**July 20-August 7**

**Highlights:** Emphasizes improvisation and playing in a combo setting. Students meet for three hours each day to learn and prepare material for a final concert at the Dakota Jazz Club. About 50-70 people, age 13-25.

**Faculty:** Includes Doug Little, Kevin Washington, Viviana Pintado and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$195.

**Contact:** (612) 871-3534; [tcjazzworkshop.com](http://tcjazzworkshop.com).

## University of Missouri, Kansas City Jazz Camp

Kansas City, Missouri

**June 21-26**

**Highlights:** Led by director Jim Widner, this day camp is designed for instrumentalists and vocalists from middle school age to adult.

**Faculty:** Includes Bobby Watson, Michael Pagán, Dan Thomas, Stan Kessler and Danny Embrey.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$400; room and board available.

**Contact:** (816) 235-2741; [umkc.edu/conservatory](http://umkc.edu/conservatory).

## University of Nebraska-Omaha Jazz Camp

Omaha, Nebraska

**June 14-19**

**Highlights:** Features classes in big band improvisation, master classes, ear training, rhythm sectionals, combos and nightly concerts by the Jim Widner Big Band. For grades 7-12.

**Faculty:** Includes Kim Richmond, Dave Pietro, Chip McNeill, Pete Madsen, Jim Widner and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$330.

**Contact:** Peter Madsen, (409) 554-2297; [petermadsen@mail.unomaha.edu](mailto:petermadsen@mail.unomaha.edu).

## University of Toledo Summer Jazz Institute

Toledo, Ohio

**June 14-20**

**Highlights:** Instrumental, vocal and teacher training tracks for talented high school and college students, music educators and professionals. Students are immersed in jazz improvisation, performance, arranging and pedagogy with professional musicians. Age 13 and older.

**Faculty:** Jon Hendricks, Gunnar Mossblad, Vic Juris, Tim Whalen, Mark Byerly and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$450, optional room and board, and college credit available for additional cost.

**Contact:** (419) 530-2448;

[summerjazz.utoledo.edu](http://summerjazz.utoledo.edu).

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Coral Gables, Florida (University of Miami)

**June 22–July 3 & July 6–17**

**Highlights:** For instrumentalists and vocalists, includes three levels of study: intermediate, pre-college and honors. Campers participate in ensembles, improvisation and jazz styles classes, small groups, master classes and jam sessions. 100 campers per session, age 11–18.

**Faculty:** Includes Ira Sullivan, Brian Murphy and Lisanne Lyons. Guest artist Mitch Frohman and band members that include veterans of the Tito Puente Orchestra conduct a Latin jazz workshop.

**Cost:** See web site.

**Contact:** (305) 238-8933;  
youngmusicianscamp.com.

### Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshops

Louisville, Kentucky (University of Louisville)

**June 28–July 3 & July 5–10 (Jazz Workshops)**

**Highlights:** For all ages and abilities, workshops are focused on hands-on improvisation, theory classes, master classes, jazz combos, faculty/student jams and faculty concerts.

**Faculty:** Jamey Aebersold, David Baker, Jerry Coker, Dan Haerle, Rufus Reid and 50 more.

**Cost:** Weeklong tuition is \$495; room and board \$140 for the meal plan; two-day seminar is \$100.

**Contact:** (800) 456-1388,  
summerjazzworkshops.com.

### Louis Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp

New Orleans, Louisiana

**July 13–31**

**Highlights:** Three-week program offers instruction in brass, woodwinds, bass, guitar, piano, drums, percussion, vocals, master classes, music composition, swing dance and performances in large- and small-ensemble settings. Includes field trips and final concert. 100 campers, age 10–21.

**Faculty:** Kidd Jordan, Germaine Bazzle, Clyde Kerr, Jr., artists-in-residence Candido Camero, Bobby Sanabria and Norma Miller, and others.

**Cost:** Non-resident tuition and registration is \$675; resident tuition, \$3,600 (must be 15 or older).

**Contact:** (225) 223-5225;  
louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com.

### North Florida Jazz Camp

Jacksonville, Florida (University of North Florida)

**June 28–July 2**

**Highlights:** Jazz bands, combos, improvisation and theory courses. About 150 campers, age 13–19.

**Faculty:** Includes Danny Gottlieb, Lynne Arriale, Bunky Green, Marc Dickman, Barry Green, more.

**Cost:** Tuition, room and board is \$485.

**Contact:** Marc Dickman, (904) 620-3841;  
northflmusiccamps.com.

### University of North Carolina Wilmington Summer Jazz Workshop

Wilmington, North Carolina

**July 19–24**

**Highlights:** A week of jazz study and interaction designed for students of varying abilities and experience levels. For students in grade 9–12.

**Faculty:** Frank Bongiorno, Joe Chambers, Bob Russell, Jerald Shynett, Steve Bailey and more.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$450.


**Contact:** (910) 962-3415; uncw.edu/music.

### University of North Texas Jazz Workshops Denton, Texas

**June 15–19 (Double Bass Workshop); June 21–26 (Vocal Jazz Workshop); July 6–11 (Sax, Trumpet and Trombone Workshop); July 12–17 (Combo Workshop)**

**Highlights:** The University of North Texas jazz workshops provide vocalists, brass and bass players of all levels with an intensive jazz curriculum. Students should be age 14 and up.

**Faculty:** Directors: Lynn Seaton, double bass; Paris Rutherford, vocal jazz; Mike Steinel, trumpet and



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### University of Texas Jazz Improvisation Camp

Austin, Texas

**June 28–July 2**

**Highlights:** For students grade 10–12 interested in developing their improvisational skills. Activities include jazz combos, theory and improvisation classes, history and listening, and master classes.

**Faculty:** Jeff Hellmer, John Fremgen and more.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$375; \$545 with room and board.

**Contact:** (512) 232-2080; [imc@utexas.edu](mailto:imc@utexas.edu).

## WEST

### Brubeck Institute Jazz Camp

Stockton, California (University of the Pacific)

**June 14–20**

**Highlights:** Includes five jazz ensembles and five combos along with instruction in improvisation, theory and history. For 110 students, grade 8–12.

**Faculty:** Patrick Langham, Steve Perdicaris, more.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$525; \$625 for residents.

**Contact:** (209) 946-2416; [go.pacific.edu/musiccamp](http://go.pacific.edu/musiccamp).

### California State University–Sacramento Jazz Camp

Sacramento, California

**July 5–10**

**Highlights:** Students work with professional musicians for five days in master classes, big band rehearsals, improv, ear training, rhythm sectionals, combos and nightly concerts with the Jim Widner Big Band. Students have access to CSUS recreational activities like tennis and swimming.

**Faculty:** Includes Dave Pietro, Mary Fettig, Chip McNeill, Jim Widner and many others.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$412 for commuters, \$895 for residential (includes five nights stay and 16 meals).

**Contact:** Steve Roach, (916) 278-7987; [roach@csus.edu](mailto:roach@csus.edu).

### Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival

Fairbanks, Alaska (University of Alaska)

**July 19–August 2**

**Highlights:** The study and performance festival features artists-in-residence and guest artists for opera and musical theater, choral groups, creative writing, filmmaking and visual arts. More than 800 participants, age 18 and older.

**Faculty:** More than 90 instructors and guests including Rick Culver, Vince Cherico, Joshua Davis, Greg Hopkins and Vardan Ovsepan.

**Cost:** About \$500; campus lodging about \$450.

**Contact:** (907) 474-8869; [fsaf.org](http://fsaf.org).

### Great Basin Jazz Camp

Twin Falls, Idaho (College of Southern Idaho)

**July 27–31**

**Highlights:** Big band and small group ensembles. Instruction in sight reading, theory and improvisation for all instruments. One college credit is available for the camp. 60 students, age 15 to



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adult. Junior Jazz Camp is for 12–14-year-olds.

**Faculty:** Includes Bruce Forman, Carl Saunders, Tom Goicoechea, Bob Dunmire and others.

**Cost:** Junior Jazz Camp, \$200; regular camp, \$450 (local) to \$550 (depending on dorm and meals).

**Contact:** greatbasinjazzcamp.com.

### Jam CampWEST

La Honda, California

**July 26–31**

**Highlights:** An alternative camp that features beat box, body percussion, turntables, spoken word, percussion and dance in jazz/funk, hip-hop, gospel, blues and more. 50 campers, age 10–14.

**Faculty:** Khalil Shaheed, Zoe Ellis, more.

**Cost:** \$650, scholarships available.

**Contact:** (510) 287-8880; jamcampwest.com.

### Jazz CampWEST

La Honda, California

**June 20–27**

**Highlights:** A jazz immersion program in music, dance and vocals for ages 15 and up. More than 100 classes each day with daily student/faculty concerts in the redwoods. About 300 participants.

**Faculty:** Former faculty have included Tootie Heath, Rufus Reid and Bobby Hutcherson.

**Cost:** Tuition ranges from \$800–\$1,030.

**Contact:** (510) 287-8880; jazzcampwest.com.

### Las Vegas Jazz Combo Camp

Las Vegas, Nevada (College of Southern Nevada)

**July 19–24**

**Highlights:** A one-week program for vocalists and instrumentalists of all abilities and ages to improve their improvisation, theory and jazz choir skills. Approximately 70–75 participants.

**Faculty:** Includes Tom Ferguson, Chris Davis, Dick McGee, Matt Taylor, Walt Blanton, more.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$150 (includes lunches for five days).

**Contact:** (702) 651-4110; csu.edu/finearts/jazzcamp.

### Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee Jazz Camp

Mammoth Lakes, California

**July 5–12**

**Highlights:** Focuses on dixieland/small band swing, with emphasis on improvisation. Campers perform in the Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee at the end of the camp. Hosts 42 campers, ages 13–17.

**Faculty:** Eddie Erickson, Jason Wanner, Shelley Burns, Anita Thomas, Bill Dendle and more.

**Cost:** \$595 for tuition, room and board.

**Contact:** (916) 927-5222; mammothjazz.org.

### Mel Brown Summer Jazz Workshop

Monmouth, Oregon (Western Oregon University)

**August 2–8**

**Highlights:** Students perform in large and small jazz ensembles, with seminars in theory, history, improvisation, music business and technology. Limited to 135 students, age 13–80.

**Faculty:** Mel Brown, Jof Lee, Renato Caranto, Carlton Jackson, Christopher Woitach and more.

**Cost:** Resident tuition, \$675; commuters, \$550.

**Contact:** (503) 838-8275; melbrownjazzcamp.com.

### New Mexico Jazz Workshop's Jazz Camp & Summer Jazz Intensive

Albuquerque, New Mexico

**June 1–12; June 15–26;**

**June 29–July 10; June 1–July 10 (Intensive)**

**Highlights:** Jazz Camp consists of three two-week sessions that give instruction in drum set, African drumming and dance, jazz dance, and improv theater. About 60 children, age 6–12 of all abilities. Jazz Intensive includes daily 90-minute classes for about 40 campers, age 12–18.

**Faculty:** Kevin Kinane, Heidi Alina, Blake Himm.

**Cost:** Camp, \$300 per session; Intensive, \$430.

**Contact:** Lisa Nichols, (505) 255-9798; nmjazz.org.

### Port Townsend Jazz Workshop

Port Townsend, Washington

**July 19–26**

**Highlights:** High-level camp focuses on improvisation in a small-group setting. Every student plays in a faculty-led combo. Sessions range from theory to instrumental master classes. About 230 participants, grade 9 through adult.

**Faculty:** George Cables, John Clayton, Wycliffe Gordon, Terrell Stafford and 30 others.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$725; room and board, \$425–\$500.

**Contact:** Gregg Miller, (360) 385-3102; gregg@centrum.org; centrum.org/jazz.

### Sacramento State University Summer Jazz Camp

Sacramento, California

**July 5–10**

**Highlights:** An intensive week of big band rehearsals, sectionals, master classes and individual courses in improvisation, theory and ear training with the Jim Widner Big Band in residency. For students age 14 or older who have studied on their instrument for at least one year.

**Faculty:** Includes Dave Pietro, Scott Whitfield, Clay Jenkins, Paul McKee, Jim Widner and more.

**Cost:** Resident tuition, \$895; commuters, \$412.

**Contact:** (916) 278-7987; csus.edu/music/jazz.

### Sacramento Traditional Jazz Society Youth and Adult Jazz Camps

Pollock Pines, California

**July 26–August 1 (Youth) & August 3–8 (Adult)**

**Highlights:** Emphasis on learning to improvise, with theory instruction and instrumental technique lessons. About 90 campers per session.

**Faculty:** Rusty Stiers, Greg Varlotta, Terry Myers, Anita Thomas, Jason Wanner and many more.

**Cost:** Youth camp is \$575; adult camp is \$750.

**Contact:** (916) 927-5222; sacjazzcamp.org.

### Stanford Jazz Workshop's Jazz Camp and Jazz Residency

Palo Alto, California

**July 19–24 & July 26–31 (Jazz Camp); August 2–7 (Jazz Residency)**

**Highlights:** Workshops welcome students of all skill levels. The Jazz Camp (for instrumentalists/vocalists, age 12–17) and Jazz Residency (for adults and advanced youth by audition) offer intensive interaction with jazz professionals and educators

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**Faculty:** About 60; past faculty has included Jimmy Cobb, Joshua Redman and Rufus Reid.

**Cost:** Jazz Camp, \$995 per week; Jazz Residency, \$1,095 per week (room and board additional).

**Contact:** (650) 736-0324; [stanfordjazz.org](http://stanfordjazz.org).

## University of Northern Colorado Jazz Camp

Greeley, Colorado

**July 19-24**

**Highlights:** The camp includes four student jazz bands and seven combos. Students attend master classes and courses in jazz improvisation, theory and listening. Includes nightly faculty combo concerts and a performance by the Colorado Jazz Orchestra. For middle school, high school and college students at all levels of experience.

**Faculty:** Includes Clay Jenkins, Don Aliquo, more.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$385; room and board is \$250.

**Contact:** (970) 351-2394; [uncjazz.com](http://uncjazz.com).

## Vail Jazz Festival Summer Workshop

Vail, Colorado



**August 29-September 4**

**Highlights:** A jazz workshop for 12 of the most promising high school-aged jazz musicians in North America. Students are nominated by educators and chosen by workshop leaders.

**Faculty:** Includes John Clayton, Jeff Clayton, Bill Cunliffe, Terell Stafford and Lewis Nash.

**Cost:** Full and partial scholarships once accepted.

**Contact:** (970) 479-6146; [vailjazz.org](http://vailjazz.org).

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# Camptime Opportunities

Dakota Austin, 12, was nervous but glowing when he stepped on the main stage of last summer's Litchfield Jazz Festival to perform with Dave Brubeck. "As a rule, I never put children on stage with professionals," said Litchfield Jazz Festival founder and Executive Director Vita Muir.

But when Austin approached Brubeck after a question and answer forum, explaining that his dream was to one day play "Take Five" with him, Muir couldn't object. Austin had already pushed the envelope when he gained admission to the Litchfield Jazz Camp in Connecticut—which occurs right before the festival—in 2007, two years shy of its minimum age requirement. In response to Austin's request, Brubeck shrugged and directed him to his sax player, Bobby Militello, who agreed. Hours later, and with no rehearsal, Austin was welcomed onstage by Brubeck. "Bobby played alongside [Dakota] on bended knee and even let Dakota take the solo," Muir said. "It was the moment of a lifetime for him."

Austin was recently accepted to Hartford's Artists Collective after its director saw his performance video. "I usually don't have the guts to ask for something like that," Austin said. "But I wanted to do it."

Unlike Austin's impromptu request, opportunities at camp to play with the masters are usually harder-won. After seeing drummer Terri Lyne Carrington perform live, and sitting in on several of her Berklee classes, trombonist Tyler Ginsberg became determined to join her Summer Jazz Workshop while at Berklee's five-week summer camp. Ginsberg attended the workshops twice before being accepted into Carrington's ensemble during his third year. Carrington's teaching methods encouraged the trombonist to expand his playing. "Instead of giving us charts with chord changes she would yell out emotions, and we would have to convey those emotions," said Ginsberg, who attributes his time with Carrington as a step in his education and has since been offered a full scholarship to Berklee.

Although trumpeter and vocalist Crystal Torres also got the opportuni-



Dakota Austin and Dave Brubeck

STEVEN SUSSMAN

ty to work alongside several of her idols at William Paterson's summer jazz camp in Wayne, N.J., it was the connections made with her fellow campers that have brought her jazz training into a different musical arena.

When Torres was on tour with Roy Hargrove's RH Factor, she ran into a former camp friend who was playing trumpet in Beyoncé Knowles' backup band. She asked her friend for an audition and joined the pop star's touring lineup three months later, with which she has played since.

Though connections made during camps opened Torres up to new gigging opportunities, she, like Austin, believes that chutzpah is necessary to take advantage of them. "It's a combination between connections I made early on at camps, as well as [having] enough confidence to take an opportunity," she said. "And to ask for it."

—Mary Wilcop



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**Faculty:** Dave Douglas, program director, and many others.

**Cost:** Free with acceptance to program.

**Contact:** (604) 872-5200; coastaljazz.ca.

## Dutch Improv Academy

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**August 23–30**

**Highlights:** Students spend one week with the Dutch masters in Holland in workshops, master classes, group jams, improvisations, field trips and evening performances. About 60 students,

age 18 and up, from all over the world.

**Faculty:** Cor Fuhler, Wilbert de Joode, Peter van Bergen, Wolter Wierbos, Han Bennink, and other members of the ICP Orchestra.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$750; tuition plus room and board is \$1,250.

**Contact:** +31-20-638-6611; canon@xs4all.nl.

## iJamJazz Summer Jazz Camp

Bonafro, Italy

**June 29–July 17**

**Highlights:** The camp is a three-week jazz theory and improvisational intensive in which students of all abilities study and perform with artists and faculty. Age 16 and older.

**Faculty:** Brad Upton, Ron McClure, John Gunther, Matt Houston and Peter Barbieri.

**Cost:** About \$3,000 includes room, board and travel within Italy (prices vary between program).

**Contact:** peter@ijamjazz.org; ijamjazz.org.

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**Highlights:** Features junior high and high school jazz band sessions and programs for new jazz rhythm players. 2,800 students from the U.S. and abroad.

**Faculty:** Numerous, from all over North America.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$315 before May 1.

**Contact:** (701) 838-8472; internationalmusiccamp.com.

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**Highlights:** A month of music, study and travel set in Vada on the Mediterranean coast. Students travel around Italy, attend jazz fests and study with renowned instructors. Students age 17 and up need three years of training plus a knowledge of jazz theory. Six of each rhythm section instrument; four horns per combo.

**Faculty:** Andrew Beals, Tyler Hornby, Mauro Grossi, Eric Marienthal and more.

**Cost:** \$3,290 includes four weeks room and board in Vada plus travel and board for trips to Rome, Florence, Pisa, Perugia and Siena.

**Contact:** labellavitaarts.com.

## MacEwan Summer Jazz Workshop

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

**August 16–21**

**Highlights:** The workshop offers serious musicians the opportunity to study and perform in big bands and combos. Improvisation, technique and performance skills will be taught through practical applications. For students age 13–20.

**Faculty:** Jeff Antoniuk, director and guest clinician, and MacEwan music faculty.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$395 Canadian.

**Contact:** (780) 497-4303; artsoutreach.org.

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### Summer Jazz Workshop

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**July 6-10**

**Highlights:** The Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Manhattan School of Music host a week of lessons, workshops, master classes, concerts and jam sessions. About 60 students, age 16-65.

**Faculty:** From the Manhattan School of Music and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam.

**Cost:** See web site.

**Contact:** conservatoriumvanamsterdam.nl.

### University of Manitoba Summer Jazz Camp

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

**August 16-22**

**Highlights:** Days include small ensemble rehearsals, practical study, improvisation instruction and jam sessions. For 100-125 students of all ages.

**Faculty:** Includes Steve Kirby, Terreon Gully, Jimmy Greene and Marcus Printup.

**Cost:** Approximately \$400 Canadian.

**Contact:** (204) 474-8016; umanitoba.ca/summer.

### Vancouver Creative Music Institute

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

**June 29-July 3**

**Highlights:** Five-day intensive program joins emerging artists with international improvisational and creative musicians. Participants play at the TD Canada Trust Vancouver International Jazz Festival. Limited to 35 players, 18 and up.

**Faculty:** François Houle, Joelle Leandre, Nicole Mitchell, Mats Gustafsson and more.

**Cost:** Tuition, \$650 Canadian; application fee, \$30.

**Contact:** (604) 871-7299; coastaljazz.ca.

### VenetoJazz and The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music Summer Workshop

Bassano del Grappa, Italy

**July 13-24**

**Highlights:** A workshop of courses divided by ability, plus master classes, theory, arranging, vocal technique, combos, a big band and public performances. For 120 students, age 18 and older.

**Faculty:** From The New School in New York.

**Cost:** 390 euros before May 10, 450 euros after.

**Contact:** (212) 229-5896 x 4580.

### Victoria Conservatory of Music Summer Jazz Workshop

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

**July 6-10 (Jazz Soloist); July 13-18 (Jazz Ensemble)**

**Highlights:** Soloist Week develops solo skills for vocalists, instrumentalists and rhythm section players. Ensemble Week focuses on big band, vocal ensemble and combo playing. Each feature student performances, faculty concerts, and jam sessions. For about 80 musicians, age 12-80.

**Faculty:** Don Thompson, Neil Swainson, Phil Dwyer, Willard Dyson, Louise Rose and more.

**Cost:** See web site.

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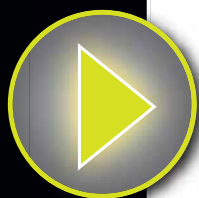
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JOKE SCHOT

## Self Containment

### Dutch-based pianist builds U.S. audience

Amina Figarova's career transcends geography. The pianist is crafting her profile in the United States while remaining in the Netherlands. Figarova's recordings are issued on the Dutch indie label Munich, but she's largely taken it upon herself to book two or three American tours each year. These visits have received financial and publicity assistance from her country's consulates in the U.S. and she gets airplay on Sirius Satellite Radio. But to her, self-sufficiency goes beyond language or any company's affiliation.

