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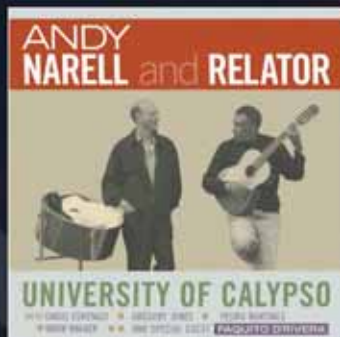


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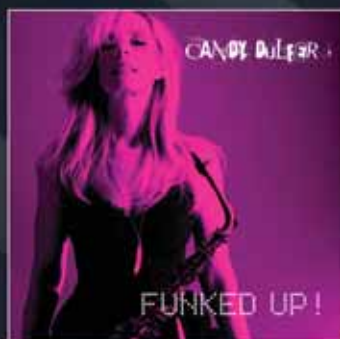
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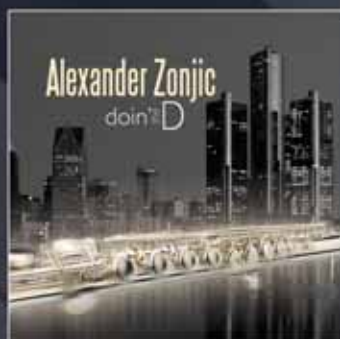
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Andy Narell joins forces with calypso legend Relator exploring the role of jazz in vintage calypso. They perform 15 classic compositions by Lord Kitchener, Lord Melody, Mighty Terror, Roaring Lion, Spider, and Relator, alongside a group of world-class Latin-jazz cats who can swing the calypso and blow the jazz hot.



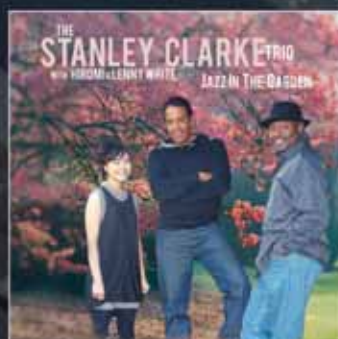
HUCD31152

Candy Dulfer has recorded and/or performed with Prince, Van Morrison, Maceo Parker, Dave Stewart, Beyoncé, Pink Floyd, Chaka Khan, David Sanborn, Aretha Franklin, Blondie, Joey DeFrancesco and many others. This follow up reflects her growth as a true jazz/funk player.



HUCD31126

Doin' The D features guest appearances by saxophonist Kenny G, trumpeter Rick Braun, Special EFX guitarist Chiel Minucci, vocalist Maysa Leak and many others, in addition to longtime collaborators Jeff Lorber and Bob James.



HUCD31155

An acoustic recording with a musical "dream team" featuring Stanley Clarke, one of the most innovative bass players of the past three decades, Japanese pianist Hiromi, emerging rising star on the jazz scene, and versatile drummer Lenny White, best known for his Return to Forever work.



HUCD31144

The tunes are from pop sources (Gnarls Barkley, Coldplay, Seal), but done in an undeniably traditional jazz style, with acoustic piano, drums and upright bass. The result is a very organic recording with a lot of soul, and a style and sophistication that can only be found in the jazz idiom.



HUDV7167

A performance by the Yellowjackets is an experience that has as much to do with sight as it does with sound. Here they are, filmed at the New Morning, one of the most celebrated clubs in Paris in March, 2008.



HUCD31157

Mike Stern's neighborhood spanned two coasts and a stop in the Lone Star State to record with all of his friends on this CD: Richard Bona, Randy Brecker, Eric Johnson, Medeski Martin & Wood, Esperanza Spalding, Steve Vai, Dave Weckl, and more.

