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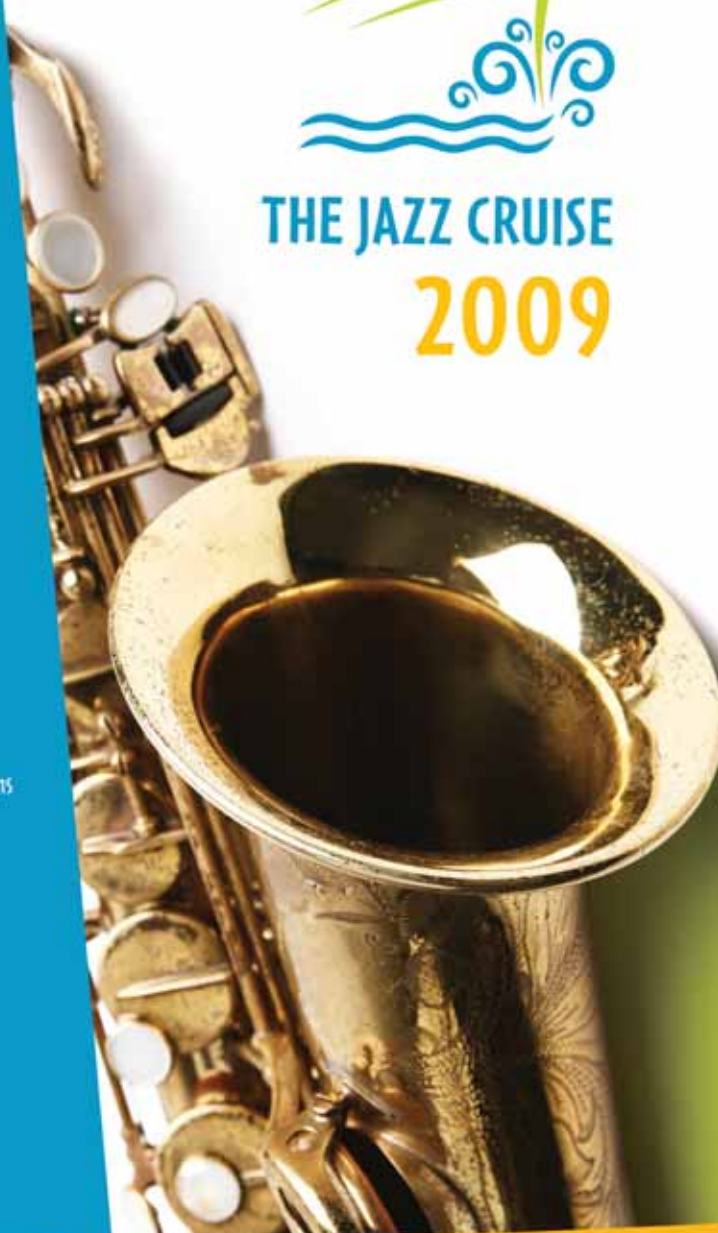
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26 Freddie Hubbard *Ready For Anything* | By Dan Ouellette

He played in, out, high, low, hard, soft, fluidly and prodigiously. Freddie Hubbard's dazzling technique and musical genius made him perhaps the most influential trumpeter in jazz over the past 50 years, with his wild musical ride almost matched by his personality. To remember the late trumpeter after his death last December, we talked to many of his contemporaries and the younger artists he influenced about his life, music and lasting legacy.

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First Take

By Jason Koransky

Don't Artists Work?

When talk bandied back and forth about an economic stimulus plan for the U.S. economy worth around \$800 billion, numbers in the millions seemed like chump change. But for the arts in the United States, an infusion of \$50 million could deliver some much-needed funds at a time when the recession is slowing down sources of funding, such as ticket sales and foundational support.

So, it seemed like a positive step for the arts when \$50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts was included in the U.S. House of Representatives' version of the U.S. economic stimulus package. But when the bill returned to the House from the Senate, the \$50 million was gone. The Senate did not reduce the funds, but rather cut them. When the bill finally passed through both houses, the NEA money had vanished.

Prior to seeing the money cut from the stimulus package, NEA Chairman Dana Gioia spoke about what \$50 million could provide for the arts community. "Arts organizations have been hit enormously hard by the current recession," he said. "They've seen their support drop from corporations, foundations and municipalities. This infusion of funds will help sustain them, their staffs and the artists they employ. We are hopeful that Congress and the new administration will support this important investment."

Well, unfortunately, Congress did not think that the arts needed extra funding, but rather that the \$50 million was "pork" slipped into the stimulus package. This, however, goes against economic data about the arts.

An NEA study from June 2008 titled "Artists in the Workforce" found that there are approximately 2 million trained, entrepreneurial working artists in the United States, which represent 1.4 percent of the U.S. labor force. Also, in analyzing its grants from 2008, the NEA estimated that for every \$10,000 in grant money it distributed, 162 artists benefitted.

Another study, by the non-profit organization Americans for the Arts, found that non-profit arts organizations and the audiences they create generate \$166.2 billion in annual economic activity, support 5.7 million jobs and return about \$30 billion in annual government revenue. Also, the recent study "Arts and the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate Economic Development" by the National Governors Association provided some specific data about how the arts impact certain states' economies. For instance, the study explained that in North Carolina, "the wages and income of workers employed by creative industries infused \$3.9 billion into the state's economy in 2006. And in



Freddie Hubbard: sweating for the music

JAN PERSSON

Massachusetts, the 17.6 percent yearly growth of the cultural sector contributed \$4.23 billion to the state's economy."

The main lesson from these studies is that the arts create economic growth. Artists and arts organizations are entrepreneurial and hard working. They know how to survive with small budgets. Plus, a vibrant arts community creates vital entertainment outlets, diversions that can lift peoples' spirits in times of economic hardship.

Regardless of which side of the political spectrum you may fall, the fact that you are reading DownBeat shows that you have a genuine appreciation for the arts. You understand the work and sacrifice that the artists who play jazz put into their craft. You go to clubs, concerts halls and theaters, and see the people working at these venues, and find joy and inspiration from the artistic products created by the artists on stage and the staff working behind the scenes. You know the sacrifices that musicians make—especially in jazz—to create their music.

Take the late Freddie Hubbard, who we pay tribute to with Dan Ouellette's cover story (Page 26). He may not have taken the best care of his lips in his career, but he sacrificed his health to make his music. Artists in the story talk about the dedication that he had to the music when he first went to New York in the late '50s as he broke into the scene. And as his chops problems developed, he persevered, even bled, to make his music. As Christian McBride said in the story: "I remember him playing one tune where the wound on his lip opened up again and blood splattered onto his suit. But he still had that attitude that the show would go on. He was like a beat-up boxer not wanting to go down for the count because he thinks he's winning."

So, the arts did not make the cut in the economic stimulus package. And as the recession evolves, arts organizations will be forced to make more staffing and programming cuts as funds dry up. Let's hope that Congress and President Barack Obama can find a way to offer more support to the arts because, as the data show, artists definitely work and the arts have an enormous impact on our economy. **DB**

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Great Cover, But You Forgot ...

I was excited to see Wes Montgomery on the cover of *DownBeat*, along with a great list of some of the best jazz guitarists in history (February '09). But I didn't see Lenny Breau, who deserves a place at or near the top of any list of jazz players, regardless of instrument or era.

Jon Treichel

jontreichel@hotmail.com

I was pleasantly surprised to see Jeff Beck among your 75 great guitarists. However, everything you listed about Chet Atkins' style is better demonstrated by the criminally underrated Lenny Breau.

Steve Jamieson

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada

I'm sure many of your readers would want to know about Lenny Breau, who was not included in this issue. He could swing like Joe Pass. His sense of harmony and chord voicings rivaled Jim Hall. He embodied Bill Evans' modern harmonic approach, using sparse voicings. He used harmonics to simulate closed chords that can't be played fretting notes. He was a genius and a natural at infusing his guitaristic inventions into the spontaneous flow of his improvisations.

David Lippincott

Eugene, Ore.

It's insane to create such a guitarist list and leave off Barry Galbraith, Ray Crawford, Bobby Broom and two Brazilian masters: Bola Sete and Toninho Horta.

Ron Seegar

El Paso, Texas

How could you have forgotten Oscar Alemán? He was not only a contemporary of Django Reinhardt—his friend and rival—but he and Reinhardt were considered the best guitar players working in France. Without doubt, Alemán was one of the greatest acoustic swing guitar players ever.

Martin Blasco

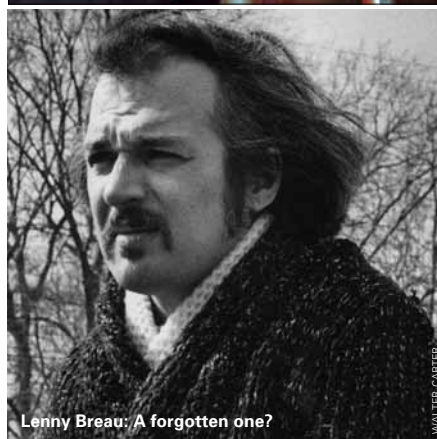
South Salem, N.Y.

I was so pleased to see Frank Zappa given his due, but why no Robert Fripp?

Brad Walseth

Twin Lakes, Wis.

Gene Bertoncini would be my pick for an additional great guitarist. Bertoncini has played with everybody who is anybody in jazz, from Benny Goodman to Tony Bennett. He is one of the most virtuosic chordal-melody guitarists on the scene, bridging the gaps among



jazz, classical and Brazilian music.

Gary Thompson

Indianapolis

Jazz, blues, pop and soul guitar legend Phil Upchurch should have been included.

Saul Davis

Studio City, Calif.

Your list of great guitarists struck me as odd in a couple of instances, especially as to why Carlos Santana was not in the lineup.

Leland Lynch

leland55@yahoo.com

Where is Al Viola? I am disappointed that this brilliant musician was overlooked.

Ron Arfin

jazzgenius@gmail.com

I am disappointed to see that Paul Weeden's name is missing in the list of 75 guitarists. Weeden grew up with Wes Montgomery as his buddy in Indianapolis; both played in the

same style. Another milestone for Weeden was playing with Coleman Hawkins' group, and he replaced Freddie Green in the Count Basie Orchestra. He also started the first professional jazz clinic in Norway.

Brinck Johnsen

Oslo

While I realize it would be next to impossible to include everyone in any list of greats, Ed Bickert, the legendary Canadian guitarist, was a glaring omission.

Kurt Kolstad

Alexandria, Minn.

Among your list of great guitarists, there are many forgotten—at least these four: Howard Roberts, Sal Salvador, René Thomas and Philip Catherine.

Maurice Creuven

maurice.creuven@gmail.com

How could you have overlooked Howard Roberts? He was a prolific recording artist as well as one of the industry's top studio musicians. His style was distinctive.

William Rick

djangobill@mac.com

The omission of Eric Clapton from your list is incomprehensible. If your intent was to perpetuate the stereotype that you folks are effete, elitist cake eaters, you have succeeded.

Bob Waldron

Huntington, W.V.

Glad To Be There

Thanks for including me among the list of 75 great guitarists. That's some heavy company to be in.

Russell Malone

New Jersey

Corrections

The Esoteric label, which released the six-disc Jack Bruce set, *Can You Follow?*, was misidentified in the feature about the bassist (February '09).

The recording date for James Moody's "I'm In The Mood For Love" was 1949, not 1942, as indicated in the feature "The Art of the Solo" (January '09).

A photo of Al Norris mistakenly ran in the entry on Eddie Durham in the "75 Great Guitarists" feature.

Nicole Tammara should have been credited for the photograph of Eli Reed ("Players," March '08).

DownBeat regrets the errors.

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Buddy Guy

Final Bow?

Dave Grusin and Lee Ritenour's latest world-embracing disc may be pair's last studio outing

About 18 years separate pianist Dave Grusin and guitarist Lee Ritenour, yet the two have uncommon chemistry. That comes through on their latest disc, *Amparo* (Decca), which shows off their classical backgrounds and immersion in international music. They have also said that despite all they have accomplished, this may be their last collaborative recording.

Grusin, the Academy Award-winning composer behind *The Firm*, *The Milagro Beanfield War* and other films, as well as a producer and founder of GRP Records, focuses on the textures and harmonies. Ritenour plays the leads. Together with violinist Joshua Bell, trumpeter Chris Botti, opera diva Renée Fleming and James Taylor, *Amparo* creates a tapestry of Latin American rhythms, European classical melodies, Ritenour's jazz flourishes and Grusin's string arrangements.

"It's music that people may have heard before," Grusin said. "But the reward for me was to reorchestrate all these old classical jams."

The choices include Handel, Ravel, Faure and Vaughn Williams, alongside tunes by Grusin, Ritenour and Antonio Carlos Jobim. The result is less Gunther Schuller Third Stream and more a lively take on Stan Getz's *Focus*—minus the improvisation.

Amparo is also not the first of its kind for Grusin and Ritenour; it follows up 2000's *Two Worlds*, a blend of classical and jazz modes that arguably spawned other classical "crossover" success stories, such as Josh Groban or even Andrea Bocelli.

"Chris Roberts (president of classics and jazz at Universal Music Group International) came up with the original idea," Ritenour said. "He knew my background with classical guitar (Ritenour began studying at 13) and knew Dave's facility as an orchestrator and arranger, and asked us to do this."

For *Amparo*, Grusin and Ritenour worked together in isolation to reacquaint themselves



Lee Ritenour (left) and Dave Grusin

LANCE STADLER

with the fresh demands of classical music. "It took us a minute to get our chops back into the groove," Grusin said. "But once we picked the music and then picked the setting that would be best to do it in, we didn't have any restrictions other than the compositions."

After laying down their parts as a live duo, Grusin recorded his regular string players, all first-call Los Angeles session musicians.

Ritenour and Grusin are aware that opportunities for big-budget jazz-classical studio connections have dried up recently, particularly with the decline of the smooth jazz radio format. Ritenour bristles, cheerfully, at the "smooth jazz" tag, but contends its original mission was far more exciting, and mentions the Los Angeles radio station The Wave (94.7FM) in the mid-'90s as an example.

"In terms of a signal, it was better than any jazz station out there," Ritenour said. "Prior to that, we're coming out of a bunch of college stations with weak signals. It was also more like FM in the '60s and '70s, with Jimi Hendrix, Santana, then a *Bitches Brew* track, a blues

track, then some Paul Simon. Then the format started expanding across the country and this warp started happening. Needless to say, it became Muzak-y and here we are. Based on where it was 10 to 15 years ago, it could have been an interesting format."

Grusin remains flummoxed with the current state of the industry. "I don't pretend to know where this is all going to sift out because it's in chaos," Grusin said. "The lack of retail stores, more than anything, has affected things. The CD is like a Ford Model A now, in terms of how people find their music."

Radio, too, is in uncharted waters, according to Grusin. "We knew who to count on to get airplay and be heard on the radio when we had GRP. Today, we have no idea who to count on."

Now, Grusin wants to return his focus to composing. "I don't know if I'll do another record project," he said. "I'm interested in writing now, but not so much for the marketplace. You get to dig into the elements of classical music in film scoring and you never get bored. Plus, you're always learning." —Matthew Lurie

Riffs



Woods' Coups: Phil Woods has added pianist Bill Mays to his quintet. The saxophonist also received Pennsylvania's Governor's Award for the Arts for his work with the Celebration of the Arts Festival. Details: philwoods.com

Hilton Helps: Pianist Lisa Hilton performed at a benefit for the blind and visually impaired at Andy's Jazz Club in Chicago on Jan. 8. Hilton has also worked with students at the Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts and at Camp Bloomfield in Malibu, Calif. Details: lisahiltonmusic.com

Bass Chats: Christian McBride is releasing a series of duets and conversations with veteran musicians under the title *Conversations With Christian* digitally through Mack Avenue. Participants will include Hank Jones, Chick Corea and George Duke. Details: christianmcbride.com

Kessel Chronicled: Maurice Summerfield has written *Barney Kessel: A Jazz Legend* (Ashley Mark). The book includes photographs, memorabilia and discographical information on the guitarist. Details: halleonard.com

National Swing: Blues Alley in Washington, D.C., will host Big Band Jam at the National Mall from April 17–26. The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra will perform at the Sylvan Theater on the grounds of the Washington Monument. Details: bluesalley.org

RIP, Martyn: Guitarist John Martyn died of complications of pneumonia on Jan. 25 in Kilkenny, Ireland. He was 60. Initially a British folk player, he adapted the techniques and spirit of jazz improvisation on a series of albums in the 1970s.

Jazz House Gigs Build New Living Room Circuit

The newest Atlanta jazz venue doesn't have a backstage. There's no stage, either—just a red Oriental rug protecting hardwood flooring. On a wintry Sunday evening, pianist Takana Miyamoto and vibraphonist Christian Tamburr performed at the space simply by walking in the door and playing. At intermission, between bites of mini quiche, Tamburr and Miyamoto chatted with the audience of 40 neighbors, jazz lovers and musicians.

The show, put on by the Southeastern Organization for Jazz Arts (SOJA), represents a growing trend in jazz presentation. House concerts, proponents say, bring a new audience to jazz through cheaper ticket prices and more accessible performance spaces. Tickets for house shows range from \$20 to \$40, depending on the prominence of the artists. Musicians play two sets, and light snacks are often served during intermission.

Mary Jo Strickland started bringing musicians to her Atlanta-area house 10 years ago. With the help of fellow jazz lover Phil Clore, she created SOJA to expand the concerts to a handful of houses throughout the city.

"A lot of people go to the house concerts who would never go to a club," Strickland said, adding that musicians enjoy playing in private homes for an attentive, all-ages audience. "Musicians are used to playing restaurants where people are talking, blenders are going off."

Bassist Craig Shaw, who has played SOJA events, added, "The audience appreciates the concert more than in a club setting."

In June 2007, Baltimore residents Marianne Matheny-Katz and her husband, Howard, started a monthly series called Jazzway 6004, including a homemade meal with dessert in the \$40 ticket price.

"People are getting such a good deal here," Howard Katz said. "This is an economic buster—they're getting a show and dinner for \$40."

In January, Washington, D.C.-based saxophonist Jeff Antoniuk brought his quartet to Jazzway after hearing about the venue from area musicians. Antoniuk enjoyed working with hosts who valued his art.

"You see excitement when you show up to the front door. They've been looking forward to this," Antoniuk said. "There's a different vibe playing in a big living room. It's relaxed, it's



Craig Shaw and Audrey Shakir at a SOJA house concert

respectful."

Pianist Joel Holmes, who has previously performed at Jazzway, appreciates the hosts' commitment. In the past, the Katzs have used personal money to fund the concerts. "Even if they take a loss, they'll do it for the love of the music," Holmes said.

House jazz concerts are steeped in a rich history. In 1920s Harlem, stride pianists Willie "The Lion" Smith and Fats Waller performed in packed apartments to raise tenants' rent money. Fifty years later, avant-garde musicians opened private lofts to the public, their music relegated to alternative spaces by the shrinking number of venues. *Wildflowers: The New York Loft Jazz Sessions*, a multi-album collection released in 1976, chronicles music created during the '60s and '70s by Anthony Braxton, Oliver Lake and other like-minded artists.

Today, house concert promoters try for a blend of local and national talent in the straight-ahead genre. At Jazz at the "A" Frame in Los Angeles, Betty Hoover routinely packs more than 100 people into her home to see artists like Wycliffe Gordon, Jeff Hamilton and Tamir Hendelman. Musicians perform in houses because they earn a large portion of the ticket price. Fees for touring acts are negotiated before the concerts. Lesser-known musicians can make much more than they do in traditional venues.

"I pay them well. The local musicians, they are paid about three times what they're paid in these clubs," Hoover said.

Frank Hanny, who runs Chez Hanny in San Francisco, unwittingly launched his series by hiring a pianist for his 50th birthday party in 2001. He ended up inviting musicians back the next month. Last year, he produced 15 concerts featuring musicians from all over the region and shows no signs of slowing down.

"I assumed it would be only occasional, but it's come to have a momentum of its own," Hanny said. "I get to have world-class players in my living room."

—Jon Ross

Koglmann Takes on Nabokov, Haydn

Trumpeter Franz Koglmann has been one of the most prolific members of the European Third Stream for many years, and is not showing any signs of slowing down.

His latest work, "Lo-lee-ta—Music On Nabokov," premiered at the Radio Kulturhaus in Koglmann's hometown of Vienna on Dec. 12, 2008. It was performed by his longstanding Monoblue Quartet. Two days after the concert, his quartet went into a recording studio in Vienna. The resulting album, which is due out in early May on Col Legno, will also include a meeting between Koglmann and keyboardist Wolfgang Mitterer.

Considering Vladimir Nabokov's distaste for jazz, it must have taken courage for Koglmann to base a work on his novel *Lolita*.

"Someone once said that Nabokov is like chamber music in prose," Koglmann said. "That was my starting point. Nabokov is also a genius of coolness. There is nothing sentimental about his work. It's like Chet Baker or Miles Davis. It's distance and emotion at the same time. Nabokov is like a kind of cool jazz."

On the concert performance of "Lo-lee-ta," Koglmann's quartet employed much of its arsenal of colors and jazz hooks. There was also a



Franz Koglmann and Ed Renshaw

strong sense of the visual. Dark clarinet flutters conjured up monochromatic images of 1940s urban America, while bittersweet melodic passages leapfrogged brief, velvety free-for-alls. There was also plenty of chit-chat between varying instrumental pairings, with bassist Peter Herbert's percussive strumming dovetailing with Koglmann's flugelhorn arpeggios, and Tony Coe's bluesy alto saxophone and clarinet statements punctuated by Ed Renshaw's guitar.

Coe's contribution to the proceedings was anything but cool, as he reeled off bebop-tinted lines. He has collaborated with Koglmann for more than three decades.

"Working with Franz brings out the more adventurous side of my improvising," he said. "Also, Franz has a sense of humor."

The Vienna concert also included an octet performance of Koglmann's 2007 piece "Nocturnal Walks," which is based on Haydn's "Symphony No. 27," and featured a playback of a monologue by 20th century philosopher Emil Cioran. Koglmann feels that Nabokov and Haydn share common dispositional ground.

"Haydn, unlike Mozart, always remains emotionally detached," Koglmann said. "In that respect he was a precursor of cool jazz, in that he kept an emotional distance from the listener."

Koglmann is also composing a new opera that, he said, "has to do with the world of business. The basic idea is to make a comedy between opera, musical, jazz and rap, and we will use also electronic sounds based on office noises."

—Barry Davis

Denis Wick IS Jazz Trumpet

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EUROPEAN SCENE

By Peter Margasak

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

Saxophonist Anker Highlights Different Side of Danish Jazz

When Americans like Dexter Gordon and Ben Webster took up residency in Denmark for extended periods, local musicians had some of the best role models playing in their clubs. The downside was that most Danish jazz artists were stuck imitating the sounds that developed across the pond. With the exceptions of reedist John Tchicai and, later, guitarist Pierre Dørge, Danish jazz was essentially the sound of American jazz.

Lotte Anker encountered this environment when she first began playing the saxophone in 1982. She had studied classical piano since she was a child, but had increasingly been drawn to jazz since she was a teenager. Halfway through her studies at the University of Copenhagen she switched her focus from literature to music, though she was still unsure where music would fit in her future. It didn't take long for her to figure out. Before long she was playing with drummer Marilyn Mazur, one of the few other Danes intent on developing a sound not beholden to bebop. After seeing the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Ornette Coleman's Prime Time, Sun Ra and Peter Brötzmann, Anker gravitated toward newer sounds despite the conservative surroundings.

"The hardest thing seemed to be the lack

of appreciation or acknowledgment for that kind of music," Anker said.

She began looking elsewhere for ideas. "A lot of Danes, including myself, looked up to the Norwegians because we felt they had a more defined sound and identity," she said.

By 1992, a quartet she co-led with pianist Mette Petersen had become a quintet with the addition of Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer. She also formed a Danish improvising trio with bassist Peter Friis-Nielsen and guitarist Hasse Poulsen, and another grouping with Mazur and American pianist Marilyn Crispell. Free improvisation was important in most of these projects, but Anker also enjoyed composing.

"I love being in the improvising world, but at the same I like to sit down and work with a composition and forms, to go deep into that area," she said. "I try to combine those two in a way, to find ways of composing that make the transition to the improvi-



Lotte Anker

sation within a composition more natural."

Fortuitously, in 1996, she assumed co-leadership of the Copenhagen Art Ensemble with Ture Larsen. The group has made numerous fine recordings, with writing by the two leaders as well as guests like Mazur, American saxophonist Tim Berne—who made his dynamic 2002 album *Open, Coma* with them—and Joachim Kühn. Also in the mid-'90s, Anker and some like-minded improvisers in Copenhagen started SPOR, a presenting association that hosted regular concerts with local players and musicians from around Europe and the United States.

Anker said that although improvised music is still a fringe activity in Denmark, things have improved. She points to the ambitious younger musicians affiliated with the excellent ILK label as proof. Two of her most recent recordings—the duo *Du Fugl* and trio *Live At The Loft*—are on ILK.

"A lot of Danes are still working with Americans, but it's not the bebop Americans anymore," she said. "It's the other side." DB

The ARCHIVES

April 17,
1958

Les Brown

By John Tynan

"As a general rule, I tell audiences, 'We're a swing band, we don't play rock 'n' roll,'" Les Brown said. "But, actually, you'd be surprised. We don't get five requests for rock 'n' roll in a year."

Dan Terry

By Dom Cerulli

"I believe we can get the kids to dance," Dan Terry said. "And get them to know what bands are about. The ballroom operators have to be convinced to try new bands. The agencies have to get out and push. The leaders



will work. They want as many people as possible to hear their music."

Trumpeter Bob Higgins Finds Horn of Plenty

By John Tynan

"Let's face it, the odds are high against staying at the top in the music business during one's entire productive life," Bob Higgins said. "For musicians with formal training in finance, the securities business offers wonderful opportunities."

A Guide for Strolling Players

By Ted Heath

Almost everybody in Britain lives within about 25 miles of a large city. That means the audiences are more used to having

sophisticated entertainment than in the country areas of America, and there probably is a greater countrywide appreciation of good jazz and dance music than there is in the United States.

Cross Section: Woody Herman

By Dan Gold

"Ella Fitzgerald is a jazz singer, Doris Day is not," Woody Herman said. "It's the same as being a jazz player. I don't think I am or ever was a jazz player. A good jazz singer is a good jazz musician, in one way or another." DB



New York's famed Apollo Theater announced that it would celebrate its 75th anniversary this year with a series of commemorative jazz, gospel and r&b concerts. At the kick-off press conference on Jan. 27, "Amateur Night At The Apollo"-winning singer Chanj (left) appeared with Dionne Warwick, Chuck Jackson, Apollo Theater Foundation CEO Jonelle Procope and dancer Savion Glover.

Fans Reach Out to Saxophonist Ware

In January, saxophonist David S. Ware's label, Aum Fidelity, sent out a dire announcement. After Ware has been quietly confronting kidney failure for 10 years through a hemodialysis regimen, he found out last December that he needs a kidney transplant. Two weeks after this message was posted on the company's web site, potential donors had already started to step forward.

"I was surprised, but it shows me the value of playing music, what I have given out and what it returns to me," Ware said from his home in central New Jersey. "When I get this transplant, it will be like a new beginning. I'm going to try to play a lot more. It's going to have even more meaning to play music in this world."

Ware hopes that one of the donors will be cleared and that he'll be able to have the transplant operation this spring. His plan will be to recuperate for three months and then resume recording and touring. Steven Joerg, who owns Aum Fidelity, will also continue to update news on Ware's condition and how people can help on aumfidelity.com.

Along with his fans' support, Ware also attributes his endurance to inner spiritual practice.

"If it wasn't for my meditation, I don't know if I could have made it," Ware said. "The meditation gives you perspective on who you are and your relationship with whatever happens to you. It gives you an anchor; it's given me mine for the last 35-plus years." —Aaron Cohen

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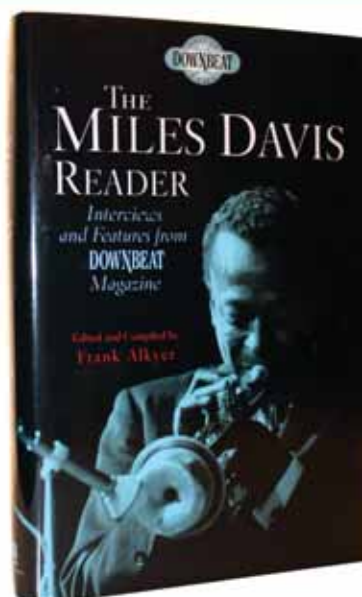
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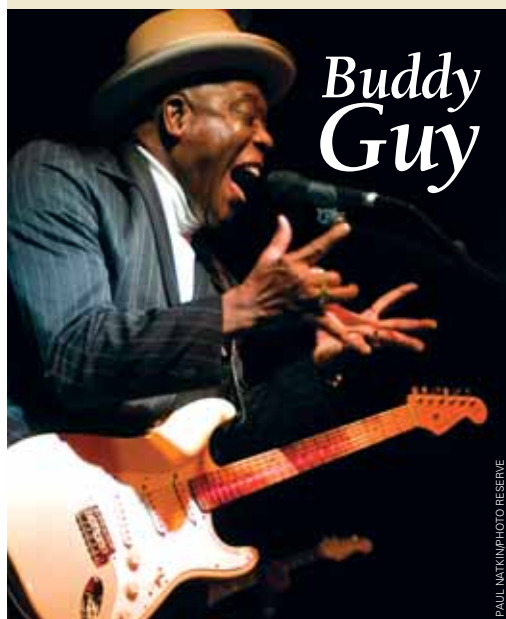


THE HOODY DEAL



Backstage With ...

By Aaron Cohen



When blues hero Buddy Guy could be anywhere in the world, each January he performs almost every night throughout the month at his Chicago club, Legends. Onstage on Jan. 9, he forgot the snow-filled sidewalks as easily as he ignored his 72 years for a set that featured his dazzling guitar work, as well as his gentle voice, especially as he sang the moving title track of his latest disc, *Skin Deep* (Silvertone). He took time to chat in his office above the bar at the beginning of his residency.

What makes you keep performing here in the dead of winter when you could be in, say, Florida right now?

I do this every January and most shows are sold out. I was thinking, "Somebody should be able to come in and do the same thing in February." But I don't know anybody else who could play in Chicago for a month and sell it out. And I don't do nothing different than anybody else. I get seniority for having done it for 51 years, so people think they should come out from the cold and see me warm things up for a little bit.

On *Skin Deep*, you and Robert Randolph make a great pairing.

Robert does a tremendous job. I want to put two or three spirituals on my next record. His family is so good at that, and there are so many good spiritual records you hardly hear. Blues and spirituals are so closely related. B.B. King said the only dif-

ference with us and other singers is we hold the notes longer, we don't snap the words like hip-hop. That's the way they were singing those spirituals before they started bringing keyboards and drums in there. The Pilgrim Travelers, Five Blind Boys: They didn't have instruments, just voices making all that great music. I used to listen to them with my mother—they had some voices, didn't they?

This was also the first disc where all the tracks were written by you, or your drummer, Tom Hambridge.

When I came to Chess in '57, '58, nobody was listening to what I had. Later on in life with my education of what was going on with writers, record companies and producers, I saw that if they didn't get a part of it, you didn't get the song in there. Now, when I asked, they finally said, "I don't know, but OK."

So now you have a song like "Skin Deep," which is a moving and personal account of racism. What were the circumstances that led to the song?

My parents were sharecroppers, working on the plantation for the white man. I was about 5 when his family's son was born. When he was 3, they used to pick me up to bring me to their house to play with him all day because he wasn't old enough to go to school and we didn't have a school. After he got big enough to walk, we would walk home at night and we used to have a flashlight. I would shine the light on my hand and his hand and he'd say, "They used to tell me that your blood is black and mine is white, but I see red blood in both our hands." When he got to be 13, they said we couldn't play together. But he was the first person I wanted to have the CD.

In one way or another, the blues always addressed these deep issues.

I tell people who say they don't like blues that if you turn your television on and see what's going on with the world and turn on Son House or Lightnin' Hopkins, you'll ask, "How could they have known about all this stuff way back then?" It's because they were telling the truth about everyday life. That's what I'm trying to do every time I play the blues. **DB**



New Orleans Hosts Danny Barker Centennial Parties

Danny Barker had many roles during his life. He played guitar and banjo behind Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong and his wife, Blue Lu Barker, along with recording several albums as a leader. But in his hometown, his biggest impact may have been forming the Fairview Baptist Church Band in the early '70s to teach young musicians the New Orleans brass band tradition. As 2009 marks the centennial of Barker's birth, the Crescent City is celebrating his contributions and personality with year-round festivities.

"He was a part of the culture," guitarist/banjoist Detroit Brooks said about Barker, who died in 1994. "He taught what he learned with those great musicians and to the kids here. He planted the seeds that grew trees like Nicholas Payton, Michael White and Herlin Riley."

The French Market Corporation and the Jazz Centennial Celebration led by Jason Patterson put on the Danny Barker Festival on Jan. 16 and 17 (his birthday was Jan. 13). Barker's students—including trumpeters Leroy Jones and Greg Stafford—were featured on one stage. Another had storytellers relating the history of Barker and his music, as well as readings from his books, including his autobiography *A Life In Jazz*. A club crawl in the Faubourg Marigny neighborhood let listeners saunter between nightspots, hearing different bands with guitars and banjos as their lead instruments.

The French Quarter Festival in April, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in April and May, and the Satchmo Summerfest in August also have plans for musical dedications, interviews and lectures about Barker. Performers at the Jazz and Heritage Fest will include a reunited Fairview Baptist Church Band.