"I don't believe that you need a record label behind you," Figarova said from her home in Rotterdam. "I've seen many musicians signed to big labels and not playing as much because they believed that the label would do the job. There is no one else who is more interested in your own career than yourself."

Figarova's husband, flutist Bart Platteau, serves as her manager, and also performs in her sextet. The pianist's 10th album, *Above The Clouds*, marks the first release in a dozen years that she and Platteau produced independently. For a half-dozen years the couple has leased an office near their home, where Platteau spends 30 hours each week.

Platteau's dual role gives Figarova an advantage. Even if the pianist hired someone, chances are he or she would have a number of clients and wouldn't perform the job as well as Platteau. "It's not like we're just getting gigs; we're working to get them," Platteau said. "Other artists have asked me to handle their management because they see we have a lot of contacts in many countries. I always refuse because I want to stay a musician, and also I don't think I could give them the same devotion like I do to Amina."

Figarova, who began performing in Europe in the mid-1990s, attributes the genesis of her

career in the United States to a summer residency program in 1998 at the Thelonious Monk Institute Jazz Colony in Aspen, Colo. Flugelhorn player Dmitri Matheny, one of the instructors, helped book the pianist in the San Francisco Bay Area, including Yoshi's.

Figarova and Platteau established similar relationships with musicians in New Orleans. In turn, the couple helped Matheny and the others they've met in the U.S. book tours in the Netherlands. "What I try to do is look for anchor dates [in one region] because the U.S. is so big," Platteau said. "I try to get two or three anchor dates, and then when I have that I go to the clubs."

Rather than spreading herself among three or four projects, Figarova focuses on a single band. Her compositions for her sextet evoke the 1940s and '50s—from *Birth Of The Cool* to hard-bop. Figarova has no reservations about championing such music, or the country responsible for its creation.

Figarova, 44, grew up in Baku, Azerbaijan. She studied classical music at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory, but concentrated on jazz after receiving a scholarship in 1990 to attend the Rotterdam Conservatory. Figarova met Platteau at the conservatory in 1991, and they married that year. In 1992, she made her first visit to the U.S. as part of an exchange program at Boston's Berklee College of Music. Figarova recorded *Another Me* in 1998, the first of her eight albums for Munich.

Figarova stresses hard work and said her long stretches on the road in the first half of 2008 made it all but impossible to keep up with business matters.

"Once we're on tour, sometimes for weeks we can't do anything," she said. "Your mind is in a different mode because you're playing all the time." —Eric Fine



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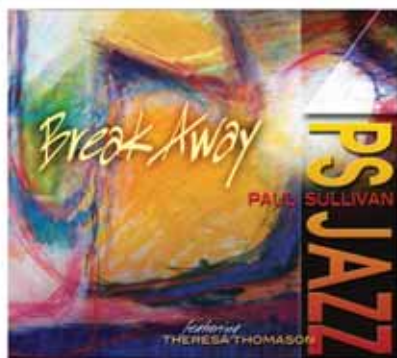
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## Veteran Assessment

### Longtime indie label chiefs on how to remain solvent

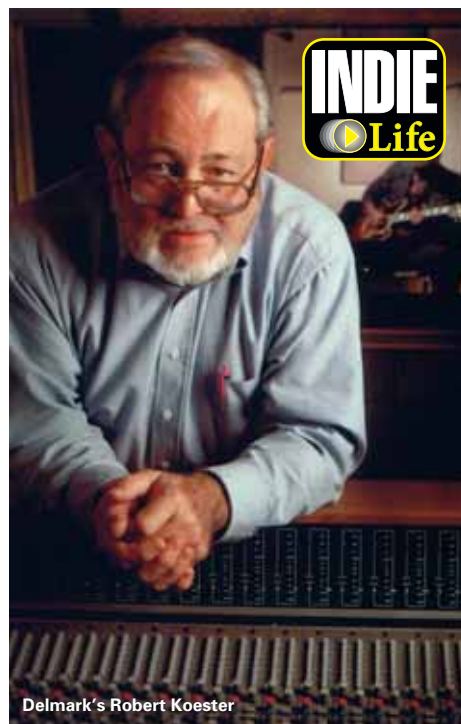
Nearly all jazz recording is being done today by a cottage industry of independent imprints, and in some cases labels that began as indies still maintain a boutique profile within a major multinational group, like Blue Note within EMI. Clearly, the heavy lifting in jazz is being done by a vast number of indies (more than 100 labels appeared in the January DownBeat listing of best CDs of 2008), often with pointedly cryptic names that sound more like passwords than brands: Anti-, Pi, Hyena, 482 Music, Hot Cup, hatOLOGY and Cryp-togramophone. Many vanish quickly and become cultish collectors items. But some have had staying power. What's the secret of their success?

"Having someone else to pay the bills," said Hank O'Neal, who founded Chiaroscuro in 1971 and has since accrued a library of about 200 titles. "There were times at Downtown Sound [his recording studio] when the rent was paid by what was in the soda pop machine." Almost every buccaneering independent would agree. Sustaining a small jazz label today is an act of philanthropy. The only possible pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, O'Neal added, is accumulating "enough albums sell to some rich entrepreneur in the way that Norman Lear bought up Concord."

Delmark Records in Chicago is the second-oldest active independent in America (after Jazzology, founded by George Buck in 1949). But it broke a cardinal rule of the independent business model almost from the start. Most indies focus on a single, underserved molecule of the market that defines their identity. Robert Koester, who founded Delmar in St. Louis in 1953 and renamed it six years later, aimed at many.

Delmark has logged more than 400 original titles. They range from the antique to the avant-garde; from George Brunis and Art Hodes in their twilight to Anthony Braxton and the AACM at their dawn along with contemporary Chicago-based free improvisers, as well as a deep catalog of blues including Magic Sam and Junior Wells.

"I'm proud of that diversity, but I've managed it because of the Jazz Record Mart," said Koester, referring to the Chicago record store he bought in 1959 and built into one of the country's last jazz retail centers. "It's an old tradition, going back to Commodore, HRS, Dial. The store is the source of our capital and subsidizes the label." It's a good thing. Since



Delmark's Robert Koester

COURTESY OF DELMARK RECORDS

2000, Koester added, Delmark has lost money every year.

"It's a hobby now," Koester said. "I keep a separate set of books in my head."

Most independents are defined by their artists, which in turn reflect their owners. If Manfred Eicher at ECM has constantly cultivated a new generation and sensibility since the late 1960s, labels like Chiaroscuro and Arbors have kept alive an older one.

"I think of it as preserving an art form that I've loved all my life," said Mat Domber, 80, an attorney whose success in real estate has made it possible for him to keep Arbors going for 20 years and more than 300 releases. "I've never looked upon jazz as a way of getting rich. I doubt if there is much future in independent recording purely as an economic venture."

Arbors has the logistic convenience of nearby manufacturing. Its numbers, more or less typical for an indie, go something like this: An initial release, such as the current *Ruby Braff: For The Last Time*, will get a run of 1,500 copies. When demand justifies, additional pressings are ordered in lots of 500. If an artist tours and wants a batch, a custom run can be ordered. About 80 percent of the Arbors catalog and half of the Chiaroscuro are currently available on disc; the rest can be downloaded.

With CDs now sold primarily through bookstores, online and in discount chains, independent distribution is not only shrinking but the CD demographic itself is slowly aging. The good news is that the technology is now so democratized, an artist can become his or her own indie label and distribute in cyberspace. They just have to be prepared to support themselves.

—John McDonough



# Not Just Kids' Stuff



## Indie jazz musicians see pros, cons of social networking sites

As a non-pop music, jazz typically rewards the self-starter. And just as the Internet has put the power of the press into the fingers of the individual, so too does it allow independent musicians to effectively market themselves and maintain professional relations using such social networking sites as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter.

The Leavenworth, Kan.-based Artist Recording Collective (ARC) uses such technology as its foundation. The year-old group's mission statement states how it "emphasizes promoting and facilitating the distribution and utilization of the works created by our artists" through means such as Twitter updates and a Facebook group and fan page.

"The major labels used to be the gatekeepers with the studios and means of distribution. Technology has changed all that," said ARC co-founder and alto saxophonist Chris Burnett. "If you can use the technological tools, which are great, you can find an audience. The whole paradigm has shifted through sites like Facebook. It's empowering for an independent organization like ARC to be able to tap into that network of users."

Kitty Margolis, a San Francisco-based vocalist and co-founder of MadKat Records, added that it helps to distinguish the three main social networking sites.

"MySpace is mostly for music," Margolis said. "It's a good place for fans and other musicians to contact me, at least initially. MySpace is not widely used by my friends who aren't in or don't follow the music business."

Margolis is also clear about the sites' limitations.

"Facebook is fun. I try to use it for 'real' friends, people I actually know and like in and outside the music biz," Margolis said. "I don't think of Facebook for promoting gigs or CDs. It's a turn off when people use Facebook primarily for self-promotion. Most of the people contacting me on LinkedIn are on the 'business' side. Other than that, it is a pretty boring place to be."

When it was founded late in the summer of 2003, MySpace was a secondary site to musicians' own web sites. These days, it's frequently the converse.

"I find it useful to find musicians and to find out who works with who and who knows who," said Justin Carroll, an organist and pianist based in Dublin, Ireland. "It's a great tool to get an idea of what someone is up to



musically. People don't always release albums, so it can be helpful to hear a recent live clip. The quality of sound can be not so good, but it's fine to get an idea of what's going on."

Twitter, a self-described "real-time short messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices," gives musicians an opportunity to reach subscribers directly in brief blasts. Petaluma, Calif.-based bassist Chip Boaz lets his fans know his thoughts on concerts he's attended and recent events.

But sometimes, older-school new technologies work better. Like Margolis, saxophonist Anton Schwartz uses Facebook to connect with whom he calls "actual" friends and other musicians, too. The one-time Stanford University doctoral candidate in artificial intelligence tends to stay away from MySpace, which he finds "unusably slow," and has found his best success with his long-running e-mail newsletter updates.

"I find that e-mailing fans is invaluable," Schwartz said. "I try to make the e-mails conversational and include information that makes it easy for people to come to gigs, and easy for them to want to."

—Yoshi Kato



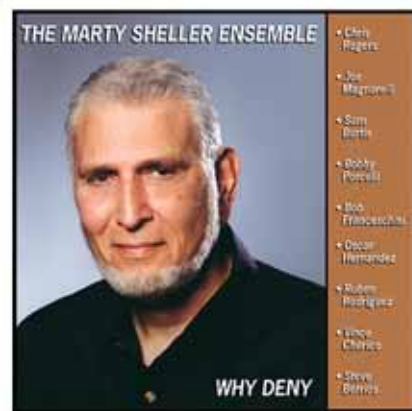
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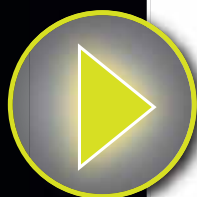
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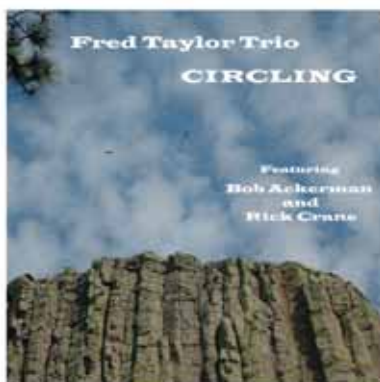


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# Reviews

Masterpiece ★★★★★

Excellent ★★★★

Good ★★★

Fair ★★

Poor ★

78 Jazz

83 Blues

85 Beyond

86 Historical

89 Books



GREG AIELLO

## Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra

**We Are MTO**

MOWO! 3204

★★★½

Don't bother to run a compare/contrast session on the Millennial Territory Orchestra's updates of early-jazz obscurities. Though they adore the swagger and prance of ancient uptown acts such as Charlie Johnson and Cecil Scott, the 10-piece NYC outfit is miles away from being a Xerox band. Leader Steven Bernstein is a hell of an arranger, and he makes his boys toe the line. But his criteria for success is a bit more complex than merely following charts. He wants the spirit of the performance to smooch the prototype while reflecting esthetic particulars of a more modern era. With the jumping bounce and wooly exclamation of *We Are MTO*, he pretty much gets what he wants.

Some of the disc's most impressive moments come from keeping things tight. As the MTO motors its way through "Dickie's Dream" (in heaven Count Basie trombonist Dickie Wells is beaming), the riffs are sharp, stacking up and goosing the tune's momentum almost as much as the two-Ben (Perowsky and Allison) rhythm section does. But by the time Peter Apfelbaum careens through his curt tenor romp, the '40s fade; he works a zig-zag trajectory that could only be conceived after 1968. Call it the best of both worlds; or the best of several worlds.

After eight years of gigs and an impressive 2006 debut, the MTO has found a way to seem natural whether its sobbing through Bob Wills' "Makes No Difference Now" (nice Matt Munisteri vocal) or funkning up a soundtrack for a steamy boudoir session ("We Are MTO"). Bernstein has told interviewers that Ellington is his "mother's milk," and the mix of glee and sophistication that pours from this stuff backs

up such claims. Insight could be part of the mix, too. The Beatles aren't an ancient uptown act, but on both MTO discs, Bernstein has given them props. This time around it's "All You Need Is Love," a resonant anthem for the start of the Obama era and a performance that has parallels with the band's spin on Don Redman's "Paducah." I Wonder if Ringo Starr ever yelled, "Aw, preach that thing, brother, preach it," while George Harrison took a solo. Something tells me Bernstein might know.

—Jim Macnie

**We Are MTO:** We Are MTO; In A Corner; Makes No Difference Now; All You Need Is Love; Paducah; Dickie's Dream; Viper Song; It's Tight Jim. (48:26)

**Personnel:** Steven Bernstein, trumpet, slide trumpet; Clark Gayton, trombone; Charlie Burnham, violin; Doug Wieselmann, clarinet, tenor saxophone; Peter Apfelbaum, tenor and soprano saxophone; Erik Lawrence, baritone and soprano saxophone; Matt Munisteri, guitar, vocal; Ben Allison, bass; Ben Perowsky, drums; Doug Wamble, guitar, banjo, vocals (6, 7).

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

## Ravi Coltrane

### *Blending Times*

SAVOY 17744

★★★★½

Poor Prince Charles. When is his mom going to move over so he can rule on his terms? Ravi Coltrane may have a special empathy for the Prince. When is his father going to move over so he can rule on his own terms? For Charles, the obstacle is an uncommonly durable queen. For Coltrane, it's a legend who has been gone as long as he had been alive but persists in memory. Still, at 43, Ravi is now three years older than his father was when he died. A couple of generations of tenor players have come into their own within the vocabulary of his father's music. Why should Ravi be any different or be held to a higher standard? Almost everyone under 50 sounds like Trane.

With his long-time working quartet, Coltrane's music here is progressive within what most would accept as the contemporary mainstream. It is pure, earnest and marinated in modal flights that move freely over a permissive and responsive rhythmic underpinning that lets the music move where it likes. One exception is Thelonious Monk's "Epistrophy," which has the advantage of familiarity and a fast, steady, swinging and solidifying groove. The other non-original is "For Turiya," an unexpected encore track on which Charlie Haden suddenly appears with harpist Brandee Younger. They revisit material the bassist recorded with Alice Coltrane on harp in 1976. Ravi's participation makes it a trio of serene and close contemplation.

The opening piece, "Shine" (not the familiar jazz classic), has some lovely melodic contours



that Coltrane and pianist Luis Perdomo ride with an almost ebullient romanticism. "First Circuit" and "The Last Circuit" seem to have little in common except for a brief, nervous, fugue-like interplay between Coltrane and Perdomo. "A Still Life" begins in a programmatic solitude but quickly begins to stir into a more dense urgency as it develops.

"Amalgams" crawls along at a snail's pace for two minutes, giving Coltrane a chance to stretch out in long, flat pitches. When it snaps to life with an abrupt tempo change, Coltrane awakens but seems to quit early, as if slightly unfulfilled. "Narcined" is preceded by the kind of tuning up that musicians do before going into a take. It adds nothing to an otherwise delightful cameo that demonstrates that a funky rhythmic line can be played with a light touch. Perdomo is especially whimsical. Coltrane follows with little more than a coda that seems to end in mid air.

The uptempo original "One Wheeler Will" plays with the basic four-note riff of "Milestones," moving it around a bit before Coltrane launches into some of his best sustained playing on the CD. He returns after E.J. Strickland's drum solo, but deprives us of any closure, preferring to cop out in a board fade. "Before With After" is another slow, dirge-like meditation, which at two-and-a-half minutes gets too little time to grow. —*John McDonough*

**Blending Times:** Shine; First Circuit; A Still Life; Epistrophy; Amalgams; Narcined; One Wheeler Will; The Last Circuit; Before With After; For Turiya. (56:29)

**Personnel:** Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Luis Perdomo, piano; Drew Gress (1–9), Charlie Haden (10), bass; E.J. Strickland, drums; Brandee Younger, harp (10).

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



## The Peggy Lee Band

### *New Code*

DRIP AUDIO 00318

★★★★½

Here's a new CD that exemplifies the strength and maturity of the Vancouver jazz and improvised music scene. Of course, that music has been fostered and fertilized by the presence of one of the world's great jazz festivals. At the core of the scene is the dynamic team of cellist Peggy Lee, leading this superb octet, and drummer Dylan van der Schyff, who grounds and propels the ensemble. Decades of development have led them to the fluidity of this amalgam, which moves without stress from orchestration to fragmentation and back.

Lee doesn't go out of her way to feature herself on *New Code*, but instead emphasizes the group. This is a good notion when you've got folks like the versatile Ron Samworth and Tony Wilson on dueling guitars. They mesh stunningly in support on the elegant "Preparations" and use a full battery of effects—many of them manual, rather than electronic—in freely improvised passages, which all feature subgroups and are titled with

## The Bad Plus

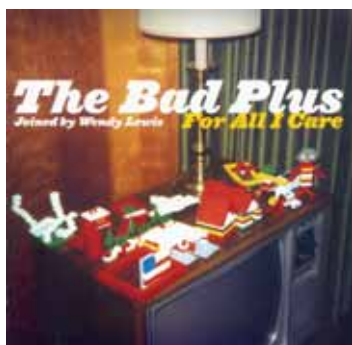
### *For All I Care*

HEADS UP 3148

★★½

Prog-rock and classical music play as central a role as jazz in The Bad Plus' playbook. This can create conflict. While rock and classical music trade in dramatic, accessible melodies, staged theatricality, disciplined ensemble parts and a healthy dose of schmaltz, jazz is improvised, intimate, individual and deplores the obvious. The addition of indie-rock vocalist Wendy Lewis accentuates the trio's rock/classical tendencies, nudging the band toward art-rock's operatic inflation, while downsizing its usually muscular improv.

The targets here are tunes by Nirvana, Pink



Floyd, Wilco, Yes, the Bee Gees, Heart, Roger Miller and The Flaming Lips, as well as pieces by György Ligeti, Igor Stravinsky and Milton Babbitt. Things start out more than well with Nirvana's "Lithium" with Reid Anderson's tough, woody bass setting off the angry, paralyzed ambivalence of Kurt Cobain's lyric, sung in a plain style

by Lewis. But things descend on Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb." It veers from attractively mysterious vocals with sparse, out-of-key, single-note piano to a flat-out pop roar.

More soaring baroque is in store on Yes' pretentious (if piano crisp) "Long Distance Runaround" and the snarling, hard-rock rapture of "Barracuda," by another Seattle band,

Heart. But the pinnacle of bad taste is The Flaming Lips' "Feeling Yourself Disintegrate," in which Ethan Iverson shows his weakness for Liszt, somebody plays declamatory chimes and the band throws in everything but the kitchen sink, including background vocals. Ugh. And what are we supposed to do, exactly, with the Bee Gees' "How Deep Is Your Love?" Reharmonized, check; kitsch, check again.

All this excess is a shame, because The Bad Plus does well with sparse arrangements. Lewis sparkles on a minimalist, glacially slow, out-of-time treatment of Miller's "Lock, Stock And Teardrops," pushing a syllable here and slightly breaking her voice there, as Iverson tinkles haunting music box piano. She also captures the weird atmospherics of Wilco's down-tempo "Radio Cure," though even it ultimately tilts toward false grandeur.

As for the classical gambits, does Ligeti's jumpy solo piano piece "Fém" gain anything



# The HOT Box

the overarching name “Offshoot.” With only one reed instrument, it’s not a particularly saxophone-heavy group, which opens up trumpeter Brad Turner (also a Vancouver vet) and trombonist Jeremy Berkman to establish a dark, brassy ambience.

Like Barry Guy does with his big groups, Lee tries to create ideal opportunities in her band for improvising, framing the interactions in big, open arrangements. On “Not A Wake Up Call,” for example, a ripping guitar solo (Samworth, I’m guessing) is subtended by big, slowly massing chords from the horns, opening into “Floating Island,” which introduces an acoustic guitar arpeggio and deliberate melodic charts that serve as an aural plateau or flood plain. Jon Bentley’s breathy tenor sax sneaks between the guitarists on “Shifting Tide,” with van der Schyff and electric bassist Andre Lachance softly coming up from below.

The architecture can be more conventional, too, as on the CD’s two covers, the Bob Dylan Americana that opens the disc and the hopeful melancholy of the Kurt Weill closer. Some of Lee’s own tunes are more song-like, like the gorgeous “Tug,” on which Turner offers a cheery solo. Lee’s fine cello playing is featured on a brief free duet with the trumpeter, and her delicate spiccato introduces “Walk Me Through,” instruments joining in one by one alongside her, building the rich theme one brick at a time. That sense of careful unfolding is typical of *New Code*’s compositions.

—John Corbett

**New Code:** All I Really Want To Do; Preparations; Offshoot 1; Not A Wake Up Call; Floating Island; Offshoot 2; Scribble Town; Tug; Offshoot 3; Walk Me Through; Shifting Tide; Lost In The Stars. (59:01)

**Personnel:** Peggy Lee, cello; Brad Turner, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jeremy Berkman, trombone; Jon Bentley, tenor saxophone; Ron Samworth, Tony Wilson, electric and acoustic guitar; Andre Lachance, electric bass; Dylan van der Schyff, drums.