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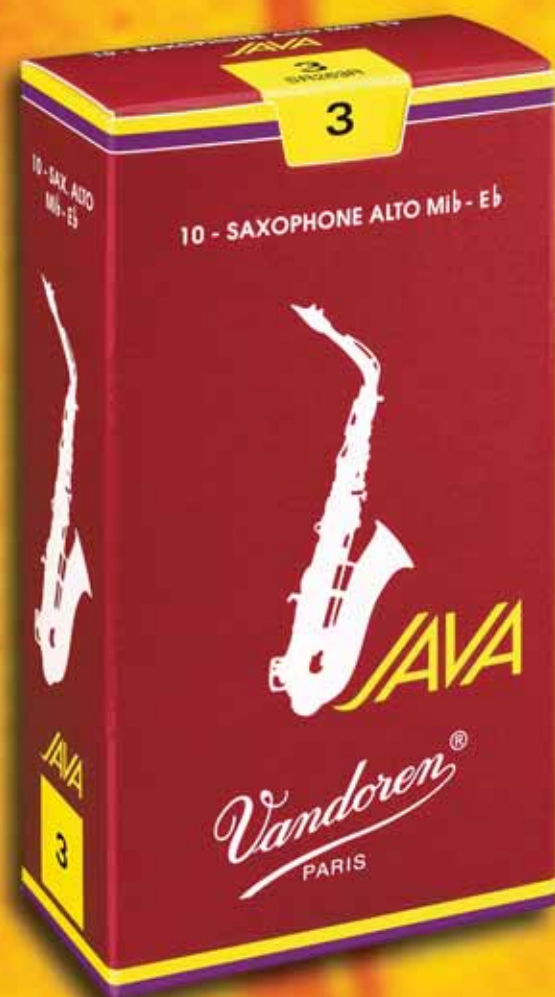
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Our Acoustic Bassist of the Year has manned the bass chair in some of the most significant groups of the past several years, from the Pat Metheny Trio and the Chick Corea/John McLaughlin Five Peace Band to the Sonny Rollins Trio with Roy Haynes. His monster chops are unquestioned, but it's his bandleading, producing, organizing and teaching skills that have led him to become one of the most influential jazz artists on the planet today.



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First Take

By Jason Koransky

A Job Inside the Music

In my 11 years working as an editor at DownBeat, the afternoon of April 22, 2004, stands out as especially profound.

I spent the Thursday at New York's Village Vanguard. The club had opened its doors to DownBeat for a photo shoot for our 70th anniversary issue. Jimmy Katz had plans to take photographs of a number of artists holding a photo of a musical legend they considered their hero. First to show up was Gary Smulyan, the winner of the baritone saxophone category in this issue's 57th Annual Critics Poll.

As the afternoon progressed, a historic, multigenerational group of jazz artists descended into the basement club, including Horace Silver, Chico Hamilton, Benny Golson, Paquito D'Rivera, Matt Wilson, Matthew Shipp, Kenny Barron, Cedar Walton, Gary Bartz and Jon Faddis. The shoot was spectacular, and helped illustrate a special issue.

These artists did not show up because I set up the shoot. The came because of DownBeat. The magazine has that sort of pull. As shown in last month's 75th anniversary issue, since 1934 DownBeat has served as a home to jazz like no other magazine.

I reminisce because this issue marks my last at DownBeat, as I move on to develop a career in law. I started working as an associate editor at DownBeat in 1998. The November 1999 issue marked my first as editor. Jon Faddis interviewed Milt Jackson for the cover. The trumpeter knew that Bags did not have much time left to live, and he convinced me that this would be a great feature. It proved to be just that.

Faddis and I had talked over the phone, but we had never met. After the story came out, Faddis came to Chicago for a Lester Bowie celebration concert. After the show, I introduced myself to him. He looked at me, and in a classic Faddis fashion, joked, "You're just a baby!"

Well, I was only 24. I could not, however, apologize for my age. Today, I consider Faddis and many other musicians as friends and colleagues. Over the past 11 years I have grown up a bit (some may disagree), and have watched some dramatic changes in jazz. The industry has witnessed a paradigm shift, with the digital revolution, home recording, scaling back of the major labels and artists taking over their recording careers. New musicians have emerged to lead this music in exciting directions. Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, and today we watch the city slowly recover.

Bound copies of each year of DownBeat sit on a bookcase outside my office. When I look through a volume, it offers a genuine snapshot of the jazz scene from that year. I hope that over the past decade we have captured the essence the



jazz scene in these pages.

This month's Critics Poll serves as a glimpse into what a group of 120 critics from around the world believe has been the best in jazz and blues over the past year. The cover story on Christian McBride, the acoustic bassist of the year, looks at an artist who has emerged as a true spokesman for jazz. Ted Panken's story on McBride appears on Page 26.