"Danny was a walking embodiment of all the things that you think of in the quintessential jazz cat," said Scott Aiges, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation program director. "He carried that torch so that another generation would know what a real jazz guy looked and sounded like." **—David Kunian**

Panama Jazz Festival Builds International and Local Bridges

The Panama Jazz Festival in Panama City, now in its sixth year, offered more than favorable weather from Jan. 12–17. It boasted an excellent lineup, an expansive educational component, and ticketed and free shows that brought together the entire city, from the elite to barrio residents. The festivities were as much about establishing a community—celebrating the late Panamanian jazz bassist Clarence Martin, presenting daily clinics and staging late-night jam sessions—as it was about throwing a fiesta.

While the headliners—Wayne Shorter and Chuco Valdés both received a key to the city from Panama City Mayor Juan Carlos Navarro and a celebratory luncheon with Panama's President Martin Torrijos Espino—turned in typically strong performances, the festival also offered a window on local musicians. Some, as it turned out, are talented enough to follow in the footsteps of pianist/festival director Danilo Pérez.

Highlighted up-and-comers included saxophonist Jahaziel Arrocha, a Panamanian native who attends Berklee College of Music and front-lined the school's quartet at the fest, and Eliecer Izquierdo, one of two guitarists in the local band Grupo Tuirá. Both performed at the free Saturday concert at Plaza Catedral, which attracted some 10,000 people.

Arrocha, who was discovered playing tenor saxophone in a Panamanian high school marching band on a borrowed horn, auditioned for Pérez's Panama City music education foundation, which gave him a tenor of his own. His steady confidence in the Berklee group and his ability to negotiate the angles and whorls on a romp through "Blue Monk" as a guest with Children of the Night—a trio comprising Pérez,

bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade—made for an auspicious beginning of his career. Izquierdo sparked several of his nonet's tunes with his bluesy, jazzy, rocking guitar breaks. While still a teenager, Izquierdo exhibited the swagger and intuitive edge of a seasoned player.

The Gala Night officially jump-started the festival and featured an exuberant performance by Jazz Flamenco Mediterráneo, a Boston-based group featuring pianist Alex Conde Carrasco and guitarist Jonathan "Juanito" Pascual. It performed at the 750-seat four-tiered Teatro Nacional as a benefit for the Danilo Pérez Foundation. The surprise of the night was last-minute substitute vocalist/dancer Conja Abdessalam, who flew in from New York and clapped and stomped the band into a turbulence of accelerated tempos.

The next night's double bill at the 2,500-seat Teatro Anayansi opened with the Marco Pignataro Quintet, with the saxophonist leading his band through melancholy but lyrical tunes, many of which felt too pensive for such a large venue. Valdés ignited the theater with percussive grooves and exclamatory piano runs. It was full-throttle salsa-to-mambo with added spunk and sass thrown into the mix when the pianist's sister Mayra Valdés scatted the blues.

Teatro Anayansi was sold out for the fest's penultimate night in anticipation of Shorter's intergalactic improvisational journey. The opening act proved to be a surprise treat, as singer



Danilo Pérez

BILL BYTSURA

Luba Mason, with her band Kava featuring guests flutist Hubert Laws and electric bassist Jimmy Haslip, delivered Brazilian-tinged, salsa-spiced tunes, with two noteworthy numbers: a samba exchange with husband Rubén Blades (also Panama's minister of tourism) and a sublime rendering of "Skylark" with Laws. Shorter led his band through gentle, lyrical and searching territory, with tunes slowly unfolding and then often bursting with Blades' drum ferocity. Sprinkled throughout the set were such tunes as "High Life," "Zero Gravity" and "Myrrh."

The crowd stood and roared, and was rewarded with two encores. The set was the festival highlight, with appreciation expressed for Shorter certainly, but also for Pérez, whose picture and story were omnipresent through at the city.

—Dan Ouellette

Brooklyn Jazz Underground Fest Shows Off Borough's Global Vision

Tanya Kalmanovitch's quartet opened the third Brooklyn Jazz Underground Festival on Friday, Jan. 9, with a set that began with Béla Bartók and ended with Thelonious Monk. These divergent music styles typified the spirit of the Brooklyn Jazz Underground collective's bandleaders: Their wide spectrum of influences extended from bop to Indian classical music during the three-day festival at New York's Smalls.

Kalmanovitch's arrangements presented different combinations of instruments. She doubled on viola and violin; Douglas Yates alternated between clarinet and bass clarinet. The absence of drums created more space at the bottom. Bartók's "Ruthenian Song" didn't swing in the conventional sense, but evoked the jazz



Sunny Jain

TODD WEINSTEIN

tradition through its lyricism. Kalmanovitch and Yates' solos completed the makeover. In particular, Yates' turn on bass clarinet matched a mus-

cular lower register with the nimbleness to sing up top in the manner of a saxophone. "Oh, You Dear Little Night," a Russian folksong, divided the quartet into sections and evoked a chamber music ensemble. Chamber music also informed the group's reading of Monk's "Crepuscle With Nellie," an arrangement that eschewed even a single solo.

The Sunny Jain Collective, which also performed Friday, featured long, winding compositions and a penchant for stretching out that contrasted with Kalmanovitch's more concise approach. At times, the drummer's quartet suggested a jam or prog band and it also culled inspiration from South Indian music. Guitarist Nir Felder created an assortment of sounds and drones with a metal slide and numerous effects.

While Felder stood in the center of the cramped stage, he played a supporting role in an ensemble where the musicians shared the spotlight equally.

"Johnny Black," introduced via a humorous account of Jain's wedding, began with a swirl of guitar, piano and drums around Gary Wang's syncopated bass groove. A short, repetitive guitar pattern gave way to a song-like melody taken at a ballad tempo, and then a solo by pianist Marc Cary, whose style suggested McCoy Tyner. The group returned to a collective mode before the whole beautiful mess grounded to a halt—but only briefly. Jain's "Two Ladies," by contrast, featured a simpler blues structure echoed by Wang's walking bass and Felder's licks.

Bassist Alexis Cuadrado, whose group performed on Sunday, featured his own compositions and those of other contemporary composers hailing from his native Spain. Leading a quartet that included accordionist Victor Prieto and guitarist Brad Shepik, the group often saved

the best for last during several back-loaded performances. Shepik's "2 Door" moved the group outside its Spanish repertoire. Loose and disjointed, the composition drew from Middle Eastern and South Asian sources. By contrast, the group's reading of John Coltrane's "Equinox" was surprisingly straightforward. Drummer Jordan Perlson integrated the house kit with a cajon, hadjira (a hybrid tambourine instrument), and a variety of shakers and bells.

Tenor saxophonist Dan Pratt showed promise as a soloist in his organ quartet. He favored streams of eighth notes, while displaying a clear tone and strong technique. But he struggled to tailor his affinity for extended composition to the parameters of a small group. Alan Ferber, a trombonist who also performed with Pratt, had no such problem with his nonet. His vision as a composer perfectly suited his ensemble. "Ice Cave" featured an unstructured section—creepy piano, scattershot guitar and drum licks—that segued into a dirge. —Eric Fine

Avital Ensemble Reaches Across Cultures for Ambitious Suite

If music's goal is to heighten the senses, bassist Omer Avital's debut of his latest full-scale piece, "Song Of A Land ... A Middle Eastern Afro-Jewish Suite," at New York's Merkin Hall on Jan. 10 was a rousing example of the art. Alternating between a bass and small oud, Avital's warm presence infused his music. Though never swinging in a traditional sense, "Song Of A Land"'s heated rhythms and engrossing improvisations suggested the essence of jazz. With the suite's section titles "Song Of A Land," "Haboneem," "Yemen," "Eretz/Palestine" and "Africa" conveying geographic clues, the results had the drama of an Alex North or Elmer Bernstein film score with a heavy spicing of Middle Eastern folk music.

Avital began composing the piece early last summer and his large ensemble featured the unorthodox instrumentation it requires, not least the leader's oud. Other standout musicians in the 13-member band included pianist Omer Klein, trumpeter Itamar Borochoy, clarinetist Ismail Lumanovski, tenor saxophonist Matan Chapnizka and cellist Isabel Castellvi. Percussionists Itamar Doari and Matt Kilmer performed on floor tom, suspended cymbal, bells, dumbek and frame drum. Inspired and directed by Avital's liberal exhortations, which took the shape of shouts of joy, ardent chants and generous use of facial expressions, the ensemble acted as a family as much as a troupe of well-rehearsed musicians.

Over the percussionists' often boisterous rhythms, the music followed a serpentine path, slowly building, rising and crescendoing, only to



Omer Avital

quickly step back for a different path with tension mounting. At times, the music suggested Moses in a scene from *The Ten Commandments*, snarling as the golden calf was hoisted above the worshipful throng. The ensemble played as one throughout, enthusiastically urging on individual soloists. Lumanovski performed emotional, complex passages that hushed the audience, his undulating melodies and fervent interpretation of the space within notes relaying a sympathetic understanding of historical Eastern European music, particularly klezmer. Ultimately, it was hard to decipher where one influence ended and another began, while Avital's oud and bass seemed to cross borders and generations.

Avital and his ensemble played only an hour-and-a-half of the piece's three hours. He plans to record the entire piece later this year.

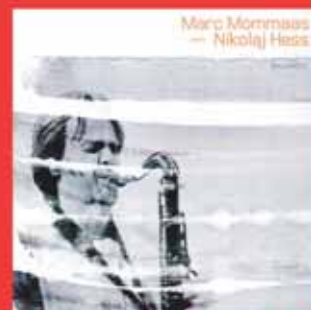
—Ken Micallef

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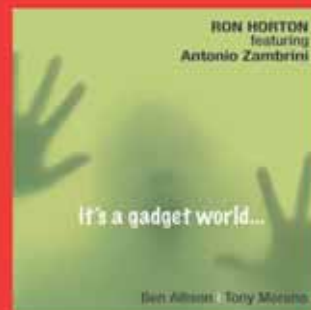
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Peter Evans All-American Cyborg's Mess

"Part of what I like about playing music is that it's a way to draw lots of different things into focus," trumpeter Peter Evans said in New York after a two-week European excursion. That trip included solo concerts, duos with bassist Tom Blancarte, and speculative improvisational encounters with saxophonists Evan Parker and Peter Brötzmann. "It has the potential to naturalize unnatural things, to mix or connect styles in an almost technological way."

Continuing this thought, Evans brought up internal connections as he mentioned alto saxophonist Jon Irabagon, this year's Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition winner and his front-line partner in the quartet Mostly Other People Do The Killing (MOPDTK).

"Jon and I sometimes talk about ourselves as being like bebop cyborgs, people who have internalized certain technological processes in our playing," he said. "So there's that stylistic component. There's also an instrumental, biotechnology aspect that's purely related to the body, like a machine, and also a psychological thing—all these different qualities drawn together into this messy focus. I don't think about this stuff when I'm playing, but I like to make reality messy, to try to show what's really there, how unclear things can be."

This offers an impeccable overview of the proceedings that unfold on Evans' debut leader date, *The Peter Evans Quartet* (Firehouse 12), and MOPDTK's third disc, *This Is Our Moosic* (Hot Cup).

On his own disc, Evans, Blancarte, guitarist Brandon Seabrook and drummer Kevin Shea navigate the leader's complex, dense, jump-cut charts, each revolving around disguised, decontextualized harmonic material from a Songbook standard. They wield virtuoso chops with an attitude, as Evans puts it, "not to sound like Sibelius playing it back to you." Meanwhile, MOPDTK references vocabulary and syntax drawn from harmolodics, hard-bop, r&b and classic New Orleans. They address them with a quasi-absurdist stance, inspired by the funhouse imperatives that animate Dutch improvisation of the Instant Composers Pool Orchestra variety.



PETER GANNUSHKINDOWNTOWNMUSIC.NET

Evans actualizes his investigations with a precisely calibrated array of extended techniques, attacks, timbres and styles, often stated within the course of a single solo, while sustaining tone and energy over long durations. A student of the instrument since age 7, an early fan of Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis, and later a Lee Morgan devotee, the Weston, Mass., native launched his experimental investigations as a teenager on weekend classes at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music. He majored in classical trumpet at Oberlin in Ohio, absorbing the canon from Bach to Xenakis, skills that he deploys with the International Contemporary Ensemble and on various freelance gigs around New York, where he moved in 2003.

"My instrument can do certain things—or I can do them with the instrument—that aren't possible on anything else," Evans said. "Lately, I'm pursuing being able to cut fast between different techniques or sounds. I'm not preparing the trumpet, I don't pretend to use mutes, so it all comes from one mechanism—the buzzing of the lips. Change one little thing, and suddenly you're in a different sound world, from a nice, clean line to a wall of white noise."

In distinction to the paths of Parker and

Brötzmann, who developed their language with the notion of breaking away from American influences during the radical '60s, the experimental esthetic that Evans applies to improvisational flow mirrors the visual phenomena he encounters in American popular culture. "I look at my whole output as one giant piece with different components," Evans said.

"I like zombie movies, horror films, ridiculous action movies, like the Robert Ludlum stories with Matt Damon," he said. "The editing is crazy—the first 30 seconds, there's a different shot every second. I like that pure color, the constant flux that almost verges on epileptic fit-inducing stuff. I listen to these YouTube 'Shreds' videos, where people make up music to go with a video that sounds opposite, or wrong, or jumbled. I listen to the fantastic things people come up with, like they're thinking, 'What would be the most hilarious thing to watch Oscar Peterson play?' or 'What if Joe Pass played these nonsense chords?'"

"I like playing music that keeps me surprised and excited, that keeps the mystery and magical part of playing at the forefront of my brain. Every other consideration should be behind that."
—Ted Panken

Will Bernard Gonzo Soul-Jazz

As last-minute replacements go, keyboardist John Medeski is an ideal name to have on call. But when Medeski subbed for Robert Walter in Stanton Moore's trio at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in 2006, guitarist Will Bernard heard not only an adept substitute, but a sonic combination he wanted to explore further.

"It's an interesting mixture for me to hear those guys play together," Bernard said. "Stanton has an aggressive rock feel that's mixed up with New Orleans traditions, which is different from when you hear Medeski with Billy Martin. I knew most of the songs would have a heavy groove to them. We weren't going to do a whole lot of light, jazzy stuff."

On *Blue Plate Special* (Palmetto), Bernard combines those elements, along with bassist Andy Hess, to create a set that specializes in heavy funk grooves. But it also veers off into the lounge exotica ("Gen Pop") and the hybrid of garage surf and ska ("Gonzo"). The album ends with a heartfelt, heads-uplifted rendition of "How Great Thou Art," suggested by Moore, whose grandmother sang the spiritual to him as a child in New Orleans.

While he shies away from labels, Bernard prefers the term "soul-jazz" to any of the various other tags that could conceivably be applied to his music.

"I don't want to be tagged and pinpointed because I have so many different stylistic interests," he said. "But I like the term 'soul-jazz' because it implies that it's more feeling-oriented music than something like 'fusion.'"

Bernard's discography is filled with collaborations and group projects, including T.J. Kirk, the Thelonious Monk/Rahsaan Roland Kirk/James Brown tribute band he formed with Charlie Hunter, and his own Motherbug, influenced by '60s/'70s horn-rock. Bernard looks forward to developing those collaborations and forming new ones. He continues to perform with Moore's trio, lead his own varied groups, and intends to work on a collaboration with Ben Sidran and long-time friend Peter Apfelbaum. He's also hoping to further explore the edgier direction taken in his 2004 trio CD *Directions To My House*, with bassist Devin Hoff and drummer Ches Smith.

The same desire to expand his palette led Bernard to relocate from the San Francisco Bay Area to New York in the fall of 2007.

"I'd been wanting to come out here a long time," Bernard said. "But I was always figuring out some excuse not to. A lot of the people I've played music with in the Bay Area live here



LOUISES DELGADO

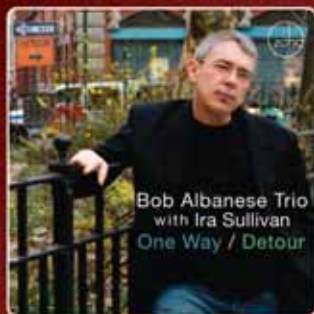
now, so it was time to come out. I want to work on my horizons, to find outlets to do different types of music."

One of the first outlets he found after the move was the artist-run label and collective Brooklyn Jazz Underground. Bernard co-founded a quartet with bassist Andrew Emer, pianist Benny Lackner and drummer Mark Ferber. The four-headed unit is a departure from Bernard's own groups, where his affinity for groove creeps in subtly at most, replaced by a freer, airy soundscape. —Shaun Brady



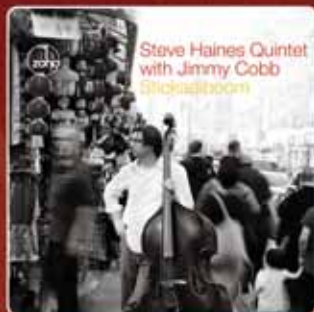
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Guests: Dafnis Prieto, Pedrito Martinez.

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ALLEGRO

Alexandre Kassin From Rio With Vinyl

When Brazilian bassist/guitarist Alexandre Kassin toured the United States last winter with his group Kassin +2, the band's name indicated as much, or as little, as its national origins. Its leadership shifts among himself, percussionist Domenico Lancelotti and guitarist Moreno Veloso; previous visits and discs have been as Moreno +2 and Domenico +2. While the group knows its bossa nova and samba, it is equally adept at blending in American r&b and Jamaican dub with charm and striking precision. Even more surprising is to hear Kassin say his primary inspiration is the medium, rather than the music itself.

"I don't consider myself a proper musician," Kassin said before a concert at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music. "My relationship with music was always more related to records. I became a musician and producer to be involved with records."

That collector's fascination is woven throughout the Kassin +2 disc, *Futurismo* (Luaka Bop). While many of the songs revolve around the keyboard-driven melodic funk that emerged in Rio De Janeiro during the '70s, the group is just as likely to add in bits of free-form



MICHAEL JACKSON

noise or ambient electronica. Meanwhile, Kassin's large band, Orquestra Imperial, pays tribute to decades-old Brazilian ballroom swing on the disc *Carnaval Só Ano Que Vem* (Som Livre).

Born and raised in Rio, it took a while for Kassin, 35, to discover these older genres. His older brother was a DJ and he became similarly

addicted to vinyl at an early age. "When I was 9, I had the whole Marvin Gaye collection," he said. But downstairs neighbor bassist Edson Lobo also caught his attention.

"I was living on the third floor, and he was playing the bass just below my room," Kassin said. "Because of him, I got interested in playing more than listening. For people my age,

Mike Clark Straightahead Prescription

Mike Clark and bassist Paul Jackson created a new approach for playing funk rhythms in the late 1960s in Oakland, Calif. The tandem went on to achieve fame in the rhythm section of Herbie Hancock's Headhunters. But in spite of Hancock's high profile, Clark recalled having reservations about joining.

"I almost didn't take the gig with Herbie because I had a great jazz career going on in the San Francisco Bay Area, and I was afraid I'd be typecast," Clark said. "But he advised me to take the gig because he said, 'Maybe nobody will hear of you at all.' We both laughed and I said OK."

Clark, 62, has finally escaped from beneath this shadow. The drummer's new album, *Blueprints Of Jazz, Vol. 1* (Talking House), reveals the hard-bop sensibilities simmering beneath the funk persona. Clark has been less visible on the straightahead scene, in part because he appears most frequently as a sideman.

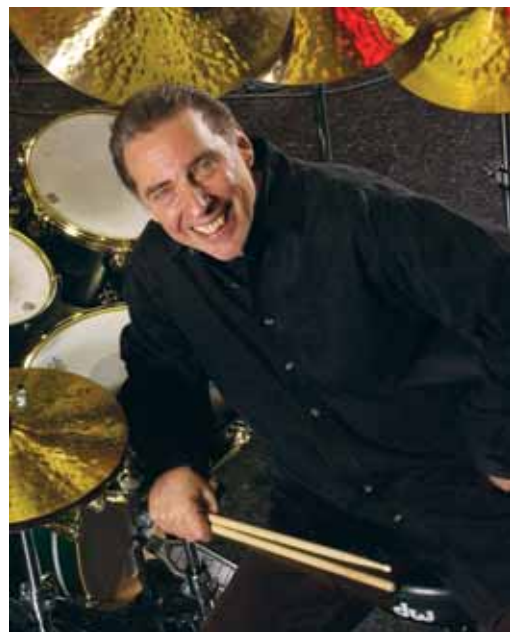
"As soon as I was done with that [Hancock] gig, I moved to New York in 1979 to play jazz," Clark said. "During the '80s and '90s, I was playing all the time. But most of the records I made sold 3,000 units or something. And Herbie's records sold 1 million. People

who don't live in New York would naturally think that's what I do."

Clark's résumé extends from Chet Baker and Vince Guaraldi to Bobby Hutcherson, Woody Shaw, George Adams and Pharoah Sanders. He spent the early part of the decade leading the group Prescription Renewal, whose various lineups included Charlie Hunter, Fred Wesley and DJ Logic. Clark and Bill Summers continue to lead a new edition of the Headhunters (without Hancock).

Trumpeter Eddie Henderson said the drummer's all-around talents have been overlooked. "He doesn't play just funk," said Henderson, who began performing with Clark in the 1960s. "He doesn't play just swing or doesn't play just bebop; I'm sure Mike can play free-jazz, too. He's a sophisticated drummer, intermingling the funk grooves with some complex polyrhythmic jazz drumming."

That mix is also reflected on the various compositions on *Blueprints Of Jazz*. Saxophonist Jed Levy's "Like That" and Clark's "Conchita's Dance" build tension characteristic of hard-bop in the 1960s. Tim



BRIAN ZUCKERBERG

Quimette's "10th Ave. 1957" is an exotic blues befitting an old-time burlesque house, while the straightforward conventions of Levy's "Thanks Len" provide an effective contrast. The syncopated "Loft Funk," co-written by Clark and Levy, features a churchy groove that recalls Lee Morgan's "The Sidewinder."

bossa nova was dead because they didn't experience it as something live. For me, it was live. It was happening daily below my apartment."

Lobo was also João Donato's bassist, and Kassín would see the legendary singer and pianist at those apartment jam sessions. Today, they collaborate regularly, and Donato appears on *Futurismo*. A few years later, Kassín met his future bandmates—including Veloso and Lancelotti—in high school.

A broadcast journalism major in college, Kassín ended his university studies at 19 when he began producing full-time for the major network TV Globo. That job led to others producing some of Brazil's pop stars, such as Marisa Monte. Kassín opened his own studio nine years ago.

As Kassín built his reputation as a producer, he continued performing with his high school friends. Initially an experimental collective, with Veloso on cello, the band shifted toward crafting the playful songs that comprised its debut, 2001's *Moreno +2 Music Typewriter* (Luaka Bop). Kassín said that the marketing obstacles that come from constantly rotating the group's name are not much of a concern.

"We were friends playing together since we were kids," Kassín said. "It was unexpected that we would travel outside of Brazil. We never even thought our records would get released."

Spontaneity has led to interesting results, with Orquestra Imperial being one of them. Although Kassín always wanted to re-create a

Pianist Patrice Rushen, who is also featured on the disc, believes *Blueprints* will allow the jazz world to see Clark in a different light. "Clark's jazz side wasn't recognized because it wasn't emphasized," said Rushen, whose career also straddles straightahead jazz and crossover fare. "Playing with Hancock put him in a situation where he was breaking new ground. But he's got all kinds of chops, and now he's got a document that says so."

Clark has recorded straightahead albums, but they are few and far between. Nearly 15 years separate *Give The Drummer Some* (1989) and *Summertime* (2003). Clark believes he will have more opportunities to record in this style. "A lot of times when I used to go to record companies with a jazz date, they'd ask, 'Well, can't you play some funk?'" he said. "I'd just go home. I'd say no."

Clark attributes his newfound freedom to record companies staffed by a younger generation. These folks, he said, haven't listened to *Thrust* (1974), Hancock's album that provided Clark's initial spotlight.

"They just know me as a jazz musician," he said. "In the last five years, it's all good for me to play what I started out playing. It's OK now at record companies for me to play what I've already been playing for the past 30 years."

—Eric Fine

big band sound, he hadn't planned on doing anything about it until a promoter offered him a residency at a 1,500-seat venue called Ballroom.


"I talked to him on a Thursday, and he called the next day and said, 'You start on Monday,'" he said. "He thought I actually had the orchestra and wanted to start playing weekly, but I didn't have anything ready. So I called all my friends to have at least 15 people there. By Monday we had 17 people onstage and seven people watching. On the last day, it was sold out."

Kassín's unique tone underpins all these pro-

jects. When he plays samba, he deliberately uses less notes than traditional Brazilians and often drifts into effects that echo dub bassist Robert Shakespeare. He adds that his model comes from such records as the 1970 pairing of Brigitte Fontaine and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Comme À La Radio*, because its links to national boundaries are tenuous.

"I love albums when they don't sound from a certain age, style," he said. "I love albums that sound like they're from nowhere."

—Aaron Cohen



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Ready FOR *Anything*

Remembering Freddie Hubbard's Fast, Brash, Brilliant and Virtuoso Jazz Life

Freddie Hubbard, perhaps the most important jazz trumpeter of the past 50 years, as well as the most adventurous, died Dec. 29, 2008, in Sherman Oaks Hospital in Southern California, where he was in intensive care following a heart attack on Nov. 26. He was 70.

Hubbard breathed fire and mused lyrically on his horn throughout his peak years. He has left a luminous legacy that underscores his innovations as an artist and his rowdy behavior onstage and off, despite the past decade-and-a-half when his trumpeting vitality and mastery waned. From the time he emerged on the national jazz scene in the late '50s, he made a huge impact.

Sonny Rollins enlisted Hubbard into his band, impressed by his talent. "Donald Byrd was playing with me, but he left to do another gig," Rollins said. "So I got Freddie. I showed him off to Donald, saying, 'Here's someone better than you.' There wasn't anything Freddie couldn't do."

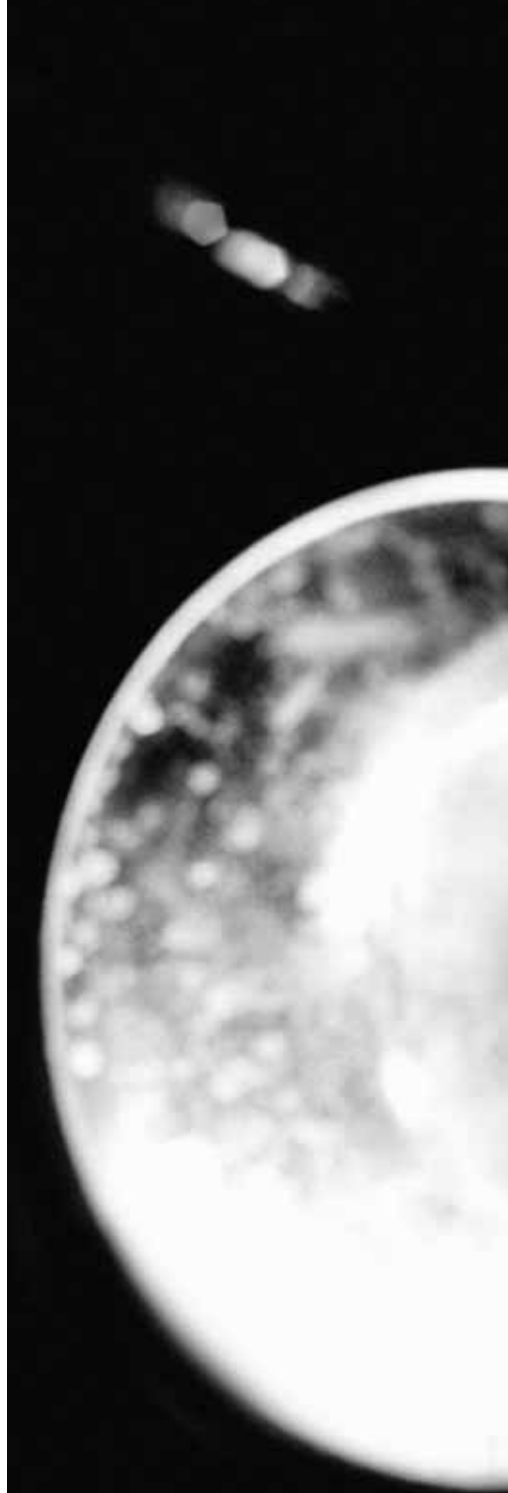
Wayne Shorter, who played with Hubbard in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, said that the trumpeter was in the same league as Lee Morgan and Miles Davis during the early '60s. "He could have been a classical player, too, because he could read and perform anything," Shorter said. "I met him in 1959 at a jam session in the back room of Small's Paradise. Freddie was one of the guys. He had a cocky, devil-may-care attitude and he was from the same place as Wes Montgomery and J.J. Johnson, so that was something. When we joined up with Art Blakey, we had the experience of seeing each other's development. When Lee left Art's band, there was a feeling of sadness, a slump. But when Freddie came in, he solidified the band again."

Hubbard made his mark not only with his bandmates and friends, but also with entire generations of trumpet players who followed in his wake. Almost immediately after Hubbard's death, trumpeters who were moved by him posted blogs on their web sites. Brian Lynch, who performed with him during special "life-changing" Blakey shows, wrote: "He was and is my greatest hero. Since the first time I heard *Red Clay* at 14 years of age, Hub has personified the music to me."

Dave Douglas' post on greenleafmusic.com articulately delved into the more technical aspects of Hubbard's playing while asserting that he was "the most imitated [trumpeter] of the last half-century." Douglas wrote that Hubbard's exhibition of joy and freedom in his playing came from his seemingly effortless trumpet prowess: "In the high range, his control of air was so sublime that his lines sometimes defied the laws of physics and harmony, resolving in odd ways just by the dint of his total domination of the instrument. Freddie grabbed the opportunity of those alternate fingerings to pop in and out of chromatic chord and scale ideas. His attack was always precise, and his dodging and darting lines flowed like water through a sluiceway."

Douglas praised Hubbard's inventive harmonies and his genius with rhythmic propulsion, while adding, "Freddie's impact is so profound that you don't often have to mention him when noting a young player's influences. Freddie is always there. He had a lot to say, and we all soaked it in."

Terrell Stafford noted that Hubbard touched on almost every style in jazz, citing his work with Ornette Coleman (*Free Jazz*, 1960), Eric Dolphy (*Out To Lunch*, 1964), and his CTI and Columbia





fusion days in the 1970s. (Hubbard also performed on such landmark recordings as Oliver Nelson's *The Blues And The Abstract Truth*, 1961, Wayne Shorter's *Speak No Evil*, 1964, Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage*, 1965, and John Coltrane's *Ascension*, 1965.)

"You hear stories about how Coltrane dedicated himself to his craft, but Freddie was always doing that, too," Stafford said. "That's why he was such a genius, from genre to genre, challenge to challenge. I loved his fire, articulation, harmonic power, sound and approach. And his compositions were incredible. I'm not taking anything from Miles or Clifford Brown, but Freddie made such a huge impact on the generation behind him and in the colleges and workshops today."

When she was 17, Ingrid Jensen caught Hubbard live two nights in a row at a club in her native Vancouver, British Columbia. "I was infatuated with Freddie's trumpet playing, and I had no concept of how he could play the instrument the way he did," Jensen said of the early-'80s shows. "On the second night during the set break, Freddie approached me at the bar and said, 'You're a trumpet player, aren't you?' He told me that if I came by his hotel the next day, he'd give me a lesson."

She calls this lesson one of the most important days of her life. "When he heard me play, I guess he thought that I was going for something," she said. "He had me play some exercises, and he sent me home with some material to practice. I kept practicing because I wanted to play like Freddie, to get that consistency of a vocal sound—those warm, round, long tones that were like Coltrane. I wanted to get to a place in my own playing where I could maintain that beautiful sound throughout all the registers of the horn."

One of the younger players on the scene, Christian Scott also bows down to Hubbard's sound. "The first time I heard him was when I was a kid," he said. "It was the most compelling sound on the trumpet I had ever heard. It was powerful and slick. When I heard *Ugetsu* with Art Blakey, I lost my mind. I went out and bought every album I could by Freddie, and tried my best to transcribe."

While Scott never met Hubbard, he was still influenced by him, "in the context of being a trumpeter—how he articulated and how he built solos," Scott said. "He and Lee Morgan were heavy in my hard-bop/bebop playing. I think, wow, I'm 25, but listen to what Freddie was doing when he was 22."

Hubbard also inspired an entire class of young musicians who weren't trumpeters. Javon Jackson was immediately pulled into the trumpeter's playing the first time he heard him. "He was such a strong performer and he could take these great extended solos," the saxophonist said. "He was the bridge of so much information. He came from the Clifford Brown style. He absorbed Trane's linear style and he embodied Sonny Rollins' rhythmic feel in his phrasing."

Jackson played in Hubbard's band in the early '90s and became friends with him. "Freddie was like a father to me," he said. "He treated me like a son. Just last October I went to see Freddie at his house. We had dinner and then we watched videos. It was like going home. It was about the music but also real personal. He left a lot to musicians. It's a serious school of higher learning. He'll live through us artists who continue to celebrate him."

Christian McBride said that Hubbard was a key to bringing Coltrane's style of fluidity and clarity on the saxophone to the trumpet scene. He also weighed in on Hubbard's output as a composer. "Freddie may not have produced the sheer volume as Wayne Shorter or Andrew Hill, but his music was meaty," the bassist said. "His tunes had great melodies, lots of great chord changes, sophisticated harmonies and tempo changes, and were sheer fun to play. It's like you can feel the music in your blood. Just think of the tune 'Red Clay.' It's got juicy changes and is funky—it is something to hold on to."