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

besides clutter with bass and drums? Does Stravinsky’s pretty, neoclassical string piece from the ballet *Apollo* sound better—or even as good—played by a jazz/rock piano trio? No, on both counts. Babbitt’s “Semi-Simple Variations”—done once acoustically, then transformed with electronics—holds up better, perhaps because it’s this kind of agitated, near-repetition-as-variation the band excels at so well.

I admire The Bad Plus greatly for its fearlessness and coherence. But here, its tendencies toward prog-rock artiness and Lisztian Romanticism alternate between the sublime and the ridiculous.

—Paul de Barros

**For All I Care:** Lithium; Comfortably Numb; Fém (Etude No. 8); Radio Cure; Long Distance Runaround; Semi-Simple Variations; How Deep Is Your Love; Barracuda; Lock, Stock And Teardrops; Variation d’Apollon; Feeling Yourself Disintegrate; Semi-Simple Variations (Alternate Version). (49:51)

**Personnel:** Reid Anderson, bass, vocals; Ethan Iverson, piano, bells; David King, drums, vocals; Wendy Lewis, vocals.

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

CDs ≡	CRITICS »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Steven Bernstein’s Millennial Territory Orchestra</b> <i>We Are MTO</i>		★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½
<b>Ravi Coltrane</b> <i>Blending Times</i>		★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★½
<b>The Bad Plus</b> <i>For All I Care</i>		★★	★★½	★★★★½	★★½
<b>The Peggy Lee Band</b> <i>New Code</i>		★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½

## Critics’ Comments

### Steven Bernstein’s Millennial Territory Orchestra, *We Are MTO*

This happily unzipped repertory band dumps academic discipline for irreverent attitude, but never loses the bubbly that resides in such 78-rpm antiques as “In A Corner” and “Dickie’s Dream.” The fun is authentic and so is the discipline, which pumps life into an arcane pre-1930 attack. —John McDonough

Very seductive combination of fun and more fun, successfully marshaling a ‘20s jazz feel but making more space for contemporary soloing and updated arrangements than, say, Don Byron’s way-back-machine once did. And Charles Burnham ripping it up, right on! Let’s hear it for a big band with strings. —John Corbett

Mischievous, playful and raucous, these historical retrievals of ‘20s hot jazz and Kansas City swing (with a modern twist) give a freewheeling sense of this sizzling party band in live performance. Bernstein writes brilliantly for winds, Doug Wieselmann’s clarinet solos are superb as are Clark Gayton’s on trombone and Charles Burnham’s on fiddle. The vocals, however, keep the album in the novelty territory. —Paul de Barros

### Ravi Coltrane, *Blending Times*

Sometimes these tracks feel like they need to be more epic than they are, as if they’re held back to keep from getting too long; they’re gone before they arrive. I can’t figure out why to keep the first 30 seconds of “Narcined” except to show how spontaneous these studio sessions were, which should be evident in the free play itself. But there’s plenty of strong jazz (uninteresting take on “Epistrophy” notwithstanding) to hold attention. Drew Gress and E.J. Strickland forge a strong alliance. —John Corbett

A superb craftsman is Coltrane, especially here, with these meticulously blended rhythms, but a duller, more monochromatic soloist would be hard to name. No doubt there’s virtue in being contained and mild (a nod to mother Alice?), but not when you play with a band as hot as this. —Paul de Barros

The ability to shape shift enhances a band’s scope, and from the Keith Jarrett Quartet nod to the Thelonious Monk bounce to the mercurial abstractions that bind a couple tracks, Coltrane has made his program pliable. At the center is the sound of his horn, which has a new sense of calm and purpose these days. —Jim Macnie

### The Bad Plus, *For All I Care*

I’ll take the Bee Gees over “Barracuda,” and Babbitt over Yes, but for the most part they once again connect the dots in a zig-zag maneuver that should ultimately implode, but doesn’t. Give or take a dreary moment, it’s a strong statement about the esthetic they’ve honed and the experimentalism they cherish. —Jim Macnie

I admire the precision and craft of the first Babbitt, Stravinsky and Ligeti. They have the advantage of being instrumentals, however emotionally frozen. The others have a weirded-out pop feel. Wendy Lewis’ vocals are proficient but so literal they sound flat and disembodied. —John McDonough

What pushes a genre-defiant program one way or another? Sometimes it’s a matter of smugness, a vibe in which the ironic self-consciousness overwhelms the inherent interest. What starts out with an incendiary little spark on a Nirvana cover is diminished as the CD plods in its attempt to level the playing field between arch modernism (Babbitt) and pop populism (Bee Gees). —John Corbett

### The Peggy Lee Band, *New Code*

These somnolent, mysteriously textured and often quietly gorgeous octet pieces occasionally use a strategy recalling Don Cherry’s *Codona*—yearning, consonant, long-toned trumpet lines over a churning, spikey world below. The opening Bob Dylan cut is marvelous. It would be nice to hear more of Lee, apart from the OK free-improv “Offshoot” tracks. Trombonist Jeremy Berkman stands out everywhere. —Paul de Barros

Making sure the sprawl doesn’t dissipate is something a little big band must have on its mind—especially a little big band this attracted to sprawl. But the cellist and her mates provide as much focus as they do elaborations, and the melodic threads and rhythmic gambits bind all that needs to be bound. —Jim Macnie

A polarizing CD that dares you to like it. You probably won’t. When the band plays straight, the music is pastoral and passive, more atmosphere than active. In its more exploratory avant conceit, I find little desire to be provoked into another dreary probe through the musical outback of sonic squeals and squawks. Dare to dislike it. —John McDonough

## Joe Zawinul & The Zawinul Syndicate

75  
HEADSUP UP 3162  
★★★★½

It's hard to believe that Joe Zawinul performed this music just two months before his death at age 75. A two-CD set, *75* documents his last recorded concert on his birthday at a festival in Lugano, Switzerland. A fitting addition is a track with Weather Report co-founder Wayne Shorter, where the two perform Zawinul's classic "In A Silent Way," recorded live in Hungary.

As a fan of Weather Report's studio work, to hear these tracks live left behind a number of the eccentricities and delicate touches that made such songs as "Badia," "Scarlet Woman" and "In A Silent Way" (pre-Weather Report) so interesting. Here, all three are redone in fresh, if less than imaginative, ways. On "Badia/Boogie Woogie Waltz," a long vocal intro and tempo upend the studio versions. Zawinul's preference for uptempo burners that feature the chops of a bassist like Linley Marthe such as on "Orient Express" runs the risk of a "you had to be there" quality, the jamming less than engaging as a recording. Likewise, Zawinul's use of a flat, indistinct synth sound made me long for the



days of those more intricate, particular keyboard sounds and Fender Rhodes that gave a heft and personality to his playing.

Still, the groove and feel remain in most of this music. The swing and strut of "Madagascar" are highlighted by Marthe and drummer Paco Sery kicking and grinding to good

effect. Zawinul's "Scarlet Woman," similarly, gets a swinging backbeat makeover from its original more meditative incarnation. Apart from such quiet moments as "Hymn" and "In A Silent Way," most of *75* is oriented around jamming and grooving. Later Zawinul music is represented here with "Zanza II," "Two Lines" and "Café Andalusia." "Zanza II" captures some of Zawinul's earlier keyboard artistry and features Sery on kalimba; it's a good example of how Zawinul could still create intimate moments in front of a live audience.

—John Ephland

**75:** Disc 1—Introduction To Orient Express; Orient Express; Madagascar; Scarlet Woman; Zanza II; Café Andalusia. (45:44) Disc 2—Fast City/Two Lines; Clario; Badia/Boogie Woogie Waltz; Happy Birthday; In A Silent Way; Hymn. (48:11)

**Personnel:** Joe Zawinul, keyboards, vocoder; Sabine Kabongo, vocals, percussion; Alegre Correa, guitar, vocals, berimbau; Linley Marthe, bass; Paco Sery, drums, kalimba, vocals; Jorge Bezerra, Aziz Sahmaoui, percussion, vocals; Wayne Shorter, soprano saxophone (disc 2, track 5).

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

## Jim Hall & Bill Frisell

*Hemispheres*  
ARTISTSHARE 0079  
★★★★

If love can be made tangible on a recording, it lives on this project by arguably the most-influential guitarists of their respective generations. On a set of duets and a one-day quartet session last summer, the communication between Jim Hall and Bill Frisell is intimate, supportive and free flowing.

The mood for the duets is set from the first notes of Frisell's "Throughout." The tape hiss of the analog recording and audible closeness of the musicians' instruments and amplifiers generate warmth, and you can hear each player listening and responding. On each of the 10 pieces—a combination of arranged and improvised takes—Frisell's approach is to either establish a base for Hall's playing or react to Hall's lead. The results include examples of Frisell's mastery of real-time sound manipulation ("Family" and "Bimini") and, particularly on "Bags' Groove," some gorgeous, unaltered playing.

Hall is in a playful mood throughout, teasing out the theme of Bob Dylan's "Masters Of War," recast as a minor-key dirge, and reaching



into a bluesy bag for "Monica Jane." Only the lengthy "Migration" disrupts the flow, wavering into less focused territory until—after more than nine minutes—Hall snaps things back into line with an allusion to the guitar lick from Billy Boy Arnold's "I Wish You Would."

The quartet date is no less immediate sounding, due to the live recording setup and the

reflexes of drummer Joey Baron. Again, the emphasis is on extended interplay between the guitarists, but Frisell takes an additional step back on many of the 10 tracks. This allows Hall to explore some tension-building harmonic inventions on "Chelsea Bridge" and delve into an inspired hybrid of jazz and country on "Owed To Freddie Green," which also sounds a bit indebted to Charlie Christian. From the gentle bossa nova feel of "I'll Remember April" to the loose rumble of "Card Tricks," there's a beautiful coherence here.

—James Hale

**Hemispheres:** Disc 1—Throughout; All Across The City; Bags' Groove; Migration; Family; Waiting To Dance; Bimini; Masters Of War; Beijing Blues; Monica Jane. (60:33) Disc 2—I'll Remember April; Barbaro; Chelsea Bridge; Owed To Freddie Green; Beija Flor; Here And Now; My Funny Valentine; Card Tricks; In A Sentimental Mood; Sonnymoon For Two. (55:37)

**Personnel:** Jim Hall, Bill Frisell, guitar; Joey Baron, drums (disc 2); Scott Colley, bass (disc 2).

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



## Matthew Shipp Trio

*Harmonic Disorder*  
THIRSTY EAR 57187  
★★★★

Pianist Matthew Shipp has always possessed a broad set of ears, but it seems as though his stewardship of the jazz series on Thirsty Ear is what pushed him in new directions. As free-jazz heavies found meaningful collaboration with adventurous electronic artists, Shipp eventually got onboard himself. While not everything he tried succeeded, it was impressive to watch him tackle new sounds.

In the last few years, Shipp has returned his main focus to acoustic music; this trio outing with bassist Joe Morris and drummer Whit Dickey is among the best work I've heard from him. Unlike the rigorous work he created with his early trio and as a member of David S. Ware's powerhouse quartet, Shipp's new disc feels springier and more optimistic.

On craggy original material and a couple of neatly rejuvenated standards ("There Will Never Be Another You" and "Someday My Prince Will Come"), the pianist rips apart the melodic material with the gusto and eagerness of a hopped-up kid, except only a deeply thoughtful adult could organize and recontextualize the components with such clarity. His command of the piano's low end remains stunning, providing a gravity to the sculptural shards and splintery phrases he endlessly derives from the compositions; more than once Shipp reminded me of the great Lowell Davidson.

The rhythm section functions as the simpatico partner, dancing alongside Shipp's machinations with an almost weightless grace, but causing some heavy friction when the moment is right. While the pianist is in constant motion here, there's a sense of patience and restraint that his early work lacked. He sounds more complete than ever before.

—Peter Margasak

**Harmonic Disorder:** GNG; There Will Never Be Another You; Harmonic Disorder; Someday My Prince Will Come; Mel Chi 2; Mr. JM; Mel Chi 1; Roe; Orb; Compost; Zo Number 2; Quantum Waves; Light; When The Curtain Falls On The Jazz Theatre. (54:53)

**Personnel:** Matthew Shipp, piano; Joe Morris, bass; Whit Dickey, drums.

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



## Budapest Jazz Orchestra Meets Kálmán Oláh

**Images**

HUNGAROTON 71242

★★★★

## Sherrie Maricle & the DIVA Jazz Orchestra

**Live From Jazz At Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola »**

DIVA JAZZ ORCHESTRA

★★★½



The Budapest and DIVA jazz orchestras take almost as different approaches to big band music as possible, the latter eschewing the former's Third Stream approach for more traditional big band fare.

The Budapest Jazz Orchestra (BJO) commissioned pianist Kálmán Oláh to compose two extended pieces dedicated to Hungarian composer Béla Bartók. "The Metropolis," which opens *Images*, is a 17-minute episodic journey that displays Oláh's orchestrational mastery. The piece opens with delicate saxophone waves and the brass introduces the theme—which returns several times in slightly different forms—over the saxes. Oláh's piano solo is preceded by a lighter orchestrated version of the theme in the

trumpeter Szabolcs Ducsai; the piece closes with the theme and sax waves.

Oláh's "Prologue To 'Round About Midnight," which segues into a straight ballad feature of the song, features the horn section playing variations of the tune's opening motive with classical saxophone writing and rich brass orchestration. Oláh excels at splitting the BJO into small sections to extract and apply a wide range of colors and textures.

DIVA's set, recorded in September 2007, is rousing and spirited. "All Of Me," featuring former Count Basie vocalist Carmen Bradford, who appears on five of the album's 13 tracks, is one of the high points. It's representative of the set, as it includes tight section work, a fine

woodwinds and followed up by a quicker-tempo march feel with rapid repeated staccato notes passed through the brass. The march returns after pointillistic and fragmentary solos by trombonist Ferenc Schreck, tenor saxophonist Árpád Dennert and

Janelle Reichman tenor statement and it swings like mad. The band works hard for Bradford and the results are sizzling, especially on "Sweet Georgia Brown."

Altoists Erica vonKleist and Sharel Cassity engage in battle on "Happy Talk." Their intertwined contrapuntal lines snake up their horns' upper range, and the feeling that they're reaching out and taking risks creates excitement. "Rachel's Dream" features a strong and playful bebop clarinet solo by Reichman, and her tenor lights up "I Love Being Here With You." Trumpeter Tanya Darby and pianist Tomoko Ohno give "TPN Blues" a soulful and bluesy treatment before an Afro-Cuban/swing reading of Leonard Bernstein's "America" closes the set.

—Chris Robinson

**Images:** Images for Jazz Orchestra—In Memoriam Béla Bartók: The Metropolis, Homeland; Valley Of Megiddo; Prologue To 'Round About Midnight; 'Round About Midnight; Last Moment. (60:20)

**Personnel:** Kálmán Oláh, piano; Budapest Jazz Orchestra.

» **Ordering info:** [hungaroton.hu](http://hungaroton.hu)

**Live From Jazz At Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola:**

I Love Being Here With You; Andalusia; Stars Fell On Alabama; Sweet Georgia Brown; This Can't Be Love; I'd Rather Drink Muddy Water; Rachel's Dream; Put A Little Love In Your Heart; Happy Talk; How Do You Keep The Music Playing; All Of Me; TPN Blues; America. (65:21).

**Personnel:** Sherrie Maricle, drums; Carmen Bradford, vocals (4–6, 10, 11); DIVA Jazz Orchestra.

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

# SEAN JONES THE SEARCH WITHIN

"Four-Time Rising Star"

—DownBeat Critics Poll

"Sean Jones embodies the 21st century jazz musician, an experimental, supremely talented type whose vision and sensibility encourages inclusion rather than separation."

—Amazon.com

Over the last decade renowned educator, composer and gifted musician **Sean Jones** has established himself as one of jazz's top young trumpeters, while also building a critically acclaimed body of work. On *The Search Within* – his fifth release on Mack Avenue Records – Jones reflects on those years past and translates that sonic journal into an extraordinarily compelling statement of its own.

Says Jones: "This is a journey inside my soul that's taken place over the past 10 years. It's an assessment of where I am in the present as well as how I've learned from my mistakes and triumphs as a way of looking into the future. This album goes very deep for me. It's a spiritual and sonic journey."

Includes Orrin Evans on piano and Fender Rhodes, saxophonists Brian Hogans (alto) and Walter Smith (tenor), bassist Luques Curtis and drummer Obed Calvaire. Special guests include Gregoire Maret on harmonica, Erika von Kleist on flute, Kahlil Bell on percussion and vocalist Carolyn Perteete.



[seanjonesmusic.com](http://seanjonesmusic.com) | [myspace.com/seanjonesjazz](http://myspace.com/seanjonesjazz) | [mackavenue.com/seanjones](http://mackavenue.com/seanjones)

## Shemekia Copeland

*Never Going Back*

TELARC 83692

★★★★½

New album, producer and label. New attitude and direction. Shemekia Copeland moves forward from her secure station as blues royalty into the roots place where blues, r&b, folk, rock, country, gospel and soul mingle without bias. Change comes as no surprise, because this modern blues woman has shown an independent streak throughout a recording career that began in 1997.

With Oliver Wood overseeing things, Copeland sings the dozen songs with feeling as first-call musicians give her much more than mere accompaniment. The urgency she pumps into "Sounds Like The Devil," a scolding of conniving politicians and greedy preachers written with her manager, John Hahn, and Brooklyn pop-soul man Kevin So, squares itself perfectly with the insistent cries from Wood's slide guitar.

As a femme fatale, Copeland sings from the deep shadows of the spooky, rumbling Hahn-Wood composition "Never Going Back To Memphis"; Marc Ribot's thrilling guitar does its damndest to evoke paranoia. The singer renders Percy Mayfield's "River's Invitation" with hard-nosed conviction while expressive heat is generated by guitarist Wood, Kofi Burbridge on electric piano and two graduates of Col. Bruce



Hampton's Southern music training camp: drummer Tyler Greenwell and bassist Ted Pecchio.

Besides the aforementioned, Copeland has two more distinctive songs under control. She finds sparks of optimism in the words of Hahn and Wood's easy-paced "Broken World," with focused and watchful John Medeski seated at the organ. She saves her best vocal performance on the album for Johnny Clyde's "Circumstances," her expressive force supplemented by guitarists Wood and Arthur Neilson.

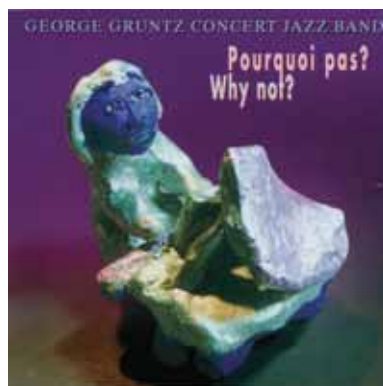
*Never Going Back* isn't without drawbacks. Copeland was dealt a lousy hand by Oliver and Chris Wood's "The Truth Is The Light," defeated by a banal lyric and a lumbering melody, and she sounds awkward handling Joni Mitchell's "Black Crow," the power in her voice oddly dissipated, with Ribot and Medeski little help. "Limousine" just runs on noxious fumes.

—Frank-John Hadley

**Never Going Back:** Sounds Like The Devil; Dirty Water; Broken World; Never Going Back To Memphis; The Truth Is The Light; Black Crow; Born A Penny; Limousine; River's Invitation; Rise Up; Big Brand New Religion; Circumstances. (47:56)

**Personnel:** Shemekia Copeland, vocals; Oliver Wood, guitars, background vocals; Ted Pecchio, bass, background vocals; Tyler Greenwell, drums, percussion; Chris Wood, bass (4, 6, 7, 11); Marc Ribot (4, 6, 7, 11), Arthur Neilson (2, 12), guitar; John Medeski (3, 6), Ike Stubblefield (1), Hammond organ; Kofi Burbridge, Wuritzer (1, 7, 9), background vocals (3, 9); Marcus Henderson, tambourine, background vocals (3, 7, 11); Mike Mattison, (3), Chonda McKnight (7, 11), background vocals.

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



## George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band

*Why Not?*

TCB 28922

★★★★½

For more than 35 years, Swiss pianist George Gruntz has successfully led his Concert Jazz Band. His orchestra has experienced frequent personnel changes but has always featured top-notch musicians, and *Why Not?* is no exception. Trumpeters Marvin Stamm and Alex Sipiagin, tuba player Howard Johnson, and trombonists Dave Barger and Gary Valente, to name a few, are all regulars in high-caliber large ensembles.

With this new opus, Gruntz delivers some of the inspired post-bop that has become his trademark. The band covers ground with some originals by band members such as Sipiagin's twirling "Wind Dance," Barger's explosive "Berne Burn" and Stamm's contemplative "When She Looks At Me." The band delivers spirited and good-humored renditions of "Struttin' With Some Barbeque" and John Coltrane's rarely covered "Big Nick," both engagingly driven by electric bassist Arie Völz.

Gruntz also contributes pieces, including "The Town I Love," which features the too-seldom-heard Larry Schneider on tenor sax. The program also includes two separate versions of the title track. Penned by Swiss composer Robert Sutter, it is full of twists and turns, with its quirkiness and tone reminiscent of Frank Zappa. It requires prowess from the soloist, and becomes a formidable feature for the nimble flute of Chris Hunter.

Gruntz does not break much new ground with *Why Not?*, but this should not diminish the value of this work. At its core, this is a solid and enjoyable big band date—which is not common these days.

—Alain Drouot

**Why Not?:** Wind Dance; Pourquoi Pas?; Struttin' With Some Barbeque; When She Looks At Me; Big Nick; In The Tradition Of Switzerland; Berne Burn; Pourquoi Pas?; The Town I Love. (70:58)

**Personnel:** George Gruntz, piano; Alexander Sipiagin, Marvin Stamm, Tatum Greenblatt, Kenny Rampton, trumpet, flugelhorn; Dave Barger, euphonium, trombone; Howard Johnson, tuba; Gary Valente, René Mosele, Earl McIntyre, trombone; Chris Hunter, Donny McCaslin, Sal Giorgianni, Larry Schneider, reeds; Arie Völz, electric bass; John Riley, drums.