Traveling to jazz festivals is one of the perks of working as DownBeat editor. I went to Moscow, Idaho, during several Februaries for the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival. The enthusiasm of the students at the festival is one of the great wonders of the jazz world. One year, I rode in a van with Hank Jones, the newest inductee in the DownBeat Hall of Fame, from Moscow to Spokane, Wash. For an hour-and-a-half, late at night, we talked about his life in music. This stands as just one of the countless special moments of my time at the magazine. Howard Mandel's Hall of Fame story on Jones begins on Page 32.

While at DownBeat I have interacted with many of the winners in this year's Critics Poll, from Sonny Rollins, Chick Corea and Steve Turre to Lee Konitz, Wayne Shorter and Roy Haynes. It has been a dream to work with musicians I consider my heroes. I could not have asked for a more rewarding professional experience.

Working at DownBeat means being part of a family. Kevin Maher and Frank Alkyer trusted me as editor, and I cannot thank them enough for giving me this opportunity and their guidance along the way. I also owe a debt of gratitude to everyone with whom I have worked at the magazine. I could not have done any of this without you.

Ed Enright has returned to DownBeat as editor, and Aaron Cohen is still onboard as associate editor. The magazine is in great hands, and will continue as a compelling and insightful view into the jazz world for years to come. **DB**

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Nationwide Grassroots

I'm glad to see that cities like Atlanta, Baltimore and Santa Cruz have started holding grassroots house-party concerts ("The Beat," June '09). Here in Harrisburg, Pa., the all volunteer Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz is getting ready to celebrate its 30th Anniversary. We have presented a Who's Who of jazz over those years with our monthly concerts. Glad to see that efforts like ours are being recognized. It ain't easy!

Gary Hoffman
Harrisburg, Pa.

Poetic Pinpointing

I just read your April 2009 issue and was compelled to comment about Marcus O'Dair's piece on Jon Hassell. I actually know about Hassell, so I didn't expect to find an abundance of new information in this article. What I did find was a calibre of writing that kept me engrossed. O'Dair epitomizes how a professional reviewer can articulate his/her subject's work with pinpoint poetics.

Roger Andris
St. Louis

Thanks For Audio SMA

Thank you so much for including audio recording as a category in the Student Music Awards. The students take it very seriously and work all year doing recording projects for entry. There are lots of video festivals, awards and competitions, but the DownBeat Student Music Awards is the only national competition I am aware of for audio. It is much appreciated.

Steve Reynolds
Audio Instructor
The New Orleans Center for Creative Arts

Shorter's Beautiful Soul

Dan Ouellette's feature on Wayne Shorter (May '09) was one of the greatest articles I've ever read in your magazine. Wayne is such a beautiful soul, one who embodies all of the best aspects of jazz music. Reading his words is every bit as exciting as hearing his music. He'll surely go down in history as one of jazz's greatest musicians as well as one of its greatest thinkers.

Max Marshall
Bloomington, Ind.

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



Congrats on 75th

The highlight of your flawless July '09 issue was Dave Dexter's stunning Billie Holiday archives feature. Happy 75th!

Dennis Hendley
Milwaukee, Wis.

The 75th anniversary issue of Downbeat resembles a textbook of sorts of information that only DownBeat can furnish in one place. It is amazing to read articles written in the past with the viewpoint of what was then the distant future.

Lyn Horton
Worthington, Mass.

I would like to congratulate you on your 75 years in jazz. But in your 75th anniversary collector's edition you left out Wynton Marsalis, the most important person in jazz since Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk. Marsalis changed jazz for myself and many others. If he hadn't come along we would have been in sad shape, yet even after being the first jazz composer to win the Pulitzer Prize, he still doesn't get the respect he deserves.

Earl Belcher Jr.
earlsib@aol.com

Your collector's edition was extremely well done and surely provided fascinating reading material for younger people. But as an individual who lived through most of those years, I found it downright depressing. My kind of jazz has been dead for a long time.

Irv Jacobs
La Mesa, Calif.

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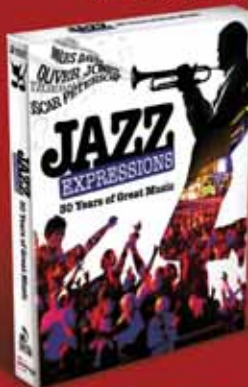


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The Beat

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Frank Wess

Blanchard Brings It Back Home

Trumpeter Terence Blanchard Turns New Orleans Library Into Recording Studio

As usual, it was quiet in the Patrick Taylor Library in New Orleans. But this time, the hush was from anticipation.