Indy Roots

Hubbard was born and raised in Indianapolis, where he grew up playing with the likes of the Montgomery brothers, David Baker, James Spaulding and Alonzo "Pookie" Johnson. One of his first big gigs was with the band the Jazz Contemporaries, where Baker recalled that Hubbard's trumpet voice was influenced heavily by Clifford Brown. "Everyone back then loved Clifford," Baker said. "I have a bootleg of the early years of that band, and I played it for Freddie once. And he said, 'I sure sounded like Clifford.'"

However, Hubbard was on a mission to find his own voice, which came quickly while still in his hometown. "Freddie developed a voice that was unlike anyone else," said Baker, who currently heads the jazz studies department at Indiana University. "He had the skill, agility, even the acrobatics. He could play like a virtuoso, but he never sacrificed the sound. He was young, impressionable, like a sponge when it came to hearing music, and he was fearless. He had the swagger and bravado. Plus, he had a great sense of humor. That was the devil in Freddie Hubbard. He was one of the most melodic trumpeters of his time. Just think of the melodies he wrote later like 'Up Jumped Spring,' which is a masterpiece."

Spaulding remembered those Indianapolis days as "an exciting musical beginning." The alto saxophonist/flutist met Hubbard at a jam session that led to the two of them rehearsing Charlie Parker tunes together. He marveled at how Hubbard developed. "Freddie was like Coltrane," he said. "After Freddie came along, playing the trumpet would never be the same. He had perfect pitch. He could hear a car horn and tell you the key. Plus, he could really play the piano. If he didn't play the trumpet, he could have done piano gigs."



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When Hubbard moved to New York in 1958, he immediately turned heads. Spaulding met up with him in Brooklyn, in Slide Hampton's building and upstairs from Dolphy's apartment. "I remember going with Freddie to Birdland once and Lee Morgan was playing," Spaulding said. "He told me to go ahead and play with him. My knees were shaking. I was shy, but Freddie was outspoken. I was nervous, but Freddie's talent was so huge that he would join right in."

One of Hubbard's first major stops after gigs

with Rollins, Hampton, J.J. Johnson and Quincy Jones was with Blakey's Jazz Messengers in 1961. Even though he had already embarked on his own Blue Note recording stint (beginning in 1960 and continuing through 1966, with Impulse! dates scattered in), Hubbard stayed in Blakey's employ until 1964. It was here that his compositional brilliance was showcased.

Cedar Walton joined the Messengers on the same day Hubbard did, after Morgan and pianist Bobby Timmons left the group to pursue their

own band-leading goals. "Freddie and I were Brooklyn residents and we used to play these bar-and-bandstand gigs like Turbo Village, which was a lot of fun," Walton said. "Somehow, Art Blakey heard us, and we joined him, which was a great opportunity for us to write music because Art didn't write. So it was me, Freddie and Wayne Shorter coming up with music that Art encouraged us to compose. It became like a family band, with everyone contributing. Freddie was a great artist and a hell of a composer."

Walton recorded with Hubbard on his early Blue Note albums (including *Hub Cap* and *Here To Stay*, both recorded in 1961) and later returned to the studio with him in 1991 for the MusicMasters album *Bolivia*, which was to the pianist "just a record session. It was hardly anything else because by then Freddie had been well into his own curriculum agenda."

Another early associate of Hubbard's was drummer Louis Hayes, who was one of the first musicians the trumpeter sought out when he moved to Brooklyn. "We lived in the same building," said Hayes, who had come to New York from Detroit two years earlier to play with Horace Silver. "Freddie had heard me playing on an album with trumpeter Wilbur Harden, whose band included John Coltrane and Doug Watkins. So when he arrived from Indianapolis, he knocked on the window of my apartment."

While they toured a lot, Hayes' presence on Hubbard's recordings was minimal, he said, even though they remained good friends for several years. "After Miles, Dizzy and Clifford Brown, Freddie was the most influential trumpeter," Hayes said. "Even up to the last time I saw him perform at the Iridium in New York recently, people came to see him. What was so magnificent and powerful about his playing was his sense of time. It was always a challenge playing drums with him, but it was also a joy. I've played with a lot of the jazz giants, but with Freddie's facilities I could let myself go and be free."

How does Shorter see Hubbard in comparison to Miles Davis? While he praises Hubbard's ideas and brands him a virtuoso, he claimed that Davis was more innovative as an artist. "It was as if Miles wasn't even playing a trumpet," Shorter said. "His instrument was more like a spoken dialogue or like he was a painter using a brush or a sculptor using a hammer and chisel. Freddie was great, but Miles' trumpet was a sword like the Excalibur. His trumpet was a bridge for carrying the scrolls across."

Ron Carter also played with Hubbard over the years, including on the trumpeter's CTI albums and with him on the V.S.O.P. tours and albums (along with Tony Williams, Shorter and Hancock). "Freddie didn't understand how good he was," the bassist said. "In some ways, he felt that he was always competing with Miles. Then Wynton [Marsalis] came along and that felt like competition. He was also insecure when it came to the press. He didn't feel like he got his full worth. But, onstage, Freddie was one of a kind. I

Last Goodbyes

California Funeral

Even though hearts were heavy, the music-filled Jan. 6 Freddie Hubbard funeral at the Faithful Central Bible Church in Inglewood, Calif., was filled with joy, love and respect for the trumpeter's accomplishments.

George Duke, who knew Hubbard since his days with Cannonball Adderley, said at the funeral, "Freddie was a nut, but could he play that horn. He was the perfect synthesis between technique and great tone, and the horn was an extension of him."

Many who knew Hubbard had stories to share. Phil Ranelin grew up in Indianapolis, and he related stories that dated back to his childhood friendship with Hubbard. Bennie Maupin and Herbie Hancock shared stories about how playing and creating music with Hubbard brought peace and equilibrium to the musical equation.

To end the service, an ensemble assembled to shine the last ray of sun on a beautiful flower: Patrice Rushen, Christian McBride, Carl Allen, Ranelin, David Weiss, Javon Jackson, Hubert Laws and Stevie Wonder serenaded Hub with "Little Sunflower." —LeRoy Downs



EARL GIBSON



FRISAS DIAS

Harlem Memorial

Not until Eddie Henderson, Jeremy Pelt and Terell Stafford stood in front of a driving rhythm section at Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church was Freddie Hubbard's impact delivered. The three trumpeters personified the power, melodic imagination, and clean technique and virtuosity of the late trumpeter.

The Jan. 10 memorial had a turnout that looked like living pages from the *New Grove Encyclopedia Of Jazz*. Randy Weston, Billy Harper, McCoy Tyner, Reggie Workman, Buster Williams, George Cables, Larry Ridley, Jack DeJohnette, Brian Lynch, Mike LeDonne, Louis Hayes, Larry Willis, Melba Joyce, James Spaulding, Russell Malone, Lenny White, Alex Blake and Javon Jackson were a few of the notables in attendance. "He was a remarkable musician and human being," Tyner said of Hubbard before offering a solo replete with clusters of brilliant chords. Weston performed a duet with bassist Blake.

The seven ensembles at the memorial performed some of Hubbard's most popular compositions, including "Red Clay," "First Light," "Up Jumped Spring" and "Little Sunflower." When Pelt hit the first notes of "Red Clay," the church's pastor, Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts, III, winced, perhaps worried about the ability of the old church to withstand such a forceful sound. Pianist Willis was equally thunderous on his solo of "Little Sunflower," giving drummer Hayes and bassist Bob Cunningham their marching orders when vocalist TC III and trombonist Phil Ranelin reprised the lovely melody.

The crowd also absorbed the music and the testimonials about Hubbard from his friends and associates who grew up with him in Indianapolis. —Herb Boyd

remember playing a show on the Queen Mary in [Long Beach] where we were outside with the wind blowing in from the water. I was astonished at what Freddie got out of the horn by playing directly into the wind."

Chops Disaster

While artists unanimously express their admiration for Hubbard's prowess on the horn, they almost all agree that he could have been so much better if he had taken better care of himself. "It was Freddie's excessive behavior that became a problem. And he wasn't taking care of his body," Carter said.

Shorter wondered what Hubbard would have been if he had gone beyond his mastery of the instrument. "I follow actors," he said. "It's like wondering where Lindsay Lohan is going to go. What story would Freddie have told? Mastering your instrument is one thing; mastering your life is another."

Rollins expressed disappointment in the last decade-and-a-half of Hubbard's career. "I was impressed by his talent, but grieved by his demeanor," he said. "I thought he disrespected his own talent. I expected more of him. The music is too important to let people off the hook. You have to ponder how great Freddie could have been. When Freddie passed, it was bitter-sweet. I loved him, but there was a missed opportunity."

The health of a trumpeter's embouchure is crucial. Hubbard told me a few years ago that all those six-set-per-night gigs in the early days proved to be the beginning of his problems. Sharing the blame was his fiery and forceful playing. Spaulding remembered watching Hubbard play one night in the '60s around the time the album *Breaking Point* came out. "We were at Minton's in New York with Ronnie Mathews on piano and Joe Chambers on bass," he said. "Freddie was hitting these high notes so hard that I could see blood coming down from his lips."

Even though the bleeding and scarring over the years took its toll on Hubbard's chops, it wasn't until the summer of 1990 that he began his descent on the instrument. "I was there when Freddie's lip popped," McBride said. "It wasn't the best Freddie Hubbard period because he was inconsistent. Some nights he was incredibly hot, others cold. Even so, into 1992, Freddie was wavering in consistency, but it didn't cause any of us reason to worry. But by the fall of 1992, we realized that Freddie's lip was permanently damaged. I remember him telling us after he returned from a show in Europe with Slide Hampton that his chops were hurting. But he was like a man of steel. He tried to get through each show."

McBride recalled his last gigs with Hubbard in January 1993 at the Blue Note in New York. It was the week Dizzy Gillespie had died, so the week's stint played out like a tribute. "Freddie want to give it his all, but there was nothing



V.S.O.P. on tour: Wayne Shorter (left), Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, Ron Carter and Hubbard

coming out," McBride said. "I remember him playing one tune where the wound on his lip opened up again and blood splattered onto his suit. But he still had that attitude that the show would go on. He was like a beat-up boxer not wanting to go down for the count because he thinks he's winning."

Hubbard recounted these incidents in *DownBeat* to Fred Shuster in 1995. He traced his problem to the Hampton date, where he played alongside Roy Hargrove and Jon Faddis. "I started playing high notes with Faddis and got carried away," Hubbard said. "High notes aren't my forte. I came back, went to Philly and played with some guys without warming up. That's when my top lip popped. Then I went to New York and played the Blue Note for a week. That's when I should have stopped cold."

But he didn't, continuing on to another European date where his lip became infected. Hubbard also told Shuster that he started hanging out and partying with "the rock crowd" which resulted in missing several shows.

Time for a Comeback

It was around this time that trumpeter David Weiss came into Hubbard's life. Hubbard owed *MusicMasters* a third record, which because of his embouchure problems, was focused on his contributions as a composer, arranger and bandleader. Weiss wrote some arrangements of Hubbard's tunes, as did Bob Belden and Bob Mintzer. The 1994 disc, *Monk, Miles, Trane & Cannon*, was the hardest date he ever made, Hubbard told Shuster: "It took a long time to finish. I had to dig really deep, but I think when people hear it, they'll hear the feeling I put in to it."

"It was hard to see Freddie struggle," Weiss said. "The date went well, but the expectations were still high."

The reviews were lukewarm, however, and Hubbard decided to try to let his lip heal so that he could return. He didn't reemerge on disc until 2000, when he contacted Weiss, with whom he had been keeping in touch. Weiss had arranged one of Hubbard's tunes for his New Jazz Composers Octet, which he liked. They recorded a new Hubbard album together, *New Colors*

(Hip Bop), and began touring the world together, billed as the trumpeter guesting with Weiss's octet. Several years later, Weiss again set into motion a new Hubbard album, 2008's *On The Real Side* (Times Square), with the octet.

As for Hubbard's legacy, Weiss said it's hard to say what it will be. "Some people are unforgiving of the last 10 years of Freddie's career," he said. "I called him the Barry Bonds of jazz. He was like the poster child for drug use. There's still a lot of talk of Freddie selling out during those silly disco days. But the paradox of today is that so many jazz artists are selling out, though in a different way."

Weiss contended that even during Hubbard's declining period, he was always so much better than people thought. Historically, he factors Hubbard as one of jazz's greatest performers. "Freddie was a pure trumpet force," he said. "He could play anything. He was also a great composer. Just think of tunes like 'Little Sunflower' and 'Up Jumped Spring.' He was on 80 percent of the most important records of the '60s."

While Hubbard's old musician friends avoided seeing Hubbard perform in such a diminished state (Walton said: "When I heard that Freddie's playing had deteriorated, I didn't want to hear him. It was the same as Oscar Peterson when he could only play with one hand at the end"), fans still flocked to his shows, even if his playing was only a shadow of what it once was.

What once was will, however, be showcased on the upcoming first-time release of *Without A Song: Live In Europe 1969*, which Blue Note will be delivering this spring. Featuring Hubbard in a band composed of pianist Roland Hanna, bassist Carter and drummer Hayes, the album captures the trumpeter in top form. Producer Michael Cuscuna said that he unearthed the tapes last year, sent them to Weiss and Belden, and then contacted Hubbard.

"Freddie was like a little kid," Cuscuna said. "He was jumping up and down. He was thrilled. He said this was some of his best playing ever captured on tape. He was full-steam ahead with the release and wanted to do publicity surrounding it, especially given his problems of the last several years. He wanted to show who the real Freddie Hubbard was."

DB



JON HASSELL RENEWS HIS AMBIENT SONIC EXPERIMENTS

Interbreeding Tones

By Marcus O'Dair | Photo by Jos Knaepen

The idea of a hybrid," said Jon Hassell, "is one of the most important ideas of our time. If you take any two things that are given to you, you ask: 'Why are these things considered separately? What would happen if you put them in the same room and turned the lights out?'"

The trumpeter talked in general terms, but he could have been laying out his musical mission statement. It's applicable to his expansively titled new album, *Last Night The Moon Came Dropping Its Clothes In The Street*, a return to ECM a quarter-century after the recently re-issued *Power Spot*. But this apparently simple concept has informed his modus operandi for decades—ever since he emerged as a solo artist with *Vernal Equinox* in 1977.

Then, as now, the elements cavorting in that darkened room included Miles Davis ("I was completely entranced by *On The Corner*"); avant-garde electronics, following a couple of years studying with Stockhausen in Cologne, Germany; and even the classical minimalist movement, having played on Terry Riley's landmark *In C* and toured with La Monte Young during the 1970s.

Most unusually, but perhaps most importantly, one can hear an influence from another artist with whom Hassell studied: Hindustani classical singer Pandit Pran Nath. Nath's legacy is evident in Hassell's warm trumpet tone—created through an unusual combination of embouchure and fingering techniques, then augmented by harmonizer and other digital effects—as well as his delicate melodies.

"I had to learn how to do something that was beyond the bugle-like, rooty-toot-toot aspect of the trumpet," Hassell said. "Raga is about drawing curves, making smooth lines—you can't

have that flexibility if you're going to play with a big, fat, orchestral trumpet sound."

These lithe trumpet lines are cast adrift over evocative, ambient soundscapes. On *Last Night The Moon*, the organic sound of Algerian violinist Kheir-Eddine M'Kachiche rubs up against the electronic sampling of Norway's Jan Bang, the whole thing anchored by Peter Freeman's disembodied, gloopy bass lines. Core material laid down in a studio in France last year sits alongside live recordings from Kortrijk, Belgium, and London; there's also a new version of a piece that originally appeared in Wim Wenders' movie *Million Dollar Hotel*.

Yet for all the disparate elements, there's cohesion. Hassell calls *Last Night The Moon* "a continuous, almost symphonic" experience, glued together by inter-track samples but also by his overarching artistic vision. Likewise, at the November 2008 London concert from which two of the album's tracks are taken, the stage hosted multiple laptops and prominent hand percussion. It's yet another manifestation of what Hassell once called an "idealized interbreeding of 'first' (technological) and 'third' (traditional) world influences."

"If you want to get purist," he said, "the Fourth World sound is one which you couldn't separate into layers. It wasn't: 'Here's an African layer, here's an Indian layer, here's a funk layer.' I wanted it to look like it belongs together, so you can't distinguish things—connecting disparate elements so they seem that they belong in the same frame or movie."

If slow-motion funk and so-called "world music" co-exist within that frame, so does jazz. As well as the influence of early-1970s Miles Davis, there's also a clear connection to older exponents of the genre, with Hassell sampling Duke Ellington on 1994's *Dressing For Pleasure*, and visiting the standard "Caravan" on *Fascinoma* in 1999. He said his current band name, Maarifa Street, derives not only from the Arabic word for wisdom, but from its evocations of "one of those old Duke Ellington tunes, like 'Bakiff.'" Yet while its importance as a component element is clear, Hassell dismisses

as "futile" the question of whether his overall sound should be categorized as jazz.

Indeed, any attempt to confine the music within any particular genre boundaries flies in the face of the musical ideology with which he's become synonymous: that of Fourth World. Hassell, who can appear almost as committed a theorist as he is a musician, defined this as far back as 1980 as "a primitive/futuristic sound combining features of world ethnic styles with advanced electronic techniques."

Included in the title of two early albums—*Possible Musics*, a 1980 collaboration with Brian Eno, and the following year's *Dream Theory In Malaysia*—he said Fourth World still underpins even his most recent work. If the concept, also defined as a quest for a "coffee-colored" musical synthesis, seems less than revolutionary three decades later, that's largely because it's become so pervasive.

Certainly, there are a number of dubious "ethnic" chill-out albums for which Fourth World is also indirectly responsible, but that's hardly Hassell's fault. In Europe, he headlines festivals and is held in considerable regard. The PR for the new album cites him as a major influence on a subsequent generation of trumpet players like Norway's Nils Petter Molvær and Arve Henriksen. It's no empty boast: The pair told Hassell as much at the Punkt Festival in Norway last summer.

Though born in Memphis and currently residing in California, Hassell's situation in the United States is different. Amazingly, February concerts for his album represented the first tour of his home country in two decades. He joked that he's "an expatriate who lives in the country he's expatriated from," and one gets the sense that the expatriation doesn't sit easily with him.

"In Europe, when I play a festival that labels itself a jazz festival," he said, "it can include anything—Philip Glass, whatever. In the States, it's much more of a dichotomy between classical, or so-called serious music, and so-called jazz. My career has suffered to some extent for having always been not clearly in one place or the other."

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This refusal to be clearly in one place or another is the essence of Fourth World. Hassell speaks often of dichotomies—classical versus jazz, the intellectual versus the intuitive, the Western world versus supposedly “underdeveloped” nations. He sees them all as boiling down to a single set of opposing forces: the north versus the south, both on a global scale and in terms of the human body, where the north represents the head, the south the emotions. (He’s even writing a book on the subject, *The North And South Of You*, enacted last year as a rather free-wheeling performance piece with Eno, to be repeated in London in April.)

Hassell and Fourth World sit on the equator between these two metaphorical hemispheres. Hassell may have worked with the Kronos Quartet, and have connections with several major 20th century classical composers, but he’s also collaborated with, among others, New York art rockers Talking Heads, experimental Icelandic vocalist Björk, Senegalese singer Baaba Maal and Ibrahim Ferrer, late vocalist with Cuba’s Buena Vista Social Club. To adopt Hassell’s own language, his refusal to distinguish between so-called high and low art could be read as part of a wider determination not to let his rational “north” colonize his more exotic-leaning “south.”

“My attention doesn’t go to the icy cave where the fundamentals of life and death are being chanted,” he said, speaking of his time with Pran Nath, “even through that’s where raga comes from. It’s always about life and death, but it’s about life and death with a smile and a little twitch of the hips, à la João Gilberto. That’s my interpretation. I’m always pushing away from that notion of austerity, away from icy toward tropical. It’s another one of those things: Let’s put both those things in the same picture instead of considering them as separate.”

Putting things in the same picture, the same frame, the same room and turning the lights out—however he chooses to express it in words, this has been Hassell’s mission for more than three decades. The philosophy—and resulting music—has remained unwavering, though the vision is perhaps more finely honed than ever on *Last Night The Moon*. It underpins every part of this album, from the music through to the liner notes, which include a dictionary definition of the word “montage.” The worldview is even manifest in the unusual title, which turns out to have been taken from a 13th century poem by Jalaluddin Rumi.

“The Sufi part of Islam came out of him,” explained Hassell, more enthusiastic than at almost any point in the interview. “It’s drunk with God, so to speak, and yet you don’t leave out her sensual side of it. It’s exactly what *The North And South Of You* is about. That’s why the line itself is so attractive to me. It’s cosmic and sexy, so that is resonant with everything we’ve been talking about. I hope the music is the same.”

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By David French
Photo by Bill Douthart

Straddling GENERATIONS

I want to be a trumpet player now,” David Weiss said. “I moved here to play trumpet and other things happened. All this stuff comes your way, and it sounds interesting. But then it mushrooms and you are doing that all the time.”

Weiss, 44, has been playing trumpet and leading bands around New York for more than 20 years. And yet, his natural abilities as an arranger, composer, producer and organizer have often kept him behind the scenes. With a new band and a new focus on playing, Weiss is making up for lost time.

Weiss is probably best known for his work with Freddie Hubbard. For most of the last decade of the trumpeter’s life, Weiss led the octet with which Hubbard toured and recorded two albums, guiding the ensemble by playing, writing arrangements and producing recordings.

“Freddie had a great impact on me,” Weiss said. “But the influences he had are more about his approach to music and what he was able to do, not anything tangible trumpet-wise. I said this at the memorial service, because everybody was talking about what a character he was. Well, underneath all that he was a dead serious musician. He took his music seriously. He was open-minded, always curious, worked harder than anybody and had a clearer vision. Those are the things you want to strive for and those are the lessons learned from him.”

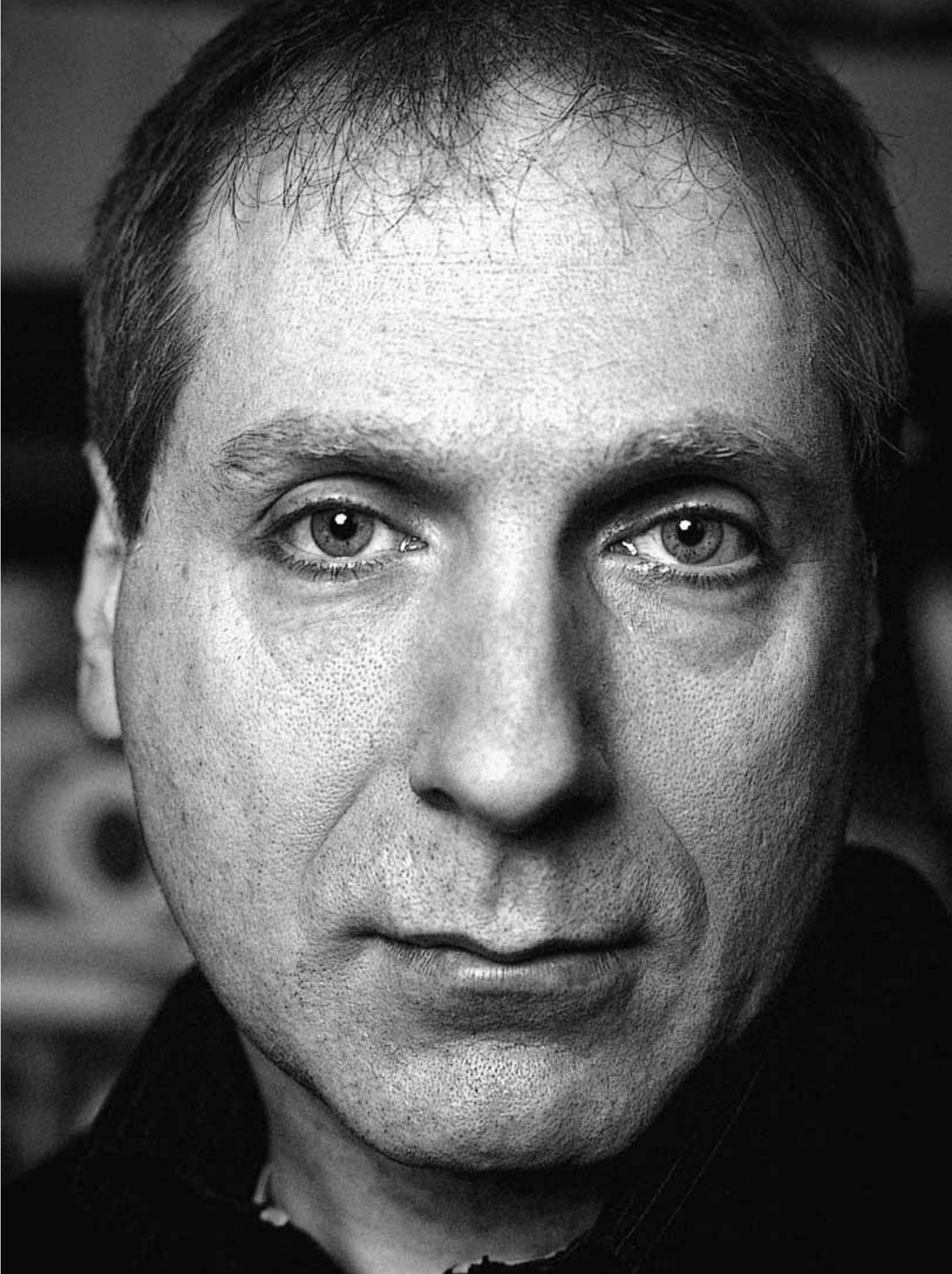
The band Weiss led to back Hubbard was the New Jazz Composers Octet (NJCO), which Weiss founded in 1996. The octet was inspired by some arrangements Weiss did for one of the first record dates Hubbard did after his lip troubles began. Weiss wrote eight-part arrangements to give Hubbard plenty of support. Though he

had no plans to work further with Hubbard, he liked the small big band sound and recruited some other up-and-comers for a band designed to highlight new jazz writing.

The NJCO—Weiss, Myron Walden, Jimmy Greene, Steve Davis, Norbert Stachel, Xavier Davis, Dwayne Burno and Nasheet Waits—released its first album in 1999 and has earned respect over the years with great players and ambitious writing that push the envelope of straightahead jazz. In November, the group released its third album, *The Turning Gate* (Motéma).

Weiss wrote the new album’s title track, a catchy, loping and twisting tune that was funded by a grant from Chamber Music America. For Weiss, the irony of the octet is that while it has been a vehicle to write and explore ideas, it has never been a context for him to play. He rarely soloed on stage with Hubbard, and with the NJCO Weiss typically stays busy leading the ensemble. He jokes that his own writing is better suited for saxophonists to solo over, and on *The Turning Gate* he takes just one short solo.

“I don’t need to solo on every tune and show



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everybody who I am and what I can do if it's not going to give me the strength to do all the things that the group requires," he said. "The physical demands of the instrument can put your ego on hold. A lot of the time I focus on getting the tunes to sound the way they should. With five horns you play hard; it's forceful music and you want to play it a certain way."

In recent years, Weiss has recorded two albums with a sextet that includes Marcus and E.J. Strickland on Fresh Sound/New Talent. But again, his relationship with the label often pulled him away from his horn, as he acted for years as talent scout and producer, supervising recordings of artists like Jeremy Pelt, Robert Glasper and Marcus Strickland before they were well known.

Groups like his sextet and the NJCO show Weiss looking forward, writing and arranging new vehicles for improvisation. But the trumpeter also finds himself looking to the past for inspiration. He continues to organize and lead a series of ambitious tribute bands filled with rising stars and jazz legends. These include Endangered Species, a big band that performs the music of Wayne Shorter; Charisma, dedicated to the music of Lee Morgan; and The Cookers, inspired by the classic Hubbard/Lee Morgan trumpet battle album, *Night Of The Cookers*. Weiss was also the guy who nudged trumpeter Charles Tolliver to dust off his big band charts a few years ago.

Weiss plays with all of these projects, but writing and arranging for his own groups and artists like Phil Woods, Abbey Lincoln, Rodney Kendrick, Tim Hagans and Marcus Printup often kept him busier than he thought was good for his playing.

"A big writing thing would come up and I wouldn't touch the horn for two weeks," he said. "I'd get called for stuff to play trumpet and after being in headphones writing all week I wasn't at my best. I'm just trying to get the focus back."

To that end, Weiss's new horn-on-the-lips band is a quintet called Point of Departure, after the 1964 Andrew Hill album, and includes tenor saxophonist J.D. Allen, guitarist Nir Felder, bassist Luques Curtis and drummer Jamire Williams. Weiss intends to release a live recording of the group this year (he does not have a label set to release the recording).

"As a trumpet player, I'm trying to figure out a new sound, a different harmony that isn't based on diatonic scales," he said. "I'm creating my own scales. It wasn't just about finding a new group, but finding a new approach to music, a new way to go up and down the horn. This group has given me the freedom to develop my voice."

The group sounds nothing like the NCJO. It plays repertoire from the mid-to-late 1960s, some of it fairly obscure, by artists like Hill, Shorter, Tolliver and Herbie Hancock.

"It's all from that two- or three-year period," Weiss said. "I'll blame it on the Miles Davis Quintet with Herbie, Wayne, Ron and Tony.

They took the harmonic thing as far as you can go. The music of that period had an openness, and it's still ripe for exploration. A lot of that stuff was recorded once and put away. Wayne Shorter didn't record *Speak No Evil*, hire a publicist and do a world tour. He went back to playing with Miles. Ninety percent of the Blue Note stuff was recorded once and put away, so a lot of the music from that period didn't get explored like it could have."

Three of the tunes in the band's book are by trumpeter Charles Moore, who recorded two albums for Blue Note in the '60s with a Detroit collective called Kenny Cox and the Contemporary Jazz Quartet.

"They were the first band that heard the Miles Davis Quintet and said, 'We like that kind of flexibility, so we're going to write tunes that put that into a form,'" Weiss said. "They created this format to solo over that is wide open. They would write tunes with open sections. All the Charles Moore tunes have the same device where he goes to three. You contrast four against three and the downbeats create this interesting rhythmic thing. They also created cueing systems. The horn player cues the next section by playing a line. But we took it further by saying we can do anything."

The band plays free, but with a driving in-the-pocket feel that builds on the originals. In particular, Felder's dreamy and angular electric

guitar and Williams' cymbal-heavy drumming keep the band rooted in the present, and only the heads sometimes betray their vintage after the lengthy solo sections. Weiss is not afraid to let the solos spin out. Many of the tunes on the unreleased album clock in at more than 10 minutes, while some, like Moore's "Number 4" and Shorter's "Paraphernalia," double that.

Reviving ambitious 1960s repertoire seems an unlikely avenue to success in today's jazz world, but Weiss is happy to follow his vision, playing smaller rooms so that he can do his own thing. Although a lot of the music was first recorded around the time he was born, he is confident that what he is creating with Point of Departure is contemporary.

"If you approach it like they did—that it's open and can go anywhere—it's as timely," he said. "It's about the musicians you choose, as long as they look at it fresh every day."

The other project Weiss focuses on these days, one that also keeps him playing at the top of his game, is the Cookers, an all-out hard-bop blowing band.

"That band started in 2002 or 2003 when I was asked to do a *Night Of The Cookers* thing for a club in Brooklyn, to get all the guys from the record," he said. "I got James Spaulding, Pete La Rocca and Larry Ridley. Harold Mabern couldn't do it so we made it a Freddie Hubbard alumni thing and got Ronnie

Mathews and Kiane Zawadi.

"I love that kind of music, and if I play it I don't want to play it with guys my age or younger," he continued. "If I'm going to embrace that stuff, I want to do it with those guys because they've got the passion and the energy, and they were there."

The current Cookers lineup includes Billy Harper, Eddie Henderson, George Cables, Cecil McBee and Billy Hart, with younger players like Craig Handy or Burno along for some dates. Weiss hopes to record soon to catch some of the fun he has on stage with players that were influences on him when he was young.

"Those are the guys I grew up on," he said. "I keep telling Eddie that the first record I heard with trumpet was a record of his called *Sunburst*. When I put Harper's *Capra Black* on in college—damn! So, yeah, it's fun.

"Those guys, most of them are 65, at least, but when I finish a gig, I feel like the old man. I'm so exhausted after those gigs and Eddie Henderson's like, 'All right, let's go to a jam session.'"

Weiss stands at a transition point in his career in which he hopes to free himself as much as possible from the paying gigs that keep him away from the horn and his own musical vision. "My focus will be the octet for writing," he said. "Point of Departure is for playing and The Cookers is for getting my ass kicked." **DB**

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ARVE HENRIKSEN FINDS NEW SOUNDS WITH A DISTINCTLY EUROPEAN APPROACH

Norwegian MAP

By Peter Margasak

As Norwegian trumpeter Arve Henriksen recalled how his listening habits expanded, growing from American jazz, contemporary classical and international music—with endless stops in between—it became clear that no one style or approach managed to dominate his thinking. If his musicality has reflected a sponge-like absorption for all kinds of sounds, the actual sound of his music is anything but diffuse. Few trumpeters over the last two decades have developed such an instantly recognizable sonic personality.

“I was always searching for my own sound, a hook to find the right way of producing and creating my own sound,” said Henriksen, 40.

That hook turned out to be the shakuhachi, the ancient Japanese bamboo flute. While studying at the Trondheim Conservatory two decades ago, fellow Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer introduced him to shakuhachi music. Henriksen instantly recognized it as the portal to develop the sound he’d been searching for. “I copied loads of shakuhachi techniques and gradually worked with them,” he said. “It took five or six years before it produced some real results, but hearing that instrument was important, because finally I had some sort of personal idea about making my sound.”