» Ordering info: [tcb.ch](http://tcb.ch)

## Chet Baker with the Bradley Young Trio

*Chet In Chicago*

ENJA 9524

★★★★

*Chet In Chicago*, recorded in 1986, is the fifth release in enja's Chet Baker Legacy Series. The Bradley Young Trio and tenor saxophonist Ed Petersen, who guest solos on three tracks, joins Baker on this set of Tin Pan Alley and bebop standards, done in a no-frills, straightforward style.

Baker is at his best on the ballads, and his lyricism is made apparent right up front with his slow introduction to "Old Devil Moon." He leaves just enough space between each deliberately placed note and his breathy articulation and tone convey a sense of vulnerability. Every listen to the ballad "We'll Be Together Again" makes me want to melt into my chair and let Baker's sound envelop me. His solo is bitter-sweet, heartfelt and tender, but never saccharine.

On "Ornithology" and "Sippin' At Bells," Petersen, playing more confident and energetic, outshines Baker, who almost sounds uncomfort-



able. Baker follows Petersen's burning solo on "Crazy Rhythm" with a quiet, understated, melodic and logically built statement that provides an excellent contrast; it's his finest non-ballad performance on the album. Young's solos are solid throughout, and bassist Larry Gray and drummer Rusty Jones contribute fine solos on "Sippin' At Bells."

The album suffers slightly from its engineering. Any time Baker plays above a mezzo-forte his sound echoes. The piano booms slightly and Baker's vocals on the first eight bars of "My Funny Valentine" are too soft. Baker disciples will probably rejoice at this album's release, and while it's not a must have for everyone else, it's a fine set.

—Chris Robinson

**Chet In Chicago:** Old Devil Moon; It's You Or No One; We'll Be Together Again; Ornithology; Crazy Rhythm; My Funny Valentine; Sippin' At Bells; Solar. (54:30)

**Personnel:** Chet Baker, trumpet, vocals; Bradley Young, piano; Larry Gray, bass; Rusty Jones, drums; Ed Petersen, tenor saxophone (4, 5, 7).

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



## Randy Sandke

*Unconventional Wisdom* »

ARBORS 19365

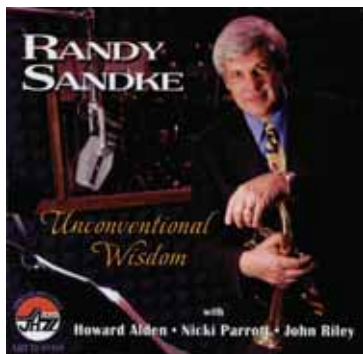
★★★★

## Warren Vaché- John Allred Quintet

*Jubilation*

ARBORS 19369

★★★★



Little that is retro hovers over *Unconventional Wisdom*, except perhaps for the presence of “New Orleans” on the program. On the contrary, Randy Sandke has made it his mission to organize his “metatonal” musical system to what he regards as some of the harmonic habits musicians find themselves falling into by default.

The album notes call this CD “the most successful convergence to date of the metatonal with the mainstream.” Yet they don’t tell us anything specific about underlying metatonal principles or where and how they converge. The intersections of theory and habit pass quietly, suggesting a system whose intentions are nuanced and intended to invigorate and not overthrow the mainstream. “Meta Blue” is a fresh, gentle and unconventional line that reflects the unexpected

a rhythm team. It begins with a curt blast, a galloping 12-bar cadenza and bopish romp through “Just One Of Those Things,” which is all Dizzy and no Bix. Sandke’s horn is warm, full-bodied and nimble. A special presence is Nicki Parrott, on bass throughout and ingénue on four vocals. She has a lovely, unaffected transparency.

Parrott also appears on *Jubilation*, recorded live in a Switzerland club. The brassy, ballsy front line puts down a rollicking program of standards, pausing rarely to reflect on ballad tempos. Cornetist Warren Vaché and trombonist John Allred enjoy a fine, often wry two-horn chemistry, never more so than when squeezing out “They Can’t Take That Away From Me,” which is played with big scooping glissandos that fall between Johnny Hodges and a stylish

thinking that has long marked many players averse to the cliché. “Nicki’s Dream,” with Sandke on straight mute, might have come from Miles Davis circa 1958; “Little Bix” shows a similar conceptual rigor on flugelhorn.

Beyond theory lays a satisfying quartet showcase in which Sandke is joined by guitarist Howard Alden and

Billy May reed section. On the other hand, when Vaché reaches down into the lower, more mellow depths of his cornet, the blend with Allred almost converges on the two-trombone team of J.J. Johnson and Kai Winding.

There is fine playing on “Song For My Father” and “Strollin’.” Vaché is on target, wise enough to play hot without any smugness or accompanying irony. “Strike Up The Band” is a hard-swinging set closer with the extra punch of two high-tension drop-out choruses that launch with a high-torque interpolation “Seven Come Eleven.” “Caravan” sags a little under weight of a good but slightly long drum solo before Vaché returns for a brief vocal on “We’ll Be Together Again.”

—John McDonough

**Unconventional Wisdom:** Just One Of Those Things; Ev’rytime We Say Goodbye; Meta Blue; New Orleans; The Best Thing For You; Nicki’s Journey; Django’s Dream; Little Bix; Chega De Saudade; December Down; For All We Know; We’re In Love; Funkallero; Toyland. (64:32)

**Personnel:** Randy Sandke, trumpet, flugelhorn; Howard Alden, guitar; Nicki Parrott, bass, vocals (2, 4, 7, 11); John Riley, drums.

**Jubilation:** Old Devil Moon; That Can’t Take That Away From Me; Song For My Father; My One And Only Love; Change Partners; Strollin’; Sweet Hunk O’ Trash; Jubilation; Strike Up The Band; Caravan; We’ll Be Together Again. (69:20)

**Personnel:** Warren Vaché, cornet, vocal (7, 11); John Allred, trombone; Tardo Hammer, piano; Nicki Parrott, bass, vocals (7); Leroy Williams, drums.

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

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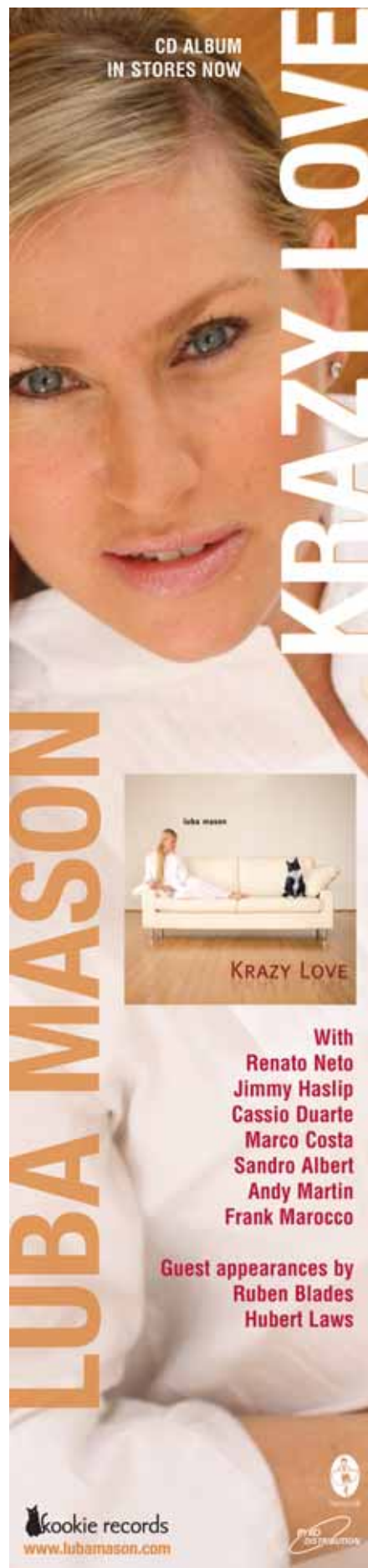
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## JAZZ

by Fred Bouchard

### File Under Vocalists

**Laïka, *Misery* (Blujazz BJB 02; 51:06)** ★★★★★½ Robert Glasper's piano blizzard shocks open "Strange Fruit," as Ivory Coast/Moroccan Laïka Fatien launches the toughest of tributes: to over-idolized icon Billie Holiday. Pure, fragile vocals eschewing swagger and sure-handed selections, admirably set, make for success. Laïka's unforced voice, with zero accent or affect but exquisite diction, redefines Lady Day's book with placid yet convincing vulnerability. Quirky duos—"What's New" with David el Malek's tenor and "All Of You" with drummer Gregory Hutchinson—and a 7/4 romp on a James P. Johnson beauty further brighten and lighten up this imaginative, unslavish homage.

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

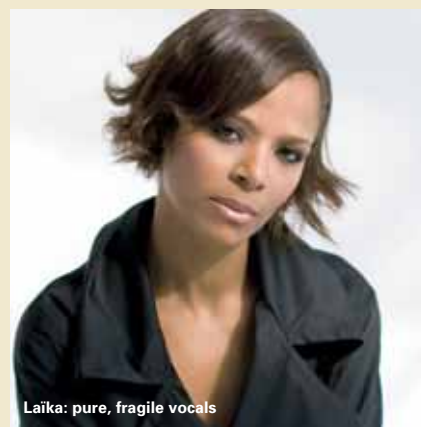
**Nikki Yanofsky, *Ella ... Of Thee I Swing* (A440 Entertainment 01; 63:30+DVD)** ★★★★★ Youth will serve this Montreal sensation, who pairs good taste and riveting chops with poise and pizzazz. The teen offers an unsettling disparity between a mature voice, capable of secure and fresh (if a tad shrill) phrasing, and chirrupy mic patter. Power ballads ("You've Changed") mix with novelty ("Old MacDonald's Farm") in a fast-paced 17-tune concert (paired with DVD, including interview). She's a bewildering reminder that her generation, in Mel Tormé's wild tune, may really go "Swingin' On The Moon." While her focus is on Ella Fitzgerald, Yanofsky manages a credible Dinah Washington on the sultry mambo "Relax Max" and Bessie Smith on "Evil Gal Blues," with a solid big band. She's a star to grow on.

Ordering info: [a440entertainment.com](http://a440entertainment.com)

**Barbara King, *Perfect Timing* (CCC Music Group; 46:30)** ★★ King's dynamic debut seems that of a seasoned pro as the bold and personable contralto belts candid vocals that channel Della Reese and Sarah Vaughan. Backed with star-studded combos (George Colligan, Carl Allen, Dwayne Burno) she declaims Christian messages in a hearty mix of Dylan, Lennon and Wonder. Smart originals include the title tune two ways and a hot "Your Smile" with Arturo O'Farrill's band and Dave Valentin's flute.

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

**Erin Bode, *The Little Garden* (Native Language 0972; 51:35)** ★★ Bode presents homegrown love songs wreathed in catchy, circular tunes—in a round, pure, intimate voice with minimum affectation, modest cuteness, discreet overdubs and Joni Mitchell's bare-bones honesty. Bode varies



Laïka: pure, fragile vocals

ALEJANDRO CABRERA

her quizzical message "love local, act global" with reflections on solitude, privilege, travel and privacy. To end the album she shifts gears with "Fences" (politics wreathed in strings) and "Goodnight" (choral prayer). Jazzy wisps creep in from co-writer Andy Maness's keyboards (on Paul Simon's "Born At The Right Time") and John Ellis' tenor sax.

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

**Deborah Latz, *Lifeline* (June Moon; 61:05)** ★★½ Pleasing vibe, decent pipes and a low-key trio mask the warts on Latz's set. After a smiling, easy "Waltz For Debby," "Sweetest Sounds" sounds soppy with odd phrasing, then the salsa-fied "I Didn't Know" hits glory strides à la Carla White. Latz's fine feel for French lends some tunes an Edith Piaf-like quick vibrato and brittle grace, but her scatting (bizarre whooshes and hollers) raises red flags and hackles. Judicious pianist Daniela Schächter makes the boss sound elegant; Joel Frahm's tenor conjures moody moments on "Feuilles Mortes" and "Don't Explain."

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

**Jane Monheit, *The Lovers, The Dreamers, And Me* (Concord 31197; 63:12)** ★★ Airy, pinched and insincere—cloying characteristics that plagued her debut persist in detracting from Monheit's claim as a serious jazz singer. Her fine pipes aren't the issue; credibility is. Saccharine seductress? Yes, in bland confections devoid of emotion like "Something Cool" and "Slow Like Honey." Narcissism rears its pretty head, too: it's no stretch to imagine her singing the coolly detached "I'm Glad There Is You" to a mirror. Glossy and world-weary, she fails the go-easy route with a literally incredible "Get Out Of Town." Fine side-men lose out in flat big-budget charts, but guitarists Romero Lubambo and Peter Bernstein shore her up admirably on afterthought tracks.

DB

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



## Quinsin Nachoff

**Horizons Ensemble**  
SELF-RELEASED

★★★½

It's always bracing to hear a lesser-known player break out of the pack with some ambitious writing for a first-rate ensemble. Even when the results fall a bit short of the mark, the effort can carry the day. Saxophonist Quinsin Nachoff has been one of the brightest young musicians in Toronto for a number of years—someone who can step easily between contemporary classical music and improvisation—and this chamber quintet recording from 2005 should win him a larger audience.

Nachoff knows that it's not enough to put high-profile guest artists like pianist John Taylor and cellist Ernst Reijseger in the window; you have to give them something to work with. His writing—bold, diverse and filled with compelling counterpoint—does the job. The approach he follows on most of the six landscape-themed compositions allows Taylor to take the lead, occasionally shadowed by the string trio, and add color with his horn. The moods that Taylor sets range from the supple dance movement on “Bogardus Place” to the minimalism of “Glacial Lake,” and Nachoff



often doesn't enter until the piece is well underway.

On occasion—such as the final section of “Bogardus Place”—Nachoff's arrangements can get too busy, but more often he pares things down to focus on texture and spare gestures. “A River Remembers Rain” is the most successful, repeating a plaintive theme around a slightly bluesy call-and-response movement and some turbulent free playing. The jauntier “African Skies” is also filled with dramatic motion, layering the strings over Taylor's piano introduction and gathering speed to culminate in a raw-toned tenor solo.

When he moves to soprano, Nachoff can call Steve Lacy to mind, particularly on “Glacial Lake,” where his grainy tone mirrors Reijseger's astringent cello and the sound of his instrument's keys add a percussive element. On both his horns, Nachoff's voice is evocative and engaging, and *Horizons Ensemble* provides an ideal setting for it.

—James Hale

**Horizons Ensemble:** Bogardus Place; Desert Landscape; A River Remembers Rain; Cartoon-Scape; Glacial Lake; African Skies. (65:06)

**Personnel:** Quinsin Nachoff, tenor and soprano saxophone; John Taylor, piano; Ernst Reijseger, cello; Nathalie Bonin, violin; Parmela Attariwala, violin.

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

## Jeff Beck

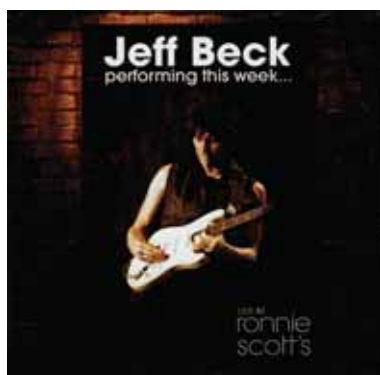
**Performing This Week ... Live At Ronnie Scott's**  
EAGLE ROCK 20150

★★★★

Could this be the greatest Jeff Beck album ever? Stoked by an aggressive rhythm section blasting fusillades at him from all angles, Beck

responds with his slurred, slippery, slimy distorted howl at its magisterial best. Sputtering machine gun blasts (Billy Cobham's “Stratus”), haunted spider's web daydreams (“Cause We've Ended As Lovers”), glistening bebop sitar hallucinations (“Nadia”), heavy metal fusoid shrapnel (“Led Boots”) and blistering 32nd-note road boogie (“Scatterbrain”) offer endless exhilaration, with nothing but burnt tire tracks in their wake.

Drummer Vinnie Colaiuta must be credited for the exemplary burn quotient, helping to raise Beck's bar and inspire him as few can. “Scatterbrain” is a study in nerve-wrecking dynamics, Beck's quartet morphing the song stage by stage, from manic tempo assault to funky march to prancing, Chick Corea-styled



samba. A brief, but lovely version of Charles Mingus' “Goodbye Pork Pie Hat” follows, then on the slow groove shuffle “Brush With The Blues” Beck cries, moans, wails and practically levitates as only he can.

Undoubtedly, a sense of '70s nostalgia exists here, such as in the Mahavishnu-esque vibe-quakes of “Space Boogie” and “Eternity's Breath.” But the players rise

above the sometimes cluttered arrangements with stunning solos of their own, such as Jason Rebello's electric piano work in “Scatterbrain” or bassist Tal Wilkenfeld's turn in “Cause We've Ended As Lovers.” Longtime Beck concert staple “A Day In The Life,” comes near the end, with Beck impersonating Lennon and McCartney, a symphony orchestra and the end of an era.

—Ken Micallef

**Performing This Week ... Live at Ronnie Scott's:** Beck's Bolero; Eternity's Breath; Stratus; Cause We've Ended As Lovers; Behind The Veil; You Never Know; Nadia; Blast From The Past; Led Boots; Angel (Footsteps); Scatterbrain; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat/Brush With The Blues; Space Boogie; Big Black; A Day in the Life; Where Were You. (70:20)

**Personnel:** Jeff Beck, guitar; Jason Rebello, keyboards; Tal Wilkenfeld, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums.

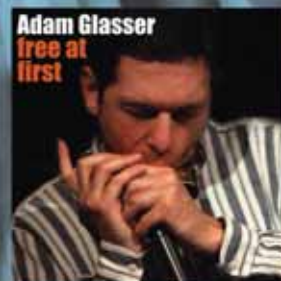
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## Marshall Gilkes

### Lost Words

ALTERNATE SIDE 003

★★★½

Marshall Gilkes sounds like an important new voice in the making. If the opening unaccompanied solo is any indication, he is a trombonist with a robust tone the jazz world has to reckon with. On this new album, Gilkes tones down his Latin jazz influences to deliver vibrant compositions that emphasize his other musical interests.

In trumpeter Michael Rodriguez, Gilkes has found a perfect match with whom he can explore his inclination for counterpoint. When the two play independent melodies before entangling them, they produce stunning results. The leader put together a terrific rhythm section to support their nimble and rich musical ideas. Pianist Jon Cowherd's dexterous right hand is backed by his rhythmic left hand, which peppers his discourse with the necessary dramatic accents. Clarence Penn's timely explosions and crisp drumming contribute to the liveliness that inhabits Gilkes' work.

As a composer, Gilkes' originality comes through with the themes that have a chamber music quality. They make the two horns sound stately and provide a new canvas for his time signature experiments. But the trombonist falls short of achieving total success when he veers toward the cloying ("Late Arrival"), although the group does create inventive solos from predictable substance.

—Alain Drouot

**Lost Words:** Crossover Intro; The Crossover; Late Arrival; Lost Words; Five Nights; Titeuf; What's Next; End In Sight. (56:00)

**Personnel:** Marshall Gilkes, trombone; Michael Rodriguez, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jon Cowherd, piano; Yasushi Nakamura, bass; Clarence Penn, drums.

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



## Craig Green & David King

LONG SONG 108

★★★½

David King is a brave-hearted musician who can swing sweetly one moment, then quickly erase any notion of splang-a-lang as he smashes his drum kit to pulp. As he does in The Bad Plus, King makes defying expectation his mission on this collaboration with guitarist Craig Green. But Green and King don't simply play guitars, drums and occasional piano; they bang on gongs, trample foot pedals and slide combs against strings.

There are multiple paths into this music, which is entirely improvised. It works well in the semi-pastoral "Walk Left," with Green shaking his guitar neck to create glowing, skittering effects, while King plays piano like some son of Thelonious Monk set afire. They cross sentiments and meet in lyrical moments. "Rock, Paper, Scissors" is equally fascinating, its martial snare drumming and eerie treated piano recalling Chinese warlords pillaging a village. King scalds the senses on the speedy "Part 3," ripping his brushes as Green's guitar produces menacing tones. Sometimes this collaboration is more "beat it with your fist" than massage your temples, as in the noisy "Faux Hawk"; less would have been more here. However, King and Green never overstay their invitation.

—Ken Micallef

**Craig Green & David King:** Thin Blue Ice; Faux Hawk; Part 2; Walk Left; Rock, Paper, Scissors; Cinematic; Stand Right; Part 3; Praise The Shadows; Rainey Qunciera; Snow Plow; Border Town 1929. (70:17)

**Personnel:** Craig Green, guitar, electronics; David King, drums, percussion, piano, vibes.

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



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## Previte/ Petrella/Salis

**Big Guns**

AUAND 9015

★★★

As with many all-improvised sessions, this project between U.S. drummer Bobby Previte, Italian trombonist Gianluca Petrella and Italian keyboardist Antonello Salis is a mixed bag. The program is nicely varied from track to track. But Salis, who alternates between piano, Hammond and Fender Rhodes, is the only one who sounds at ease, finding fresh and provocative gambits on every piece. Previte comes off as the least inspired participant. He plays with loads of power and sometimes drives the music from the pocket (as on "Blues For Gio"), but much of the time he sounds like he's firing off a row of cannons.

Petrella is a monster on his instrument, and previous work has revealed his sharp grasp of electronic enhancements, but he overdoes it a little here. Reverb effects pedals sometimes reduce his razor-sharp phrasing and full-bodied tone into an oil slick of dubby low-end. When he plays clean lines, he and Salis usually lock into some gripping interactions, from slinking, guttural growls against the splattery piano figures on the title track or fat post-bop riffing against greasy and spooky Hammond trills on "The Battle Of Zama." Some actual tunes would have helped. —*Peter Margasak*

**Big Guns:** Landscape; Twilight Zone; Control Freak; PM; Big Guns; Just Following Orders; The Battle Of Cannae; The Battle Of Zama; Blues For Gio; Profondo Notte: Five Fifteen; Five Twenty Five; Five Fifty One. (46:51)

**Personnel:** Gianluca Petrella, trombone, effects, melodica; Antonello Salis, piano, Hammond organ, Fender Rhodes; Bobby Previte, drums.