Trumpeter Terence Blanchard's sextet was set up to record between the two main rooms, with Blanchard's trumpet and Walter Smith III's saxophone in one brick and wood-paneled room facing the rhythm section set up in the alcoves. This was the first time Blanchard recorded in New Orleans, as well as the first recording ever made in the library. The resulting disc, *Choices* (Concord), is due out in August.

New Orleans native Blanchard got the idea for the setting from his wife and manager, Robin Burgess, but he had already wanted to record in the Crescent City.

"We've been trying to find ways to keep talking about New Orleans and the positive things happening here," Blanchard said during the recording session, held this spring. "And then at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art's gala next door, my wife walked through and fell in love with the building. Then I walked through and I loved the sound of it, but wasn't sure it would work acoustically. We flew in our engineer, Frank Wolff, who thought it would work. Once that happened, it was just a matter of scheduling time."

A few weeks after the sessions, Wolff said the recording worked out as he expected.

"It had somewhat of a live vibe," Wolff said. "I recorded it with good preamps, and I almost didn't compress or EQ while recording at all, which is unusual. The place is magnificent. It's just cool and fun and relaxed, which is a great way to make music."

Given that the library sits right on Lee Circle in New Orleans, there were other concerns for the recording, as well.

"We sent a request to the New Orleans police and fire departments asking them to use alternate routes so as not to interfere with the recording," production manager Libra Lagrone said. "We don't know if they met the request, but the recording was not interrupted. We asked for the streetcar not to run, but the reply to that was a big, fat no. The streetcar doesn't have alternate routes."

There were other benefits to recording in New Orleans. "The city has an influence on the band," Blanchard said. "They have a chance to visit their favorite spots and hear other musicians. New Orleans has played a big role in their lives. Bassist Derrick Hodge wrote a tune that's steeped in the tradition of New Orleans music, but it's his own take on it, which brings a freshness to the genre. You can see by the composition and the way that [drummer] Kendrick Scott played it that New Orleans has had



Terence Blanchard

ERIKA GOLDRING

a huge impact on their lives. And Derrick has family here. Kendrick is from Houston, which is not far from here.

"Usually when we record, we're in separate booths, and you never get a sense of what is going on until you hear it in the control room. Here it felt like we were recording in a cathedral. There was a lot of trust going on with the music. Not much was discussed in terms of arrangement and musical ideas. We had fresh ears and kept it honest and approached it as a live concept. It was a risk that was taken, and it took off. I'm proud to be a part of it."

Blanchard paused before explaining the disc's title.

"What we're trying to say is that in general, there aren't really any bad choices. You reap the action of the choices, obviously, but when I see my students beat themselves up over their choices, I say, 'No, no, no. You don't beat yourself up, because we don't believe in good or bad choices in regard to the music.' For us, it is all about experimentation and exploration."

—David Kunian

Riffs



Mississippi–Chicago Connection:

Guitarist Eddie C. Campbell (left), Chicago Blues Festival Coordinator Barry Dolins and guitarist Eddy “The Chief” Clearwater check out the historical marker that the Mississippi Blues Commission presented to Chicago on June 11 (during the city’s annual blues festival). The commission has unveiled more than 120 markers to designate important sites in the music’s development. Details: msbluestrail.org

Lincoln Center Auditions: Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. Department of State are now accepting applications for bands that would like to take part in The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad Program. This initiative brings jazz, hip-hop and gospel groups to countries that seldom encounter U.S. musicians. Applications are due Aug. 10.

Details: jalc.org/TheRoad

LaVette Online: Bettye LaVette has released *A Change Is Gonna Come Sessions*, a six-song EP consisting mostly of jazz standards in a digital-only format through iTunes. Along with reinterpreting Sam Cooke’s title track, LaVette also covers “Lush Life” and “God Bless The Child.” Details: bettyelavette.com

MaxJazz @ 10: The MaxJazz label will celebrate its 10th anniversary in September with pianist Mulgrew Miller’s four nights at Jazz at the Bistro in St. Louis Sept. 23–26. The company is also planning other events for later in the year. Details: maxjazz.com

RIP, Sam Butera: Saxophonist Sam Butera died of pneumonia in Las Vegas on June 3. He was 81. Butera was best known for the energetic wails he blasted in response to the singing team of Louis Prima and Keely Smith during the ‘50s.