His debut solo recording, *Sakuteiki* (Rune Grammofon, 2001), focused on those qualities to the point where it could be difficult to figure out that he was playing a trumpet—despite the fact that the music was recorded live to two-track without any effects, even in postproduction. But Henriksen’s sound had already been turning up on a growing number of contexts: in the dark free-improvisation of Supersilent, the atmospheric post-bop of Food, and as a member of groups led by saxophonist Trygve Seim and pianists Christian Wallumrød and Jon Balke.

Cartography, his fourth solo album, and first for ECM, scrambles any clear lineage from the styles and approaches he absorbed when he was younger. If anything, it sounds like ethereal

ambient music created with a painterly touch and marked by a refined melodic sensibility. Although it draws heavily from jazz in its emphasis on improvisation and some of its rich sonic vocabulary, it’s not jazz.

“It is a picture of where I stand today, and it’s a map of where I can put my music,” he said. “The music comes from many places and I’m just borrowing it for a while and then it goes on with someone else.”

Where Henriksen stands today is a long way from where he first set foot as a member of Veslefrekk—with drummer Jarle Vespestad and keyboardist Ståle Storløkken—back in 1988 while at Trondheim. This trio, which modeled itself after the Norwegian group Jøkleba—with keyboardist Balke, drummer Audun Kleive and trumpeter Per Jørgensen—let the three young musicians explore a deep slate of interests.

Henriksen got his start playing marching-band music in his small home village of Stryn as a child. Before long he fell for American jazz, from traditional styles through post-bop, but he never stopped checking out new sounds.

“By the time I had come to Trondheim I felt more attached to the spacey way of creating ECM music,” he said. “The standard jazz repertoire had become so strict, it’s more of a reproduction of something that happened a long time ago. It’s more important to create something that I feel attached to. I’m a Norwegian, I’m a European, and I have a closer connection to

Norwegian folk music than American Negro spirituals or the standard jazz repertoire.”

While Henriksen expresses gratitude for the years he spent hearing and absorbing the lessons of American jazz and for the fundamental technique it provided, today he doesn’t consider it the most honest avenue for his artistic expression. At school he was free to find his own way; he only had two classmates in the jazz program when he started in 1987.

As heard on Veslefrekk’s eponymous 1994 debut album, the trumpeter’s distinctive sound had already emerged. After Miles Davis, his first great trumpet heroes were Chet Baker and Denmark’s Palle Mikkelborg. Beginning with his teenage years, Henriksen sought to forge his own soft, airy and mellow variation of his style. Subsequent encounters with the music of Molvaer and American trumpeter Jon Hassell expanded his view of the horn, and over the years he incorporated more ideas.

In 1997, Veslefrekk was invited to perform for a one-off collaboration with producer and sound artist Helge Sten at a jazz festival in Bergen, Norway. The performance was so satisfying that he became a new member of the group. Veslefrekk became Supersilent. “It was a big chance for us,” Henriksen said. “He brought in this darker, heavier frightening thing.”

Indeed, from the beginning, Supersilent took the electronic sound of ’70s Davis into new terrain, freely mixing in synthetic sounds with tur-



bulent grooves, yet sometimes Henriksen's lyric trumpet dispelled the fury with tenderness.

For Henriksen, Supersilent has been a crucial outlet for him to explore pure sound—he calls it a laboratory—and with Vespestad's recent decision to leave the group so he can devote himself to his work with the Tord Gustavsen Trio, Farmers Market and singer Silje Nergaard, he wonders where the group will go. Yet he is adamant that it will continue with Sten and Storløyken. "It's important to us," he said. "It's been the place I can do the research and we're

allowed to do it without having to answer any questions. I love the challenge."

If Supersilent is where Henriksen has done much of his sound research, finding new ways to expand the vocabulary of the trumpet, his solo records have arrived as the refined creations of that study. *Cartography* was made with electronic music producers Jan Bang and Erik Honoré—they also worked with the trumpeter on his second solo album, *Chiaroscuro* (Rune Grammofon, 2004)—and he credits them with pushing him to deliver the most precise and

direct work of his career. "This record has been put together through many different filters along the way," Henriksen said. "It's a challenge in many ways because I like to have a sort of evolution, to find new ways of telling the same story. Listening to the way Jan Garbarek has changed over the years, I hear how precise he is now. It's almost a cliché, but as you get older you want to use less words, less tones and go directly to the main idea."

Bang and Honoré are the founders of the Punkt Festival, where live remixing collides with jazz, contemporary classical, folk and experimental music. "Poverty And Its Opposite," the opening track on *Cartography*, was recorded at the 2005 installment of the event in Kristiansand, in the south of the country, when the trumpeter was performing with Bang and percussionist Audun Kleive. That track, with the close miking of Henriksen's trumpet and the shape-shifting ambient scapes of Bang became the model for the record, expanding and improving on *Chiaroscuro*.

Henriksen shared melodic trumpet fragments with Bang, who, in return, would provide abstract samples and sound environments. Both would load the sounds on their laptop computers and samplers and work with them alone. The album was made in fits and starts over the next three years, with a number of outside musicians making valuable contributions: British art-rock David Sylvian (who recited two poems and titled each track), Kleive, Storløyken, guitarist Eivind Aarset, bassist Lars Danielsson and Anna Maria Friman of Trio Mediaeval, among others. Yet it's the partnership between Henriksen and Bang that binds the album, finding a striking marriage between the trumpeter's poetic musings and the evocative, often-cinematic settings built from the elaborate array of samples.

On a recent European tour, the duo built on tracks from the album, freely improvising lines and mutating samples. "Most of the material we treat openly," Henriksen said. "It's always been my idea that once you've done a record you can continue with the material and take it further. There have been some interesting doors that have opened with this record."

He sounds humbled when he mentions his various collaborators, heaping on praise and gratitude, and expressing the contentment he feels with *Cartography*. Yet Henriksen doesn't seem complacent. While he's struggled with saying no when invited to participate in different recording projects—and his massive discography proves it—he's trying to focus his time on solo work and with Supersilent, Wallumrød and Seim, although he quickly rattled off several more upcoming projects. Naturally, he's still searching for new sounds.

"There's so much to be done with the trumpet," he said. "You can make a lot of strange sounds on the trumpet, but it's important to do it musically. Hopefully, I'll be able to discover new sounds that I can use."

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LITTLE Jazz GOES A LONG WAY

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The sign outside the Metropole in New York City reads “Dixieland.” But if signs mean less to you than sounds, and you step inside, what you will hear is jazz. And if it’s Sunday afternoon or Monday or Tuesday night, it will be some of the best jazz, these or any days.

That is when a quintet led by two timeless masters of the art of jazz holds postgraduate seminars. The language they speak is informed by the past, which they helped to create, aware of the present, in which they live, listen and hear, and pointing toward the future, which they are still building.

They are Coleman Hawkins and Roy Eldridge, one of the great partnerships in jazz, a partnership of mutual inspiration, common experience and warm friendship. It currently rests on a solid foundation supplied by J.C. Heard on drums and two new but experienced faces, pianist Joe Knight and bassist Francesco Skeets.

Among those who have been on hand to receive, and perhaps get, the message are students and faculty members from all the schools: Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Dizzy

Gillespie, John Lewis, Lucky Thompson, Gerry Mulligan and many others. There is a loyal lay audience as well.

“Working with Coleman is just perfect,” said David Roy Eldridge. “That’s it. Perfect. He’ll play something, and it will get to me and make me play. And he’s himself. I hope we can stay together for the longest time.”

When Roy took a leave of absence this summer to accompany Ella Fitzgerald on a tour, Hawk was impatiently awaiting his return, even though his replacement was a more-than-capable trumpeter.

“Roy will be back soon,” Hawkins was heard to say frequently and with growing expectancy. “Roy and I can get that real good feeling going when we play.”

The difference in Eldridge’s playing when he worked with clarinetist Sol Yaged, who believes in set routines, from his work with Hawk, who believes in freedom, says more than many words. So do the fresh, original lines Hawkins and he constantly are working up on standard tunes.

Born in Pittsburgh on Jan. 30, 1911, Eldridge has been a professional musician for 32 years. He has earned a large share of acclaim in those decades, but is not inclined to rest on it.

In the history books, Eldridge generally is referred to as “the link between Louis and Dizzy” or the creator of “saxophone-style trumpeting.” There is something to all of this, but it leaves out more than it conveys. Jazz is a living, growing art and if time has not stood still since

that supposed night at Minton’s when Gillespie cut Eldridge, neither has Roy. Neither he nor Gillespie play now the way they played in 1941. And when they get together, it is in a spirit of friendly rivalry, not of historical comparison.

“Dizzy is too much,” Roy said. “There has never been any hostility between us, and when we get together, it’s a ball.”

Jazz is not boxing: Ideas are exchanged, and the music is always the winner. There are elements in Roy’s playing today that would be unthinkable without Gillespie and Charlie Parker (“Bird was the greatest; he had his own,” Eldridge said) and he is still himself.

As for the saxophone style, Roy acknowledges Hawkins and Benny Carter among his early and continued influences. But there were also trumpet players: Rex Stewart (“for speed, range and power”), Jabbo Smith and, somewhat later, Armstrong, “who taught me to tell a story, among other thing.”

Whatever the influences, once Roy found his own voice, he created an idiomatic trumpet style. Roy’s elder brother, the late Joe Eldridge, was an alto saxophonist and arranger, unduly underrated in both capacities. He encouraged Roy to stick to music and gave him his first trumpet.

Eldridge has done his share of big-band work. The list includes Horace Henderson, Speed Webb, Charlie Johnson and McKinney’s Cotton Pickers, among the pioneer bands of the pre-swing era. Later came with with Teddy Hill, “and Fletcher Henderson. We had Chu Berry,

Buster Bailey, Joe Thomas and, of course, Big Sid Catlett. That band was school.”

With Krupa and Artie Shaw, Roy played the book as well as his specialties. But he prefers the freedom of small groups now, saying, “You don’t get to stretch out in a big band. And things get kind of set.” Studio work, as well, is a doubtful pleasure to Roy.

“As far as I know,” he said, “I never play a tune the same way twice. Sure, you play a number a lot of times, and certain little things get set. But the overall feeling is never the same. That’s why it’s such a drag for Coleman when they

always ask for ‘Body And Soul.’ He made a record of it—and now they want him to always play the same thing. It’s just not possible. I guess that’s why I don’t like studio work. I’ll play something, and the cat says, ‘That sounds good. Write it down and do it that way on the show!’ But when the show goes on, I don’t feel the same way. So it doesn’t come out naturally.”

Eldridge’s most famous record is probably “Rockin’ Chair” with Krupa. “We had the number scheduled for recording for quite some time,” Roy said, “but never got around to it. When we finally did, I didn’t feel ready. After

we cut it, I asked them to please not release it. Some time later, we were out on the coast, and Ben Webster and I got together. He loves records, and we got to playing some. When he put on ‘Rockin’ Chair,’ I said, ‘Who’s that?’ Ben smiled. I didn’t recognize myself until the chorus—and I’m still surprised.”

There was another time, later, when a record surprised Roy. By the late 1940s, he had come to a critical stage in his career. He was nagged by feelings of doubt: that being himself no longer had validity, that his voice was clashing with the voices of newcomers. The jazz scene had changed. “I felt unhappy with the way things were going,” he said. “I felt out of place. My playing didn’t seem to fit, the way I could hear it. I’d been with Jazz at the Philharmonic for quite some time. In 1949, I decided to quit and came back to New York. Norman [Granz] asked me to do one more concert, at Carnegie Hall, and I agreed. Afterwards, I still felt the same. So when Benny Goodman asked me to go to Europe with him in 1950, I was more than happy to accept.”

Perhaps it wasn’t just the music. The many indignities Roy suffered when he was with Krupa and Shaw—the contrast between star billing, acceptance by fellow musicians and audiences and the behavior of hotel clerks, bouncers and others a musician deals with on the road—was a contrast that could not fail to affect a man as straightforward and honestly emotional as Eldridge.

In Europe, he found new confidence in his voice, plus the freedom he cherishes. “When the tour with Benny ended, I stayed on in Paris,” he recalled. “I had a steady gig in a good place. I had friends, and I had a following. The money wasn’t exceptional, but I was happier than I had been in years. Nobody told me how to play, and I began to enjoy my work again.

“Then Norman came to Paris, and we got together. He asked me to go back with him. ‘No,’ I said. ‘I’m happy right here.’ He offered me a good contract. And to make it more appealing, he showed me some bills. It was good to see some real money again, and I was tempted. But then I thought for a while, and I still felt ‘no.’ Then Norman put a record on. It was the one made at the Carnegie Hall concert in ’49. I listened, and I couldn’t believe it—it sounded good. My playing didn’t stick out—it was a statement, the other guys were making their statements, and together it made sense. That record made me go back. That bad feeling was gone.”

When Roy returned from a six-week tour of Europe last summer, he was asked how it had been. “Wonderful,” he replied. “That Cannes ... if I had the money, I’d buy it and have my friends come around.”

Roy looked around for a while. Then he turned and said, “You know what? It feels good to be back home.”

In the last few years, Roy has toured here and abroad with the Granz enterprises. New York is



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his home base now; before the Metropole one could find him at the Central Plaza, where the sledding was often tough, or at the late Bohemia, where it was sometimes drafty.

Now there are weekend gigs in Brooklyn and Long Island, often with Hawkins. And television. The latter is not an unmixed blessing.

"Somehow, you never get a chance," Eldridge said. "On Art Ford's show (which has left the air) we got away a few times. But it's gotten so that I don't expect anything to happen. I may have some little thing worked up, but, sure enough, before we go on, they have to cut it. I'm not on a glamour kick. I don't push myself up front. What for? But maybe someday I'll get a chance to do something I like on a show."

The most recent Timex show, on which Eldridge was allotted eight bars—and those eight split in two fours—is a disheartening illustration of Roy's point.

Recording has been more satisfying. In the recent past Roy has made permanent some of his most creative playing, in varied contexts, but always in good company. His associates have included Hawkins, Lester Young, Gillespie, Carter, Art Tatum, Stan Getz, Sonny Stitt, Jo Jones, Oscar Peterson and a string section. The records haven't made the hit charts but will outlast most of the stuff that has.

Roy reflects that today "some cat can come along, get himself a hit record, and overnight he's a big name and can get any booking. It was never like that in the 'old' days.

"I think that a musician who is a musician should be able to play anywhere," he added, "and shouldn't be limited to one style. Something is wrong if he is."

Eldridge loves music and takes pride in it. This attitude is reflected in his consistently meticulous appearance. His style of dress is not "sharp," but correct. And as Jo Jones has said, "Roy will work just as hard for \$25 as for \$250. He's a very responsible man."

And a very energetic man as well. At Max, the Mayor's, a large establishment in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn, where the budget does not allow for a bass, and the crowd does not allow for a letup, Roy would play chorus after chorus, sing, emcee and even back local "talent" on the drums (generating enough steam to drive the Basie band), somehow educating the rough-and-tumble audience to appreciate the beauty of a passionate rendition of "I Can't Get Started." And when he came off the stand for a brief intermission, he would be warmly received at the bar.

"Roy sure knows how to break the ice," a member of the band commented. "And how to give."

At the Metropole, things are sometimes more relaxed, and Roy may get a chance to play one of his "strollers"—a muted solo with just walking bass and brushes behind it. After two choruses, the mute come out and the piano comes in.

The restless searching and energy that is in Roy (but which doesn't prevent him from play-

ing relaxed when he wants) makes him his own severest critic.

"It happens maybe three or four times a year," he said. "You pick up the horn and everything comes out just right—feeling, range, speed—you know just what you want and you can get it. It's a mysterious thing."

But there are many more times when it seems that way to the listener, or to the musicians playing with Roy. "When you work with Roy, there's always something new," said bassist Gene Ramey. "The more you can play, the more you've got to play."

Eldridge has a pleasant house on Long Island, where he lives with his wife, Vi, his teenage daughter, Carol, and a large, shaggy dog of indeterminable ancestry named Chico.

He is an enthusiastic amateur photographer and a prolific and exuberant letter writer. He has completed his autobiography and has hopes of finding a publisher in England. There have been interested American parties, but they all found the book too outspoken. Roy, however, wants no compromises. It is his story, and he wants to tell it as honestly in print as he tells it on the horn. He has been himself too long to change now. **DB**

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Chops Goals

A Three-Part Practice Regimen Designed for Long-Term Trumpet Achievement

I have been approached by many jazz trumpet players inquiring about “chops” endurance, flexibility and other pedagogical aspects of performance. I immediately refer to my classical studies and bring up various exercises, etudes, excerpts and methods that I’ve worked on. After answering questions about these issues, I am almost always asked how to incorporate this into jazz and how to practice these exercises and have time to work on jazz performance.

This always amazes me. Many trumpet players—musicians in general, for that matter—go through their careers without an effective, daily practice routine that incorporates the musicianship necessary to play jazz and the pedagogical skills to execute musical ideas clearly. I believe this is due to the overwhelming task that many aspiring jazz trumpet players face. Not only do you have to spend hours gaining technique, flexibility, range and correct breathing practices, but you have to practice lines, chords, tunes, patterns and other components of jazz pedagogy without getting fatigued. All of this practice can be frustrating without a clear plan.

Throughout my early study, I had teachers and mentors who instilled in me the importance of having great technique and facility as well as a good working knowledge of jazz practices and pedagogy. While studying these aspects of playing, I began to come up with a practice routine that fit my needs and helped me accomplish my goals. Over the years, I have adjusted it slightly as I accumulate knowledge, taking what I can from every method of study that I come across and assessing whether it fits my needs and is applicable to my general way of playing.

Before developing a practice routine, you must have clear goals in mind, both long-term and short-term. You have to decide what kind of player you would like to be. This will help you have a clear focus while studying musical and pedagogical ideas. About 15 years ago, I wrote out my career goals in five-, 10-, 20-, 30- and 40-year increments, accounting for what genres of music I wanted to play, what bands I wanted to play in, and what type of music I wanted to write and perform in my own bands. From this, I devised a plan of action.

I researched what techniques and skills I would need to achieve these goals, found people with similar career paths and sought advice. I began to take the knowledge that I learned and



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came up with a practice schedule that would help me achieve these goals—a routine that would give me musical and technical proficiency. This routine breaks down into 10-, five-, three- and one-year goals, as well as quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily goals, which mirror

my plan of action. I continue to use the bulk of the routine that I developed years ago.

My daily routine is broken down into three segments. First, I have my maintenance routine, which includes exercises that are used to maintain basic trumpet technique and proficiency.

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Included are expansive long tones, flow studies, Herbert L. Clarke exercises 1–3, tongue slurs, scales and arpeggios (see examples, which include an excerpt from Vincent Cichowicz's flow studies and tongue slurs from William Fielder). This routine typically lasts about an hour-and-a-half and includes 15 minutes of silence at the start and an assessment period at the end. The silence prepares my mind for practicing, and allows me to assess progress in the practice session when it is complete. The assessment is documented in a daily journal, which contains daily, weekly, monthly and yearly goals as a reminder of why I am practicing.

Due to fatigue and time constraints, it is not possible for most people to practice all day. Therefore, it is crucial that you practice with your mind as frequently as you practice with your body. Meditation on practice routines and goals will help to reinforce muscle memory and personal assessment and achievement.

During my second practice routine, ranging from an hour to an hour-and-a-half, I include articulation exercises, various etude books including the Marcel Bitsch, Jean-Baptiste Arban, Theo Charlier and top tones books. I also incorporate excerpts from symphonic repertoire as well as solo literature from the classical genre. These methods and repertoire are crucial in the reinforcement of a daily maintenance routine. They reinforce basic tone production, clear articulation, flow and flexibility.

ulation, flow and flexibility.

If you choose to use jazz repertoire to achieve this type of reinforcement, you must keep in mind that the primary aim of this practice session is to reinforce instrumental pedagogy. The difficulty in using jazz repertoire to reinforce pedagogy is that it's easy to get caught up in the musicality of jazz and the freedom of it and not focus on the discipline that it takes to reinforce trumpet pedagogy. This is why I stick to the classical repertoire, as instrumental discipline is established and reinforced in the genre. This is not to say that it isn't present in jazz. However, in most studying, a direct association is made between instrumental pedagogy and the classical genre. Perhaps in the future, those of us who have studied both genres will begin writing excerpt books and etudes that focus on instrumental techniques inside of jazz.

My third practice session, being my longest (one-and-a-half to two hours), is dedicated to jazz. This session includes transcribing solos, learning tunes, and working on lines, patterns and harmonic concepts. I do my best to work on these items in all keys through the cycle of fourths and in all registers. In a given week, I will have a certain solo, tunes and harmonic concepts that I'll work on and have clear goals that I want to achieve by week's end. This varies from week to week, as my second session also varies from week to week. The first session is typically

the same. During my jazz session, I retain the technical discipline that I've worked on in the first two practice sessions while developing my concepts in jazz. It is important that all of your practice habits feed into each other. After all, specific goals all lead to your long-term musical goals and ambitions.

Over time, it is important that the methods you study and habits you take from others are then refined into your own concept of playing and practicing. I heard Wynton Marsalis speaking about Thelonious Monk during one of our Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra concerts and he discussed something that Monk said in regard to genius. He said, "Monk believed that a true genius is the person who is most like himself."

This is also true in your practice routine. Your greatest development will come through your self-discovery in the process. After careful study of everyone else's methods and assessment of what works for you, you will put together your own plan and achieve what you wish, your way.

DB

Trumpeter Sean Jones is professor of trumpet and jazz studies at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. He has toured with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, and recorded five albums as a leader, the most recent being *The Search Within* (Mack Avenue). He can be reached at seanjonesmusic.com.

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Dizzy Gillespie and Max Roach's Live Duet on 'Bastille Day'

Trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and drummer Max Roach's improvised duet "Bastille Day" can be heard on their live album, *Paris 1989* (A&M Records), a concert recording from the only occasion when the two bebop pioneers performed together as a duo. The transcription is written in concert pitch.

Roach begins the track by setting up a hip-hop groove with a strong backbeat and swung 16th notes. Entering after the opening vamp, Gillespie begins his trumpet solo with a series of two-bar phrases. During the first eight bars he almost exclusively uses notes from the F-minor pentatonic scale, except for some prominent half-valved A-naturals on the upbeats to bars 5, 7 and 9. In the next four bars, measures 13–16, he highlights a new bent blue note: the flattened fifth, C-flat. Then, four bars later, he introduces another new pitch, D, as a whole note in measure 21. This gradual expansion of his melodic palette creates a progressive intensification over the course of the solo.

Roach, meanwhile, uses just three elements of his drum kit throughout the excerpt shown

here: a closed hi-hat cymbal struck with sticks (notated above the staff's top line), bass drum (bottom space) and snare drum (next-to-highest space). At its simplest, his main repeating rhythmic pattern consists of the bass drum on the downbeat and the and-of-three, plus the snare on two and four; it's heard most clearly in bars 5–7. Roach continually varies this basic pattern, though, sometimes by reducing it down to a bare minimum, as in bars 13 and 14, and more often by adding embellishments. His most intricate embellishments appear during the fills toward the end of each four-bar section. One especially recurrent motive, consisting of six 16th notes—snare/bass/rest/snare/bass/snare—occurs at the end of bars 4, 10, 15, 22 and 26. In measure 18, Roach displaces this same motive an eighth note earlier in the bar, and in measure 28 he begins it on the and-of-two.

Featuring a small number of simple musical ideas, "Bastille Day" is a case study in spontaneous interplay, with Gillespie and Roach sometimes exchanging short fragmentary motives in close succession (measures 25–28)

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and elsewhere superimposing syncopated figures to produce dynamic polyrhythms (measures 18 and 23).

DB

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BLUNT ASSESSMENT

WITH HIS MUSIC
AND WORDS, MARTIAL
SOLAL KNOWS NO
OTHER WAY BUT TO
SPEAK HIS MIND

*By Ted Panken
Photo by Carol Epinette/Dalle*

On New Year's Eve in Orvieto, Italy, Martial Solal, having just arrived in town, sat with his wife at a center table in the second-floor banquet room of Ristorante San Francisco, where a raucous cohort of musicians, personnel and guests of the Umbria Jazz Winter festival were eating, drinking and making merry. Solal quietly sipped mineral water and nibbled on his food. "It is difficult to dine here," Solal said with a shrug, before departing to get his rest.

It seemed that the 81-year-old pianist would need it: His itinerary called for concerts on each of the first three days of 2009: a duo with Italian pianist Stefano Bollani, a solo recital and a duo with vibraphonist Joe Locke. On the duo encounters, Solal opted for dialogue, accommodating the personalities of the younger musicians. With Locke, who played torrents of notes, he comped and soloed sparingly but tellingly, switching at one point from a rubato meditation into Harlem stride, before a transition to another rhythmic figure. It was his fifth encounter with Bollani, who is apt to launch a musical joke at



any moment, and Solal played along, indulging the younger artist in a round of “musical piano benches,” riposting with jokes of his own.

“Martial is humane,” Bollani said a few days later. “He could be my grandfather, but one good thing about jazz is that you do not feel the age difference. His humor is more snobbish, serious, French—or British. I always thought of him as a sort of Buster Keaton. His face tells you nothing, but the hands are doing something funny.

“We decided to improvise freely,” Bollani continued. “He always does something you don’t expect. But it’s easy for me to follow immediately an idea that he starts, not only because he’s a master, but I love the way he plays. He is the only piano player in the world who has no Bill Evans influence, and he has a huge knowledge of all the stride piano players—Art Tatum first of all, but also Teddy Wilson or Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith. But he doesn’t play them as a quotation. He plays thinking as Art Tatum was thinking, but in a modern way.”

In Orvieto, Solal clarified that he continues to acknowledge no technical limits in navigating the piano, playing with undiminished authority on the solo concert, as he does on the new *Live At The Village Vanguard* (Cam Jazz), recorded during an October 2007 engagement. He does not rely on patterns, but uses *tabula rasa* improvisation as a first principle, elaborating on the vocabulary of his predecessors—in addition to Tatum and Wilson, they include Earl Hines, Erroll Garner, Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, not to mention Ravel and Debussy. He addresses forms as a soliloquizing philosopher plays with ideas; within the flow, you can hear him contemplate the possibilities of a single note, what happens when he transposes a line into a different octave, the relationship of an interval to a rhythmic structure. He deploys the songs played by his American antecedents as the raw materials, their content burnished by harmonic erudition, a lexicon of extended techniques and a multiperspective sensibility not unlike that of a Cubist painter.

“It was incredible,” said pianist Helio Alves, in Orvieto for the week

with Duduka Da Fonseca’s Samba Jazz Sextet. “He sat and played, as though he didn’t think about anything, but it was as though he’d written out everything in his head, so well-put-together and arranged, so much information. His technique is incredible. He’s an advanced classical player; he sounded like all the jazz players plus all the 20th-century composers. You could hear Bartók, Debussy—everything.”

Solal had expressed mild concern about how he would fare in fulfilling his other Orvieto obligation, a public “Blindfold Test” prior to the solo concert. “I will recognize nothing,” he said, adding that it might be difficult for him to state his opinions in English to an Italian audience.

I assured him that a translator would be present, and that the point of the exercise was less correct identification of the musicians than responses that elaborated his esthetic. “I will come up with something,” he said.

As the event transpired at a time when no other concerts conflicted, many of the musicians performing at the festival were among the full house at Sala dei Quattrocento, an upstairs performance space in Palazzo del Popolo, a 13th-century structure that served eight centuries ago as Orvieto’s meeting hall.

The leadoff track was “Where Are You,” a standard that Solal has recorded, performed by Ahmad Jamal (*In Search Of: Momentum*, Dreyfus, 2003), who, like Solal, conceptualizes the piano as a virtual orchestra. Within two minutes, Solal made a dismissive “turn it off” gesture.

“I don’t know who is playing, and it’s not so important,” he said. “I had the feeling it is someone who played the piano well in the past, 20 years ago maybe, and stopped practicing since. He is trying to do things that he has in his mind, but his fingers can’t play it as he did before.”

Told it was Jamal, he elaborated. “He played beautifully 40 years ago. Each time I met him, I knew he did not practice. So he has the same story to tell, but he can’t express it. I must add that he is still a marvelous stylist. I always admire people who have a personal way to express music, and he is one of them. Now, this happens to many pianists who are getting old. They stop practicing at home—except me. For instance, maybe 40 years ago, I heard Earl Hines, who was a great pianist, and he couldn’t play any more. I was crying. They should do like me. Practice every morning. Except today.”

Solal likes to play both Duke Ellington’s songs and “Body And Soul,” so it seemed a good idea to offer Ellington’s trio meditation on the Johnny Green classic (*Piano In The Foreground*, Columbia, 1961).

“There is a TV channel called Euro News, and they have wordless sequences called ‘No Comment,’” Solal stated after 90 seconds. “That’s exactly what I would say about this record. It can be about 1,245 different pianists, but none I can name. I’m afraid now.”

Told it was Ellington, he said, “I still have no comment. I love Duke Ellington, but not this. This record was probably a Sunday morning before he shaved. I never heard Ellington like this, as a soloist. I’m surprised. I know that in America it’s normal to say, ‘This one is marvelous, that one is terrific’—everybody is beautiful. But in Europe we have the right to say, ‘I love Ellington, but this record is no good.’”

Solal looked at me. “I think this gentleman hates me,” he said, “because he played for me two records by people I love, but not their better record.”

Since Solal continues to play duo with Lee Konitz, a partner in different contexts since they met in 1965, it seemed imperative to play him a collaboration of Konitz with Lennie Tristano—an energetic quintet version of Konitz’s “Subconscious-Lee” from a televised date from the Half Note in 1964, with Warne Marsh sharing the front line (*Continuity*, Jazz Records, 1964). It was an ill-advised selection.

“The drummer plays a little loud,” Solal said. “Is that Lee Konitz? It’s probably an old record. He played excellently then, but today he plays better—differently. I don’t know who the piano player was. A European, French, American, Italian ...”

“Italian-American.”

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"So it's not Cecil Taylor. It's not Art Tatum. I have a long list of who they are not. Because of the noise of the rhythm section it's difficult to judge the pianist. But this is not a record that I am going to buy when I go out."

Told it was Tristano, Solal was not pleased. "You chose exactly the record where they are not at their top. I hope when you choose one of mine one day, you will ask me before. Lennie Tristano is one of the greatest stylists of the piano also. The four pianists you chose are each in their category alone, I could say. They are so themselves that you should recognize it on the first note. But I'm no good!"

Next up was Hank Jones performing Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" (*Bop Redux*, Muse, 1977), another staple of Solal's repertoire. "I know the melody—but I don't know the words," Solal joked. "When I first arrived in New York, they told me that in New York there were 8,000 piano players. This makes the exercise difficult. I am not sure if this is a pianist from New York." He paused. "By the way, I wish that you would make me hear some non-American musicians, because they exist, too."

The crowd applauded vigorously.

"I am not a political man," Solal added. "But maybe this is one of them. It's not Monk himself playing this. He has too much technique for Monk. He has not enough technique for Tatum. He is somewhere in the middle of different influences. There are so many excellent pianists in New York."

It was time to showcase French pianist Jean-Michel Pilc romping through Monk's "Straight, No Chaser" in kaleidoscopic fashion (*New Dreams*, Dreyfus, 2007).

"I'm sure I know him, but I can't find the name," Solal said. "I like the energy—the sense of jazz and energy and good feeling."

Afterward, he said, "I almost thought Jean-Michel. He is too



Solal at his live "Blindfold Test" in Umbria

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good to be French. This is the best record I've heard yet. This pianist is crazy, and that's what I like in music—but with a good sense of jazz and feeling. I am happy this is Jean-Michel, because I like him. I like Duke Ellington, too. But as a pianist, Pilc is above."

Solal has frequently played Dizzy Gillespie's classic "A Night In Tunisia," so next up was McCoy Tyner's solo version (*Jazz Roots*, Telarc, 2000). Solal could not identify him. "I was thinking of Michel Petrucciani, but I don't know. There are some good ideas and then mistakes in the approach, the way he approaches the piano."

After the track ended he said, "I like McCoy Tyner, too. But he is better with his trio than alone. Almost every piano player in jazz wants to play alone, and it's a difficult exercise. McCoy played a lot of concerts as a soloist, and sometimes it is fantastic when he is detached, and sometimes he makes stupid ... I mean, things not as good or interesting."

Between 1957 and 1963, Solal, who held a long sinecure as house pianist at Club Saint-Germain in Paris, often played opposite Bud Powell. The next track was Powell's third take of "Tea For Two" (*The Genius Of Bud Powell*, Verve, 1992) on a 1950 trio date with Ray Brown and Buddy Rich for Norman Granz. It is often regarded as Powell's homage to

Tatum, Solal's other pianistic hero, who had recorded his own unparalleled inventions on the line a generation before.

"Is it Bud Powell?" he asked. "It is easy to recognize him, because he has almost one way to play. He was influenced by my favorite musician, Charlie Parker."

Asked if he came to know Powell well, Solal said, "Many nights he was asking me, 'Bring me a beer, please.' That's about the conversation I had with him. When he came to Paris, he was already in bad shape. But I judge him on what he did before he came to Paris. He had a fantastic way to play chords, strongly and on the 10 fingers."

Solal reached a crossroads in 1963, the last of his dozen years at Club Saint-Germain, which hired him one year after he moved from Algiers, Algeria, his hometown. He arrived at 22, a few months after Parker hit town for a jazz festival whose other participants included Miles Davis, Tadd Dameron and Sidney Bechet.