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



## Mario Pavone Double Tenor Quintet

**Ancestors**

PLAYSCAPE 011508

★★★★

Perhaps an asterisk is indicated next to the name Double Tenor Quintet since Jimmy Greene and Tony Malaby also play soprano saxophone. In terms of delivering the traditional punch of the two-tenor front line, however, Greene and Malaby easily clear the historically high bar. Still, the date is sufficiently fueled by Mario Pavone's smart, well-hooked compositions and a sterling rhythm section rounded out by Peter Madsen and Gerald Cleaver to elevate it above the stereotypical showcase of sparring steroidal sax wielders.

Often, when an album is dedicated to relatively recently departed giants like, in this case, Andrew Hill and Dewey Redman, their influences are heard on discrete tracks. Instead, Pavone has melded the sly structural features the pianist favored and the earthy swing the saxophonist mined from quirky outbound material. Additionally, Pavone's signature pile-driving attack and booming sound repeatedly allow Madsen and Cleaver to vigorously test the tensile strength of the compositions.

*Ancestors* is the 10th recording Pavone has led or co-led on Playscape. Like its predecessors, the album has a rallying spirit and a progressive bead on traditional practice. It is what jazz needs from its eminent leaders.

—*Bill Shoemaker*

**Ancestors:** Ancestors; Strata Blue; Tones; Iskmix; Arc For Puppy; Beige Structure; Pachuca; Andrew. (51:18)

**Personnel:** Mario Pavone, bass; Tony Malaby, Jimmy Greene, tenor and soprano saxophone; Peter Madsen, piano; Gerald Cleaver, drums.

» Ordering info: [playscape-recordings.com](http://playscape-recordings.com)



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## Michael Wolff

*Joe's Strut*

WRONG 016

★★★★

Michael Wolff builds his works on a solid understanding of jazz composition, from their integrations of harmonic and thematic content to their flexibility in allowing room for exploration. As a player, Wolff is equally reliable; his up-tempo solos can swing hard, and he has the temperament to leave space where it belongs on ballads.

All of that is clear throughout *Joe's Strut*. But it's also obvious that something is absent—idiosyncrasy, that flash that brands a performance or a composition sufficiently that its source is easy to apprehend. This is true on the album's weakest number, the title track blues variant. The tune is built on a simple piano motif, which might sizzle a little more over a Mardi Gras rhythm. Instead, Wolff sets it to straight-eights and a backbeat, played without much enthusiasm by drummer Victor Jones. This seems to encourage Wolff to channel his solo through a series of bluesy licks, repeated notes and other clichés.

The same point applies to the album's stronger moments. On the ballad "Wheel Of Life," the rhythm is implied more than articulated by bass and drums, and the texture evokes the impressionist ethos cultivated by one of Wolff's influences, the late Bill Evans. In the forefront, Wolff and Steve Wilson, playing soprano sax, craft an eloquent conversation, with inflections and pauses that suggest thoughtful as well as artful discourse. A similar intelligence enhances "If I Were A Bell," which simmers quietly as the players leave lots of room—yet it swings with a pulse that's as irresistible as it is sometimes ephemeral. In the most revealing moment in this package, Wolff finds the essence of "Come Rain Or Come Shine" by paring it down to the melody and a series of single notes in the low register. *Joe's Strut* delivers, smoothly and seamlessly. For some, that's enough. But for those who appreciate, say, Joe Zawinul, it's nice to flash a little seam. —Robert Doerschuk

**Joe's Strut:** Harbour Island; Joe's Strut; Wheel Of Life; If I Were A Bell; The Third You; Freedom; Come Rain Or Come Shine. (52:24)

**Personnel:** Michael Wolff, piano; Steve Wilson, alto and soprano saxophone; Ian Young, tenor saxophone; Rich Goods, Chip Jackson, bass; Victor Jones, drums.

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

## Taylor Ho Bynum Sextet

*Asphalt Flowers Forking Paths*

HATOLOGY 675

★★★★

Attempt to describe Anthony Braxton's music at your peril; despite a dogged determination to articulate and explore his every idea at length, his music is as broad as it is deep, and full of change. Brass man Taylor Ho Bynum is a former Braxton student and current MVP, playing with him in large and small ensembles. He's learned a lot from Braxton about giving the big picture and the little details their due.

*Asphalt Flowers Forking Paths*, Bynum's second sextet album, flows like a round trip. It begins with a solo, then a trio, then the whole band plays and then they reverse the process until Bynum stands alone once more. The structure may seem schematic, but it creates a framework for many different things to happen at unpredictable moments.

The opening solo statement is a series of gurgles and growls that withholds any evidence that it came from a brass instrument for nearly half its length; slap it on without looking and you'll



shatter, the head reappears. That jauntiness sounds sneaky, but in a good way.

The sextet finally arrives on "whYeXpli-CitieS (Part I)," which erupts with a violent storm of guitar feedback that yields to yearning, blue chamber music, which in turn morphs into agitated improv debate. Throughout the record, the changes in tone, texture and style keep coming, and the players rise to the challenge, modulating their voices and withholding or asserting their presence in order to make them work. There's plenty of solid soloing, but the way they execute the transitions impresses. —Bill Meyer

**Asphalt Flowers Forking Paths:** Open; Look Below; whYeXpliCiteS (Parts I–III); Goffstown; Close. (44:15)

**Personnel:** Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; Matt Bauder, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Jessica Pavone, viola; Mary Halvorson, Evan O'Reilly, electric guitar; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.

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

## Sheila Jordan

*Winter Sunshine*

JUSTIN TIME 233

★★★★½

Beginning moments into the first track and repeatedly throughout this live set, we are reminded that the star of the show was 79 years old when this was recorded. This is no plea for cheap applause or excuse for a sub-par performance; more likely, Sheila Jordan is teasing those who might be fooled by her youthful verve into thinking she must have gotten carded to get into the venue.

She gets a little pitchy. Often she swoops or wobbles around the note rather than tagging it precisely. None of that matters. What matters is the smile Jordan brings into her delivery, even when she simply sustains one long vowel.

She evokes Peggy Lee's "Fever" in "Comes Love," but in place of sultry camp she leads listeners in clapping their hands, giggles delightedly, invites women to slap their negligent dates and turns the realization that she doesn't have an ending for the song into a hip coda. She becomes a quizzical kid on "Dat Dere," and on "Whose Little Angry Man Are You?" she seems to assume a Native American persona as she chants her solo choruses. She scats occasionally, but seems more comfortable when spinning sto-



ries into her variations on the tune. After setting "Lady Be Good" to a slow ballad tempo, she caresses the words into a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, noting specifically that she remains the untouchable mistress of vocalese.

For those who conclude that Jordan is more comfortable straying from rather than interpreting a tune, she closes

a brisk "I Remember You" with a brief flourish on the final chord: "Did you notice that I sang the last chorus the exact melody?"

Maybe because this gig took place in Canada, at Montreal's Upstairs in February 2008, Jordan ruminates at one point, with impish dark humor, about losing her memory, not making enough on Social Security to survive, and wishing she could move to Canada for "free hospitalization." Like other riffs about her age, their effect is to draw us closer into this artist's embrace, which feels as sexy, playful and assuring as it has for all the seasons of Jordan's career.

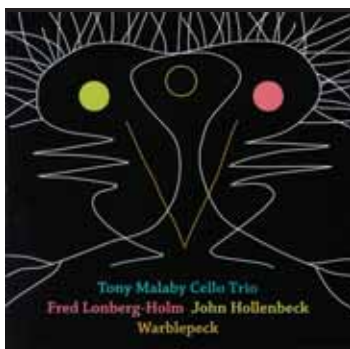
—Robert Doerschuk

**Winter Sunshine:** Comes Love; I Remember You; Dialogue (How 'Bout That); Lady Be Good; Whose Little Angry Man Are You?; Dialogue (79 Years Old); Dat Dere; Ballad For Miles/It Never Entered My Mind; All God's Chillun Got Rhythm/Little Willie Leaps; Dialogue (Be Bop); The Crossing; Sheila's Blues. (63:39)

**Personnel:** Sheila Jordan, vocals; Steve Amirault, piano; Kieran Overs, bass; André White, drums.

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





## Tony Malaby Cello Trio

Warblepeck

SONGLINES 1574

★★★½

Recorded live off the floor with a simple collection of instruments, saxophonist Tony Malaby's first meeting with versatile cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm covers an exceptional range of textures and moods. While there's nothing complicated about the material, the trio has so much coiled energy that it sounds like a lot goes on in each song.

Much credit for the recording's diversity and relentless momentum rests with percussionist John Hollenbeck, who shifts easily between drum kit, various mallet instruments and an array of "small kitchen appliances." From the jolting rhythm of the title song, which clunks forward like it's on square wheels, to the slow drag of "Scribble Boy," to the tight syncopation of the latter half of "Sky Church," Hollenbeck never repeats himself. He shifts to melodica for a ghostly take of Bill Frisell's "Waiting Inside," wheezing out acidic-sounding chords against Malaby's dark, breathy tenor sax and Lonberg-Holm's droning cello to create a sonic experience that spans Europe from west to east.

Malaby may be best known for his broad-shouldered tenor, but his soprano steals the show here. Unlike either the prevailing post-Coltrane or Steve Lacy models, Malaby seldom takes his soprano into the upper register, preferring a husky purr for his meandering line on "Anemone" and in "Scribble Boy."

As a bandleader, Malaby also excels at sequencing his program. There are fiercely paced selections here, like "Two Shadows" and "Sky Church"—where Lonberg-Holm's engaging cello riff makes the Jimi Hendrix reference of the title obvious—and barely there atmospherics like "Fly On The Wall" and "Jackhat 2." Making them sound of a piece is the art that Malaby works best on *Warblepeck*.

—James Hale

**Warblepeck:** Warblepeck; Jackhat 1; Two Shadows; Waiting Inside; Fly On The Wall/Remolino; Anemone; Anemone Vamp; Sky Church; Scribble Boy; Jackhat 2; Chicotaso. (54:38)

**Personnel:** Tony Malaby, tenor and soprano saxophone; Fred Lonberg-Holm, cello, electronics; John Hollenbeck, drums, marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel, melodica, small kitchen appliances.

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

## BLUES

by Frank-John Hadley

### Dust Their Brooms

EG Kight: *It's Hot In Here* (M.C.

0062; 52:59) ★★★½ A real singer

and rhythm guitarist with a

musical disposition of her own,

Kight does more than heat up

the 11 original blues-rock tunes

and one non-original on her

fifth album. "The Georgia

Songbird," as she's called, rec-

ognizes the humanity in the

words of the reflective, slow-

swaying "Through The Eyes Of

A Child," and she feels the tor-

ment most interpreters don't

know exists in the older-than-

sin "House Of The Rising Sun."

On the aforementioned and two

others, lead guitarist Ken Wynn plays with

clear articulation and imagination.

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

Paul Rishell & Annie Raines: *A Night In Woodstock* (Mojo Rodeo 1950; 58:25)

★★★½ This club gig in 2005, part acoustic

duo and part plugged-in band, gives

lessons in the power of the blues. Rishell

shows remarkable understanding of his

guitars, and his singing voice breathes

with knowing grace and burnished intens-

ity. Playing bittersweet harp, Raines taps

emotions as expressively. They approach

an original like "Moving To The Country"

(joined by their band) with the same

warmth as they do Tommy Johnson's

"Canned Heat Blues" (no accompani-

ment). Only "Bad Credit," a little more

than two minutes long, fails to affirm their

musicality. Good friend John Sebastian

joins Raines for the so-so harmonica duet

titled "Orange Dude Blues."

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

Blues Caravan: *Guitars And Feathers*

(Ruf 1140; 73:02) ★★★½ Germany's Ruf

label teamed veterans Deborah Coleman

and Candye Kane with young Briton Dani

Wilde for an European tour last year.

Kane, just a few months past successful

cancer surgery, shows herself to be a rare

powerhouse who packs plenty of heart

into every word she sings. Coleman offers

pleading inflections of voice and guitar

that ring true. Both handle good songs.

On the debit side, Wilde's voice flounders

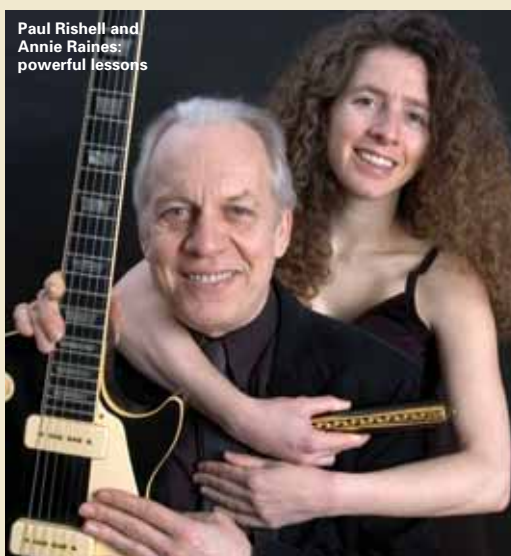
when she strives for visceral excitement,

and the frisky support band lays down a

lot of loud nothing much.

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

Gina Sicilia: *Hey Sugar* (Vizztone/Swingnation 388009; 44:06) ★★ This 23-



Paul Rishell and Annie Raines: powerful lessons

year-old vocalist polishes her precocious talent to a higher shine on her second album. But blindingly so—she's prone to stridency and proves haphazard about the refinements of phrasing and emotional detail that characterize outstanding singing. It's anybody's guess what style Sicilia will stick with in the future, bounding from Chicago blues and classic jazz (with trumpeter Jon-Erik Kellso) to sentimental old-style r&b and blues-sprinkled country music.

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

Rory Block: *Blues Walkin' Like A Man*

(Stony Plain 1329; 54:03) ★½ The back

cover quote about Block's tribute to coun-

try blues great Son House alleges the

singer/guitarist "can hold her own with

the legends who inspired her." Phooey

blooey. It can reasonably be claimed here

that her facsimiles of "Preachin' Blues"

and a dozen more classics are, pick your

poison, heavy-handed, showy or glib.

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

Ike and Tina Turner: *Sing The Blues*

(Acrobat 001; 56:23) ★★★ In the late '60s,

just before covering The Beatles, Sly

Stone and Creedence Clearwater Revival

songs that brought them overdue acclaim

in the United States, the Turners cut two

blues albums called *Outta Season* and

*The Hunter*—combined here, minus two

LP tracks from each. Tina brings extrovert-

ed carnality to songs associated with,

among others, B.B. King, Jimmy Reed,

Robert Johnson and T-Bone Walker, as

Ike's spiky guitar jabs at listeners' ears.

The funky-up arrangements are as dated

as the era's maxi coats and down-to-the-

knees strands of pearls. DB

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

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HYDRO

## Michael Bates

**Clockwise**

GREENLEAF MUSIC 1009

★★★½

It's fitting that the title of the third album by bassist Michael Bates, a Canadian now based in New York, refers to motion since the music created by his quartet, Outside Sources, never stops moving, often in several simultaneous directions. The leader's compositions are spiky and rigorous, packed with jagged melodic counterpoint, brash tempo shifts and deep, craggy grooves.

It's not only the instrumentation that borrows from the classic Ornette Coleman Quartet, with the loosey-goosey interaction, yet the tunes themselves are miles away. By packing in so many quick-changing ideas, Bates risks composing pieces that arrive as schematic exercises—a flashy display of prog daring-do with no heart. Luckily, his excellent band not only brings the pieces to life, but also makes them sound natural and touched with unlikely grace.

Bates and drummer Jeff Davis are the band's motor, providing sparks and propulsion no matter how tricky and active the levers and gears



grind. They balance fluidity and chunkiness, shaping tactile rhythmic figures as malleable armatures. Plying flesh to the bone is the assured frontline of saxophonist Quinsin Nachoff and trumpeter Russ Johnson. They navigate the bassist's complex themes with apparent ease—injecting subtle commen-

tary—and when it comes time to improvise they let it fly, veering into free territory without surrendering the required awareness of where they are within each tune. It's a breathtaking balancing act.

The record was produced by Dave Douglas, whose influence as a composer is acutely felt here. But Bates is clearly emerging, and once he pares down the info in his tunes, watch out.

—Peter Margasak

**Clockwise:** Great Exhibition; Damasa; Rideau Medals; Machinery; Fellini; Lighthousekeeping; Marching; Bloodletting; The Russian School. (52:30)

**Personnel:** Michael Bates, bass; Russ Johnson, trumpet; Quinsin Nachoff, saxophone, clarinet; Jeff Davis, drums.

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

## Derek Trucks Band

**Already Free**

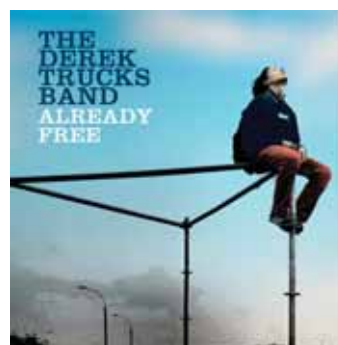
RCA VICTOR 88697 32781

★★★½

Those who regard guitarist Derek Trucks as only a talented purveyor of enlightened Southern rock stylings are doing the equivalent of applauding the opening act and then leaving before the headliner. Trucks' music, powered by his phenomenal technique and equally adventurous sensibilities, is always a mini-festival and *Already Free*, arguably his best release yet, effectively showcases his all-embracing artistry.

Yes, he's a member of the Allman Brothers and Eric Clapton's touring band. But Trucks' consistently questing music is as rooted in Mumbai as it is Macon, as he deftly incorporates international influences and core Americana attitudes to create a fusion unlike any other.

Trucks kicks off the album in fine fashion with a suitably rambunctious rendition of *The Basement Tapes*-era Bob Dylan cult favorite "Down In The Flood," one of the guitarist's standard concert openers. The straightahead soul of "Sweet Inspiration," distinguished by vocalist Mike Mattison's raw emotional reading, serves



to further anchor the album in recognizable roots material. But songs like the subdued Eastern-flavored "Maybe This Time," sung by Clapton bandmate Doyle Bramhall II, are most representative of Trucks' superbly realized intention of coalescing cultures to form a new musical identity.

Big Maybelle's classic "I Know" is one of the best

examples of the synergistic success of the Trucks musical method as he guides the song through a contemplative cross-cultural opening before igniting it into a blazing display of swaggering Southern-fried guitar. In similar fashion, the low-tech acoustic original "Back Where I Started," with wife Susan Tedeschi taking the vocal, finds Trucks playing bottleneck blues on an Eastern instrument to create an effective sort of Delta sarod sound.

—Michael Point

**Already Free:** Down In The Flood; Something To Make You Happy; Maybe This Time; Sweet Inspiration; Don't Miss Me; Get What You Deserve; Our Love; Down Don't Bother Me; Days Is Almost Gone; Back Where I Started; I Know; Already Free. (55:11)

**Personnel:** Derek Trucks, guitar; Todd Smallie, bass; Yonrico Scott, percussion; Kofi Burbridge, keyboards; Mike Mattison, Doyle Bramhall II (3), Susan Tedeschi (10), vocals; Count M'Butu, percussion.

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



## Bossa Commemorations

Last year marked the 50th birthday of bossa nova—launched in 1958 when samba singer Elizeth Cardoso recorded a pair of new tunes by Antonio Carlos Jobim and Vinícius de Moraes. João Gilberto played guitar on those sessions and later that year he put his fingerprints all over the same tunes. Loads of albums were released to commemorate the occasion, and Blue Note tossed in six reissues. **Chá Dançante** (EMI Brasil 16733; 22:03) ★★★ was one of the earliest recordings by pianist João Donato (although he plays mostly accordion here), a key architect of the new genre. The 1956 instrumental session isn't bossa nova—it focuses more on baiões and sambas—but the jazzy bounce and the production by a young Jobim certainly presaged what was to come.

By the time guitarist Luiz Bonfá—best known for the compositions he wrote for the film version of *Black Orpheus*—released **O Violão E O Samba** (EMI Brasil 16740; 28:11) ★★★½ in 1962, the bossa nova had gone beyond craze status to become the national sound of the time. Bonfá made loads of the records during this period, and this is one of the best. Backed by a small group that included drummer Edison Machado, he surveys a mixture of originals, classic sambas and Jobim's "Lamento No Morro"; while there are some average vocals on a few cuts, the real pleasure is hearing him dig into the harmony of the pieces in thickets of chords and fleet single-note runs.

Shortly after making that record, Bonfá headed up to the United States, where he helped spread the sound. So did organist Walter Wanderley, who ended up playing regularly with Astrud Gilberto. Before he left he made the instrumental collection **Samba No Esquema De Walter Wanderley** (EMI Brasil 16748; 28:23) ★★★, one of several recordings by him that probably established the clichéd lounge-style of bossa nova. Wanderley exhibited a frenetic rhythm style, consistently opting for staccato stabs over any sustain. While these days the music sounds a bit stilted and cheesy, there's no denying his preternatural feel for the music's buoyant groove.

Keyboardist and arranger Eumir Deodato also found success in the U.S., particularly with crossover efforts produced by Creed Taylor, but on 1964's **Idéias** (EMI Brasil 16731; 29:27) ★★★★★ his vivid imagination brought the sound of surprise to a slew of



Eumir Deodato:  
vivid imagination

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

bossa novas penned by folks like Marcos Valle, Jobim and Roberto Menescal. Leading a crack nine-piece combo—including the astonishing percussion team of Wilson das Neves and Dom Um Romão—Deodato moves the horn section, guitarist Durval Ferreira, and his own piano and organ around like chess pieces in strategic substitutions and alterations that make every chorus sound new.

While Cardoso may have been the singer on the first bossa nova record, on her 1966 duo album with Ciro Monteiro, **A Bossa Eterna** (EMI Brasil 16851; 27:50) ★★★ she serves up old-school samba with mannered arrangements by Caçulinha and Seu Conjunto, where queasy organ and accordion dominate. Still, her full-throated singing brings style and verve to the material and she has a natural rapport with Monteiro, another samba vet.