"Many people were playing like Bird then," Solal recalled, referencing gigs with James Moody, who lived in Paris until 1953, and jam sessions with Gillespie. "Bebop is where it started with me and jazz. I listened deeply to Bud, but early I understood that to become

unique, you can't listen and copy. I had masters in my mind, but I wanted to know everyone and forget them, so I could turn my back and start to be myself."

That Solal fully established his tonal personality during these years is evident on a pair of mid-'50s recordings for French Vogue—a crisp 1954 trio date with bassist Joe Benjamin and drummer Roy Haynes, and a 1956 solo recital on which he finds a way to synthesize the language of Tatum and Powell into his own argot. With his post-1957 rhythm section of drummer Kenny Clarke and bassist Pierre Michelot, he interacted with the likes of Konitz, Bechet, Don Byas, Lucky Thompson and, as Solal put it, "almost every musician, mostly American, coming on tour in Europe, who came to sit in with us."

In this context, Solal found his identity outside of bebop, as "a child of middle jazz." Ellington and Oscar Peterson heard him, and told Newport Jazz Festival impresario George Wein, who invited him to the 1963 edition. Solal crossed the Atlantic for the gig, then—booked by Joe Glaser, Louis Armstrong's manager—settled into an extended gig at Manhattan's Hickory House with bassist Teddy Kotick and drummer Paul Motian.

"Glaser wanted me to stay, and life became easy," Solal said. "My first week in New York, I had my cabaret card, my union card. I had a personal problem, or I would have stayed. I would have become American. But I did the wrong thing. I left after four months. I promised to come back the next November. He had a contract with Japan, and then London House in Chicago. But I never showed up. He was angry. It was a mistake. Next year he called me again to go to Monterey Jazz Festival, and then I came maybe 12 or 15 times, but over 40 years."

Over the years, Solal had developed his skills as a composer, recording a number of projects for Vogue, and in 1959 he was asked to write the score for Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless (A Bout De Souffle)*, a film that had as radical an impact on cinema as Ornette Coleman's Atlantic recordings of that same year had on jazz. Resigned to the fact that he would live in Europe, Solal continued scoring films until "the cinema didn't call me any more. Jazz was finished. They were more interested in rock and songs and pop music." Solal continued to gig as well, flirting with the freedom principle on a few occasions, but never moving too far away from his roots in "middle jazz." Still, he remarked, "a child will grow disobedient."

"From the beginning, jazz for me was American," Solal maintained. "Even if in Europe now, they say there is a European jazz, this is not the point. I want to play jazz from the original, but with my conception; my ideas can be different, but I don't want to turn my back to jazz. I am interested in harmony above

everything. Harmony changed the sense of the line. The same line with different chords is not the same line any more."

Solal does not incorporate other media into his musical esthetic. In cinema, Godard loved to make use of the jump-cut, a visual analogy to Solal's penchant for making instant transitions in a piece. Or the notion of montage might apply to the way Solal, in an improvisation, references and plays with five or six different themes.

"Nothing could influence me," Solal responded. "I was 32 when I did *Bout De Souffle*. It was a little late to have a new mind. We are influenced by everything around us. I get everything in my mind, and often I don't know how I translate it.

"My wife is a painter, and I am interested in painting," he continued. "But when I see a Renoir or a Rembrandt, I can't say I am going to do this in music. I like some painters of this period, but I don't like painting that's very abstract. Like in my music, I like a mixture of modern and traditional. I don't like art that forgets everything that happened before. When free-jazz came, I was not against free-jazz. I understood that the movement was necessary. But the best way is to use everything that exists. I have been interested in contemporary music for years, and I've played with different contemporary composers. But I don't like people who refuse the past."

The record by Bud Powell you played yesterday, when was it made?" Solal asked. "I have a record where he plays much stronger than that. I like to judge anyone on what he can do the best."

Solal still works hard to meet that standard. "As a pianist he has no limits," said Dado Moroni, the Italian pianist who played in Orvieto with Locke's quartet. "He treats it like an athlete in training—to be in shape, you have to practice. That's what he does. You can hear it in his touch, the clarity with which he executes his ideas."

"Like every honest pianist," Solal responded to Moroni's observation, "not more. [But] if you want to be honest with the audience, you have to present yourself in the best possible condition."

In describing the particulars of his regimen, Solal illuminated the worldview that differentiates his tonal personality from such antecedents as Monk and Powell, who, according to testimony from Barry Harris and Walter Davis, Jr., practiced by immersing themselves in one song exhaustively over a six-to-eight-hour span.

"I never play a tune at home," Solal said. "I should have done it maybe. If I play five choruses on 'Stella By Starlight,' I have enough for the day. I want to keep fresh for a concert. Everything has to be spontaneous.

"I must practice a minimum of 45 minutes, or I can't play right," he continued. "I practiced

four or five hours a day when it was time to do it, between my 50s and 70s. At home, I practice stupidly, like a student, to get my muscles in good shape. I play an exercise with the left hand and I improvise in the right hand. These things don't go together. It's a different key, different tempo. Half of me is playing the exercise, half of me is playing anything. That's the way to independence of both hands."

Solal pointed to his temple. "But the music is here," he said. "I don't want to lose anything, but I don't want to improve again."

The mention of Monk led to a discussion on technique. "Monk never lost technique," Solal said. "He never had technique. If Monk one Monday morning woke up, went to the piano and played like Tatum, there is not Monk any more. He had his sound because of the lack of technique. So the lack of technique is not automatically bad. But to lose the technique is bad, because when you lose technique, you still play what you have in your mind. You will play the same thing, but you miss two out of every three notes.

"But I have been influenced by Monk. The way he thinks about the music, not note-by-note, but the way he was free about certain rules of the music interested me a lot. I love anyone who has personality, a strong style, *le passion d'être*."

It's complex to operate by "pure art" imperatives, as Solal does, and also sustain a career. He gives the audience familiar songs. "There is maybe too much information in my music for the audience," Solal said. "If you want to love it, you should listen to one or two tunes at one time, then two tunes the day after. Some years ago, I was playing freely, no standards, and the public was not with me. I love standards, and also I want to prove that if you have enough imagination, you can make them new every day. I'm never tired of 'Body And Soul' and 'Round Midnight,' because you can put all the music in the history of music in it.

"That's how it is in my trio," he continued, referring to his unit with the Parisian twins Francois and Louis Moutin on bass and drums, respectively. "I can go anywhere, and I know that they will try to go in the same direction. Nothing is decided, except the melody we'll use. We can stop, we can slow down, we can change key. Everything can happen with them."

When Solal said "everything," he meant it. "Including contemporary ideas, or conceptions of Stravinsky or Bartók, our greatest composers, is not a bad thing for jazz," he said. "Jazz should include everything. But we must never forget the essential [element] of jazz, which is a way to express the note, a conception of rhythm.

"I don't wish for anything anymore—just to continue as long as possible. When I can't move my fingers normally, I will stop. I would be too unhappy."

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April 18	La Jolla, CA (Athenaeum)
April 20	Oakland, CA (Yoshi's)
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April 24	Portland, OR (Jimmy Mak's)
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Reviews

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



Jeff "Tain" Watts

Watts

DARK KEY 002

★★★★

Of the possible metaphors for swing, I like those that invoke a body of water. Swing can function like undertow, with a force that operates from an unseen place, pulling and pushing with energy drawn from the deep. When Jeff "Tain" Watts and Christian McBride kick into gear, the result has that sort of tidal, elemental power. Music like this needs a certified lifeguard.

Supergroups are often a disappointment. But when one appears that challenges the participants, it can be a rollicking good time. With this riptide rhythm team in place, the star front-line has plenty to work with and is spurred to moments of greatness. Branford Marsalis, who generally sounds terrific, seems especially relaxed to be out of the leadership role. In a cool, soul-jazz setting like "Katrina James," the tenorman slurs blusily and spars cooperatively with Terence Blanchard over Watts' Crescent City crunch. Blanchard, too, sounds brilliant, particularly without Marsalis on the Monk-ish "Dingle-Dangle."

The drummer's tunes are well-suited, whether introducing a groggy little out-of-time break into the head on "Wry Köln" or swapping lead between the two horns on "Return Of The Jitney Man" (listen to Marsalis ally oop the solo to Blanchard like Ornette Coleman to Don Cherry).

Meanwhile, underneath, Watts and McBride chum and burn. The drums are mixed high and a bit cavernously, but it is a drummer's date, after all. There's a bit of freewheeling fun on "Dancin' 4 Chicken" that recalls the Art Ensemble of Chicago (though like him as I may, Don Moye could never swing this rock hard). Check out McBride's gonzo arco on that track, channeling Slam Stewart.

Watts takes a turn alone on "M'buzai," which features earthy mallet work. Only the ballad "Owed ..."—its interesting twists don't overcome its syrup—and a weird agitprop theater piece, "The Devil's Ring Tone," are less durable. Too bad Watts didn't put the instrumental version of "Devil's Ring Tone" first in the program, so listeners who had heard the vocal one a couple of times didn't have to skip over it.

—John Corbett

Watts: Return Of The Jitney Man; Brekky With Drecky; Katrina James; Owed ...; Dancin' 4 Chicken; Wry Köln; Dingle-Dangle; Devil's Ring Tone; The Movie; M'buzai; The Devil's Ring Tone. (62:25)

Personnel: Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums; Terence Blanchard, trumpet; Branford Marsalis, tenor and soprano saxophone; Christian McBride, bass; Lawrence Fields, piano (4).

» Ordering info: chambersoftain.com

Gary Smulyan

*High Noon:
The Jazz Soul
Of Frankie
Laine*

RESERVOIR 195

★★★★

What a dandy recipe went into this curious retrieval. Take the high-romantic sentimentality of post-WWII pop singer Frankie Laine (“That’s My Desire,” “Mule Train,” “We’ll Be Together Again”), slice and dice for coolly crisp “little big band” then add liberal amounts of fiery, swinging baritone sax solos. Weird. And wonderful.

Bari man Gary Smulyan, who plays with a husky yet never heavy, heart-felt tone, is in unusually fine form, ringing the bells of the changes while taking care to create pungent new melodies. On the brisk, swinging opener, “I’d Give My Life,” he covers the horn from sewer to chimney, making a sweet turnaround after the first 16 bars. On the super slow “Baby, Baby All The Time,” he’s pretty and passionate. Occasionally, Smulyan falls into headlong notiness (“It Only Happens Once”), but for the most part, he leaves plenty of air and space around his ideas. The closing cadenza on “We’ll Be Together Again” is masterful.

But with due respect to Smulyan, the secret ingredient here is Southern California arranger Mark Masters, whose way with winds (including French horn and bass clarinet) is so fresh you can taste it. Masters teaches at Claremont McKenna College in Pasadena, where his American Jazz Institute specializes in such tributes. After Smulyan played on one of them (to Clifford Brown), he suggested this paean to Laine.

The band establishes an ebullient, optimistic



tone right out of the gate with “I’d Give Up My Life.” Masters’ tasty voicings have that classic “West Coast” feel of being dense and wide-open at the same time. He’s especially deft at switching timbre in little bursts (“It Only Happens Once”) and using quick tempo changes as a compositional device (“Put Yourself In My Place, Baby”). The clever rewrite of “When You’re In Love” implies the melody without ever stating it.

Snappy without being flip, happy but never sappy, Masters’ pen combines punch with restraint with cool élan.

Others shine, too. Scott Robinson’s bass clarinet solo on the high-drama movie score of “High Noon” is a knockout, and John Clark’s French horn outings are immaculate, free of the slippery burbling one hears so often from that difficult instrument. Trombonist John Fedchock is so fleet it’s sometimes hard to tell him and Clark apart, especially when they trade fours. (Plentiful round robins keep the pace from flagging.) Saxophonist Dick Oatts chirps bright as brass and bassist Andy McKee solos as well as anchors several tunes with nicely exposed lines. The rhythm section consistently swings deep.

This is a sweet project, one that manages to dip into two nostalgias—pop melodies and “cool” arranging—yet still sound fresh and present. Nice work.

—Paul de Barros

High Noon: I’d Give My Life; High Noon; Torchin’; It Only Happens Once; Baby, Baby All The Time; When You’re In Love; Put Yourself In My Place, Baby; A Man Ain’t Supposed To Cry; That Lucky Old Sun; We’ll Be Together Again. (70:51)

Personnel: Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; Scott Robinson, tenor and soprano saxophone, bass clarinet; Dick Oatts, alto saxophone; Joe Magnarelli, trumpet; John Clark, French horn; John Fedchock, trombone; Pete Malinverni, piano; Andy McKee, bass; Steve Johns, drums.

» Ordering info: reservoirmusic.com



Chicago Jazz Philharmonic

Collective Creativity

3SIXTEEN 31604

★★★★

Versatility seems to be the new, if not highest, virtuosity. Orbert Davis is a talented Chicago trumpeter whose ambitions have left no ground uncovered, no goal unconsidered. Here he expands his resumé into a kind of pseudo classicism in which he serves as composer, soloist and conductor of the 55-member Chicago Jazz Philharmonic—on its face, yet another attempt by jazz to play Pygmalion with itself.

Davis chooses breadth over focus, which produces an impressive diversity but a disjointed musical joyride. As a sort of overture, we have “Fanfare For Cloud Gate,” a brief Davis commission celebrating a municipal sculpture with some strong trumpet work from the composer. Then we swing to another fanfare, that of Louis Armstrong’s 1928 “West End Blues” cadenza and a raggy romp through “Weatherbird” from the same period. Davis is impeccably correct on the notes, but overlooks the majestically incorrect vibrato that gave Armstrong’s performances their lift and temperature.

But the main business here is Davis’

Eric Reed

Stand!

WJ3

★★★★½

Is it possible Eric Reed has two distinct approaches to the piano trio? A couple of years ago he dropped *Here*, the jauntiest record he’s ever made. With *Here*, jaunty meant informal-yet-dapper and somewhat roguish; the remarkable music bristled with right-hand flurries that felt like they weren’t locked into any particular rules.



coat where *Here* was a spring jacket. Happily, each garment looks sharp on the leader.

Both discs were made with the same rhythm section, and on *Stand!* it’s obvious how much bassist Rodney Whitaker and drummer Willie

Given his previous penchant for formalism (he’s never an off-the-cuff record maker), it was utterly refreshing. Now, with *Stand!*, that bounce (dare I say itchinness?) has been replaced with some of the strategic grandeur he’s previously provided. Reed’s deep chops make it easy for his trio music to sound lush and, indeed, *Stand!*’s program is rich with harmonies and cozy with interplay—a fur

Jones III bring to the party. “Adoracao” may not get too far past a stereotypical Spanish melody, but performance-wise it’s laughingly tight. That kind of precision is a hallmark of Reed’s work. The full-throttle bop tornado of “Git’cha Shout On” may be based on the leader’s impressive chops, but it mows down everything in its path because the three musicians are so connected. Whitaker lifts and rolls; Jones cranks and spins. The leader winds each of them up enough to build the most graceful mad dash you’ve ever heard. Somewhere, Bud Powell is nudging Oscar Peterson with a smile.

One of the CD’s strong points is its melodic variety. The cascading “New Morning” avoids the overt gospel and hymn vibe that Reed’s known for, yet proffers a spiritual feel (it also has echoes of Nicky Hopkins’ tunes from the

The HOT Box

"Collective Creativity Suite," occupying tracks three through 11. As with most jazz "suites," the parts are best considered on their individual merits and not as a whole, since they don't easily, or necessarily intentionally, coalesce.

"Diaspora" begins the work with an imposing thunder, then retreats for lively solos by Ed Wilkerson and Ari Brown, essentially setting up the primary format: soloist and rhythm section flanked between philharmonic-sized bookends, but with relatively little interaction between improviser and composer. There are exceptions. We get three short versions of "Creation Of Evolution," for instance, each little more than meditative moans or flute flutterings. They seem to signal intermissions from the main work, not signposts toward its development.

After a percussive, somewhat inflated start, "One Thousand Questions" clicks into a cartoonish but charmingly staccato, two-beat interplay among Davis, Brown and Nicole Mitchell before each solos at greater length. The full orchestra reenters in proper spirit for a jaunty climax. It's the most energetic and appealing chapter of the suite.

"Seraphim" showcases Mitchell and pianist Ryan Cohan in their solos, during which the orchestra is mostly silent or offers sweetening backgrounds. Finally, the two-part "An Afternoon With Mr. Bowie" offers terse variations on another famous suite, Igor Stravinsky's "The Firebird." Brown solos first on a romantic variation of the lullaby section in which Davis' strings swell in emotional Gordon Jenkins-like eruptions. Davis takes the solo role next in a leaner medium slow jazz groove that shows what a first-class player he remains at heart.

—John McDonough

Collective Creativity. Fanfare For Cloud Gate; West End Blues/Weatherbird; Diaspora; The Creation Of Evolution (Part 1); One Thousand Questions, Once Answered; The Creation Of Evolution (Part 2); Seraphim; And Afternoon With Mr. Bowie (Parts 1–3); Vice Versa; Going To Chicago. (52:06)

» Ordering info: chijazzphil.org

late '60s mixed with Miles Davis' "Nardis"). The title track seems a tip of the hat to McCoy Tyner, and indeed the band attacks it like a super trio. "Gratitude" is airy and innocent, with more than a little Vince Guaraldi wafting by.

Such stylistic singularity is what makes the program so engaging. If some of the tracks seem overly designed, they also seem wonderfully distinctive. Ultimately, Reed's got skills at making odd subtleties feel incontestably natural by layering his performance with an old-fashioned tool: daunting authority.

—Jim Macnie

Stand! Stand; Pursuit Of Peace; Prayer; Git'cha Shout On; Gratitude; You Are There; New Morning; Adoracao; Like A Thief In The Night; A Love Divine; Everything That Has Breath. (50:08)

Personnel: Eric Reed, piano; Rodney Whitaker, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

» Ordering info: ericreed.net

CDs ≡	CRMCs »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Jeff "Tain" Watts <i>Watts</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½
Gary Smulyan <i>High Noon: The Jazz Soul Of Frankie Laine</i>		★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★
Chicago Jazz Philharmonic <i>Collective Creativity</i>		★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★
Eric Reed <i>Stand!</i>		★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Jeff "Tain" Watts, *Watts*

Let's just deem it the supergroup that it is and revel in the physicality of all these hard-hitting blues and bent-bop tunes. The drummer keeps the pieces simple, and the band plays the living crap out of them. That's a concept that likely won't disappear anytime soon. It would be hard to underestimate the chops of Christian McBride.

—Jim Macnie

Watts' tubs speak, like Max Roach's did. Not just notes and musical ideas, but politics and social language, connected to grass roots, like Charles Mingus (his inspiration here). Not sure how well the topical dig at George Bush will wear, and Branford Marsalis seems to be digging himself a hole lately, but this is hardcore, no-bull stuff. Terence Blanchard is on fire.

—Paul de Barros

Watts' tunes may not be much, but his playing galvanizes this quartet to kick up one torrential storm. Blanchard hasn't sounded this unzipped since his Art Blakey days, and Marsalis is in fervent form. McBride keeps this runaway train on track until it runs out of steam.

—John McDonough

Gary Smulyan, *High Noon: The Jazz Soul Of Frankie Laine*

A light and low-key, but generally superb salute to Laine in name only that freely transforms his catalog to its own purposes; e.g. "High Noon" is refitted from a ticking time bomb to a slow blues. Smulyan synthesizes everything best about bari from Harry Carney through Pepper Adams, and Mark Masters' West Coast-ish charts form a elegant organizing axis. Outstanding.

—John McDonough

This is a somewhat dry, thoughtfully produced project born of a slightly eccentric concept, approached with Masters orchestrating the (mostly) obscure repertoire in a manner recalling '50s West Coast songbook records. The leader contributes plenty of his superb, buttery, no-frills baritone.

—John Corbett

This fun date that belongs just as much to arranger Masters as it does the section players and soloists of the bari player's tribe. There's no glitz to the arrangements; the performances have the feel of embellishments rather than complete overhauls. The brass sound particularly impressive.

—Jim Macnie

Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, *Collective Creativity*

Orbert Davis is an integrator. He brings worlds together—in this case big band, classical (à la Darius Milhaud and Igor Stravinsky), straightahead and non-mainstream jazz. *Collective Creativity* is hugely ambitious, as anything requiring a 50-plus orchestra must be, and successful on its own terms. The trumpeter arranges for his orchestra with a slick, brassy hand that's not always so in sync with the AACM folks he celebrates, though when it kicks into "Vice Versa," it's a joyous syncretic jazz symphony.

—John Corbett

It's all in the performance. The wealth of strings that bolsters the jazz band's antics is precise in execution, and the material comes alive because the ensemble's bold manner carries the day. The writing itself is intriguing on a level or two as well. Even the noirish spin on Stravinsky's "The Firebird" finds itself a groove to settle into.

—Jim Macnie

Bob Graettinger meets Sun Ra in a pompous mix of grandiosity and naiveté. You want to like these guys for taking on the big concepts, but the swirling primal ooze metaphors—to take one example—are too obvious and clichéd. Some great reeds solos, though.

—Paul de Barros

Eric Reed, *Stand!*

Reed's crisp technical prowess has never moved me, but he is maturing. No longer bombastic, he sounds firm, confident and restrained, with gravitas and deep spiritual feeling, not just "gospel" gestures. An often moving drive toward the light.

—Paul de Barros

Reed's a man of big hands and ideas who speaks in chords the size of boulders, so there is a mass to this trio that may sometimes leave you gasping for air. Even lyrical pieces ("New Morning") swell into mountains. But Reed moves his mountains with a confident ease and power that wins the day, though two incomplete tracks sound a bit sloppy.

—John McDonough

Sharp, hip piano trio with none of the untoward trappings the format can foster. When they sprint ("Git'cha Shout On") they're lithe, when they meditate ("New Morning") Reed's hymnal roots show. Reed's love of big chords and emotionally layered harmonies steers clear of the lachrymose.

—John Corbett

The Microscopic Septet

Lobster Leaps In
CUNEIFORM 272

★★★★

Amidst the natty suits and serious pronouncements of the 1980s jazz scene, the Microscopic Septet's arrow-through-the-head celebration of the music's history was sorely out of place—unfortunate for the financial prospects of the Micros and the joyless approach taken by too many of their peers.

Cuneiform's two-volume, four-disc retrospective of the Micros' too-meager output was perhaps the most welcome resurrection of the past few years, only eclipsed now by the return of the flesh-and-blood band itself. *Lobster Leaps In* picks up where the Septet left off 20 years ago, and if the musical climate seems more hospitable these days, the somewhat grayer-haired Micros aren't about to let that get in the way of them playing the scrappy underdogs, blithely amusing themselves with a respectful tongue out at their peers.

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, Douglas Adams described the confused lineage



of one of his characters as resulting from “an accident with a contraceptive and a time machine”; substitute “exhaustive jazz record collection” for “contraceptive” and you’ve got a sense of this record. The Micros skip merrily through the century, finding an avant-garde side street branching off from a trad-jazz Main Street, beginning with the modernist boogie-woogie of Wayne Horvitz’s “Night Train Express.”

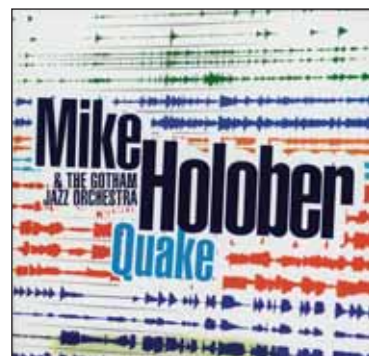
The remainder of the tunes were penned by pianist Joel Forrester and saxophonist Phillip Johnston, and range from the Cubist calypso of “Disconcerto For Donnie” to “Money Money Money,” which sounds like someone mistakenly booked the Art Ensemble of Chicago to play a 1950s prom. As always with the Micros, it’s gloriously, delightfully and inappropriately right. Welcome back.

—Shaun Brady

Lobster Leaps In: Night Train Express; Disconcerto For Donnie; Lobster Leaps In; Got Lucky; Lies; Life's Other Mystery; Almost Right; Money Money Money; Lt. Cassawary; Twilight Time Zone; The Big Squeeze. (73:10)

Personnel: Phillip Johnston, soprano saxophone; Don Davis, alto saxophone; Mike Hashim, tenor saxophone; Dave Sewelson, baritone saxophone; Joel Forrester, piano; David Hofstra, bass; Richard Dworkin, drums.

» Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com



Mike Holober and the Gotham Jazz Orchestra

Quake

SUNNYSIDE 1205

★★★★

Covet Mike Holober, a big band composer/orchestrator who doesn't have to fire all of his loudest guns on every tune, who pays loving attention to textures, and who knows the value of space and subtle dynamics. His band is stocked with some of New York's finest, and if they don't have unlimited elbow room, they have awfully good material to interpret.

Holober takes his time exploring motifs and compositional devices to any given track, yet they're never cluttered. His voicings are full and he moves the themes, countermelodies and backgrounds around in interesting ways. He's an expert colorist, in the way that Gil Evans could load a chord or phrase with different combinations of instruments. Movement—within the chords, sections and ensemble—is a continual source of beauty, like in the exquisite sense of unfolding on “Roc And A Soft Place.”

While Holober allots plenty of space to the soloists, the compositions and charts are front-and-center here. Trumpeter Scott Wendholt plays a behind-the-beat blues phrase in the swirling funk of “Twist And Turn” that's bracing in its clarity. Holober's piano choruses deepen the wistful waltz “Thrushes.”

Like many contemporary big band writers, melody is not one of Holober's great strengths. It's refreshing then to see how he develops George Harrison's simple, melodic “Here Comes The Sun,” and what the band does with it. Alto saxophonist Dave Pietro plays throughout much of the tune, running from wistful to playful to swinging. The song runs from gentle rondo to sprightly bounce to being a flag-waver. Like all of Holober's charts, the journey, rather than the destination, provides the best rewards.

—Kirk Silsbee

Quake: Quake; Twist And Turn; Roc And A Soft Place; Here Comes The Sun; Note To Self; Thrushes; Ruby Tuesday. (70:56)

Personnel: Tony Kadleck, Craig Johnson, Scott Wendholt, Joe Magnarelli, trumpets; Bruce Eidem, Mark Patterson, Pete McGuinness, Nate Durham, trombones; Dave Pietro, Jon Gordon, Tim Ries, Charles Pillow, Steve Kenyon, saxophones; Mike Holober, piano; Fender Rhodes; Steve Cardenas, guitar; John Hebert, bass; John Riley, drums.

» Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Tierney Sutton Band

Desire

TELARC 83685

★★★★

With a voice that whispers, coos and directs in soft-spoken mannerisms, Tierney Sutton sings and swings her way through the 11 songs on *Desire*, most of them standards. Her voice and the band find a balance, with arrangements key to the presentation. The opener, “It's Only A Paper Moon,” starts out with her barely audible voice speaking the song into play with an arrangement that emphasizes the instrumental accompaniment through Christian Jacob's piano solo. It features sympathetic brushwork from drummer Ray Brinker. The pattern is set, as she uses sacred and religious texts to begin and end *Desire*.

As with “Moon,” other songs are given rhythmic makeovers, as when “My Heart Belongs To Daddy” lives on as an uptempo swinging waltz, creating the impression that this is a new song. Much of “Daddy” hangs out in a minor-chord world, creating an element of suspense. The “daddy” theme comes up again with “Long Daddy Green” and “Fever,” as if Sutton were divining the presence of an all-knowing, loving man in her life, her close-to-the-mic perfect-



pitch purring a subtle cry for more. It doesn't hurt that the accompaniment is spare, with renditions that leave you wondering what's behind her delivery.

The sing-songy quality to *Desire* makes for intimate cabaret, especially given the cohesiveness of everyone involved. That this has been a unit for 15 years is obvious, making Sutton's work seem all the more potent. It allows her to be more expressive with the material, as when she lays back almost behind Jacob's dreamy piano lines on “Then I'll Be Tired Of You.” It's as if she is accompanying herself as a singing piano player. When the program falters it is more along the lines of personal taste, with songs like “Fever” and “It's All Right With Me” lacking the imaginative, emotional sizzle of songs like “Whatever Lola Wants” and “Cry Me A River,” which explodes after Sutton's plaintive moan with the trio lunges into another driving waltz before she returns.

Desire can be heard as cabaret, or as music with a strong, cautionary message. That it can go both ways is a testament to these musicians' artistic abilities.

—John Ephland

Desire: It's Only A Paper Moon; My Heart Belongs To Daddy; Long Daddy Green; Fever; It's All Right With Me; Then I'll Be Tired Of You; Cry Me A River; Love Me Or Leave Me; Heart's Desire; Whatever Lola Wants; Skylark. (57:35)

Personnel: Tierney Sutton, vocals; Christian Jacob, piano; Try Henry, Kevin Axt, bass; Ray Brinker, drums.

» Ordering info: telarc.com

Horn Sensibilities

Sweet, but also short, Toronto trumpeter Lina Allemano's *Gridjam* (Lumo 2008-3; 36:16) ★★★½ displays an enticing emotional dichotomy between smoky, melancholic interludes and upbeat lyricism. Allemano's sunny side shines through, buoyed by the nimble, responsive drumming of Nick Fraser. Although the album title is a reference to fellow Canadian trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, Allemano works from a more abstract sonic palette. Only bassist Andrew Downing's "Recall" leads the quartet toward boppish territory, while Fraser's "Also" gives the leader a solo outing where she can exhibit her full range of overtones, burrs and rushing air.

Ordering info: linaallemano.com

The conceit of Brad Goode's *Polytonal Dance Party* (Origin 82519; 63:46) ★★★½ is plainly stated in the title, and the program maintains interest as long as the polytonality and backbeats are held in balance. Largely because the rhythm section doesn't bring the same level of creativity as the front line of Goode and guitarist Bill Kopper, slower tracks like the soulful "Betcha By Golly Wow" sound like little more than intriguing trips through a sonic blender. Goode's choice of balladic pieces like "Autumn Nocturne" weights the program more toward novelty, which creates the feeling of listening to something that becomes instantly dated.

Ordering info: origin-records.com

Imagine stepping in to play forward with a well-established NBA team. DePaul University Jazz Studies Director Bob Lark can probably relate after dropping in twice to play flugelhorn with saxophonist Phil Woods' long-standing band. *Live At The Jazz Showcase* (Jazzed Media 1038; 70:42) ★★★ was recorded in 2006. With friends and neighbors Steve Gilmore and Bill Goodwin in the rhythm section, Woods' band is one of the longest-running in the business. Guest pianist Jim McNeely was a relatively "short-stay" member at five years. That Lark doesn't just hang but sounds like he belongs is no small feat. His rich tone and lithe phrasing are a great fit for Woods' relaxed swing.

Ordering info: jazzedmedia.com

Token Tales (Paved Earth 0901; 54:44) ★★★½ by South Carolina native Mark Rapp presents a young trumpeter who sounds closer to Freddie Hubbard and Lee Morgan than to his contemporaries. His attack is strong and he favors a relatively pure tone without much inflection, an ideal match for



Mark Rapp:
pure tone

SHAWN BELL

muscular ballads like "Thank You" and the title track. Rapp broadens his sonic arsenal with didgeridoo, which ushers in "1st Minute, 1st Round," and some electronic enhancement of his Harmon-muted horn, on which he breaks out of the traditional Miles Davis model by playing more aggressively and with more of a metallic edge.

Ordering info: markrapp.com

Fans of minimalist beauty would be hard-pressed to find a better combination than Enrico Rava, Stefano Bollani, Mark Turner, Larry Grenadier and Paul Motian. The Italian trumpeter's *New York Days* (ECM 2523; 77:46) ★★★★★ shimmers like a gauzy landscape painting, with Turner's husky, vertical phrases and the hiss of Motian's cymbals the dominant textures. Even when something alters the prevailing mood—such as Grenadier's hard-driving introduction on "Outsider" or Bollani's sprightly lead on "Thank You, Come Again"—it is quickly subsumed by another motif, leading elsewhere. While he can write gorgeous lines, Rava's compositional gifts are best expressed what is left unsaid, and this is the ideal band for that.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Brazilliance x 4 (Resonance 2002; 57:57) ★★★★★ is a no-frills run-through of nine Brazilian songs and a bossa nova arrangement of Miles Davis' "Tune Up." Sometimes, simplicity is the best approach, although it helps when the musicians have as firm a handle on the idiom as Claudio Roditi and his three cohorts have. Roditi's crisp, energetic delivery conveys gem-hard notes with tremendous sensitivity, while pianist Helio Alves, bassist Leonardo Cioglia and drummer Duduka da Fonseca play with precision.

DB

Ordering info: resonancerecords.org



ABDULLAH IBRAHIM SENZO

In Stores March 3, 2009
Sunnyside SSC 1212

The solo piano performance has been an important showcase for the artistic development of the legendary Abdullah Ibrahim. These performances allow the audience an unobstructed glimpse at his ability as a performer and musical sociologist. Since the mid-1950s, Ibrahim has been active in the combination of jazz music with folk music associated with the various native peoples of South Africa. The combination is a unique hybrid of modern jazz and the rhythmic, singsong melodic forms of the native tribes. Ibrahim became the world's ambassador of South African jazz after he left for Europe to escape the turmoil of Apartheid. Senzo is Ibrahim's new CD, which documents a recent live performance for German radio.



ISRAEL NARANJAS SOBRE LA NIEVE

In Stores March 3, 2009
Sunnyside SSC 1211

Israel Fernandez is a young flamenco singer. This record has a modern flamenco flavor reminiscent of Ketama or Niña Pastori. Jazz and Cuban influences permeate Pedro Ojeto's arrangements.



sunnysiderecords.com



Nicole Henry

The Very Thought Of You

BANISTER 3017

★★★★

Nicole Henry offers wise programming to frame her modest, bluesy pipes. Balancing her set between three piano trios, with a few guest guitars entering late in the set to introduce plectral color, Henry keeps the listener focused on the vicissitudes of mood and repertoire, rather than the distraction of excessive solos.