The eponymous album by **Quarteto Novo** (EMI Brasil 16746; 31:36) ★★★★★ had even less to do with bossa nova, but it's a classic, a key launch pad for future legends Hermeto Pascoal and Aírto Moreira. The group, which functioned originally as the backing band for singer Geraldo Vandré (who composed much of the material here), hailed from the country's culturally rich northeast, and local styles like the baião form an important part of the sound. But the adventurous, constantly morphing arrangements take the folkloric sources into the stratosphere, with the combo producing a deceptively rich, varied sound. The jazz-fueled excursions its alumni would soon embark on are hinted at, but Quarteto Novo functions as a model of precision and succinctness, packing endless invention into three-minute gems.

DB

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## HISTORICAL

by John McDonough

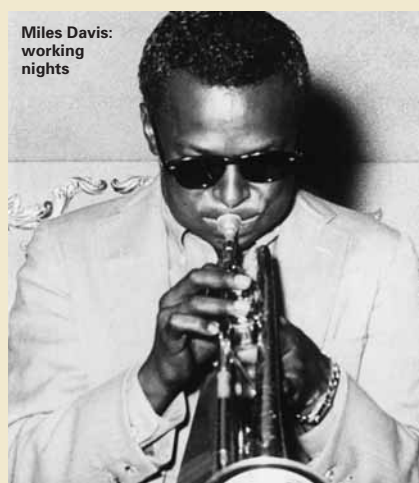
### On The Air

**The Miles Davis All-Stars: *Broadcast Sessions 1958-59* (Acrobat 004; 70:46) ★★★★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>** shines so brightly among the Acrobat reissues reviewed here, it almost blinds us to the others. The music is only part of the lure. Superbly recorded and garnished with a bohemian ambiance, it has an intimate jazz-club verisimilitude that crackles with historical and emotional context. Davis was far from an anointed legend in 1959. While he was making his landmark recordings for Columbia by day, he was still working small jazz clubs at night. It was a characterization that appealed to his own sense of theater and permitted his fans to savor their own exclusivity and hipness. This CD gives us a glimpse of those working nights.

The first four tunes ("Four," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "Walkin'" and "Two Bass Hit") date from May 1958 and offer the initial recordings of the quintet with pianist Bill Evans. John Coltrane was in search of a voice. The next three pieces from November 1958 include the elegant Cannonball Adderley and Red Garland, who replaced Evans on short notice. It's hard-swinging music, even from Coltrane, beginning with "Sid's Ahead" and an eager "Blackbird," which Adderley sits out but Garland digs deeply into. In the final two tracks from January 1959, Davis is sparse and teasing while Trane and Adderley are wall-to-wall. One cautionary note: "What Is This Thing Called Love" is falsely identified as a Davis group, but is a Gerry Mulligan jam session with Art Farmer, Gigi Gryce and others.

**The Dave Brubeck Quartet: *On The Radio Live 1956-57* (Acrobat 015; 71:21) ★★★★★** catches his most celebrated group in the early prime of its maturity. Brubeck's jazz standing then owed more to alto saxophonist Paul Desmond than his own skills. This is not to say that Brubeck doesn't deliver interesting work here; "Stardust" and "A Minor Thing" are thoughtful, even when his lines tend to swell into large bricks. But few could swing harder and lighter than the brilliant Desmond. These 15 titles from Basin Street and Blue Note broadcasts catch the group's charms in fine, full-bodied sound.

**Sarah Vaughan and Woody Herman: *The 1963 "Live" Guard Sessions* (Acrobat 016; 60:20) ★★★★★** offers a pair of previously issued promos for the National Guard that combine interludes of awkward patter with a mix of music from multiple



Miles Davis:  
working  
nights

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

sources, most well recorded, in their only encounter. Each of Vaughan's eight songs are performed with a trio, with Herman accompanying on clarinet without the band. At least three of Herman's band numbers are spliced in from live remotes of undisclosed origins. The 1963 Herman band was among his best. But the format gives little breathing space to its talent. Vaughan is in spectacular voice as usual.

Carmen McRae is more relaxed in ***Live At The Flamingo Jazz Club, London May 1961* (Acrobat 014; 37:59) ★★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>**, a short club set that is reissued without anything to supplement the original 1962 LP. We still have 11 familiar songs served straight up by one of the finest post-war singers at the height of her talent. McRae would look for subtle and unexpected ways to reshape a lyric. Note how she lingers on the word "wonder" in "Stardust."

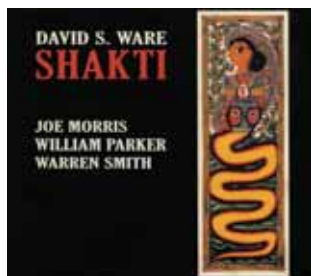
Frank Sinatra tackles a mix of standards, contemporary pop tunes and a few novelties in jovial fashion on ***The Lucky Strike "Lite-Up Time" Shows 1949-1950* (Acrobat 013; 40:30) ★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>**. Assembled from about 10 programs with the old-radio flavor intact, the charts are bright and the "thin" jokes amusing. Trumpeter Ziggy Elman is impressive on two pieces, and Sinatra's take on "Body And Soul" with Bobby Hackett is lovely.

While Rosemary Clooney was scoring her early hits in Mitch Miller's Columbia encampment, she often found opportunities (with Ellington, Goodman and Harry James) to reveal the jazz-friendly instincts that lay behind the hits. The 16 transcriptions of ***On The Air* (Acrobat 003; 46:19) ★★★★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>** mostly give her the songs and big band charts that do credit to her talents. A couple of now politically incorrect oldies add further charm.

DB

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





## David S. Ware

### Shakti

AUM FIDELITY 052

★★★★

Shakti, the Hindu goddess and the emanation of energy, power and creativity, has been an inspiration for other jazz musicians. Saxophonist David S. Ware's 23rd outing as a leader comes packaged with pertinent folk artwork and as Ware's poetic CD notes caution: "Don't try with intellect reason logic to understand [Shakti's] ways/she assumes myriad of forms/personal impersonal." One should warily assess Ware's cathartic playing with prosaic judgment.

As with Sonny Rollins, although Ware is an entirely different player, there is an uncompromising individuality to Ware's approach. He wanders alone, William Parker's deep-pawed bass his footprints, like a wounded bear in the wilderness on the marathon "Nataraj." This track runs almost 20 minutes and features several bluesy solos from Joe Morris. Morris doesn't rush his lines and shadows Ware nicely; his notes have a bulbous, bell-like sound. Warren Smith, a percussionist with a resumé including stints with Gil Evans and Roland Kirk, provides a surround-sound polyrhythmic forest of cymbal splashes and rumbling toms.

During a period in "Nataraj," Parker is all whinnying arco, with Ware burrowing for something (this excavating aspect of his playing recalls Fred Anderson), and Smith busy on all parts of the kit; the separation of the sound is wondrous. Ware's deployment of kalimba on "Namah" provides respite from the perennial turbulence of his tenor, which returns with sweet-and-sour anguish-mixed-with-ecstasy, eventually morphing into hasty tourniquets of notes and tobogganing plangency.

The artful presentation of some limbo-like internal landscape is emphasized by the track fades, which occur at moments when Ware is lifting off. "Crossing Samsara" is a good example, as he quests for something in the Himalayan upper register just as the sound is squeezed away, leaving you wanting more, convinced that life is all hills and troughs, but there must be eternity.

—Michael Jackson

**Shakti:** Crossing Samsara; Nataraj; Reflection; Namah; Antidromic; Shakti—Durga, Devi, Kali. (68:15)

**Personnel:** David S. Ware, tenor saxophone, kalimba (4); Joe Morris, guitar, percussion (4); William Parker, bass; Warren Smith, drums.

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

## Shakers N' Bakers

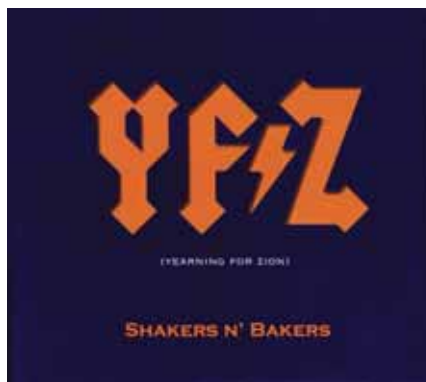
### Yearning For Zion

LITTLE (I) MUSIC 103

★★½

Shakers N' Bakers gets its words from the divinely inspired vision songs of the mid-19th century Shakers, and the group based certain compositions on this record upon the work of John Adams, Arvo Part and György Ligeti. But it neglects to acknowledge one of their most important progenitors—Albert Ayler. Shakers N' Bakers sounds a lot like the controversial recordings that Ayler made for Impulse, in the way Ayler blended gospel and pop song with free-jazz, not to mention his choice to swaddle much of his late period music in harpsichord and spacey keyboards.

Like *New Grass* and *Music Is The Healing Force Of The Universe*, *Yearning For Zion* evokes the power to inspire and alienate that can infuse alternative spirituality. And the stumbling block resides in the same place. Mary LaRose and Miles Griffith are more skilled singers than Mary Parks, Ayler's erstwhile vocal foil. But in



saxophonist Jeff Lederer, persuasively inhabits the varied settings, from near-lullaby to jittery reggae to manic march. Lederer and guest clarinetist Andrew D'Angelo twine reed lines to such soulful effect on "Scour And Scrub" that I hope they make a follow-up album—and that it's all instrumental.

—Bill Meyer

**Yearning For Zion:** In Me Canoe; Even Shakers Get The Blues; The Roar Of G\_D; Scour And Scrub; Chinese!!!; Lay Me Low; Laughing John's Interrogatory; Yearning For Zion; Limber Zeal. (51:52)

**Personnel:** Mary LaRose, Miles Griffith, vocals; Jeff Lederer, tenor and soprano saxophone; Jamie Saft, electric harpsichord, organ, piano; Chris Lightcap, bass; Allison Miller, Matt Wilson (4, 5), drums; Mark Feldman, violin (2, 3, 9); Andrew D'Angelo, bass clarinet, alto saxophone (4, 5); Stephen LaRosa, electric harpsichord (9).

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## John Beasley

### Letter To Herbie

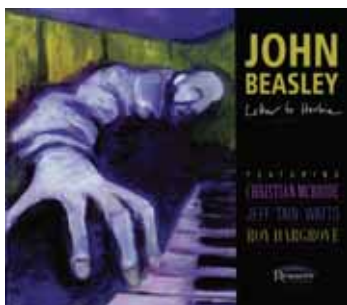
RESONANCE 1003

★★★★

Well-played, smartly executed and exhibiting an affection for the album's namesake, *Letter To Herbie* finds John Beasley covering a fair amount of Herbie Hancock's career. Of the 10 tunes here, two were written by Beasley as vehicles to express Hancock's influence on his pen, with one by Wayne Shorter, along with seven Hancock originals, including a hybrid of two Hancock songs.

The best tribute albums can stand alone without reference to the subject at hand; people not familiar with Hancock's work should be able to enjoy this project as well as any fan of Hancock's. But will they? Fans of straightahead jazz with some experimental spirit thrown in are likely to find their fingers snapping and their toes tapping.

However, some of the material has a cleverness and too-pat quality. For every "4 AM," there is the distractingly reinvented "Bedtime Voyage." "4 AM" showcases the best this band and Beasley have to offer. It's a no-nonsense, uptempo swinging remake, complete with some fine drumming by Jeff "Tain" Watts. "Bedtime



Voyage," which blends Hancock's "Tell Me A Bedtime Story" with his "Maiden Voyage," is not such a sympathetic remake. Two great songs are neutered of their beauty by Beasley's rearrangement with the extended band. I kept wanting each song to play out only to have it flipped over to the other song. Beasley turns "Chan's

Song" into a slow-moving funky number, while a trio plays the ballad "Still Time" true to form.

Beasley's "Hear And Now" resembles Hancock's "Dolphin Dance," and his "Three Finger Snap" recalls "4 AM" as it's an uptempo, straightahead trio piece, where the playing emerges triumphant with a not-so-subtle nod to "One Finger Snap." That self-conscious quality comes through again on Hancock's "The Naked Camera" (1967), which, while echoing some of Hancock's funky electric '70s vibe, still sounds stilted.

—John Ephland

**Letter To Herbie:** 4 AM; Bedtime Voyage; Chan's Song; Three Finger Snap; The Naked Camera; Eye Of The Hurricane; Diana; Hear And Now; Still Time; Vein Melter. (50:50)

**Personnel:** John Beasley, piano; Fender Rhodes, synthesizer; Christian McBride, acoustic and electric bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums; Roy Hargrove, trumpet; Steve Tavaglione, alto flute, bass clarinet, synthesizer; Michael O'Neill, guitar; Louis Conte, percussion.

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

## Tim Ries

### Stones World

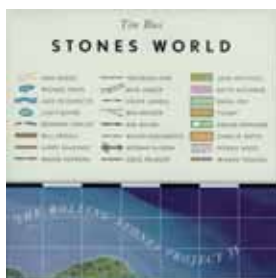
SUNNYSIDE/TAMES 4104

★★★★½

Saxophonist Tim Ries has played almost everywhere on the planet as a member of the Rolling Stones

touring band. His previous *Stones Project* release recast the band's material in a relaxed jazz format, but its sequel—using an array of international stars performing in their own styles—takes the Stones' music on a world tour showcasing indigenous musicians in an assortment of innovative settings.

*Stones World* is a more ambitious and adventurous undertaking, with proportionally more satisfying and successful results. Ries, heard to excellent advantage throughout, provides the only non-Stones song with his fittingly titled "A Funky Number," but even fervent Stones fans may not always be able to instantly identify the reconfigured songs. "Brown Sugar," rendered as a sort of Portuguese honky-tonk tune with a superb guitar/sax ending, is world beat rock 'n' roll with the emphasis on a graceful roll, while "Jumpin' Jack Flash" is spiced up with flamenco dance rhythms. "No Expectations" is transformed from a country music weeper into something more sadly sublime through the fado



artistry of singer Ana Moura.

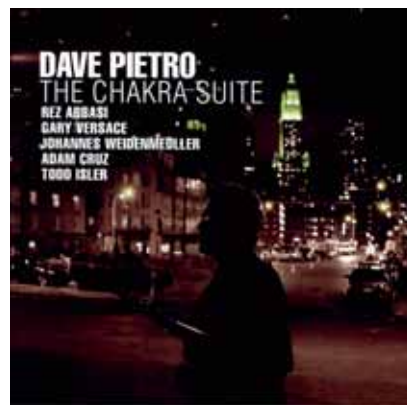
Eddie Palmieri leads his band through an energized bilingual remake of "Under My Thumb," giving it a rhythmic upgrade with swirling percussion creating an explosive clave foundation and Conrad Herwig's trombone adding some extra muscle. "You Can't Always Get What You Want" is delivered in a straightahead jazz septet context featuring strong soloing, especially from guitarist Bill Frisell; the performance is as distinguished by Jack DeJohnette's masterful drumming as it is by the solos.

The centerpiece of the album is "Salt Of The Earth," featuring vocals in more than a half dozen languages and instrumental embellishments from harp and tabla. But "Hey Negrita," incorporating the African band Tidawt and featuring commendable contributions from Mick Jagger on harmonica and Ronnie Wood on guitar, is arguably a still greater world beat fusion success. The song becomes an extended funk burner that explores new Berber blues stylings above Charlie Watts' drums and some of Ries' best sax work.

—Michael Point

**Stones World:** Disc 1—Baby Break It Down; Under My Thumb; Hey Negrita; No Expectations; Miss You; Fool To Cry; You Can't Always Get What You Want; Brown Sugar; Salt Of The Earth. (64:25) Disc 2—Jumpin' Jack Flash; Angie; A Funky Number; Lady Jane. (33:55)

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



## Dave Pietro

### The Chakra Suite

CHALLENGE 73271

★★★★

No question *The Chakra Suite* is carefully organized and full of scrupulous detail, with Dave Pietro filtering fascinations with Brazilian and Indian music through the unifying theme of the Hindu system of chakra. The seven chakras are seen as spinning energy nodes in the body that relate to sound, light and color, and have implications for states of consciousness and energy flow. Pietro picks a varying mood and scalar/rhythmic combination to illustrate each chakra and imply the correlation with such forces as desire, intuition, inner strength, trust and balance. The results have an admirable equilibrium that reveal Pietro is in command of these internal elements and his sextet is down with him.

Of interest is Pietro's deployment of anachronistic saxophone anomalies like the F-mezzo and C-melody saxophones, which add subtle adjustments of tonality. The tenor-like C-melody is featured on "Anahata," which begins in meditative repose then spirals into plaintive blowing from Pietro, grounded by a bass solo from Johannes Weidenmeuller, then left to wind into a desert storm guitar solo from Rez Abbasi. The latter is effective on "Vishuddha," which has the most ostensibly Indian (and Arabic) flavor in this suite, where he plays sitar guitar with gorgeous bluesiness before percussionist Todd Isler joins with konnakol vocalizing.

Evocations from the rainforest open the CD, and "Svadhithana" features the Brazilian baiao rhythm plus intriguingly sinister accordion from Gary Versace. But "Manipura" is the most engaging cut, with its raga-based 5/4 opening riff followed by Pietro's Indian rope-trick ascending soprano melody. Drummer Adam Cruz guides Pietro's flow with a dramatic contour to an oasis where the leader duets with Isler's hadgini clay pot. —Michael Jackson

**The Chakra Suite:** Muladhara; Ajna; Manipura; Anahata; Svadhithana; Vishuddha; Vishuddha; Sahasrara. (54:06)

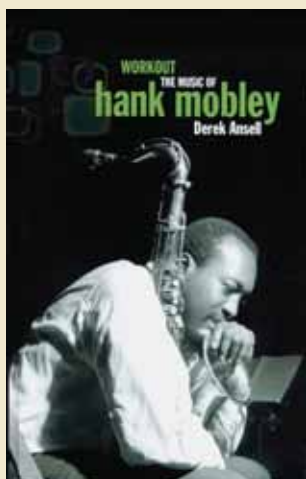
**Personnel:** Dave Pietro, soprano, F-mezzo, alto and C-melody saxophones; Rez Abbasi, acoustic, electric and sitar guitar; Gary Versace, piano, accordion; Johannes Weidenmeuller, bass; Adam Cruz, drums; Todd Isler, percussion, vocals.

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



## BOOKS

by Frank-John Hadley



### Giving Mobley His Due

Hank Mobley's star in the jazz firmament shines, maybe not of the first magnitude, but bright nonetheless. The years since his death in 1986 have been kind to his reputation, a seismic switch from the last decades of his life when this consummate Blue Note hard-bop tenor player and stellar composer was shunted into the shadows by free-jazz, then jazz-rock. It was no help either that Mobley's soft, "round"

tone and swingingly nonchalant approach was at odds with the famous hard-sounding, declarative attack of John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins—or that he was a drug addict.

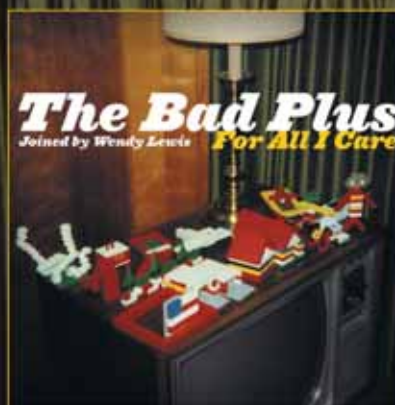
It took a while, but Mobley's album *Soul Station* is widely accepted as a classic. A six-CD Mosaic box set gathers Mobley's 1950s sessions, and there are other reissues readily available. Mobley can be heard today, too, on many sessions credited to such colleagues as Kenny Dorham, the late Freddie Hubbard and Sonny Clark. His legacy is secure.

That's not enough for British Jazz Journal International contributing writer Derek Ansell. His book *Workout: The Music Of Hank Mobley* (Northway) walks the reader through Mobley's recording history—a decent part anyway, about 50 albums—giving explanations on why he ardently believes Mobley should rank in the top tier of tenor saxophonists. He writes that this original member of the Jazz Messengers, inspired by Charlie Parker and his sound out of Lester Young, had a singular rhythmic conception: "He would cut across bar lines and somehow squeeze as many notes as he wanted into a given sequence and always make it come out sounding right or, at least, right for him." But some of the persuasive force of Ansell's writing in favor of Mobley is dispelled when he complains about how critics and fans of jazz have failed to make Mobley "as big a name as Rollins, Coltrane or Getz."

*Workout* does prompt devoted listeners of '50s and '60s jazz to get reacquainted with Mobley's discography, and its 175 pages point readers who are new to hard-bop to jewels like the blues-soaked *Hank Mobley And His All Stars* (1957, Milt Jackson joined Mobley out front), *Roll Call* (1960, recently remastered on CD, arguably the place to go after savoring *Soul Station*) and Dorham's *Whistle Stop* (1961). Ansell judges the first half of the '60s to have been Mobley's most inspired time in the Rudy Van Gelder studio.