The Miami-based singer's intense vibrato and singsong, blues-drenched melodic variants on "That's All" and "Almost Like Being In Love" that open *The Very Thought Of You* make her vocal presence a cheerful, if slightly breathless, tonic. She shifts the mood toward standards before she volleys her main thrust with a redirection toward quiet soul balladry.

"I Found You" spins out in a lengthy form to hypnotic effect, "All That I Can See" redoubles the intensity and "All The Way" seals her direction toward Vegas melodrama. Except for a quick and earthy "Gonna Lock My Heart," Henry's quivering, heartfelt set never looks back, and she closes with three leisurely takes on oldies, a churchy "At Last," an intimate "The Very Thought Of You" and "Make It Last." —Fred Bouchard

The Very Thought Of You: That's All; Almost Like Being In Love; I Can't Be Bothered Now; Waters Of March; What'll I Do; I Found You; All That I Can See; All The Way; I'm Gonna Lock My Heart; At Last; The Very Thought Of You; Make It Last. (50:55)

Personnel: Nicole Henry, vocals; Brian Murphy, Mike Orta, Jaui Schneider, piano, keyboard; Mariana Martin (4), Manny Lopez (6), Aaron Fishbein (7), James Bryan McCollum (7), guitar; Jamie Ousley, Paul Shewchuk, bass; Danny Burger, Orlando Hernandez, David Chiverton (7), drums; Sammy Figueroa (4), percussion.

» Ordering info: banisterrecords.com



Sonantes

SIX DEGREES 1148

★★★★½

Beto Villares »

SIX DEGREES 1152

★★★★

These two records, both of them largely producer-driven efforts, cast broad nets to challenge the narrow perceptions of what we think of as Brazilian music. Yet as varied and ambitious as they are, they're also unified and consistent.

Sonantes is a recent project helmed by producer Rico Amabis (known for his membership in the São Paulo production crew Instituto), bassist Dengue and drummer Pupillo (both of manguê beat pioneers Nação Zumbi). Despite being studio-bound, the music conveys a beguiling intimacy and energy. The popular vocalist Céu functions as the primary voice, lending her smoky, almost torchy croon to ballads and more uptempo numbers. (Northeastern folkie modernist Siba and MC Bnegão also add their vocals). But the real star is the song-to-song variety. From the brassy sound of jacked-up frevo on "Frevo De Saudade" to the dubby, lilting and seductively atmospheric "Defenestrando," *Sonantes* effortlessly juggles and reshapes familiar and obscure Brazilian forms, boldly threading in generous heapings of hip-hop, rock, electronica and dub. The record works because the compositions are so solid, which leaves any stylistic schizophrenia as an afterthought, as the melodies and arrangements dictate all of the particulars.

The eponymous debut of Beto Villares—which was released in Brazil five years ago under the name of one of its finest tunes, "Excelentes Lugares Bonitos"—splits the difference between singer-songwriter turf and production extravaganza. Villares has served as a conventional producer for important singers like Céu and Zelia Duncan (the current voice of Os Mutantes), created the score to the TV series "City Of Men," and, perhaps most importantly to this record, he worked with ethnomusicologist Hermano Vianna in surveying and recording examples of the infinite folkloric styles of his homeland. Villares also draws on a wide variety of guest vocalists—including Duncan, Céu, Siba, Pato Fu's Fernanda Takai and MC Rappin' Hood—but the record never feels like anything less than the vision of a single talent.

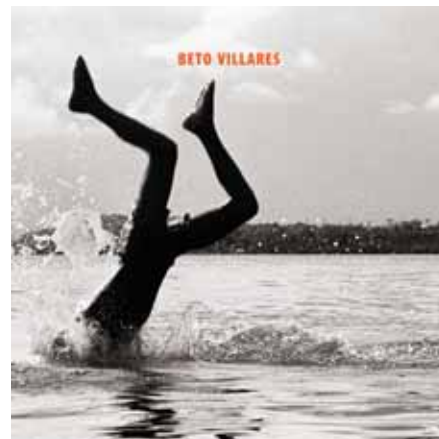
Villares covers as much territory as *Sonantes*, and while he doesn't shy away from electronic production, the emphasis is on live instrumentation that vibrantly brings in folkloric sounds within a modern palette. Villares holds tighter to Brazil's most well-known forms. The bossa nova and samba, deployed in gorgeous arrangements, look back to their golden era (the sweet vocal harmonies on "Lume" point straight to Quarteto Em Cy) without sounding nostalgic. But his real accomplishment is combining styles in a way that's logical and respectful. It's as if his song-collection experience with Vianna gave him a fresh perspective, funneling the mentality of a forward-looking songwriter through rural forms that have endured through decades of change. It's a gem.

—Peter Margasak

Sonantes: Carimbó; Miopia; Toque De Coito; Mambobit; Looks Like To Kill; Defenestrando; Quilombo Te Espera; Itapeva; Braz; Frevo De Saudade. (35:09)

Beto Villares: Incerteza; Excelentes Lugares Bonitos; Rio Da Bossa Nova; Nó Dend'Água; Aboio; Nação Postal; Um Dia Desses; Meio Dia Em Macapá; Redentor; África Lá; Santo Negro; Festa Na Roça; Medo; Prá Acabar; Lume. (44:41)

» Ordering info: sixdegreesrecords.com



Roberto Occhipinti

Yemaya

ALMA 12132

★★★★

Canadian bassist Roberto Occhipinti turns in an often dazzling set on his third album as a leader, recorded in Toronto, Moscow and Havana. Plus, two pieces are straight from Brazil: His bass sings the lead on Djavan's "A Ilha," wrapped in the strings of the Globalis Symphony Orchestra and topped with Kevin Turcotte's gorgeous flugelhorn solo; and Occhipinti sounds the opening lines and high-flying first improvisation on "Maracatres" by Jovino Santos-Neto.

Yemaya is hardly a bass-dominated project, though, as the emphasis is on the leader's arrangements, including his own compositions. This includes "Mank," with its 5/4 meter and tricky, cross-cutting brass, woodwind and rhythm-section lines, and "El Otro Tipo," one of five tunes benefitting from the creative propulsion of drummer Dafnis Prieto.

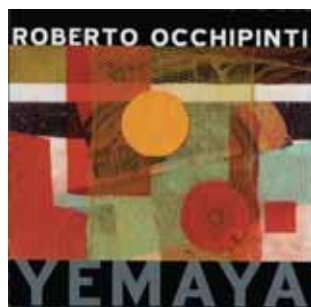
The album also features the buoyant "Herbie's Mood," inspired by Hancock and penned by Cuba-born pianist Hilario Duran; and the light "Bernardo's Tango," a tribute to Italian film director Bertolucci, written by tenor saxophonist Phil Dwyer. Occhipinti sends listeners off with "Yambu," an Afro-Cuban groove fest dedicated to the late drummer and percussionist Pancho Quinto.

—Philip Booth

Yemaya: Maracatres; Mank; Yemaya; El Otro Tipo; A Ilha; The Shadow; Herbie's Mood; Bernardo's Tango; Yambu. (50:58)

Personnel: Roberto Occhipinti, bass; Hilario Duran, piano; Phil Dwyer, tenor saxophone; Kevin Turcotte, trumpet, flugelhorn; Les Alt, flute; Al Kay, trombone; John Johnson, bass clarinet, alto saxophone; various others.

» Ordering info: almarecords.com



**Steven Bernstein/
Marcus Rojas/
Kresten Osgood**

Tattoos And Mushrooms

ILK 150

★★★½



It seems like Danish drummer Kresten Osgood is everywhere, working with Scandinavian up-and-comers and forward-looking Americans, from Oliver Lake to Michael Blake. His association with Blake led to this beguiling trio session that transcends the brassy peculiarity of its instrumentation. Slide trumpeter Steven Bernstein and tubaist Marcus Rojas function together masterfully, with a high-low attack and putty-like pliancy that gives the combination a surprising dynamism. With instrumentation this spare, there's nothing to hide behind.

Rojas provides bass lines most of the time, but he veers toward fat, patient legatos that swaddle and cushion Bernstein's protean lines, toggling between tart lyricism and blubbery abstraction. The slow crawl of Osgood's "Hope For Denmark" provides a platform for the brass's most plush and bulbous extroversions. While the opening of "Thelonious" is pure spitting, sizzling sibilance, it quickly pops into a brisk tempo showcasing Bernstein and Rojas' precision on the melody. Osgood coaxes the performances along, keeping an imperturbable pulse on even the most shapeless passages. But when the trumpeter blows virtual tears on "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," that's all he needs to do. —Peter Margasak

Tattoos And Mushrooms: Prince Of Night; Hope For Denmark; Thelonious; Scaramanga; Abington; Eastcoasting; I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry; Khumbu; The Beat-Up Blues. (62:22)
Personnel: Steven Bernstein, trumpet, slide trumpet; Marcus Rojas, tuba; Kresten Osgood, drums.

» Ordering info: ilkmusic.com

Ann Hampton Callaway

At Last

TELARC 83665

★★★★



On *At Last*, Ann Hampton Callaway creates a programmatic album that outlines the journey one embarks on the way to finding and experiencing love. Callaway wonders up front "What Is This Thing Called Love?" and then expresses confusion over what she'd do when she encounters it on "Comes Love." Joni Mitchell's "Carey" expresses the playful joy of infatuation along with the inevitable realization that it can't last. Callaway finds her love on a celebratory and dramatic version of "At Last." The album's remainder expresses a range of emotions and challenges in a relationship.

At Last allows for the clear expression of its plot. Callaway has a fabulous instrument, as her dark, rich voice is flexible and supple enough to caress each word of "Lazy Afternoon," which draws the listener into a world in which every moment needs to be savored as long as possible. Her understated scat solo on "What Is This Thing Called Love?" is full of nuance and inflection while her nimble bebop lines on "Spain" could hang with any trumpeter's. The guest soloists and different rhythm section configurations enhance each song's mood and provide variety without disrupting the album's narrative.

—Chris Robinson

At Last: What Is This Thing Called Love?; Comes Love; Carey; At Last; Spain; Lazy Afternoon; Landslide; Save A Place For Me; Over The Rainbow; Finding Beauty; On My Way To You. (58:57)
Personnel: Ann Hampton Callaway, vocals; Ted Rosenthal, piano; Jay Leonhart, bass, vocals (3); Victor Lewis, drums; Rodney Jones, guitar; Mads Tolling, violin; Teodross Avery, tenor saxophone; Marvin Stamm, flugelhorn; Wycliffe Gordon, trombone; Emedin Rivera, percussion.

» Ordering info: telarc.com



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Gourds and Platform Shoes

Chuck Bernstein: *Delta Berimbau Blues* (CMB 102844; 61:08) ★★★★★ San Francisco Bay Area jazz drummer Bernstein wrests musical magic from an Afro-Brazilian string-and-gourd berimbau, his delivery honest and purposeful in solo, duo and trio performances. He has a dark beauty of style that is fashioned into new textures through his communions with several guitarists, tenorman Robert Kyle, singer Lisa Kindred, bassist Sam Bevan, drummer George Marsh, trombonist Roswell Rudd and two other berimbau specialists. While all of the playing on this album is of a high quality, Bernstein and Good Medicine guitarist Sister Debbie Sipes stand out for radiating suspenseful authority all through the down-home originals "Drop D" and "Kelley Blues."

Ordering info: chuckbernstein.com

Various Artists: *Broadcasting The Blues!* (Southwest Musical Arts Foundation 04; 68:24) ★★★ Celebrating 25 years of his "Those Lowdown Blues" show on KJZZ in Phoenix, Bob Corritore compiles 19 of his favorite songs from visiting guests. The famous (Lowell Fulson, Cedell Davis, Lazy Lester, more) and the undervalued (to name two, Phoenician Chief Schabuttie Gilliam and San Diego's Tomcat Courtney) all work through emotional hurt with self-possession and moral urgency. Willie Dixon offers his approval: "Bob, keep on playin' the blues."

Ordering info: bobcorritore.com

Guy King: *Livin' It* (IBF 1003; 55:07) ★★★ Formerly with Willie Kent's band in Chicago, King toggles between soul and blues on an album that runs through good originals and covers of T-Bone Walker and Percy Mayfield before his singing kicks in as a confident, stirring cry on Little Johnny Taylor's "If You Love Me Like You Say." He's a good guitarist, somewhere in a style between B.B. King and Albert Collins, and his trusty, unpretentious band includes as soulful an electric pianist-organist as exists anywhere, Ben Paterson.

Ordering info: guyking.net

Big Shanty: *Sold Out ...* (King Mojo 1008; 45:48) ★★★ Guitarist Big Shanty's great thrill is to fire up blues in a riotous manner that bolsters old-school Southern blues-rock with jam-band hell-raising and acid-tossed-in-your-face techno-blues. Sift



William Elliot Whitmore: prolific farmer

CHRIS STRONG

through the sonic turbulence and Shanty's heard singing about age-old blues matters like loneliness and hittin' the road. "Uncle Sam Go To Rehab" is his twisted requiem for the Bush presidency.

Ordering info: kingmojo.com

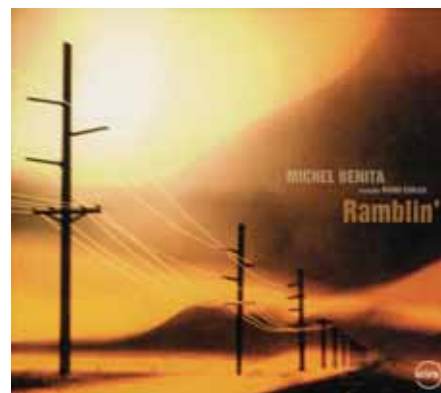
William Elliot Whitmore: *Animals In The Dark* (Anti- 86974; 37:18) ★★★ Raised up and still living on a farm in Iowa, Whitmore—just 30 years old but six albums into his career—is a modern bluesman who finds no contradiction between soaking up the vibe of his friends the Pogues and pledging loyalty to the Pete Seeger folk, Hank Williams country and Gary Davis rural blues legacies. His filthy, charcoaled baritone voice and strong banjo and guitar work are good matches to his rugged, tune-fest songs on hope, human closeness, government rot and cutting the mortal cord. Clearly feeling the lyrics, he transmits meaning with intensity. Whitmore, accustomed to solo work, doesn't require the strings, organ and other accompaniment.

Ordering info: anti.com

Johnny Winter: *Live Through The '70s* (MVD Visual 4755; 111:00) ★★★ With the film cameras rolling at shows in the United States and Europe, Winter shows off excellent straight blues guitar playing on "Key To The Highway" (done impromptu during an interview, backed by his bass player), and on "Walking Through The Park," from a Chicago "Blues Summit" with Junior Wells, Dr. John and an almost hidden Mike Bloomfield. Elsewhere, he lets loose with many nuclear reactions of blues-rock. Eye-popper: Winter the rock star in top hat and platform shoes.

DB

Ordering info: mvdb2b.com



Michel Benita

Ramblin'

BLUJAZZ 3368

★★★★

Bassist Michel Benita is something of a sound stylist. A deft player with an understated, traditionalist bent, the Algeria-born Benita has lived in Paris since 1981 and worked with many jazz notables. On *Ramblin'*, he has hooked up with guitarist Manu Codjia for a smart exploration of contemporary material, including tunes by Bob Dylan and Gillian Welch, as well as improvising on some traditional Irish music.

The dialogue between Benita and Codjia flows, even when Benita throws programmed "found" sounds into the mix. Codjia is a fluid guitarist, and his atmospheric playing makes this album a listening pleasure. Comparisons to Bill Frisell are unavoidable in sound and approach, including the interpretations of Dylan's "Farewell Angelina" and "It Ain't Me Babe," but the music still sounds exciting from beginning to end. Other cover tunes unearth similar echoes of classic Americana, including Welch's "By The Mark." While the waltzing melody from Neil Young's "Round And Round" works well in this format, Dan Fogelberg's "Stars" serves as a surprising showcase for Benita's powerful bass work and Codjia's tasty electric leads.

The sterling rendition of Bert Jansch's classic guitar workout "Blackwaterside" provides album's high point (Benita inexplicably misidentifies it in the liner notes and the song credits). The duo's sonic immersion in old Irish music is also top-notch, particularly their charging version of the lament "Molly Ban." The duo uses nuanced interludes of original material throughout, and their suave, sharp sound is consistently engaging. —*Mitch Myers*

***Ramblin'*:** Farewell Angelina; Round And Round; Blackwaterside; Atlantic, IA; Where I Belong; It Ain't Me Babe; One Single Chord; Stars; As I Roved Out; Como; Dos Arbolitos; By The Mark; Silent Woman; Molly Ban; Denise And Sledge; Secret Meeting. (49:13)

Personnel: Michel Benita, bass, acoustic guitar, percussion, programming; Manu Codjia, acoustic guitar, electric guitar.

» Ordering info: blujazz.com

Dr. Lonnie Smith

Rise Up!

PALMETTO 2138

★★★★

As Hammond B-3 organ players go, Dr. Lonnie Smith is a titan of the style, a master of the sleekly purring keyboard rope-a-dope, and a mellow groove-meister who knows what buttons to push and where to push (and pull) them.

When joined here by alto saxophonist Donald Harrison on the sweet soul of "Pilgrimage" or with New Orleans drumming kingpin Herlin Riley on "Dapper Dan," you know you're undoubtedly in the presence of Hammond greatness. It's a fine recording, from the opening track, "A Matterapat," to the closer, "Voodoo Doll." Everyone performs to perfection, and Smith and Harrison sound particularly inspired.

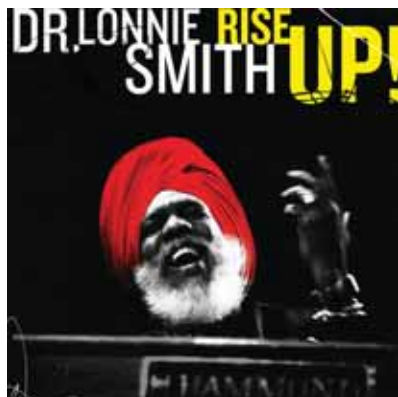
At times, however, a static voodoo is at work in *Rise Up!*, even amid the hot rhythms ("Dapper Dan") and humid atmospheres (the gorgeously melancholic "And The World Weeps"). Somehow, the music sounds contained, as if its lid (or perhaps Smith's ubiquitous turban) is firmly held in place by some unknown force.

—Ken Micallef

Rise Up! A Matterapat; Come Together; Pilgrimage; Dapper Dan; And The World Weeps; People Make The World Go Round; Tyrone; Sweet Dreams; Voodoo Doll. (62:28)

Personnel: Dr. Lonnie Smith, Hammond organ, vocals; Peter Bernstein, Matt Balitsaris, guitar; Donald Harrison, alto saxophone; Herlin Riley, drums; James Shipp, percussion; Jo Lawry, vocals.

» Ordering info: palmetto-records.com



Wolf Pac

Raw

WARREN WOLF MUSIC

★★★★

A vibraphonist friend of mine who saw Warren Wolf last winter commented after the set, "Wow, he plays a lot of vibes." My reaction after *Raw* was no less enthusiastic. Wolf calls his group the Wolf Pac, which varies in combinations of anywhere from two to six players per track. Wolf wrote all of *Raw*'s compositions except for two versions of "Body And Soul" and a fast take of "Airegin," on which he scorches his vibes.

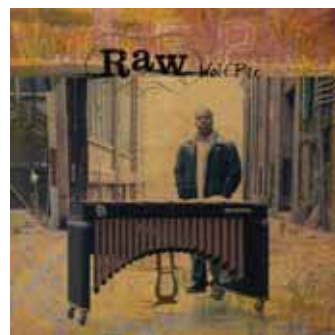
The playing on *Raw* is virtuosic. Put "Cell Phone" on repeat and let it go. There aren't enough synonyms for "hot" to aptly describe it, with Walter Smith's tenor and Darren Barrett's trumpet solos standing out. The first version of "Body And Soul," which is a mid-tempo duet between Wolf and bassist Peter Slavov, cools things down, yet it still swings intensely. The fusion-inspired "Havoc #2" features spirited trading between Barrett and Smith. During their simultaneous solos, Wolf ratchets up the tension with furious drumming while Fields plays a slowly rising line on his Fender Rhodes. When the tension releasing climax hits it's off to the races again.

—Chris Robinson

Raw: 427 Mass. Ave.; Believe; Cell Phone; Body & Soul (Duo Version); Body & Soul (Coltrane Version); Havoc #1 (Break Song); The Struggle; Just Made It; Havoc #2; At Home Alone; Airegin. (59:35)

Personnel: Warren Wolf, vibraphone, drums; Lawrence Fields, piano, Fender Rhodes; Walter Smith, tenor saxophone; Plume, alto saxophone; Darren Barrett, Jason Palmer trumpet; Kris Funn, Peter Slavov, bass; Charles Haynes, drums.

» Ordering info: myspace.com/jazzywolf



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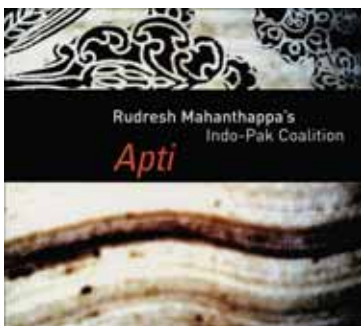
Rudresh Mahanthappa's Indo-Pak Coalition

Apti
INNOVA 709
★★★★

For much of his early life, Indian-American saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa wasn't particularly interested in his cultural background.

When he finally was, back when he was studying at DePaul University in Chicago, he realized he didn't have the knowledge to create a meaningful merger of jazz and classical Indian traditions. A decade later Mahanthappa certainly has it figured out.

Hot on the heels of last year's brilliant *Kinsmen*, a deft and rigorous hybrid of forward-looking jazz improvisation and Carnatic music, comes *Apti*, the debut effort by his Indo-Pak Coalition, a muscular trio formed long before December's violence in Mumbai, with Pakistani-born guitarist Rez Abassi and tabla player Dan Weiss. Mahanthappa's disregard for cultural purity is on display with the personnel alone, with the Anglo musician playing an Indian instrument and the South Asians on Western axes.



The long rhythmic cycles of Mahanthappa's compositions and the darting, high-velocity unison phrases he plays with Abassi borrow heavily from Indian traditions, but there's nothing glib or pastiche-like in the formulations. The members of the trio freely and seamlessly

move between the two traditions. An arpeggio by Abassi can quietly double as the tamboura-like drone—which he can spin off into a fleet solo and then right back to a hovering swirl of notes—and the saxophonist's knotty phrasing can shift from the tightly coiled lines of Indian classical music into post-bop intervallic leaps in a heartbeat.

Mahanthappa, like his occasional collaborator trumpeter Amir ElSaffar, is heralding a new reality in jazz, where the music exists on equal footing with another hearty tradition, and something genuinely new results. —Peter Margasak

Apti: Looking Out, Looking In; Apti; Vandanaa Trayee; Adana; Palika Market; IIT; Baladhi; You Talk Too Much. (58:12)

Personnel: Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Rez Abassi, guitar; Dan Weiss, tabla.

» Ordering info: innova.mu

John Santos Quintet

Perspectiva Fragmentada
MACHETE 208
★★★★



Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet

Infinity
PATOIS 007
★★★★

Here we have two California-based quintets, both performing Latin jazz and each exploring their material with different approaches. Percussionist John Santos has recorded 10 albums of quasi-folkloric Latin designed to pay respects to the tradition established by such iconic musicians as Cachao, Ray Barretto and Patato. In that regard, Santos succeeds, as *Perspectiva Fragmentada* is a textbook representation of organic Latin performed by his exemplary quintet and aided by such hot-fingered ringers as bongo player Johnny Rodriguez and trumpeter Ray Vega. But while Santos' music is authentic, it sometimes lacks the visceral edge associated with banging on percussive instruments to a surging mambo beat.

Trombonist Wayne Wallace's *Infinity*, though also adhering to standard Latin rhythms and melodic motifs, expresses more of a West Coast commercial mood, complete with r&b-fired electric bass and drums inferring multiple styles. While *Infinity*'s best tracks, including the title track, "Songo Colorado," "Cha-Cha De Alegria" and "Straight Life/Mr. Clean" are rife with flowing improvisation, other tracks ("Love Walked In") veer too close to smooth jazz placidity for comfort.

—Ken Micallef

Perspectiva Fragmentada: Perspectiva Fragmentada; Campana La Luisa; Ritmático; Chiquita; Consejo; Not In Our Name; Dos Equinas; Mi Corazon Borincano; Israel Y Aristides; No Te Hundes; Mexico City Blues; Visan. (67:20)

Personnel: John Santos, percussion; Orestes Vilató, timbales, bongos; John Calloway, flute; Saul Sierra, bass; Marco Diaz, piano; various others.

» Ordering info: johnsantos.com

Infinity: Infinity; Songo Colorado; As Cores Da Menina; Love Walked In; Memories Of You; TBA; Close Your Eyes; Cha-Cha De Alegria; Straight Life/Mr. Clean. (57:33)

Personnel: Wayne Wallace, trombone, tuba, melodica vocals; David Belove, bass; Michael Spiro, percussion, hand drums; Murray Low, piano; Paul van Wageningen, drums; Roger Glenn, flute, vibraphone; Jackie Ryan, (4, 7), Orlando Torriente (2), vocals; background vocals.

» Ordering info: patoisrecords.com

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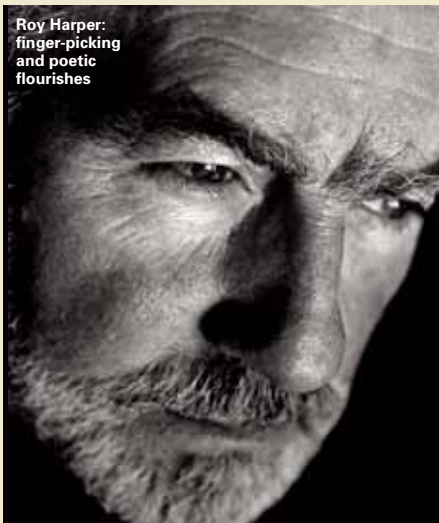
A strange and sympathetic pioneer of the psychedelic folk scene in England, Roy Harper emerged in the mid-'60s sounding like another Bob Dylan/Woody Guthrie wannabe. But by the time he recorded his first album using just an acoustic guitar and a Revox, it was clear that Harper was treading his own musical path.

Wielding a distinctive, ringing guitar style and a regal, authoritative singing voice, Harper's ambitious song-prose often manifested into imposing, tour-de-force solo epics that mixed his haunting vocals with hallucinatory and socially conscious commentary and finger-picking flourishes—many of which can be found on the two-CD best-of collection, **Counter Culture (Science Friction 039) ★★★★★**. The sets feature quality performances drawn from 1966 to 2000, but the anthology is dominated by Harper's most prolific phase—the 1970s—including long-form classics like "I Hate The White Man," "Me And My Woman" and the 19-minute saga "One Of Those Days In England."

While his quirky career can barely be contained within a two-disc primer, this collection features many of Harper's finest songs and gives great indications of his depth as an artist. Harper's recordings moved beyond the folk idiom into a grander rock esthetic, and much has been made of his affiliation with musicians from Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin—especially his longstanding camaraderie with guitarist Jimmy Page. In the course of several decades and still counting, Harper's eclectic muse remains undiminished.

For those with an interest in the freakier foundations of U.K. folk, a few of Harper's more marketable recordings have been re-issued. **Flat Baroque And Berserk (Science Friction 028) ★★★★★** was Harper's fourth album, originally released in 1970, and it still exudes the power and confidence of a daunting young talent spreading his wings. Showcasing his songwriting prowess with a definitive live version of "I Hate The White Man" and other pensive essentials like "How Does It Feel" and "Tom Tiddler's Ground," Harper's troubadour stance is unyielding and confrontational as much as it is stoned, playful and obtuse. His acoustic guitar playing is intricate and propulsive, and other than an occasional harmonica, harp or recorder (and full backing band on

Roy Harper:
finger-picking
and poetic
flourishes



"Hell's Angels"), Harper's guitar provides the sole counterpoint to his emphatic vocals. Whether addressing race relations and worldly politics or simply singing silly love songs, Harper was unafraid to explore the inner and outer realms of his brash hippie consciousness.

Harper's next album, **Stormcock (Science Friction 047) ★★★★★½**, is rightly considered a dramatic high point in a sterling recording career. Featuring just four songs ranging between seven and 13 minutes in length, *Stormcock* is progressive in its sensibility and elegantly spare in instrumentation. Harper's voice is even more sure here, and he uses it to great dramatic effect, including hypnotic vocal overdubs on the opening track, "Hors d'Oeuvres," and "The Same Old Rock," which also features Harper on the 12-string guitar, jamming prodigiously with Page on lead guitar. All the tracks feel somewhat open-ended and merit their extended lengths. "One Man Rock And Roll Band" is a hallucinatory war epic with an echoing acoustic guitar sound and "Me And My Woman" is yet another emotive vocal journey—this time with string arrangements by David Bedford and a dreamy sonic ambience.

Finally, there's the 1985 album from Harper and Page, **Jugula (Science Friction 032) ★★★**. Somewhat heavier musically, this disc still contains several instrumental highlights and a couple of rousing performances, particularly the opening track, "Nineteen Forty-Eightish," and "Hangman," which echoes the acoustic/electric guitar structures of *Led Zeppelin III*. Harper is always convincing as the front man, but was lacking some of his grand poetic inspirations on this recording.

DB

Ordering info: royharper.co.uk



DIEGO BARBER CALIMA

In Stores March 24, 2009
Sunnyside SSC 1210

Guitarist Diego Barber expresses his enthusiasm on his new recording, *Calima*. The classically trained guitarist jumps headfirst into his debut recording with an amazing group of musicians. The jazz trio FLY (saxophonist Mark Turner, bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jeff Ballard) provide ample support to Barber's fluid guitar and expressive compositions.



BEN WENDEL SIMPLE SONG

In Stores March 24, 2009
Sunnyside SSC 1216

Debut albums rarely sound coherent or balanced. Saxophonist and bassoonist Ben Wendel has achieved these goals on his new recording *Simple Song*. The Los Angeles raised musician, along with a band of formidable talent, has put together one of the more adventurous and well-conceived debut recordings in a long while.



sunnysiderecords.com





Louis Moholo-Moholo

Sibanye

INTAKT 145

★★★★

At first sight, South African drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo, an original member of the Blue Notes and later a fixture in pianist Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath, and pianist Marilyn Crispell, who got much attention during her tenure with the brainy Anthony Braxton, could not be further apart. This makes this album's triumph even more remarkable. Without any planning, the pair launches into a series of free improvisations that grab the attention from start to finish.

Although *Sibanye* has been released under

Moholo's name, Crispell is at the forefront, as the drummer is mostly satisfied with a supportive role. He uses the cymbals as a driving force and the toms to add drama or provide a vociferous backdrop. In every situation, he is careful not to overshadow his partner and manages to harness his eagerness and excitement.

Crispell is often categorized as a Cecil Taylor disciple, but this performance will easily dispel this notion. She does display the angularity and physicality most are accustomed to—the might of her attack on the keys still has the capacity to impress—but she also favors a newer approach that was the trademark of her latest solo album, *Vignettes* (ECM), which adroitly balances lyricism and tension. On a couple of occasions she connects with Moholo at such an emotional level that she brings a poignancy that also inhabits the work the best South African jazzmen have produced.

The result is a thoughtful work and a beautiful collaboration that succeeds because Crispell and Moholo make some commendable efforts to bridge their musical worlds and to create an original and personal universe. —Alain Drouot

Sibanye: Improvise, Don't Compromise; Moment Of Truth; Journey; Soze (Never); Phendula (Reply); Reflect; Sibanye (We Are One). (58:57)

Personnel: Marilyn Crispell, piano; Louis Moholo-Moholo, drums.

» Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Henry Grimes

Solo

ILK 151

★★★★

Henry Grimes' story attracts superlatives like a magnet attracts iron filings. A sought-after accompanist for the likes of Cecil Taylor and Don Cherry, as well as the first-call bassist for ESP, he disappeared in the late '60s and lived a life of obscurity, poverty and hard labor until he was discovered by a social worker living bassless in a Los Angeles SRO in 2003. William Parker shipped him a bass and within months he returned to music.

The best part of the story is that his playing was quite good. This record, his first widely available unaccompanied solo release, should be the crowning statement of an inspiring second act; instead, it is a tough slog for all save Grimes' uncritical true believers.

The problem is not that Grimes plays violin, an instrument he started bringing on stage when he turned 70, as well as bass. While his chops on the smaller instrument do not match those he brings to the bass, he still achieves passages where incendiary abandon transmutes into rough-hewn beauty that cracks the nut of conventional harmony and finds sweet meat inside. Anyone who can warm to Billy Bang or Omette Coleman's bowing will find something of worth when he hits his peak here.

Nor can one fault his bass skills. His arco playing still matches melodic fluency to a marvelously cavernous tone, and he's at his most lucid rendering bold, complex pizzicato figures. Even so, there are moments when he sounds like he's treading water while he waits for the next good idea to arrive. The album's problem lays in a failure of discipline and poor post-production. It runs two hours and 34 minutes, which is simply too long, especially given the inconsistency of the material. A more listener-friendly approach that mined the session for its best moments and split them into sections would have resulted in a much stronger album than this intermittently engaging but deeply flawed document. —Bill Meyer

Solo: Disc 1. (76:47) Disc 2. (77:08)

Personnel: Henry Grimes, bass, violin.

» Ordering info: ilkmusic.com

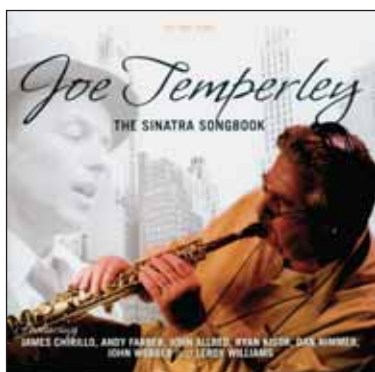
Joe Temperley

The Sinatra

Songbook

HEP JAZZ 2093

★★★★½



Scottish baritone saxophonist Joe Temperley moved to New York in the mid-'60s, and has had a distinguished career anchoring the woodwind section of legendary big bands, including Duke Ellington, Woody Herman and for the last 20 years, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. He'll turn 80 this year, and this CD is, unsurprisingly, a nostalgia trip. But aside from a certain Francis Albert, it also showcases Temperley's nicely tempered soprano sax (notably on a sunny "Day By Day").

Soprano and baritone aren't obvious doubling mates, but Temperley is at home on the lighter horn and, as Frank Sinatra biographer and liner note writer Will Friedwald puts it, on bari Temperley is more "Fred Astaire than Hulk Hogan." The CD has a sprightliness that will appeal to those who like their jazz diatonic, non-gratuitous and not overly clever, pretty much the Sinatra way therein. Andy Farber is an important member of the ensemble, who, along with guitarist James Chirillo, wrote most of the

arrangements, and is a nimble, on point saxophonist.

Chirillo's "Moontune" is a contrafact of "Fly Me To The Moon," with some playful shoots and ladders riffing, and more relaxed soprano from the leader. Farber's ironic, breezy take on "I'll Never Smile Again" is another protracted piece with consummate solos all round, with trumpeter Ryan Kisor's being

the most adventurous; the song offers some cute unison glissandi, and another tip of the fedora is owed to the swinging rhythm section. The workmanlike Temperley doesn't laud it on the ballads, as he keeps things airy and at a ballroom tempo so we don't get lost in any emotional trough; to wit Gordon Jenkins' valedictory tearjerker, which closes out the set, wouldn't embarrass the Chairman. —Michael Jackson

The Sinatra Songbook: Come Fly With Me; Everything Happens To Me; Moontune; PS I Love You; Day By Day; Nancy (With The Laughing Face); All The Way; I've Got The World On A String; I'll Never Smile Again; In The Wee Small Hours; I've Got You Under My Skin; Put Your Dreams Away; Goodbye. (67:37)

Personnel: Joe Temperley, baritone and soprano saxophone; Andy Farber, alto and tenor saxophone; Ryan Kisor, trumpet; John Allred, trombone; James Chirillo, guitar; Dan Nimmer, piano; John Webber, bass; Leroy Williams, drums.

» Ordering info: hepjazz.com

Ran Blake

Driftwoods

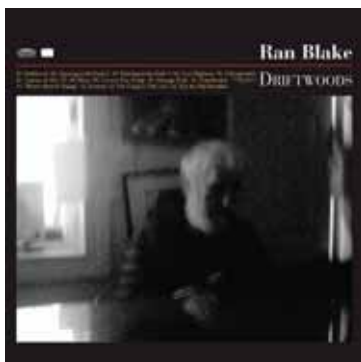
TOMPKINS SQUARE 2097

★★★

Ran Blake has long invited listeners to assess his work in terms of its intellectual orientation and content. On *Driftwoods*, he practically hands them a syllabus by which to more fully appreciate the material and the way he approaches it. In his liner essay, Blake lays out the concept of this project—it's a tribute to his favorite singers—and then goes into detail about what makes these songs memorable.

Right off the bat, one characteristic shared by some of them is their complexity, a point Blake underscores in his commentary. In terms of his performance, though, the intricacy of the material has no obvious bearing on Blake, whether he feels his way through the labyrinth of Billie Holiday's "No More" or sees how far he can stray beyond the limits of a three-chord tune.

With this, Blake offers the murkiest version on record of "You Are My Sunshine." It arrives with a jagged fanfare, a brassy suspended voicing that crumbles into a lower register before the melody emerges as a single line, momentarily on its own and apparently unconnected to what-



ever the introduction was intended to accomplish. This gives way in a second verse to a distention of the tune, which trudges through dissonant flurries that recall Charles Ives' *The Unanswered Question*. Then, as with most of the tracks on *Driftwoods*, the performance stops, leaving no sense of resolution in its wake.

If these dissections would shed new light on this reper-

toire, that would lend weight to Blake's efforts. But mostly they lead away from greater understanding; following an approach similar to what he did with "You Are My Sunshine," Blake plods through "Lost Highway" and, by inserting a minor seventh 47 seconds into a song in which this bluesy insinuation is otherwise absent, loses touch with its neo-Appalachian character.

Playing often heavily on what sounds like a small and not entirely tuned-up grand, Blake pays tribute neither to the singers who immortalized these songs nor to the songs themselves, but rather to his own interpretive identity.

—Robert Doerschuk

Driftwoods: Driftwood; Dancing In The Dark 2; Dancing In The Dark 1; Lost Highway; Unforgettable; Canção Do Sol; No More; I Loves You, Porgy; Strange Fruit; Pawnbroker; There's Been A Change; Portrait; I'm Going To Tell God; You Are My Sunshine. (41:46)

Personnel: Ran Blake, piano.

» Ordering info: tompinkssquare.com

Eli Degibri Trio

Live At Louis 649

ANZIC 3001

★★★★

As part of the potent community of Israeli jazz musicians working in New York these days, saxophonist Eli Degibri has already attracted his fair share of attention. Herbie Hancock enlisted him for his quartet—an arrangement that lasted almost three years—and Degibri has cut a pair of fine solo albums. But his debut recording for Anzic Records represents a new zenith, capturing his protean power and expressiveness with exhilarating effectiveness.

Brilliantly supported by Hammond B-3 whiz Gary Versace and drummer Obed Calvaire, Degibri presides over live sessions done at New York's Louis 649 in August 2007, where a sui generis balance between melodic richness and structural ingenuity couldn't sound more natural or familiar. Five of the seven pieces are originals by Degibri, which sound like instant standards packed with episodic development and indelible



tunefulness.

While Versace isn't afraid to shake a little grease from his keyboard, by and large he embraces an elegant post-Larry Young conception, creating sleek, astonishing settings for the saxophonist that veer between pin-drop tender and bulldozer propulsive. I can't say if Versace and Calvaire are responsible for the

way Degibri's improvised lines reveal a seemingly inexhaustible imagination, but they give him plenty to work with. The leader's lines ripple with a sanguine fervor, but they never tap into organ trio hokum.

The trio hasn't reinvented the format, but it's been several years since a group has injected this instrumental setting with so much style and substance.

—Peter Margasak

Live At Louis 649: NY-TLV-NY; Every Time We Say Goodbye; Gypsy; Pum-Pum; I Fall In Love Too Easily; Shooohoo; Colin's Dream. (74:53)

Personnel: Eli Degibri, tenor and soprano saxophone; Gary Versace, Hammond B-3 organ; Obed Calvaire, drums.

» Ordering info: anzicrecords.com

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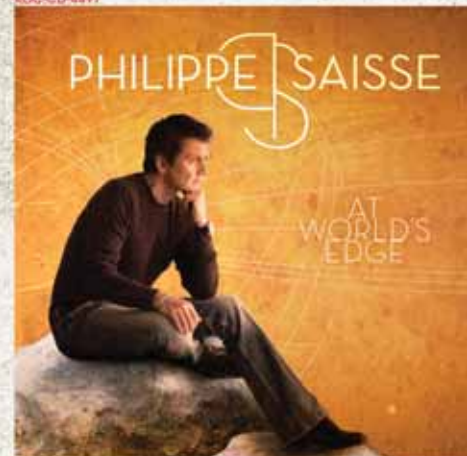
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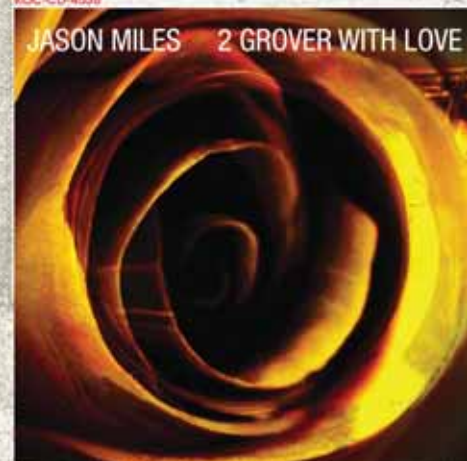
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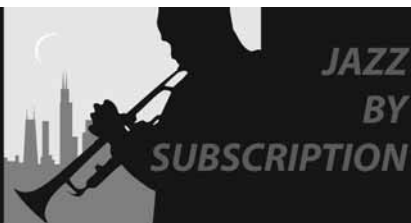
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HISTORICAL

by John Ephland

Random Mix

Over two discs, Ruby Braff's live "historic final performance" at the 2002 Nairn Jazz Festival in Scotland, *For The Last Time* (Arbors 19368; 59:31/55:45) ★★★★★, proves how engaging and vibrant this sweet-toned trumpeter could not only engage an audience but keep the musical moods moving. Featuring Scott Hamilton on tenor saxophone, the rest of the rhythm section help to keep things swinging ("Sometimes I'm Happy," "Just You, Just Me") and tender ("Yesterdays," "Why Shouldn't I?"). Braff is on top of his game. The setting feels like a club, which is fitting for someone who so helped define intimate, small-group jazz.

Ordering info: arborsrecords.com

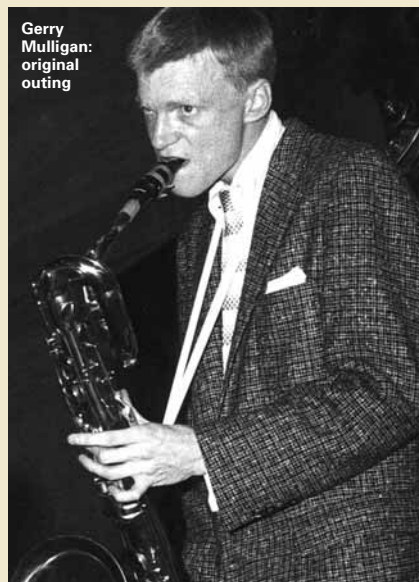
Another live set, this one from the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in 1956, carries a similar vibe as the Braff set. Gerry Mulligan's *Western Reunion* (MCN 0801; 77:25) ★★★★★ is a previously unreleased recording (in mono) featuring Jeru's long-time colleagues Bob Brookmeyer and Zoot Sims along with Dave Bailey, Bill Crow and Jon Eardley. The program has lots of Mulligan originals (the title track, "Nights At The Turntable," "Line For Lyons") along with some Duke Ellington ("I'm Beginning To See The Light"), Count Basie ("Ain't It The Truth"), and standards like "My Funny Valentine" and "Sweet And Lovely."

Ordering info: muziekcentrumnederland.nl

Another traditionalist, clarinetist Bob Wilber gives a novel treatment to a set of jazz standards with *New Clarinet In Town* (Classic Jazz 8; 38:30) ★★★★★. From 1960, this date has a slightly rigged feel to it even as the extended ensemble enlivens a smart batch of tunes, ranging from swingers like Dave Brubeck's "The Duke" and Django Reinhardt's "Swing 39," to more classical-sounding fare like Oscar Levant's "Blame It On My Youth" and Leonard Bernstein's "Lonely Town." Wilber's sound can be melodic and swinging—if somewhat measured—as he's also joined by pianist Dave McKenna, bassist George Duvivier, drummer Bobby Donaldson, a string quartet and French horn.

Ordering info: musicminusone.com

Vince Guaraldi's *Live On The Air* (D&D 1120; 37:12/43:00) ★★½ gives us a taste of the keyboardist away from his "Peanuts" moorings. His trio with drummer Elliot Zigman and bassist Seward McCain does revisit his cartoon music via the pretty "There's No Time For Love, Charlie Brown" (on Fender Rhodes) and in the rockin' medley "Eleanor Rigby/Linus And Lucy," but



Gerry Mulligan:
original
outing

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

this live-in-the-studio date from 1974 found the pianist also swinging with an uptempo version of "Cabaret" along with a samba take on the pop hit "If," Fender Rhodes ballad treatments of "Old Folks" and "Then Came You," and his classic "Cast Your Fate To The Wind," among others. Sloppy annotation detracts.

Ordering info: vinceguaraldi.com

Another recording that sounds dated is The Three Sounds' *Soul Symphony* (Blue Note 22384; 43:51) ★★★ from 1969. The early parts of the 26-minute title track are imaginative, combining tender piano lines against subtle string accompaniment followed by a slow funk groove with bass and drums along with orchestra and backup singers. Chunks of it, though, make the soul-meets-the-symphony idea seem like a soundtrack to an urban drama TV pilot, as pianist Gene Harris, bassist Henry Franklin and drummer Carl Burnett navigate composer Monk Higgins' subtle but oftentimes camp orchestration.

Flutist/vocalist Bobbi Humphrey's *Fancy Dancer* (Blue Note 22376; 38:50) ★★★ is the perfect barometer of where the label had been when it was recorded in 1975. Another period piece, it's a funky, free-wheeling affair that reflected Blue Note's evolving approach to urban music. "Uno Esta" is relaxed disco-funk, but with some grease thanks to energetic drumming, backing vocals, dance-floor orchestration and Humphrey's on-top-of-the-beat blowing. The flutist feels at home adding soul and whimsy alternating simple lines with flair. It ends up being more pop than jazz, despite the extended cast of players. **DB**

Ordering info: bluenote.com

Charlie Hunter

Baboon Strength

SPIRE ARTIST MEDIA

★★★★

Tim Collins

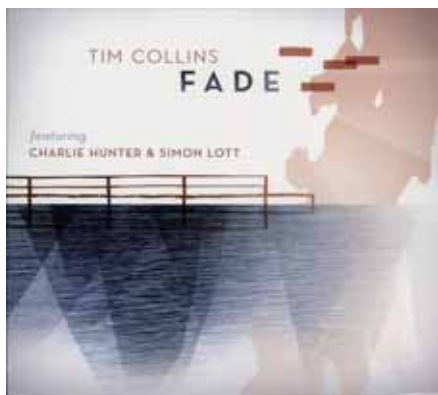
Fade »

ROPEADOPE DIGITAL 45

★★★★

Charlie Hunter has been a student of the trio format for years, and with each incarnation of his threesome, his music feels more focused and complete. On *Baboon Strength*, a lineup revamp swaps the pop-oriented saxophonist John Ellis and drummer Simon Lott for Erik Deutsch on a fuzzed-out combo organ and groove-minded drummer Tony Mason. The combination complements Hunter's percussive seven-string style, even as he shuns the spotlight to focus on the group dynamic.

Baboon Strength draws strength from the succinctness of the individual songs and the seamlessness of the album as a whole. While Hunter's last release with the Groundtruth project sprawled at nearly two dozen tracks, each tune here makes its point quickly, but still leaves time for innovation and fun. The trio plays with



her drumming skills as much as for her vocals. However, the thematic opener gambles the album's ultimate pop potential with a high-pitched, squealing tone that's downright annoying on its surface, but entertaining because it works despite itself. In the end, the muted guitar parts and slow-cooked improvisations over tight melodies point to a fresh direction for Hunter.

While *Baboon* offers neatly packaged, light-hearted tunes, Hunter's production and bass work with vibraphonist Tim Collins portrays something a little darker and more earnest. Featuring Lott on drums, Collins' *Fade* offers a range of emotional tracks that move seamlessly from a hammering anger ("Loud") to painfully pretty lines that want to keep replaying in your

pop-oriented melodic ideas borrowed from unlikely places like surf punk and disco-rock (Debbie Harry would feel at home with the opening bars of "Welcome To Frankfurt"). An achingly soft ballad underscored with propulsive percussion honors its namesake, Karen Carpenter, for

mind long after the end of the disc ("Rise, Set, Fall"). Strings on "Lake George 1983" and the title track deepen the textures even more, giving the album's slate of original compositions a dreamy, cinematic feel.

Even the music feels narrative, like the unyielding counterpoint in "Stop Or I'll Throw My Keys," which forges ahead for bars and bars with the same level of propulsion, refusing to climax or let one melody have the last word. Meanwhile, the pensive and beautiful "Cave Dweller" evokes a head-down, heavy-heartedness that makes being out front a lonely endeavor for the vibes. But Collins' loneliness is the listener's treat.

—Jennifer Odell

Baboon Strength: Athens; Astronaut Love Triangle; Welcome To Frankfurt; Difford-Tilbrook; A Song For Karen Carpenter; Baboon Strength; Fine Corinthian Leather; Porter-Hayes; AbaDaba. (44:52)

Personnel: Charlie Hunter, seven-string guitar; Tony Mason, drums; Erik Deutsch, keyboards.

» Ordering info: charliehunter.com

Fade: Loud; Rise, Set, Fall; Lake George 1983; Dear Old Friend; Stop Or I'll Throw My Keys; Cave Dweller; Fade; Mystified; Saddle Bags; Joyride. (51:43)

Personnel: Tim Collins, vibraphone, electravibes, bowed vibes, glockenspiel, piano, drum programming; Charlie Hunter, electric bass; Simon Lott, drums; Ulrike Schmitz (2), Zach Brock (3, 7), violin; Matt Blostein, alto saxophone (3, 7); Marla Hansen, viola (3, 7); Chris Hoffman, cello (3, 7); Matt Clohesy, acoustic bass (3, 7).

» Ordering info: ropeadope.com

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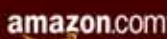
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★★★★

Satoko Fujii Orchestra New York

Summer Suite

LIBRA 215-023

★★★★



The cover image—paired heads, profiled nose-to-nose, inches apart, their vaguely androgynous, almost-symmetrical features rendered with a minimum of calligraphically precise strokes, the negative space between their faces and pressed-together hands revealing an enfolding, winged spirit—says much about the synchronous ambience of *Chun*. It's a program of nine compositions by Satoko Fujii, which she performs on piano in duet with her husband, trumpeter Natsuki Tamura.

Fujii is a sonic explorer, and for this project—her fourth duo recording with Tamura, one of more than 40 she's realized since 1996—she frames Japanese vernaculars within post-'60s jazz and post-Webern postulations. She sometimes sets up slow-build soundscapes and sometimes goes for theme-and-variation off of an initial unison. Either context offers ample space for informed dialogue. Fujii's orchestral technique, clear chromatic lines and "prepared piano" devices contrast effectively with Tamura's arsenal of extended techniques, which he executes with a warm, vocalized tone throughout the trumpet's full range.

Fujii shares composer duties with Tamura and guitarist Yashuhiro Usui on *Sanrei*, on which she eschews keyboard duties and conducts the 15-piece Orchestra Nagoya, a Japanese ensemble of fluent polylinguists, through a seven-piece program. The charts reference tropes from avant-rock, fusion, American and Japanese speculative jazz, and traditional Japanese melodies. The musicians follow the example of Usui—a deft guitarist and skronk-producer—and taiko-to-fusion drummer Hisamine Kondo in executing the expansive, precisely delineated colors, textures and timbres contained in the charts. They also infuse them with tremendous energy. There is much dialogue among the sections, creating an anthemic and occasionally surreal feel. They blend vocabulary that one might associate with the '70s and '80s units of Gil Evans and Sun Ra with logic structures reminiscent of the orchestral playbooks of Anthony Braxton and Muhal Richard Abrams to realize Fujii's fresh imperatives.

Similar strategies prevail on *Summer Suite*, the seventh recording by Fujii's Orchestra New York, an ongoing entity since 1997. The leader's intimacy with the idiosyncratic tonal personalities of her personnel (the trumpet section, for example, comprises Tamura, Herb Robertson, Steven Bernstein and Dave Ballou) and formal control over the raw materials upon which they improvise is apparent on the title track, a kaleidoscopic 39-minute tour de force in which events ebb and flow across the dynamic spectrum. The sections interpret the scored passages with a breathe-as-one quality, gestating, propelling and sustaining far-flung solos by drummer Aaron Alexander, alto saxophonist Oscar Noriega, trombonist Joey Sellers and tenor saxophonist Tony Malaby.

—Ted Panken

Chun: Tokyo Rush Hour; Nudibranch; Infrared; Chun; Stone Flowers; Curt Response; Ultraviolet; Spiral Staircase; Triangle. (54:25)

Sanrei: Gokaku; Eaves; Blueprint; Kondo Star; Syogetsu; Sankaku; Sanrei. (68:05)

Summer Suite: Summer Suite; Sanrei; In The Town You Don't See On The Map. (54:28)

» Ordering info: www.2s.biglobe.ne.jp/~libra

Burnt Sugar the Arkestra Chamber

Making Love To The Dark Ages

LIVEWIRED MUSIC 1002

★★★½



Triangulating Afro-futurism and Butch Morris' conduction cue lexicon is a heady proposition on paper, but Burnt Sugar ringleader Greg Tate's approach yields fluid, funk-fortified music. While there are moments that flash with antecedents—usually located somewhere in the mid-'70s, but reaching back occasionally as far as the '40s—Burnt Sugar has its own sound. There's a cadre of horn players who cover the post-Ornette Coleman waterfront with ease (including Matana Roberts and Avram Fefer), rhythm sections who can lock into a groove but also suddenly pivot, and a sufficient array of textures (some emanating from Tate's laptop) and searing walk-ons by Vijay Iyer and Vernon Reid that morph the ensemble's sound from track to track.

Burnt Sugar is at its elastic best during extended work-outs like the second section of "Chains And Water," "Thorazine/81" and the title piece. However, some of the album's high points occur in more tightly scripted pieces like the first part of "Chains And Water," a throbbing, harmonica-laced holler featuring Lisala, a compelling singer. But there are also a few miscues in the more structured passages. In the boppish tag that concludes "Chains And Water," Lewis Barnes' trumpet is fractured by a psychedelic mix. A synthesized ostinato threatens to stifle the album-ending title piece, but violinist Mazz Swift prevails with a synthesis of Leroy Jenkins and Papa John Creach, making a lasting impression.

—Bill Shoemaker

Making Love To The Dark Ages: Chains And Water; Thorazine/81; Love To Tical; Dominata; Making Love To The Dark Ages. (75:30)

» Ordering info: livewiredmusic.org

Lee Shaw Trio

Live In Graz

ARTISTS RECORDING COLLECTIVE 2062

★★★½



Recorded at the Café Stockwerk in Graz, Austria, in 2007, *Live In Graz* showcases the octogenarian pianist Lee Shaw and her trio. Shaw's highly cohesive trio consists of bassist Rich Syracuse and drummer Jeff Siegel, who play together so well and change direction so deftly that it's as if they share a collective consciousness. But this does not mean their individual voices are suppressed. Syracuse shows off his melodicism and inventiveness on several lengthy solos, most notably on "Easy Walker," "Song Without Words" and the lovely waltz "Rain Threads."

Shaw has a clean, delicate touch, with which she pulls the notes from the piano rather than pushing them out from it in predominantly single-note melodic lines. The trio's every utterance contains constant dialog and give and take: Siegel surges with Shaw's lines and urges her on with creative cymbal and snare work, Syracuse often sits on pedal points to help Shaw build tension, and she is more than happy laying out, putting the spotlight on her colleagues.

A supplemental DVD includes tour photos, a bonus track from the concert, video footage from the trio's Reulingen, Germany, concert, as well as interviews with Shaw and the trio.

—Chris Robinson

Live In Graz: Easy Walker; Song Without Words; Elegy; Rain Threads; Street Of Dreams; Feet; Stan's Song; Night Mist Blues. (77:29)

Personnel: Lee Shaw, piano; Rich Syracuse, bass; Jeff Siegel, drums.

» Ordering info: artistsrecordingcollective.info

BOOKS

by Matthew Lurie

Musicians' Record Collections Key to Personalities

Great musicians don't always make for great straightahead interview subjects, but there are other ways to describe these artists. Ben Ratliff, jazz critic for The New York Times, has cultivated a unique device: Put on a few of a jazz musician's favorite records and let the conversation flow.

The Jazz Ear (Times Books) collects 15 of Ratliff's riotously good "Listening With" pieces, all of which originally appeared in the Times, with Sonny Rollins, Andrew Hill, Pat Metheny and Paul Motian as some of the standout subjects. As Ratliff acknowledges in the introduction, precedent for these pieces lays mostly with DownBeat's "Blindfold Test." But in letting each artist select his or her own albums, and by allowing the conversations to wander all over the psycho-musical map, Ratliff ends up with portraits that

tell as much about these legendary musicians' musical ideas as they do of who they are as human beings.

The musicians' choices are often as surprising as they are revealing. Motian puts on a Baby Dodds "documentary" record to illustrate the importance a drummer plays in delineating song structure. Ornette Coleman says he uses a 1916 recording by Jewish cantor Josef Rosenblatt to describe how there can be "crying, singing and praying, all in the same breath." Dianne Reeves finds lessons in a song by country singer-songwriter Mary Chapin

Carpenter on the gradual crumbling of an aged romance.

Ratliff relates these exchanges with a profoundly elegant style, suffusing his loaded imagery with pregnant pauses—not unlike a literary Ahmad Jamal. Hill's enigmatic oeuvre needs only a few lines for readers to get the picture: "His work is dense and knotty and difficult to play, but much of it is beautiful, aerated with song. There's an undefined, shifting-sands feeling."


But the real meat of *The Jazz Ear* comes outside of his ruminations on music. Ratliff digresses into his subject's body language (Maria Schneider dancing out her own melodies), dress (when Wayne Shorter, clad in a Superman T-shirt, puts on Vaughan Williams, Ratliff points out Shorter's not-so-subtle fondness for "superhero music") and especially conversational style. There's Joshua Redman's surprising insecurity: "Redman is an on-the-one-hand, on-the-other kind of talker and by extension tacks naturally toward self-effacing comments, often to the effect that he hasn't heard enough, or that he can never reach the level of understanding or sheer musicianship of someone else."

When Coleman takes a defensive tack, Ratliff seizes the moment instead of ignoring it: "This is the sound of Coleman's gate closing. He loves exposing you to this cast of mind, but if he senses you trying to pick it apart or superimposing a grid of Western logic on it, he holds you at bay with a charming tautology." An incidental moment for the average interviewer becomes a revealing one for Ratliff.

DB

Ordering info: henryholt.com






Tony DeSare Radio Show

"...brilliant concept album spanning decades of American song, blending traditional swing, jazz and pop with his original material, all presented in a nostalgia-flavored radio format ... Tony DeSare is the most compelling new singer / pianist to come along since Harry Connick, Jr. ... This one's a winner."

— Cabaret Scenes



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3/17-22	Dizzy's at Lincoln Center	New York, NY
3/27	Berks Jazz Festival	Reading, PA
3/28	Princeton Regional Schools PAC	Princeton, NJ
4/13-18	University of North Texas	Addison, TX
4/23-25	Catalina Bar & Grill	Los Angeles, CA
4/30	Tempe Center for the Arts	Tempe, AZ
5/22-23	Spoletto Festival	Charleston, SC
6/20	Symphony Pavilion	Sun Valley, ID
8/19-23	Iridium	New York, NY



CD-83685

ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY | All Last

On Tour in 2009

Dizzy's Club Coca Cola	2/17-3/1
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Toronto Symphony	Toronto, CANADA 3/31-4/1
Tennessee Williams Theatre	4/3
Grand Foyer Cabaret	Key West, FL
Seoulers	Boston, MA 4/10-11
Arts NO Shift Gala @ Tivoli Theatre	Raleigh, NC 4/18
Catalina's Bar & Grill	Los Angeles, CA 5/13-17
Bay Area Cabaret	San Francisco, CA 5/17
Edmonds Center For The Arts	Seattle, WA 5/23-24
Kimmel Center - Philly Pops Gala	Philadelphia, PA 6/5



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BORDERS®

Ray Bryant

In The Back Room

EVENING STAR 114

★★★★½

Despite his demand as a sideman, Bryant is no stranger to solo piano recordings, and cut the majority of this material during a Fats Waller centennial celebration concert at Rutgers in Newark, N.J., in 2004. However, as disarming as the five Waller interpretations are, including a leisurely, yet somewhat scrappy jaunt through “Jitterbug Waltz,” it is not Bryant’s riffs on the Waller canon that have the greater impact, but the pianist’s more personal statements.

“Impossible Rag” is a feisty acknowledgment of the physical challenges inherent in the early jazz piano music he admires. His right hand grabs dollops of keys as he thunders with his



left. The piece doesn’t last two minutes, and reveals an impatience with perfectly correct technique, his playing rough hewn but bristling with character.

A rousing, boogie-woogie-infused take on “St. Louis Blues” climaxes the disc, but below the brawny, barrelhouse bluesiness is a seam of churchy solemnity evident in hymnal hues during “Little Girl” and the intro to “Easy To Love.” Bryant knows how to pace a set: Compare the opening ballad against the rocking title track and his amble through “Keepin’ Out Of Mischief Now.” —Michael Jackson

In The Back Room: Lullaby; Keepin’ Out Of Mischief Now; Black And Blue; The Impossible Rag; Jitterbug Waltz; In The Back Room; Little Girl; Ain’t Misbehavin’; If I Could Be With You; Honeysuckle Rose; Easy To Love; St. Louis Blues. (59:42)

Personnel: Ray Bryant, piano.

» Ordering info: lpb.com/eveningstar.com

François Carrier/ Michel Lambert/ Jean-Jacques Avenel

Within

LEO 512

★★★★½

François Carrier releases CDs every season, it seems. The Canadian saxophonist’s

growing catalog is not only consistently engaging, but he has proven to have a fine ear in enlisting star power that complements his music. Previously, Dewey Redman exemplified this; but, with the release of this 2007 Calgary Jazz Festival performance, the great tenor player has to share this distinction with Jean-Jacques Avenel, one of the more woefully underheralded bassists of his—or any—generation.

Avenel is an excellent match for Carrier, who frequently employs a softer edge and more conventional approach to line than most freely



improvising saxophonists, and drummer Michel Lambert, who supports the unfolding music without subordinating himself. The three only require a shred of line and rhythm to incite energetic, expansive interplay, and they can pivot fluidly as a unit, attributes that serve them well in the 40-minute “Part 2.” At the same time, these strengths convey a deliberate approach to form on the much shorter opening and closing parts of the performance. Unfortunately, Avenel’s plump tone and the well-etched presence of each note in his most dazzlingly virtuosic passages are somewhat diminished in this recording. —Bill Shoemaker

Within: Parts 1–3. (60:38)

Personnel: François Carrier, alto and soprano saxophone; Michel Lambert, drums; Jean-Jacques Avenel, bass.

» Ordering info: leorecords.com

Tony Monaco

Live At The Orbit Room

CHICKEN COUP 7012

★★★★

Too often, Hammond organ combos celebrate the chitlin’ circuit with all the subtlety of a crash cymbal. *Live At The Orbit Room*—an homage to the 1950s and ’60s with an organ/guitar/drums lineup—overcomes such limitations with the force of Tony Monaco’s playing. The album chronicles a June 2007 booking in Toronto, and reunites a trio fea-



turing Toronto musicians. Opening the date with Don Patterson’s “S’bout Time,” Monaco pairs the simple riff with an uptempo bass line; in tandem with drummer Vito Rezza, he builds tension and momentum. Guitarist Ted Quinlan keeps up with the power surges, and the music all but boils over.

The trio downshifts to a funky gear on “Ode To Billy Joe.” Quinlan spotlights his blues sensibilities, but Monaco charts a different course: He slows the tempo—



Jakob Bro Trio

Who Said Gay Paree?

LOVELAND 010

★★★★

The Danes are known for their low-key ways, but Jakob Bro and buds host a virtual sleepwalk through seven standards, an Elvis sighting, a rare Cole Porter and John Coltrane’s “Fifth House.” The quickest tempo they clip is a bumptious clip on “All Of Me.”

“No hurries, no worries” is this trio’s motto as it crawls snail-like over “Come Rain Or Come Shine,” “Love Me Tender” and (making watch-walkers ask) “How Long Has This Been Going On?” Quietly intent on parsing the tunes, Bro may strike listeners as less imperturbably stolid than as one savoring melodic details. And not just melodies, but lyrics, too: The booklet strikingly includes the lyrics of each tune except Trane’s spookily malleted modal blues, recalling Dexter Gordon’s tradition of reciting the lyrics before playing ballads. This rapt concentration on charm over chops and golden silence over drossy decibels may derive from a long association with drummer Paul Motian. Bro delivers a relaxed set without pretense, just pretty tunes played soft with a sleepy reverence.

—Fred Bouchard

Who Said Gay Paree?: Come Rain Or Come Shine; So In Love; Love Me Tender; All Of Me; How Long Has This Been Going On?; The Thrill Is Gone; Fifth House; She’s Funny That Way; Speak Low; Who Said Gay Paree? (52:05)

Personnel: Jakob Bro, guitar; Anders Christensen, bass; Jakob Høyer, drums.