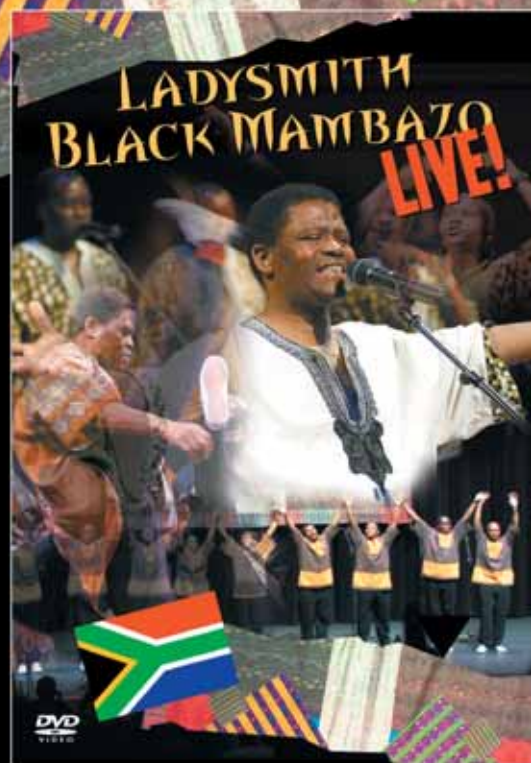
Ansell also gives considerable weight to John Litweiler's DownBeat interview with Mobley (1973, one of the few he ever granted) and to intelligent album liner notes in praise of the tenor-man by, among others, Bob Blumenthal and Ira Gitler. The author spoke with Cedar Walton but he did not seem to search out Horace Silver, Hubbard and many others who played with Mobley and could have shared insider information on the music. Ansell might have kept his emotions under tighter control and done a bit less hero worshiping, but he's to be commended for doing his part to keep Mobley's hard-bop in circulation. **DB**

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## Eliane Elias

**Bossa Nova Stories**  
BLUE NOTE 28103

★★★

Long recognized as a great jazz pianist from her multiple Blue Note releases, Brazil-born Eliane Elias tackles the vocal frontier on *Bossa Nova Stories*. The album is almost evenly split between deeply felt, deeply swinging, marvelously conceived and



brilliantly performed bossa nova and commercially driven pabulum. Dull, lackluster renditions (complete with syrupy strings) of "The Girl From Ipanema," "Too Marvelous For Words" and "They Can't Take That Away From Me" are one step removed from the airport lounge, two steps away from atypical. Elias doesn't sound like she even believes it.

But get her on home turf and she sparkles. For instance, accompanied by a crack group including the great Oscar Castro-Neves on guitar, Elias

wows on a simmering "Chega De Saudade," her vocals butterfly light, the arrangement sunny and glittering.

—Ken Micallef

**Bossa Nova Stories:** The Girl From Ipanema; Chega De Saudade; The More I See You; They Can't Take That Away From Me; Desafinado; Estate; Day In, Day Out; I'm Not Alone (Who Loves You?); Too Marvelous For Words; Superwoman; False Baiana; Minha Saudade; A Rã (The Frog); Day By Day. (59:15)

**Personnel:** Eliane Elias, piano, vocals; Oscar Castro-Neves, Ricardo Vogt (7, 13), guitar; Marc Johnson, bass; Paulo Braga, drums, percussion; Toots Thielemans, harmonica (6, 10); Ivan Lins, vocals (8); orchestra.

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## Broken Arm Trio

SKIPSTONE 003

★★★★

If you play saxophone, piano or drums, you can take your pick of jazz idols. But if you look for an example to follow as a jazz cellist, the options narrow considerably. The Broken Arm Trio is named after the circumstance that led one of Erik Friedlander's idols to the instrument. Bassist Oscar Pettiford picked it up after a sports injury left him unable to play his main instrument; he and Herbie Nichols are the inspirations for this ingratiating set.

You can hear Nichols' influence in Friedlander's refusal to choose between accessibility and challenge. He is no stranger to extended technique and restless stylistic exploration, but he's also a sucker for a catchy tune. And he knows how to write one; if you don't find yourself humming the opener "Spinning Plates" after one listen, you need to talk to the doctor about your immunity to fun.

Even when the songs are short—two tracks last less than a minute, and only one more than six—they're packed with event and effervescence. Reflecting not only the influence of doubling double bassists but folk guitarists, Friedlander sticks mainly to pizzicato. He and bassist Trevor Dunn occasionally interweave their lines to sound like one big guitar, but more often the rhythm section adheres to a traditional supportive role. They infuse the music with bounce and energy, and never overplay.

—Bill Meyer

**Broken Arm Trio:** Spinning Plates; Pearls; Knife Points; Jim Zipper; Pretty Penny; Cake; Buffalo; Hop Skip; Ink; Big Shoes; In The Spirit; Tiny's. (49:09)

**Personnel:** Erik Friedlander, cello; Trevor Dunn, bass; Mike Sarin, drums.

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

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## Bill Carrothers

### Home Row »

PIROUET 3035

★★★★

## Andy Scherrer Special Sextet

### Wrong Is Right

TCB 283

★★★½

Bill Carrothers expresses himself best while streaming intricate concepts into long, elegant lines of melody through a harmonic topography that varies between crowded and open stretches. This puts him in the same school as Keith Jarrett, whose spirit he evokes throughout *Home Row*, not in the least through his exquisite interactions with bassist Gary Peacock. Their communication is exciting when suspended within empty spaces at slower tempos, as on "Jesus' Last Ballad." One note, tolling mournfully, leads at the top into a sequence of shadowy chords, from which Carrothers transitions into a cautiously major mode. With Bill Stewart playing on brushes, the pianist and bassist begin a slow-motion dialog, built on a balance of substance and silence.

These qualities apply well at up tempos too, though their impact is perhaps as much physical as cerebral. An element of humor becomes evident in the trio's race through "My Heart Belongs To Daddy." It's hard not to sense a little camp here, with Carrothers stating the theme as a turbulent tango before spinning variations on the modal implications of the minor-to-major shift between verses and choruses. Peacock and Stewart maintain a freewheeling momentum; it erases nearly all reference to the tune. Yet even in these quicker tempos, Carrothers plays thoughtfully and deliberately.

Embedded within a sax-heavy six-piece setting on *Wrong Is Right*, Carrothers picks his spots as the arrangements allow. In general, the focus is on presenting the compositions, only one of them Andy Scherrer's, with two each by Carrothers and drummer Dré Pallemmaerts. The latter shows exceptional delicacy on "For Anne," as the composer and as the gentle engine as it proceeds through the tune's airy changes. *Wrong Is Right* is fundamentally a ballad collection, though it has plenty of expressive range.

As on *Home Row*, though, *Wrong Is Right* brings some lightheartedness into the mix, though not always successfully. Unaccompanied piano opens "Wrong, Wrong, Wrong" with a reflective, Satie-like air, which the group soon decimates with a razz of jaw harps for no clear reason. On the other hand, their amble through "Jordan Is A Hard Road To Travel" is a delight, from the clustered harmonies that showcase the gospel theme at the top to the borderline chaotic ensemble commentary on that theme on the second verse. All of this primes Carrothers to solo, which he does briskly and concisely.

This is not the only spot where Carrothers has room to shine. His finest moments come in



a reading of John Coltrane's "After The Rain," most of which he plays on his own, with a classically informed sense of structure, a glistening tone and impeccable rubato.

Scherrer doesn't step out much; he shares space with fellow saxophonists Jürg Bucher and Domenic Landolf.

Differences in their sound are apparent but it is left to the listener to guess, for example, who plays the smooth-toned tenor lead throughout the ballad "Karma." —Robert Doerschuk

**Home Row:** When Will The Blues Leave; Jesus' Last Ballad; A Squirrel's Tale; Hope Song; My Heart Belongs To Daddy; Off Minor; Lost In The Stars; Home Row; Ballad Of Billy Milwaukee. (60:46)  
**Personnel:** Bill Carrothers, piano; Gary Peacock, bass; Bill Stewart, drums.

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

**Wrong Is Right:** In And Out; For Anne; Jordan Is A Hard Road To Travel; Freckles; Waltz For Blaine; Karma; Wrong, Wrong, Wrong; After The Rain; Happy House. (57:42)

**Personnel:** Andy Scherrer, saxophones; Domenic Landolf, Jürg Bucher, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Bill Carrothers, piano; Fabian Gisler, bass; Dré Pallemmaerts, drums.

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## Inside Reid Anderson's Home Studio: Bassist Builds a Secret Techno Lab

The Bad Plus bassist Reid Anderson may appear as close to a traditionalist as you will find in the trio with drummer David King and pianist Ethan Iverson, which typically improvises outside the bounds of polite jazz society. The Bad Plus contorts all manner of music under its loose jazz rubric, collapsing metal, grunge, new wave, soundtracks, pop, rock and standards within its maddeningly unpredictable improvisations. The trio's latest, *For All I Care*, takes incentive a step further, adding Wendy Lewis' lush vocals to further upend conformity.

Given The Bad Plus' fondness for bucking the system, Anderson's home studio isn't used for recording trio demos or experimenting with miking techniques. Citing the old-school techno of Aphex Twin and Squarepusher as prime sources of inspiration, Anderson secretly creates subversive electronica on his Apple MacBook Pro—Cycling '74 Max/MSP—Roland TR-909-enabled rig.

"I don't use any of this in The Bad Plus," Anderson said from his home in Brooklyn. "This is a musical quest, a personal passion of mine. I love electronic music, and I've been searching over the past few years, trying to see if I can come up with my own approach to electronic music."

Anderson's home studio resembles that of a renegade electronic producer. Consisting of classic hardware and modern software, his studio includes Korg MS-20, Vermona PerFourMer and Moog Little Phatty synthesizers, Neumann KM 184, Shure SM 57 and Electro Voice RE20 microphones (all via a Chandler LTD-1 mic pre/EQ), Akai S-3200 sampler, Mackie HR824 monitors, and the MacBook—Cycling '74—TR-909 setup.

What piece plays the most important role in Anderson's budding electronic dreams?

"The computer," he said. "It's the central brain of the operation, and it's also where I record everything. I've been getting into Cycling '74 Max/MSP, trying to build my own virtual instruments."

Unlike such popular software sequencing programs as Digidesign's Pro Tools, Ableton's Live or Apple's Logic Audio, Cycling '74's Max/MSP allows you to practically create your own language, your own subset of sounds represented on the computer's screen by a menu of virtual cubes or boxes. Used by everyone from Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood and German techno duo Daft Punk to Aphex Twin, Max/MSP aids originality.

"Max/MSP is a programming language

based on small modules that each perform a specific task," Anderson said. "You connect these software modules—they look like bricks on the screen—together in such a way that you are only limited by your imagination. You can build virtual synthesizers, samplers; you can control robots with Max if you want."

Currently designing his own sampler in Max/MSP, Anderson better understands Logic, but doesn't like its layout. "I've been working with Logic longer than Max," he said, "but with Logic you have to obey their rules. You might want to do something in Logic that seems simple but to get Logic to do it you have to do a weird workaround or consult the manual. Part of the problem with electronic music is that even though there is some brilliant music being made, so much of it sounds the same because programs like Pro Tools, [Steinberg's] Cubase and Logic can do all the work for you. I would rather do things the hard way."

Anderson's other toys-'n'-tools include the classic Akai S-3200 sampler, the equally renowned Roland TR-909 and the Communist-era Vermona PerFourMer modular synthesizer.

"The 3200 is one of the old Akai samplers, a 20-pound monster," Anderson laughed. "I don't sample beats from vinyl. I create a lot of my own sounds and toy around with them in the Akai or on the MacBook. I will use the Roland 909 sometimes, or trigger sounds from the 909 sequencer, which feels nice."

"Vermona was the state synthesizer company of East Germany," he continued. "They brought the name back and have been releasing some analog gear, like an analog drum machine (DRM1 MK3), a spring reverb (Retroverb) and the PerFourMer, which is a four-voice analog synth. It has no memory; it's just a faceplate of 72 knobs. There's no keyboard, it's just a synth module."

Anderson's guise as electronic beat maker hasn't affected his bass sound in The Bad Plus, not even his miking applications. Tchad Blake, the trio's producer, treats Anderson's bass sound with a Tech 21 SansAmp pedal; otherwise, the signal chain is simple.



Reid Anderson

MARK SHELDON

"I liked the bass sound Tchad got on our album *Suspicious Activity*," Anderson said. "He tried different mics and ended up using one of the cheaper Neumann condenser vocal mics. He had a U47 but the cheaper Neumann worked best. And Tchad's placement is pretty consistent: If you are looking at the bass it's just off to the right side pointing to the body of the bass, not the F hole."

Although Anderson is secretive about his electronic fascination (no photos of his studio were allowed, no MP3s available or given), he's committed to releasing an album. Someday, perhaps.

"I'm not in any hurry," he said. "I don't have any record label pressuring me. The world of electronic music is wide open with possibilities. There's some incredible stuff that I am in awe of but at the same time there is room for some other ideas. I am trying to put that into practice."

Would Anderson ever contribute his computer music to The Bad Plus? "Dave and Ethan are into my music," he said. "It's always been part of what we do to have multiple perspectives. But I wouldn't bring this music to The Bad Plus. We've committed to playing our music with acoustic instruments and staying within those parameters keeps us on our toes."

"You never know," Anderson paused, "but I don't think so." —Ken Micallef



## Yamaha Black Phoenix Alto Saxophone: Vivid Look, Sweet Sound

Yamaha has added esthetic appeal, cool collectibility and a touch of mellow tone to its YAS-82Z Custom alto saxophone with the Black Phoenix YAS-82ZBP. The visually striking new alto model is part of Yamaha's Black Phoenix line of limited-edition wind instruments, which commemorates the company's 50th anniversary of U.S. manufacturing.

The Black Phoenix alto features vivid black lacquering on the outside and inside of the instrument. This marks a departure from Yamaha's black lacquering method, which doesn't cover the interior surface of the horn.

The process produces a subtle difference in tone, according to Jonathan Goldman, product marketing specialist for Yamaha Winds.



"The Black Phoenix alto does play a little tighter, and there is a timbre change because the black lacquer is a little bit thicker—especially with it being inside the body of the instrument," Goldman said.

Play-testing the Black Phoenix alto revealed plenty of positives in the way the instrument feels and responds. The key mechanisms and

blue steel springs allow for nimble, quick fingering. The body, bow and two-piece hydro-formed bell of the horn are all annealed during production to make the horn less resistant. It projects with a sweet tone that contributes to its jazz appeal.

The Black Phoenix YAS-82ZBP alto saxophone will provide pros, intermediate

players, college students and educators with a refreshing new option. Only 150 will be made, and each model will include the standard high-F# key. Yamaha's Black Phoenix line also includes the YTR-8310ZBP trumpet and the YSL-697ZBP trombone.

—Ed Enright

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



## Korg M50 Workstation: Solid Performance at an Affordable Price

There was a time when the hardware workstation was the holy grail for keyboardists and composers. The advent of computer sequencing and recording, and the dearth of high-quality sample libraries and virtual instruments, have diminished the number of workstations on the market, but Korg has stayed the course. Its Oasys mega-workstation offers cutting-edge capabilities and sounds, but at a price out of reach to all but the most well-heeled musicians. The company has since released the M3, which incorporates many of the Oasys' features and brought it down to a more manageable price tag, but still not what most would call affordable. Is there a solid keyboard workstation available at a price that won't break the bank? Enter the Korg M50.

The M50 draws many of the M3's popular features and sounds and puts them into a more economical package. It is available in 61-, 73- and 88-key versions. I had the 88-key. The keyboard feels nice, and incorporates Korg's RH3 hammer action, which has a firm response, and represents the full dynamic spectrum well. The 61- and 73-key versions have a semi-weighted synth keyboard. The

front panel is easy to navigate, partly due to the large touchscreen at the center. There is also a control joystick in place of pitch and mod wheels, and a couple of dedicated switches in that area for patch variations.

The M50 uses the M3's EDS synth engine, which sounds great. It also includes a host of onboard multisamples and drum kits that offer a wide array of sounds that you would expect from any decent workstation. The sounds range from good to great, and there's a comfortable mix of staples and experimental stuff. Missing here are the sampling capabilities of the M3, and Korg also stripped out the expansion slots and its KARMA music generation technology. KARMA can be added to the M50 by purchasing a \$200 software package, which allows you to develop the KARMA programs on the computer and dump them into the M50.

The M50 also has a nice multitrack sequencer onboard, which I found to be intuitive. It is a creative boost to be able to put together a quick tune without having to fire up the DAW. There are also two full-featured polyphonic arpeggiators. These have enough options to keep you tweaking for hours, and

they are a blast to play with. The M50 also has what Korg calls a "drum track," which basically amounts to having a little onboard pattern-based drum machine, which is great for sketching out a quick tune idea.

Also in the box is editing software for your PC or Mac. This will allow you to do your editing on the big screen, and serves as a librarian too. You can also use the SD card slot in the back to load/unload information, or use it as an expansion of the internal patch and sequencer memory. Another nice feature is software that allows you to use the M50 as a plug-in virtual instrument in your favorite DAW while offloading all the heavy lifting back to the Korg.

The M50 is a winner. I am a computer-based player most of the time, but I miss when my workstations were the center of my compositional arsenal. There's something visceral and immediate about being able to create a multitrack arrangement on the synth you're using, with all the sounds coming from the same source. The M50 offers that experience at an affordable price.

—Chris Neville

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

## 1» Fakin' It

Sher Music has released a best-of collection of songs from its popular series of jazz fake books. *The Best Of Sher Music Co. Real Books* contains more than 100 of the best-known tunes selected from Sher's *Real Books* publications. The collection is designed to introduce a new generation of musicians to easy-to-read, historically accurate charts, and includes features such as sample rhythm section figures and horn harmony parts. The book includes songs from Bill Evans, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington and many more. MSRP: \$26.

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

## 2» Refined Rehearsal

To launch the third generation of its Silent Instruments series, Yamaha has debuted the new SV-150 Silent Practice Plus violin. The redesigned violin includes new features to complement a violinist's playing, like a built-in digital tuner, digital metronome and more than 24 digital sound effects including reverb, distortion and vibrato. An SD card port allows musicians to play along with recorded music in any audio file format, and the instrument's body weighs in at just 14 ounces.

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

## 3» Pint-Sized Pro

Marantz Professional has introduced the CDR310, a portable CD-based field recorder. The CDR310 offers long-term recording in uncompressed .WAV and MP3 formats. It can handle a project from beginning to end and features built-in microphone pre-amps with XLR connectors and 48 volt phantom power for use with external condenser mics. The burner can create audio and data discs.

More info: [d-mpro.com](http://d-mpro.com)

6»



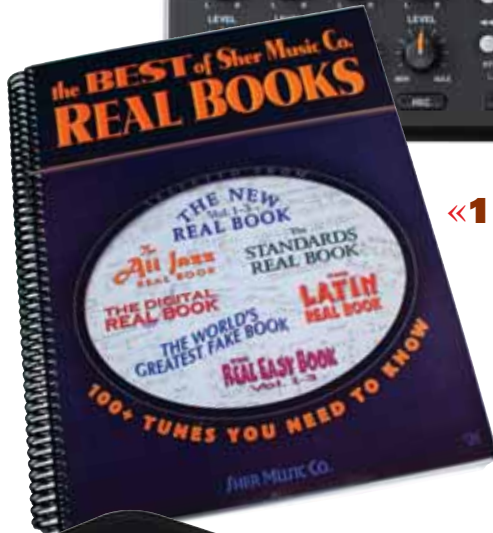
«5



4»



«1



2»



3»



## 4» Updated Analog

Tascam's new DP-004 Digital Pocketstudio is a portable four-track digital recorder that has the easy-to-use style of cassette-based recorders updated with CD-quality digital recording. The recorder uses a set of dedicated knobs and buttons for easy operation. A pair of unbalanced 1/4-inch inputs accept mic or line signals, or musicians can employ the built-in stereo microphone. A stereo mixdown track is also included, and tracks or mixes can be transferred to a computer using USB 2.0. The unit is less than the size of a paperback book. MSRP: \$199.

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

## 5» Multiple Mixing

M-Audio's ProFire 610 FireWire audio interface features two pre-amps with Octane technology to provide clean, transparent sound with low distortion. Multiple analog and digital connection options enable DJs and electronic musicians to use the ProFire 610 for live performance rigs. The on-board DSP mixer lets users create multiple independent monitor mixes.

MSRP: \$499.95.

More info: [m-audio.com](http://m-audio.com)

## 6» Take The Lead

Vox Amps' new JamVOX integrated monitor and software system extracts the guitar from any MP3 and plugs a guitarist right into the music of their favorite bands. Guitar XTraktion technology lets users remove the guitar part from any song to play along with the band. Users can also isolate the part for practice, slowing down tempo without changing the pitch. Additionally, the JamVOX offers access to 19 guitar amps and 54 effect units ranging from vintage to modern in an easy-to-use, drag-and-drop software interface.

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





# They *laughed* when I said they could have Perfect Pitch



David-Lucas Burge

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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!*

## Now it's YOUR turn!

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## Connect to Indian Rhythms Without a Fuse

As an Indian-American, I feel the urge to engage with my ancestry. As a jazz musician, I choose to do so as an improviser and composer. Having this hybrid identity, I have become more concerned with combining or synthesizing melodic and rhythmic concepts of jazz and Indian classical music into an organic whole.

Indian music and jazz have often been put forth as being similar because of their improvised nature, but many forays into melding the two art forms have resulted in superficial fusion—like adding a tabla player to a quartet. While I have employed Indian musical techniques in my work for several years in bands with Western instrumentation, only recently have I felt comfortable engaging with classically trained Indian musicians in an ensemble format. This is highlighted in my two recent discs, *Kinsmen* (Pi) and *Apti* (Innova), but I'm no expert on Indian classical music, as I consider myself a perpetual student.

Classical Indian music (Hindustani from the north and Carnatic from the south) in general does not employ harmony. This music primarily consists of melodic constructs (raga) and rhythmic cycles (tala). Form is something that does not occur in a traditional Western sense: There is no AABA 32-bar configuration or anything similar. Structure is based on raga and tala in reference to songs that are hundreds of years old.

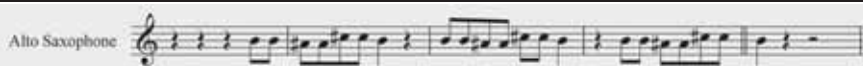
As a saxophonist, I feel that monophonic instrumentalists should be more rhythmically proficient as soloists and composers. Essentially, we should be able to do anything that percussionists (including pianists) can do.

One of the most prevalent features of Indian music is the korvai (Carnatic) or tihai (Hindustani). This refers to a rhythmic cadence (usually at the end of a solo or the end of a piece) where a figure is repeated three times that ends on beat 1 or the first beat of the composition. This is played by the melodic and percussion instruments.

Example 1 offers a basic five-beat fragment (including the rest) that starts on beat 4 and lands on beat 1 (ideally, the top of the form). The notes can be whatever one wishes. One could play this to end a solo on a jazz form or use such an idea as an ending to a tune. In either case, there's a bit of math involved, as one has to calculate where to start the repeated figure.