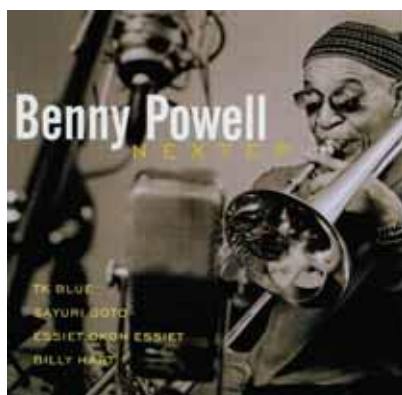
» Ordering info: lovelandrecords.com

to a standstill at one point—and plays scatter-shot licks before following a familiar route back to the pocket. “I’ll Close My Eyes,” however, suffers from schmaltz, and a mid-tempo reading of “Someday My Prince Will Come” fails to produce many sparks. Pushed hard by Rezza, the trio closes out the album with gusto on Jimmy Smith’s “Slow Down Sagg.” While uneven, the recording demonstrates why Monaco merits a wider audience. —Eric Fine

Live At The Orbit Room: S’bout Time; Ode To Billy Joe; I’ll Close My Eyes; Someday My Prince Will Come; Slow Down Sagg; S’bout Time; Ode To Billy Joe. (73:19)

Personnel: Tony Monaco, organ; Ted Quinlan, guitar; Vito Rezza, drums.

» Ordering info: summitrecords.com



Benny Powell

Nextep

ORIGIN 82517

★★★★½

This album is ripe with personality. Every cut evokes the aura of its leader, veteran trombonist Benny Powell. And each cut is different from the one that came before it. With a flexible crew that can navigate some second-line, swing, blues, samba and all things (light) Latin jazz, *Nextep* doesn't hit you over the head with amazing displays of virtuosity. Instead, the underlying group presence and unpretentious nature of the program stays with the listener after repeated plays.

There are nice interludes where we get some peeks into chops, as when bassist Essiet Essiet plucks away on the serene Latin-esque ballad "A Single Tear Of Remembrance." Along with Essiet, Powell brings along old friend Billy Hart on drums, who plays a typically understated but solid role. Also helping navigate the various styles are Powell mainstays pianist Sayuri Goto and saxophonist TK Blue.

Of the 10 cuts here, Powell contributes one, the lilting, soft-spoken "You Got It," a song simple in design, and affecting with little touches like when Blue (on tenor) shadows Powell on the theme statement. The other nine are also originals, eight of which are written by Blue or Goto. Just when one might think this is a quiet program, the band throws in some danceable, bouncy township-inspired material, such as the folksy "The Caribbean Express."

The simple, direct nature of this recording at first strikes one as an uninspired, uneventful outing. Indeed, there is little going on here that hasn't been heard before. However, with this combination of players and repertoire, we get something worth listening to. Maybe the personality is the band, and not just Powell.

—John Ephland

Nextep. Free To Be Me; The Township Diary; Best People; Akiha; Another Blue; Night, Never End; I Tried And Tried; A Single Tear Of Remembrance; You Got It; The Caribbean Express. (57:57)

Personnel: Benny Powell, trombone; TK Blue, alto and soprano saxophone, flute; Sayuri Goto, piano; Essiet Essiet, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

» Ordering info: origin-records.com

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DOWNBEAT MUSICIANS GEAR GUIDE

Best of the 2009 NAMM Show

The economy may be in a recession, but that does not mean that music instrument manufacturers did not release any new products at Winter NAMM 2009. Rather, the musicians at the Anaheim Convention Center had plenty of musical toys with which to play, as manufacturers rolled out thousands of new and enhanced products. Combining the aisles for four days offered a peek into possible new directions in music making, and gave us a glimpse of some new products that could become essential gear for professional and amateur musicians.

BAND & ORCHESTRA

Dark, Focused Flugel

Jupiter has released the XO series 1646 B-flat flugelhorn, which features a .413-inch bore and a nickel silver tunable leadpipe providing a more focused and darker timbre. The 1646 has a 6-inch hand-hammered one-piece bell of silver-plated yellow or rose brass and a custom wooden third-valve trigger with mini-ball linkage. It comes with an XO series Tourlite case. **More info:** jupitermusic.com

Exquisite Release

Ja Musik has introduced new Malcolm McNab model B&S trumpets—a medium-bore B-flat, a medium-large-bore C and a three-valve E-flat. The bell of the B-flat model is hand made with a French bead wire. The trumpets have excellent intonation and projection.

More info: ja-musik.com

Mouthing Off

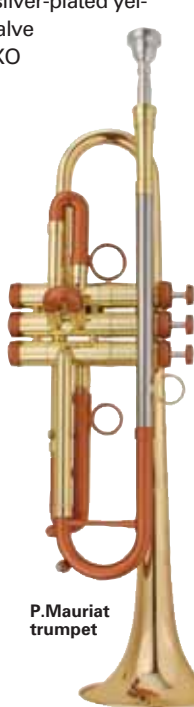
Denis Wick has introduced a new line of trumpet mouthpieces. The 4E is made for jazz and lead playing, as it has an extra-shallow cup to allow for a bright sound, and an open throat and V-type backbore. The 4X has all the same attributes as the 4E with an additional extra-wide rim. The MM4C was designed for combo and solo jazz work. It was originally designed to be a versatile classical mouthpiece, but its open throat and V-type backbore allow for the projection and upper-register response desired by most jazz musicians. It has a medium-shallow cup. **More info:** dانسr.com

Brass Arrival

P.Mauriat has entered the trumpet market with the introduction of the PMT-600Y (yellow brass) and PMT-600G (gold brass) professional trumpets. The instruments have .46-inch medium-large bores, and come in silver-plated, clear epoxy lacquer and colored epoxy lacquer finishes. The PMT-600Y has a normal weight receiver, twin tube yellow brass leadpipe and hand-lapped stainless steel valves. The PMT-600G has a heavyweight receiver, twin-tube nickel-silver leadpipe and hand-lapped stainless steel valves. **More info:** pmauriatmusic.com



Jupiter flugelhorn



P.Mauriat trumpet



Denis Wick mouthpiece



Regina Carter violin



Sonaré flute



Antigua trumpet

Regina's Strings

Regina Carter has won the DownBeat Critics Poll Violinist of the Year for the past 11 years. So when her name is attached to a violin, the instrument should have playability outside of the classical realm. That being said, the Regina Carter Violin Collection from Erwin Otto Strings emulates Guarneri and Stradivari violin designs, so they have heavy classical chops as well. The four violins in the series—RC10, RC20, RC30 and RC40—are professional-level instruments, designed by luthier A.J. Pantalone and Carter. The violins range in quality depending on materials used, which include maple and spruce, and range from \$3,495 (RC10) to \$7,695 (RC40). **More info:** rsberkeley.com

Golden Tone

Sonaré added some sparkle to its flute line with the 14K rose gold-plated 700 series flutes. The 707 is the 705 model with a gold-plated lip plate and crown; the 708 features a body and headjoint plated entirely in gold, as well as silver-plated keys; and the entire 709 is plated in rose gold. The three new flutes feature a hand-cut Powell headjoint. MSRP: starting at \$2,200.

More info: sonarewinds.com

Stylish Looks

Antigua's TR3580BN intermediate B-flat trumpet takes the company's silver-plated counterpart and adds a stylish black nickel finish. It features a .462-inch bore and 4 3/4-inch, two-piece bell. Two sets of finger buttons—convex or concave—suit a player's preference, and stainless alloy pistons provide faster valve action. MSRP: \$1,199.

More info: antiguawinds.com

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Subtle Cymbals

While NAMM featured no shortage of cymbals, jazz musicians who like their instrument to accentuate a more subtle tone should check out the Bosphorus Master Series. These cymbals are made from the company's proprietary alloy, which provides a soft feel. Since it's thinner than an average cymbal, it also has more resonance.

More info: bosphoruscymbals.com

Kind Of Blue Sounds

As Miles Davis' classic album passes its 50th anniversary, drummers can own a souvenir of this milestone through this limited-edition snare from Innovation Drum Company. The Davis estate sanctioned the design of 50 of these hand-crafted snares, which are sold through Blue Drums.

More info: innovationdrums.com

Mini Latin

For drummers who want to embellish their sound with Latin drums that are small enough to not weigh down their kits, Latin Percussion's Micro Snare offers a fun addition. The 3 1/4- by 6-inch shell fits neatly onto most bar holders and clamps and has a crisp sound that can supplement a regular snare. Jazz drummers who are also interested in looking at Latin clave rhythms would enjoy the LP chrome mini timbales with chrome-plated 6- by 8-inch shells.

More info: latinpercussion.com



Bosphorus cymbal



Kind Of Blue snare



LP mini timbales



Remo kanjira



SKB percussion case



Optimal Protection

As forward-looking jazz drummers look for more kinds of percussion instruments—and sticks to use with them—the new SKB percussion case is the ideal carrier. The case can hold an array of mallets, bells, shakers and tambourines, and is also configured to stay open during a performance so reaching them on the stand is a snap.

More info: skbcases.com

Indian Rhythms

Jazz players seeking inspiration from Indian rhythms have an ideal drum with Remo's kanjira. It duplicates the ancient Indian hand-held percussive instrument, yet uses a synthetic head instead of endangered lizard skin. The company's Acousticon bearing edge also makes the drum hold up in different climates.

More info: remo.com

Ludwig Centennial Jazzer

As part of its centennial this year, Ludwig unveiled several new kits. The Epic X-Over Striped Jazzette would appeal to jazz drummers for more reasons than its name. The company's engineers have crafted a distinctive blend of walnut and North American maple in the tonal and outer plies. With this combination, the drums accentuate lows and highs with a different balance than other models. The kit also includes a lift for the bass drum, which enhances its clarity.

More info: ludwig-drums.com



Ludwig Jazzette kit

PRINT

Big Name Books

Hal Leonard has released a number of new books that delve into the methods of the giants of jazz. Paul Desmond and Oscar Peterson are the subjects of two new Signature Licks books. Each book/CD package features a selection of the heads and solos from some of the artists' most popular recordings; a user can read the music while following along with the CD. The company has also released the *Best Of Sonny Rollins* transcription book, which features Newk's solos on tunes such as "Airegin," "Oleo," "Tenor Madness" and "St. Thomas." More info: halleonard.com



Sher Guides Songbirds

Sher Music's *The Jazz Singer's Guidebook* by David Berkman offers serious vocalists step-by-step lessons in jazz harmony and scat singing. The book/CD addresses topics ranging from the basic piano skills necessary for self-accompaniment to writing lead sheets, and includes hundreds of listening exercises in improvisation, composition and improving intonation for scatting. More info: shermusic.com



Hot Licks

Music Sales has released new titles in its Hot Licks DVD series, including *Junior Wells Teaches Blues Harmonica* and *Jay Geils' Blues Guitar Improvisation*. The DVDs have been remastered from guitarist Arlen Roth's video recordings and feature on-screen notation. MSRP: \$24.95. More info: msdealers.com

Carl Fischer Plays With Loops

Carl Fischer has released a DVD companion to Donny Gruendler's *Playing With Drum Loops* book/CD package. *Creating And Performing Drum Loops* walks drummers through the entire process of track programming, equipment wiring and performance to prepare for any commercial gig. MSRP: \$19.95. More info: carlfischer.com

Alfred Sits In

Alfred has released the latest version of its book and play-along CD combination *Sittin' In With The Big Band, Vol. II*. The package features 10 big band charts written at a medium difficulty level to let music students play along with a professional jazz ensemble and develop skills in blending, style, phrasing, tone, dynamics, technique, articulation, time and playing in tune. MSRP: \$14.95. More info: alfred.com

GUITARS

Clip & Tune

Planet Waves' new headstock tuner is the ultimate clip-and-tune solution. Using an instrument's vibrations as its input, the unit provides accurate tuning and bypasses ambient room noise. The display features digital needle graphics, as well as green and red colors to indicate whether a note is in or out of tune. MSRP: \$49.99. More info: planetwaves.com

Planet Waves headstock tuner



Laptop Gig Bag

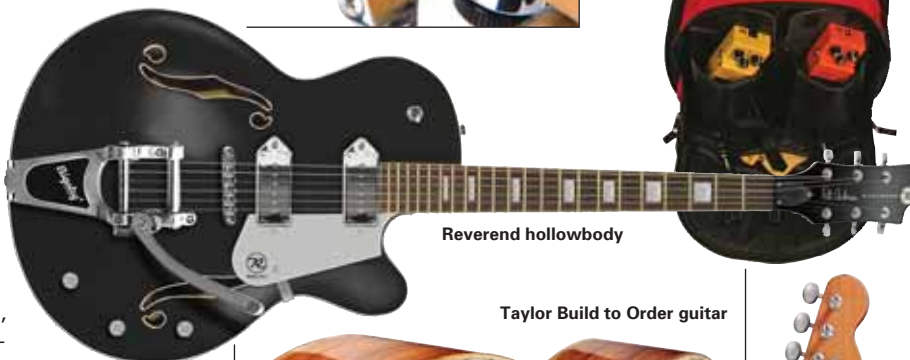
Gator's Viper gig bag will hold a guitar within the rigid sidewall, quilted, padded gig bag section, and includes a reinforced headstock/bridge section and adjustable neck cradle. The exterior of the bag has separate pockets for a laptop, sheet music, guitar pedals, cables and other accessories. MSRP: \$119.99. More info: gatorcases.com

Gator Viper bag



Satin Hollowbody

Reverend pulled out the stops for its first full hollowbody guitar, the Pete Anderson signature model. Designed to evoke Anderson's favorite designs of the 1950s and '60s, it delivers with a satin finish, three-way pickup switch, 24 3/4-inch neck, rosewood fingerboard with 12-inch radius and two Reverend P-90 pickups. MSRP: \$1,429. More info: reverendguitars.com



Reverend hollowbody

Taylor-Made

Building on consumers' hunger for customization, Taylor's Build to Order program makes the customer the craftsman. Wedge materials, purfling, body shape and wood choice are all up for grabs. Once a Build to Order guitar is commissioned, a team of Taylor's luthiers oversees each step in the construction process.

More info: taylorguitars.com



Taylor Build to Order guitar

Boutique Beauties

Paul Reed Smith has launched an upscale guitar amp line. Available in Dallas, Blue Sierra and Original Sewell models, the tube amps pay homage to American and British models, and were created in collaboration with master amp designer Doug Sewell. They cover the needs of different playing styles and provide unique tonal possibilities.

More info: prsguitars.com



Paul Reed Smith amp line

Cool Kat

The PhatKat amp by JazzKat is designed to deliver power with warmth and a clear tone. At 28 pounds, the cabinet is tuned and ported for peak speaker performance, enhancing the natural low tones of a variety of electric instruments, from guitars to harmonicas. It features 150 watts of power, a 12-inch eminence driver, two channels, line out (balanced/unbalanced) and external speaker jack.

MSRP: \$1,099. More info: jazzkatamps.com



PhatKat amp

Road Worn

For players who prefer an axe with a history, Fender debuted the Road Worn series of guitars and basses at NAMM. It consists of a '50s Tele, '50s Strat, '60s Strat, '50s Precision Bass and '60s Jazz Bass. All feature distressed nitrocellulose lacquer-finished bodies and necks, as well as worn chrome hardware. Modern upgrades have also been included in each model, including Tex Mex single-coil pickups and larger 6105 frets, along with five-way pickup switches on the Strats. MSRP: guitars, \$1,200; Precision Bass, \$1,500; Jazz Bass, \$1,570. More info: fender.com



Fender Road Worn '50s Telecaster

A preview of this
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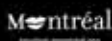
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PRO AUDIO

Hearing Voices

The Electro-Harmonix Voice Box creates two- to four-part harmonies directly from a singer's vocals in the same key as the accompanying instrument. The Voice Box comes with nine accessible presets, natural glissando and pitch-shifting algorithms for realistic harmonies. The Gender Bender knob allows for male or female formant modification. The Voice Box is also a focused 256-band articulate Vocoder with adjustable harmonic enhancement and controllable format shift.

More info: ehx.com

Stylish Traveler

The BV-1 is a multipattern tube condenser mic that ships in a retro-tweed, buttercream case. The BV-1 also includes a suspension shockmount, power cable, perforated metal pop filter and power supply with pattern-selection switch. All Avant microphones are tested in the U.S. before shipping. MSRP: \$999.

More info: avantelectronics.com

Vocalist Toolbox

TC-Helicon's VoiceLive 2 serves as a playground for vocalists who perform live or record. Up to eight harmony voices can be controlled from a guitar, keyboard or MP3 player. New reverbs, tap tempo delays, doubling, distortion and more have also been added, and the one-touch adaptive tone algorithm automatically controls compression, EQ and de-essing for great vocal sound. MSRP: \$995.

More info: tc-helicon.com

Buggin' Out

The AKG GB 40 FLexx GuitarBug transmitter provides high-quality audio and performance. The frequency response is ideal for guitar and bass, but can be used for keyboards and all instruments with a jack plug. The FlexxJack-Plug allows for extended flexibility by matching all guitar outputs with an included long adapter jack.

More info: akg.com

Digital Studio Tool

Shure has continued its expansion into digital studio recording with the PG27USB and PG42USB side-address condenser microphones, as well as XLR models of the new microphones, the PG27 and PG42. The PG27USB and PG42USB connect Shure microphones to any USB computer port. The cardioid condenser microphones feature built-in headphone monitoring with zero latency and monitor mix control. This enables users to hear what they're recording through headphones and make on-the-go adjustments. The PG27 and PG27USB feature a flat, neutral frequency response for natural reproduction of a wide variety of instrument and vocal sound sources. The PG42 and PG42USB were engineered to reproduce the subtle nuances of lead vocals.

MSRP: \$238–\$298. More info: shure.com



Electro-Harmonix Voice Box



Avant BV-1 condenser mic



TC-Helicon VoiceLive 2

AKG FLexx GuitarBug



Shure PG27 and PG42 mics



Zoom H4n recorder

Field Recording

Zoom's H4n, an update of its H4 handheld recorder, offers improved audio via the new built-in X/Y stereo condenser microphones, which allow variable recording patterns at 90 or 120 degrees, and a digitally controlled mic pre-amp. Internal and external mics can also be used simultaneously for four-channel recording. The H4n also features a more intuitive user interface. MSRP: \$609.99. More info: samsontech.com

PIANO/KEYBOARD

Stage Line

Kurzweil debuted the latest addition to its SP family of stage pianos, the SP3X. The SP3X builds on the design of the Kurzweil's successful SP2X stage piano with an expanded sound set of 512 programs. The SP3X also offers MIDI controller capabilities, velocity and aftertouch sensitive piano-weighted keyboard action, and a variety of wind, voice, synth, brass, bass, guitar and ensemble sounds. MSRP: \$1,895. More info: kurzweilmusicsystems.com



Kurzweil
SP3X

'V' Piano

The latest addition to its V-series of instruments, Roland's V-Piano reproduces the complex resonances of acoustic pianos through an advanced modeling technology, unlike the loop-based sampling of previous digital pianos. New keyboard sensors not only support high repetition, but also reproduce the tonal fluctuations caused by differences in stroke acceleration patterns. The V-Piano produces vintage and vanguard sounds. The vintage tones reproduce the style of contemporary pianos and famous vintage pianos, while vanguard tones allow users to create new sounds, going beyond previous physical restrictions of acoustic pianos related to the type and number of strings. More info: rolandus.com

Roland
V-Piano



Yamaha
Avant
Grand

Real Feeling

Yamaha's digital Avant Grand uses sound reproduction and sampling technology to capture the sound, touch, action and physical resonance of an acoustic grand piano in a 4-foot cabinet without the tuning or cost of a comparable stringed instrument. The Avant Grand's tactile response system transmits string-like vibrations through the keys to a player's hands. Yamaha also created a new, specialized grand piano pedal for the Avant Grand that duplicates the spring, friction and inertia of traditional pedals. The instrument also contains a four-channel, three-way spatial acoustic speaker system that mimics the points where the original grand piano samples were taken. More info: yamaha.com



Hammond
B-3 mk2

Micro Expands

Korg has expanded its micro line of portable synthesizers with the microKORG XL synth with vocoder. The 37-note velocity-sensitive microKORG XL offers Korg's analog modeling, along with an ergonomic interface, in a lightweight and portable keyboard. MKXL employs full eight-voice, multimodeling technology, a 16-band vocoder, on-the-fly parameter editing and USB MIDI connectivity, packaged with Korg's new natural touch keyboard action. The microKORG XL uses Korg's Radias engine to offer an analog sound with 128 sounds out of the box. MSRP: \$750. More info: korg.com



Korg microKORG XL

B-3 Enhanced

Musicians couldn't seem to keep away from Hammond's new B-3 mk2 at NAMM. The B-3 mk2 is an enhanced version of the company's first digital B-3 organ from 2002, which was designed to be an exact duplication of Hammond's original B-3. This year's model celebrates the company's 75th anniversary and includes features like a new sound engine that more faithfully reproduces the sound of the Classic B-3. A 12AU7 vacuum tube is now used in the pre-amp circuit and a 12AX7 in the overdrive. The model also includes a digital Leslie simulator. MSRP: \$26,995. More info: hammondorgano.com



Kawai EP3

Powerful Performer

Kawai's new EP3 professional digital piano features the company's harmonic imaging technology to reproduce the broad range of Kawai concert grands. The EP3 is also equipped with features to aid practice and performance, like a built-in metronome with an additional 30 drum rhythms, USB drive for quick computer connectivity and an audio input for connecting an MP3 player or other audio device to its six-speaker sound system. More info: kawaius.com

DB

Reporting by Aaron Cohen, Jennifer Domine, Jason Koransky, Zach Phillips and Mary Wilcop.

Oberlin Stages Pekar's Jazz Opera

JOHN SEYFRIED

Harvey Pekar (left) watches Oberlin students perform *Leave Me Alone*

Emotional divas, portly tenors, over-the-top drama and preposterously broad comedy, all performed before tuxedo-clad audiences in gigantic concert halls. These are the conventions of opera—easily identified by anyone over the age of 10 with a working knowledge of Bugs Bunny. “[Theater and opera director] Peter Sellars called it a lobotomized art form,” said Paul Schick, artistic director of Real Time Opera, a small New Hampshire-based production company. “Opera defines classification because its premises are so absurd.”

This is why Real Time is dedicated to creating shows that go way out of the box to challenge preconceptions about operatic subject matter (physicist Richard Feynman), venue (New York’s Knitting Factory) and musical composition (one show created and performed by John Trubee and the Ugly Janitors of America). Now it has created an opera with a libretto by Harvey Pekar, the professionally misanthropic author of the comic book *American Splendor*.

“Once you’re thinking in terms of reinventing an art form,” Schick said, “Harvey’s a natural choice.”

The result of that choice is *Leave Me Alone*, a comic jazz opera in the form of a meditation on how art clashes with modern culture and everyday life, composed by California-based saxophonist Dan Plonsey and written in collaboration with the Pekar. The show, which had its premiere—and only performance—on Jan. 31, was staged at Finney Chapel on Oberlin College’s Ohio campus. It was simulcast live on leavemealoneopera.com.

For the students at Oberlin’s Conservatory of Music who performed Plonsey’s offbeat music behind this equally offbeat take on opera, *Leave Me Alone* offered an opportunity for growth that isn’t as readily accessible through older works.

“In academia we are constantly looking backwards, but it’s equally critical to look toward the future,” said David Stull, dean of the

conservatory, which also staged the 2007 U.S. premiere of an Austrian composer’s operatic interpretation of David Lynch’s film *Lost Highway*. “Harvey’s not trapped by convention and he’s not afraid for the show to have jagged edges. What’s interesting about this is that it’s doing something that hasn’t been done before. No student can say, ‘Oh, I understand this because I’ve done it.’”

That was particularly true for Noah Hecht, a drummer and one of the students who provided the show’s musical backdrop. “I was intrigued by a jazz opera,” Hecht said. “Dan doesn’t have drum parts written, so it’s been exciting for me to get inside of the music and find out what to channel and where things are coming from.”

Plonsey initially conceived *Leave Me Alone* as the loosely fictional story of a musician struggling to make his art in the face of domestic responsibilities. When he brought fellow Cleveland native Pekar on board, the show began to change.

“Before I could even get far in describing the show, Harvey said, ‘I’m in the habit of taking any work that’s paying me,’” Plonsey said. “But he sees things in a unique way.”

Pekar’s vision was something experimental and reality-based, a show about its own creation, peppered with personal monologues by himself, Plonsey and both of their wives, with everyone involved playing themselves.

The opening, developed and performed by Pekar, is a polemic about modern society’s intolerance of and failure to support avant-garde and cutting-edge art, which he believes will lead to the destruction of a worthwhile mainstream.

“I used to work at a Veterans Administration hospital and a doctor there had a subscription to the Cleveland Orchestra. When they’d play something even mildly challenging, like Stravinsky’s ‘Firebird Suite,’ this guy would be furious,” Pekar said. “I wanted to lecture people about that—at the beginning—so they had no chance to misunderstand me.” —Joshua Karp

School Notes



Grammy Lessons: Saxophonist Gerald Albright (above) performed with high school students from the Grammy Jazz Ensembles at Spaghettini Italian Grill & Jazz Club in Seal Beach, Calif., on Feb. 2. Terence Blanchard also performed with the ensembles that week. The high school musicians from across the country were selected for the week of instruction, which included lessons from Justin DiCioccio of the Manhattan School of Music and Ron McCurdy of the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. They also recorded a CD at Capitol Studios.

Details: grammy.com

Kentucky Bear Hug: The University of Louisville’s School of Music has marked four years of its Open World Leadership Cultural Program with the new two-CD set *Jazz Connection* (Sea Breeze). The discs feature collaborations between the school’s students and faculty and Russian jazz musicians. Details: louisville.edu

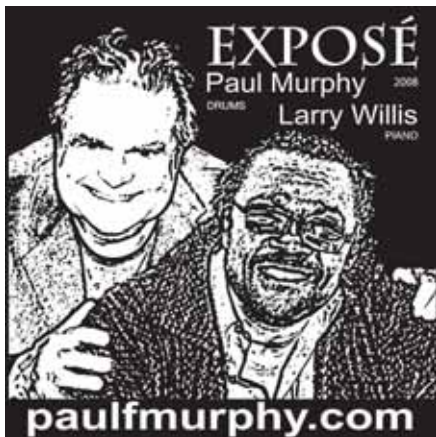
Northwest Voices: Vocalists Nancy King and Billy Gaechter sat in with the Mt. Hood Community College Jazz Ensemble in Oregon for the group’s new disc, *Doin’ The Best Deeds* (Sea Breeze). Details: mhcc.edu

Skidmore Summer: Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., has announced details for its summer Jazz Institute, which will run from June 27–July 11. The program accepts students high school age and older. Instructors include Curtis Fuller and Bill Cunliffe. Details: skidmore.edu

Canadian Fellowships: Canadian universities are offering postdoctoral fellowships for studying the social value of improvisation. The grants are for the University of Guelph, McGill University and Université De Montréal for the 2009–’10 academic year. The application deadline is April 30. Details: improvcommunity.ca

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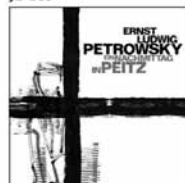
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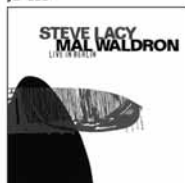
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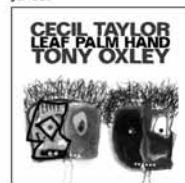
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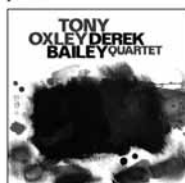
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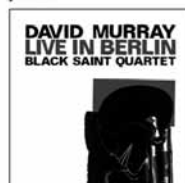
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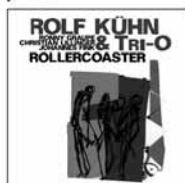
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"It's easy to get absorbed in your own world and not have the time or desire to hear other things, because it can confuse your own progression," tenor saxophonist-flutist Lew Tabackin, 70, mused after sitting for the "Blindfold Test." "A lot of this music was remarkable. I hope nobody was offended by anything I said—it's hard not to be honest at my age."

Chris Byars

"A.T." (from *Photos In Black, White And Gray, Smalls*, 2007) Byars, tenor saxophone; Ari Roland, bass; Andy Watson, drums.

That was a Herbie Nichols kind of tune. The tenor player reminds me of a slightly more abstract Charlie Rouse—I should probably know who it is, but I don't. The time feel and sound were nice, the theme and improvisations were well-integrated, and the drummer seemed to play the form. A successful attempt at a tenor saxophone trio. 4 stars.

Adam Rudolph/Sam Rivers/Harris Eisenstadt

"Susurrantion" (from *Vista, Meta*, 2004) Rudolph, hand drums, percussion; Rivers, flute; Eisenstadt, drums.

Some sort of ethnic flute. The player utilized the instrument's basic limitations and made a lot happen. The flute and the drum go well together; they are probably the two earliest instruments. Wind blowing through a reed is basically a flute, and it created a sound before man existed. Drums probably came shortly after. I enjoy the way the piece developed. It sustained interest, which is difficult in this sort of piece. 4 stars.

Wayne Escoffery

"Noon Night" (from *Hopes And Dreams, Savant*, 2008) Escoffery, tenor saxophone; Joe Locke, vibraphone; Hans Glawischnig, bass; Lewis Nash, drums. Nice composition, well put together, well played. Not exactly the kind of music I prefer to listen to, but a credible job. The bass player had a nice attack on the solo. When I hear a tenor, I expect to hear more in the middle of the instrument. When tenors get in the high register—unless it's Stan Getz or somebody who perfected it—it can get a little whiny, and doesn't project the character of the tenor saxophone. 3½ stars. (after) I did a gig with him once. I might have guessed if he'd played normally.

Von Freeman

"Blue Pres" (from *The Great Divide, Premonition*, 2004) Freeman, tenor saxophone; Richard Wyands, piano; John Webber, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

At first, the intonation unnerved me a bit. Playing a subtone in the lower register is an interesting proposition, because you need a certain amount of breath support to keep the pitch in the right place and there's not as definite a center to the sound—but there are ways to support it. At the end, it cooled itself out, or maybe I just got used to it. All in all, the performance was heartfelt and excellent. 4 stars.

Bill McHenry

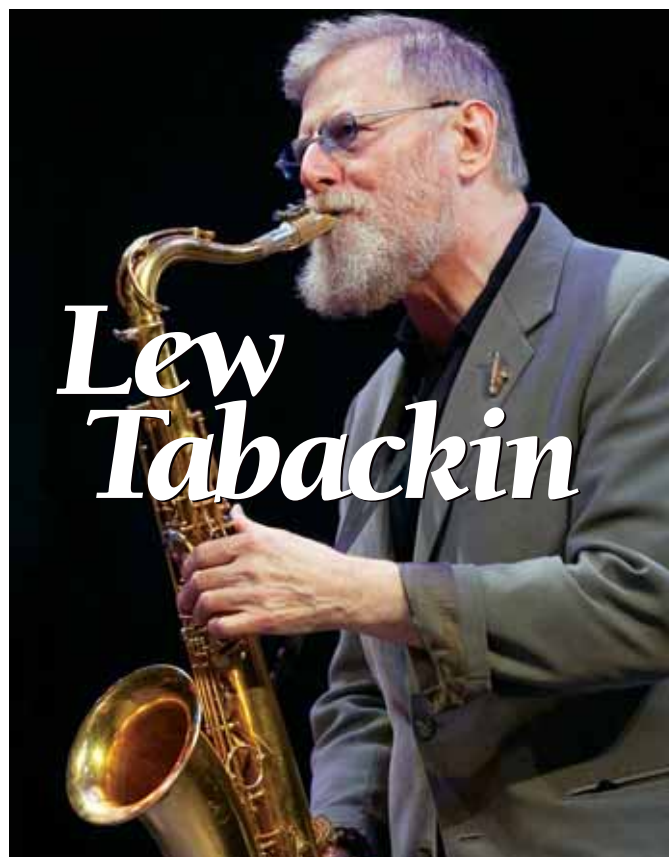
"Roses" (from *Roses, Sunnyside*, 2007) McHenry, tenor saxophone; Ben Monder, guitar; Reid Anderson, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

I have mixed feelings about this. I was impressed by the first third—how good the communication was among the players, a real collective improvisation, and the way the intensity built. But when it got into the more intense reality, I started to hear too many not-too-interesting patterns popping up. I'd rather hear one note or two notes than the same pattern played a few times. All in all, though, a good attempt. 4 stars.

Stephen Riley

"Lady Bird" (from *Easy To Remember, SteepleChase*, 2007) Riley, tenor saxophone; Neal Caine, bass; Jason Marsalis, drums.

Stephen Riley. The vehicle is "Lady Bird," an old standby, nice changes, used to be a jam session tune. He uses such diverse elements—a bit of Paul Gonsalves, some Warne Marsh thrown in there, all kinds of stuff.



Stephen is an impressive player, with his own approach, his own sound and the conviction to keep it that way; he shows that it's possible to create something unique at this time. The trio sounds fine. If there's any criticism, maybe it goes on a little too long. 5 stars.

Dimitri Vassilakis

"The Drum Think" (from *Parallel Lines, Candid*, 2007) Vassilakis, tenor saxophone; Jeff Watts, drums.

It got a little redundant, went on too long. Lots of chops, remarkable technical abilities, but I would like to hear a couple of strong, beautiful melodic statements, something powerful. I can enjoy it on a certain level, but if you're going to do this music, it should sustain itself and tell a narrative. It's stuff we used to do 40 years ago. It's much more fun to play than to listen to. It could be a European player. Once all the Europeans wanted to play like Americans and sometimes overdid it. Now you hear some good players from America sound European, eliminating the sense of swing and bebop sensibility, which is the central character of American jazz. I miss that in the development of players. 3 stars.

Antonio Sanchez

"Did You Get It?" (from *Migration, Cam Jazz*, 2007) David Sánchez, Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums.

Two fantastic tenor players. They obviously know each other quite well. They played basically the same conception. A lot of the better younger players tend to play too many eighth notes. They could have used a little space once in a while, but I won't quibble about that. Fluid, remarkable playing. The rhythm section was great, too. 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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