Korvais and tihais can be complex. Most Indian classical musicians have a lexicon of these cadences in much the same way that

### EXAMPLE 1



### EXAMPLE 2

many jazz greats have their own vocabulary. In comparable fashion, some are improvised and some are preconceived, some are simple and some are complicated.

A way of constructing a tihai or korvai would be to have a rhythmic idea that contracts and expands. Example 2 looks at the ending to "Ganesha" from *Kinsmen*. The tala is a traditional Carnatic 21-beat cycle, three smaller cycles of seven grouped as 3+4. The melodic content of the korvai is not particularly complex, as it essentially spells out the raga. The first half consists of eight notes that reduce from quarter notes to dotted-eighth notes to

eighth notes. The second half starts as three sets of five 16th notes, then the second 16th is expanded to an eighth note and the first 16th note follows suit. This whole melodic statement, which spans nine bars of 7/8, is repeated three times. To add variety, the note values of the first half are divided in the second and third iterations, quarter notes become two eighth notes, dotted-eighths become dotted-16ths, etc. What makes this intriguing is the crossing of the bar line that creates a triumphant tension and release before going back to the melody.

In this blending of ideas, I like to reverse engineer some of these concepts. Why not use



Alto Saxophone

Tabla

7

A. Sax.

13

A. Sax.

19

A. Sax.

22

A. Sax.

Example 3 is the melody to “IIT” from *Apti*. The form is eight bars of 4/4 (32 eighth notes). However, the rhythm of the melody reduces and expands as 6/8 (3/4), 5/8, 4/8 (2/4), 3/8, 2/8, 3/8, 4/8, and 5/8 (also 32 eighth notes). One can see the melody written out followed by the 4/4 version with quarter-note hits at the beginning of each subdivision while the tabla part remains the same. This makes for an interesting melody and allows the soloist to play off of the smaller subdivisions and play in 4/4.

New York-based saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa can be reached via his web site, [rudreshm.com](http://rudreshm.com).

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5 [1] F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

9 F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

13 A<sup>b</sup> Fmi<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>mi<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>7 A<sup>b</sup> G<sup>7</sup>

17 Cma<sup>7</sup> Ami<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

21 F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

25 F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

29 Cmi<sup>7</sup> F<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>mi<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>7

33 Ami<sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup>dim<sup>7</sup> Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

37 [2] F lay back Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

41 F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F D<sup>7</sup> Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

45 A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>mi<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>7 A<sup>b</sup> G<sup>7</sup>

49 Cmi<sup>7</sup> Ami<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

53 F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F

58 Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> Cmi<sup>7</sup>

62 F<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>mi<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>7 Ami<sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup>dim<sup>7</sup>

66 Gmi<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F C<sup>7</sup> F

## Jazz In Bloom An iPhone Program Creates a Jazz Copyright Issue

My article based on questions from David Liebman (November '08) generated a quite bit of interest from readers around the world. The following question was received from John Goldsby, the bassist in Germany's WDR Big Band.

**I was recording a new CD/DVD last week with a pianist named Hubert Nuss and the drummer John Riley. When we finished all of the written music, the pianist said, "Let's play a free piece with the new Bloom program on my iPhone." Bloom is an iPhone application created by Brian Eno. You can touch parts of the iPhone screen, and the phone plays random melodies and rhythms. There is no way to control the sound rhythmically or melodically—it does that by itself. It sounds tonal—and every once in a while there might be a pitch outside of the current tonal center. It is a clever program—it sounds like background music that you might hear in a designer bar in a Midtown hotel.**

Bob Clarida, a copyright litigator at the New York law firm Cowan, Liebowitz and Latman and a jazz guitarist, does not think that Eno would have copyright over the result.

"The Copyright Office compendium of practices and procedures has something for examiners about a visual work consisting of different sizes, shapes and colors of glass pieces in a bag, which can be arranged into an infinite number of patterns," Clarida said. "The pieces in the bag are not copyrightable, but any particular assembly of them into a design may be. This would be the same analysis. The particular pitches and rhythms aren't fixed until the user causes them to happen.

"On the other hand, you could say it's like a video game, which is copyrightable notwithstanding the fact that the player's interaction determines what happens in the game," Clarida continued. "But even in the video game case, the creator of the game doesn't own copyright in each individual 'episode' a user creates—they are derivative works, perhaps, and thus perhaps not independently copyrightable by the users, but they are not owned by the underlying work owner, unless there's an agreement that says so."

Tom Kjellberg a lawyer at the same firm as Clarida and also a musician, explained how algorithmic composition was an issue in the copyright world a little while ago.

"There were some consumer-level programs released, some of which came with license agreements providing that the creator of the program was a copyright owner of whatever the program generated," Kjellberg said. "I don't think it would fly, in the U.S. anyhow. The copyrightable authorship, if any, would lay in the user's adoption of some phrase the program generated."

Most parents recall the electronic toy Simon, which required you to remember and repeat long passages of notes. No one would have thought of claiming a copyright in the note configuration created in response to the one played by Simon. But we live in the digital age and the ease and low cost of transferring digital data has created new possibilities that raise novel legal questions.

Here's another question I get from time to time, and although I've addressed some of these issues in past articles, it keeps coming up because it goes to the essence of jazz improvisation. This one came via e-mail from Eric Stevens.

**Can I use the chords to "Body And Soul" with an entirely different melody, title and words, as so often is done by boppers on "How**



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

**High The Moon" and other tunes? If not, how many bars of chords may I borrow from a song, assuming that I'd only want to borrow something beautiful, such as the chords (but not melody) coming out of the bridge of "Body And Soul" on the words "chance to prove, dear?" If not, what if those quarter notes were stretched into whole notes using four bars and a different melody? How do substitute chords and extended chords affect things? Does that legitimize using a sequence that otherwise would be an infringement?**

Stevens appears concerned about the extent to which a chord pattern is protected and to what extent he can use this as a jumping-off point to a derivative work.

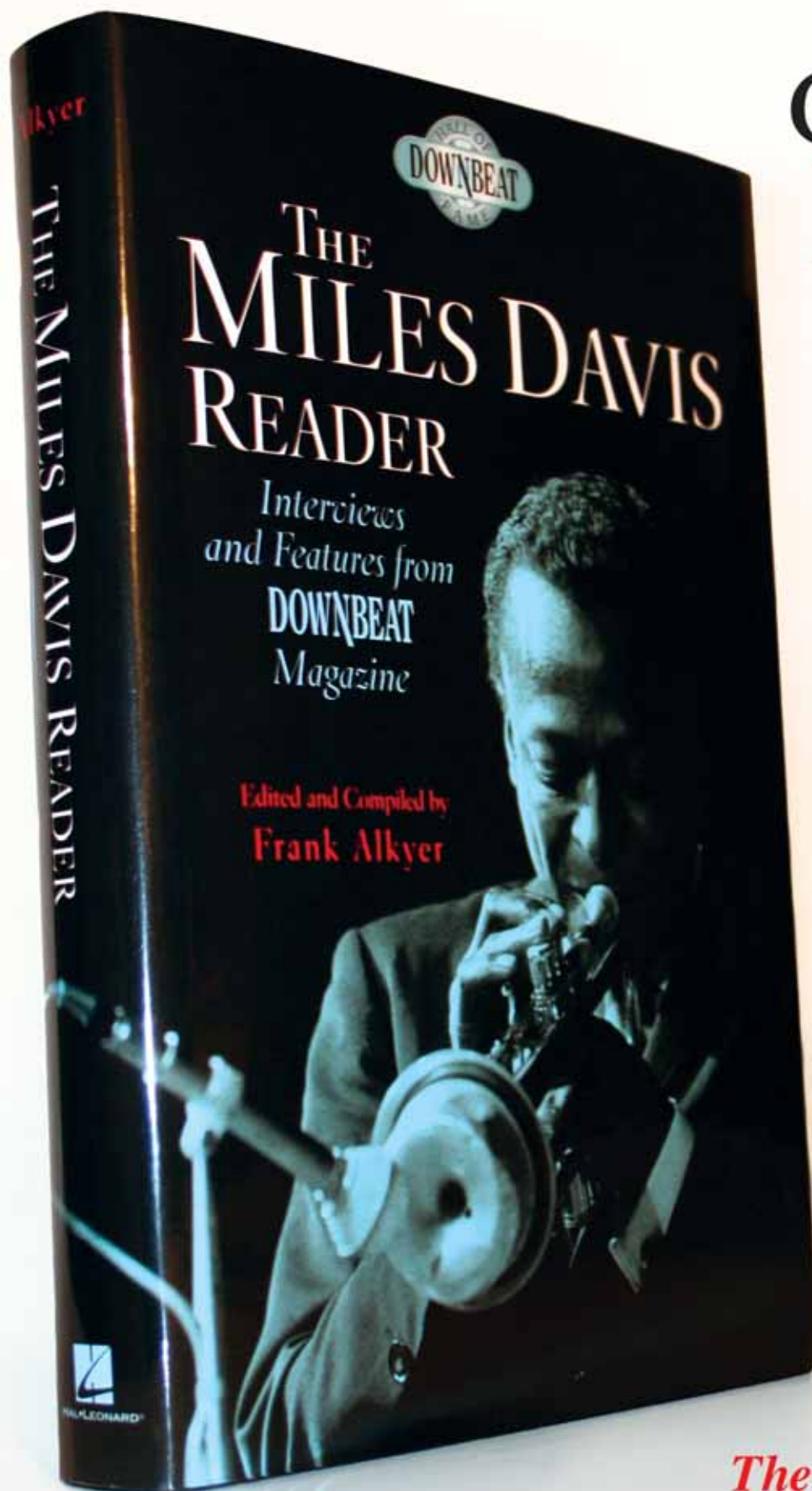
You can use the chords to a tune as the basis for another tune. The few times it has been tested, the court usually has decided it's not an infringement because a chord pattern does not contain the requisite degree of originality to entitle it to copyright protection. Courts don't (or more likely can't) distinguish the common pattern from the ingenious one. If it's not protectable, then the number of bars you "borrow" or the extent to which you alter the original chord pattern is irrelevant.

The stretching of notes question is tricky. It implies that an intent to copy exists. The issue is whether what you intend to copy is protected. You probably can get away with using a chord pattern, even an atypical pattern and writing your own melody, but you tread on dangerous ground when you take someone else's melody and change it. That presupposes that the melody you appropriate is original enough to be entitled to copyright protection.

Stick to the changes and you'll be OK. That's not only good advice to a student of improvisation; it turns out to be good legal advice as well. **DB**

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





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## Guitarist Andreas Öberg Brings Jazz Lessons Online

Swedish jazz guitarist Andreas Öberg has always enjoyed teaching, but keeping a full performance schedule means he rarely has time to give private lessons. Unable to sit down one-on-one with guitar students, Öberg recorded a detailed series of video guitar lessons for the web.

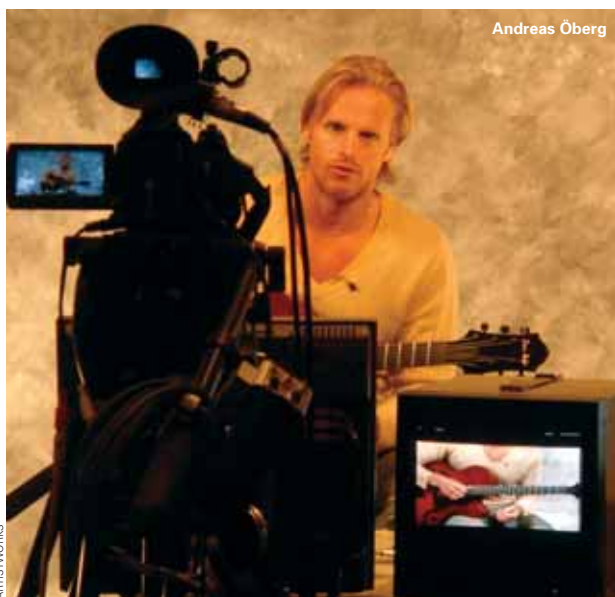
The Andreas Öberg Guitar Universe, hosted by California-based ArtistWorks, gives students access to five lesson plans of varying difficulty. In the most basic instructional videos, Öberg teaches instrumental techniques that can be applied to blues, rock and jazz; more advanced lessons explore improvising over John Coltrane changes and the music of Django Reinhardt. Access to the site is sold as a three-month pass for \$60.

Öberg takes a holistic approach to guitar education and tells students to see the fretboard as one unit, not a series of fingerings. When a player breaks out of standard scalar positions, Öberg said, the guitarist is free to improvise using the instrument's full range. "A lot of guitar players play what they have in their fingers instead of playing what they hear in their heads," Öberg said.

Former AOL executive David Butler created ArtistWorks as a response to the proliferation of DVD music lessons. He had been watching videos to learn jazz guitar, but the impersonal nature of recorded lessons left him frustrated. "DVDs are one-sided," said Patricia Butler, David's wife and the chief financial officer at ArtistWorks. "You can sit there and watch that thing all day long and still not get it. If you don't understand what the guy's saying, what are you going to do, call the guy?"

David Butler launched his first lesson site in 2007 for guitarist Jimmy Bruno, offering live instruction with the artist via online messaging tools. Those early experiments were flawed; many students spent the entire lesson trying to get a clear picture or battling connection problems. After talking with a handful of musicians, Butler realized the lessons didn't have to be in real time to be effective, and he soon perfected the video format used today.

Future offerings from ArtistWorks include



DJ lessons and piano pedagogy using the same tools featured on Öberg's page. The final goal, David Butler said, is to allow worldwide access to lessons from professional musicians. "You can get piano lessons in your neighborhood, and you can get pop guitar lessons at your local music store, but to really learn jazz is not available in many places," he said.

At Guitar Universe, musicians worldwide can access chat rooms or visit message boards to trade technique tips. The master class function, the site's biggest selling point, differentiates it from the dozens of pedagogical tools on the web. Students are encouraged to upload footage of themselves improvising over chord changes to the site. Öberg then records his own video, commenting on each player's technique. The exchange is posted online for the benefit of the community.

"I thought this was a great way to interact with fans and guitar students all over the world. I also like the community aspect—that these people can interact with each other," said Öberg, who views Guitar Universe as a modified social networking site.

Online teaching is a new concept for Öberg, but he already surfs the Internet regularly to maintain his various fan sites. Armed with a portable video studio, Öberg relishes being able to create videos and update his site while touring.

"I will bring a video camera everywhere I go, and I will bring my computer," Öberg said. "I will be able to keep the site running from wherever I am in the world."

—Jon Ross

## School Notes



**Winning Writer:** Gabriel Stillman of Milton, Mass., won the 2008 Virginia Commonwealth University High School Jazz Competition for his piece "The Trademark." The national competition is held for large jazz ensemble works written by high school students. Along with a cash award, Stillman will also receive a VCU jazz scholarship. Details: [vcu.edu](http://vcu.edu)

**Desert Strings:** The Arizona Bass Players Festival will be held at Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz., from March 5–8. Along with clinics and a competition, guest artists include John Clayton and Joel DiBartolo.

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

**Down Under:** Berklee College of Music held scholarship auditions in Australia for the first time from Jan. 6–13 in Sydney and Melbourne. The school's ongoing world scholarship tour has now held try-outs in 40 cities on every continent except Antarctica. Details: [berklee.edu](http://berklee.edu)

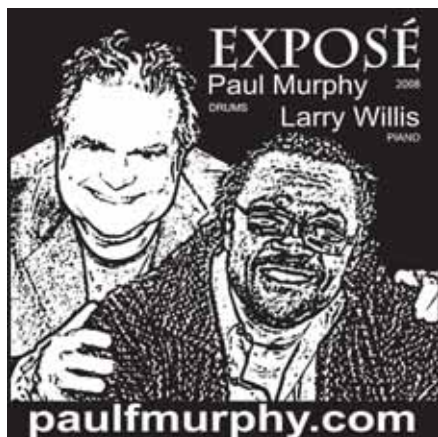
**Columbia Launch:** Columbia University has launched a new web site, Jazz Studies Online. The site features performances as well as such teaching materials as book chapters, journals, resource indexes, and videos of lectures and interviews. Details: [jazzstudiesonline.org](http://jazzstudiesonline.org)

**Student-Teacher Harmonizing:** New York's Lucy Moses School at the Kaufman Center celebrated its 15th anniversary with a student and faculty concert at Merkin Hall on Jan. 11. Guitarist Roni Ben-Hur directs the school's program, which is geared toward teaching jazz harmony and improvisation to beginning and amateur musicians. Details: [kaufman-center.org](http://kaufman-center.org)



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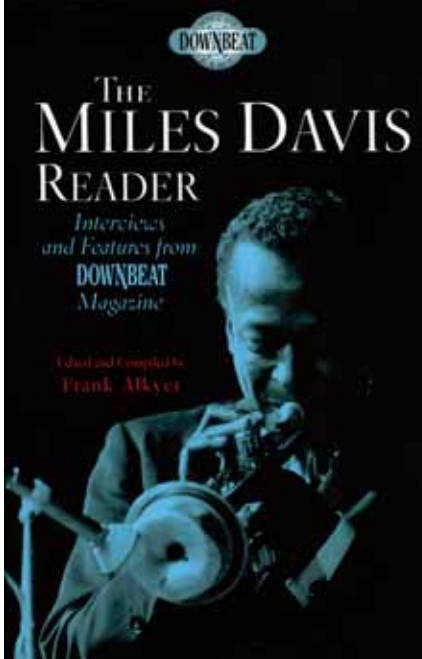
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A two-decade jazz veteran at 38, pianist Geoffrey Keezer bedrocked his inventions on consequential apprenticeships with Art Blakey, Art Farmer, Ray Brown, Benny Golson and Jim Hall, and brings forth his ideas as a member of Christian McBride's quartet and as leader of numerous albums and projects. He recently released *Áurea* (ArtistShare).

## Peter Zak Trio

"We See" (from *For Tomorrow*, SteepleChase, 2006) Zak, piano; Paul Gill, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

It's a Thelonious Monk composition. I don't remember the title. I have no idea who the pianist is, but his time is excellent, locked-in and swinging. The drummer reminded me of Lewis Nash. I liked everything about it. In the context of playing the music of that period and straightahead swing, 5 stars.

## Herbie Hancock

"Solitude" (from *River: The Joni Letters*, Verve, 2007) Hancock, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums.

Duke Ellington's "Solitude." I have no idea who the trio is. I liked the pianist's touch and the way the piano was recorded. Sometimes, though, this arrangement gets so far away from "Solitude" that it's no longer that tune, like the intro with the unison left hand and the bass, or the long interlude at the end of his melody before he soloed, where the chord changes didn't relate to the song at all. I loved the overall feeling and performance, but I'd prefer to hear it applied to an original piece. I'm a traditionalist about melody. If I'm going to play an Ellington song, I just want to play it. 4 stars.

## Ramón Valle Trio

"Kimbara Pá Ñico" (from *No Escape*, ACT, 2003) Valle, piano; Omar Rodríguez Calvo, bass; Liber Torriente, drums.

The pianist sounds familiar. A wild guess—Jean-Michel Pilc? The drummer sounds familiar, too, like some New York guys I know. I liked the performance and the composition, which is fresh, not like anything I've ever heard. My guess is that the pianist isn't American. The concept is well-defined and consistent, with a high level of performance. 5 stars.

## Marcin Wasilewski

"Diamonds And Pearls" (from *January*, ECM, 2008) Wasilewski, piano; Slawomir Kurkiewicz, bass; Michal Miskiewicz, drums.

"Diamonds And Pearls" by Prince. Is it Brad Mehldau? The reverb is gorgeous. It reminds me of Joe Ferla's. I love this song. It's so pretty, and the treatment was respectful of the tune. Hank Jones once told me that some songs you don't have to do anything to, and this is one of them. The pianist's touch is beautiful, that flowing, classically influenced legato playing that evolved out of Keith Jarrett's early work. 5 stars.

## Marc Copland

"River's Run" (from *Voices: New York Trio Recordings, Vol. 2*, Pirouet, 2007) Copland, piano; Gary Peacock, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

The form is a double-length F-minor blues, but nobody is playing anything blues-like in the improvisation. It's approaching a blues from a European perspective. I would like to hear at least some reference to blues, funk or soul somewhere. The pianist had the sustain pedal down throughout, and his time wasn't that good. The trio played broken and floaty, and never locked in. The so-called "broken time" thing that's now the European jazz sound comes partially from Scott LaFaro with Bill Evans, but also from Herbie [Hancock], Ron [Carter] and Tony [Williams] in the '60s. Broken time happens all over *Maiden Voyage*, but at any point, on a



dime, these guys can break into the deepest groove you ever heard. Here, the relationship between broken time and the groove isn't there. Generally, I like things in the cracks and nether regions, but this wasn't my cup of tea. 3 stars.

## Kenny Werner

"Lo's Garden Suite" (from *Lawn Chair Society*, Blue Note, 2007) Werner, piano, keyboards; Chris Potter, bass clarinet; Dave Douglas, trumpet; Scott Colley, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

I have this record, and I like it. It sounds like 2008, fresh, the only thing of its kind. I'd like to see if more could be done with the sound design, if he'd used the two obvious electronica elements—that real high-end, glassy thing that went through almost the whole piece, and also the delays—with more variation and surprise. Perhaps the glassy thing could be pulled out of the mix sometimes; the delay was always the same speed. I'm interested in electronica that has a lot of variety, à la evolved electronica composers like David Last or DJ Olive, whose pieces evolve from beginning to end. But I like that Kenny's going for something new and different. 5 stars.

## Branford Marsalis Quartet

"Hope" (from *Braggtown*, Marsalis Music, 2006) Marsalis, soprano saxophone; Joey Calderazzo, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.

I've become more snobbish about piano technique. When I came on the scene with Art Blakey, I played hard, without much attention to my sound. As I've gotten older, I don't have the physical strength to bang on the piano all night, and I don't want to. It's natural for a jazz pianist to place less emphasis on proper technique and a good, even sound, because the energy goes into improvising and creating musical events—I value a pianist who does both, like this one. I prefer this to the Marc Copland piece: They're not superimposing a floaty, rubato style of playing over a blues form. The intent is clearer, and they're realizing it. Gorgeous. 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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