Colleagues Pay Musical Respects to Freddie Hubbard



Howard Johnson (left), Jimmy Owens and James Spaulding

On May 4 at New York’s Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, below one of the largest freestanding domes in the world supported by massive granite columns, Freddie Hubbard was majestically memorialized by a full cast of jazz luminaries and a nearly full house of thousands of mourners.

The almost three-hour event, long on music and short on remarks, featured many of Hubbard’s best-known compositions, beginning with the sober “Lament For Booker” (written for Booker Little when he died in 1961 and played by four trumpeters—event co-organizer and Hubbard champion David Weiss, Eddie Henderson, Nabate Isles and Brian Chahley—with Howard Johnson supplying the bass lines on tuba). The evening concluded with the rousing “Birdlike” (buoyed by Joe Lovano on tenor sax and Randy Brecker on trumpet).

Even though the sonics of the cavernous house of worship were largely atrocious (even the high-peeling trumpets sounded muted), the spirit prevailed with the steady flow of musicians who came on the makeshift platform stage to pay homage to Hubbard, who died on Dec. 29 at the age of 70. While a hastily organized tribute took place at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem not long after his death (on Jan. 10), the memorial at St. John the Divine in Morningside Heights was a fully developed event that brought together former band mates who paid their respects with their notes (including, on an ebullient take of “Up Jumped Spring,” pianist Cedar Walton, tenor saxophonist Javon Jackson, flutist James Spaulding and drummer Al Foster). Hubbard’s wife of 30 years, Brigitte Hubbard, sat in the front row for the performances.

Speakers included Killer Ray Anderson, Hubbard’s boyhood friend from Indianapolis, who told stories of the young trumpeter and con-

cluded, “Freddie’s here in spirit. He’s just gone to get himself some rest.”

Other attendees included journalist Stanley Crouch, who spoke there nearly 35 years earlier at Duke Ellington’s funeral. Wendy Oxenhorn of the Jazz Foundation of America, which ministered to Hubbard’s medical and housing needs for several years, co-organized the memorial.

Guitarist Russell Malone, who played on one of the memorial’s highlight tunes, “Little Sunflower,” said that he had mixed feelings about the evening.

“I’m certainly happy to be here among so many of Freddie’s friends,” Malone said. “But it’s so sad that he’s no longer here and that we’ll never hear his sound again, except on records.”

Wallace Roney, who led the trumpet charge on the vibrant “Straight Life,” commented backstage that it was great to see so many people—musicians and audience members—honoring “one of the greatest trumpeters of all time. A lot of people talk about Freddie’s antics, but he was so genuine and he loved to have fun. This man enjoyed his life.”

“This is a celebration, but at the same time it’s a heavy loss for the community,” Lovano said before his appearance, “especially if you played with him. It’s moving how so many people from this community have come together tonight.”

Trumpeter Steven Bernstein attended without his instrument.

“I’m not playing,” Bernstein said. “I’m just here to pay tribute to a great trumpet player.” He remembered the summer between sixth and seventh grade in Berkeley, Calif., when a friend and young bandleader, Peter Apfelbaum, gave him a copy of *Straight Life*. “Peter wanted me to listen to it and work on playing it. I’m still working on it.”

—Dan Ouellette

Nina Simone Memorialized in North Carolina Hometown

Nina Simone left her hometown of Tryon, N.C., relatively early in life. Looking back, the singer/pianist's caustic rebukes of American social ills, especially Southern racism, were widely heard. Still, Simone's daughter, singer Lisa "Simone" Kelly, couldn't be more elated about North Carolina's tribute to her mother's memory, which includes a scholarship, music festival and statue.

"Imagine your mom and the town where she was raised raising her name up in so many wonderful ways," Kelly said. "It's pure joy. She was able to excel in so many different areas in spite of the times and the more I immerse myself in my mother's world, the more I understand her."

Crys Armbrust, a professor of British literature, began planning the Eunice Waymon-Nina Simone Memorial Project (NSP) in 2007 (Waymon was Simone's birth name). That year, the North Carolina plastics recycling company EcoResin donated \$25,000 for the NSP scholarship fund, which selected its first winner this spring. Megan Elizabeth Miller will use the funds as a graduate student in classics at Oxford University this fall.

"Mom was all about education, graduated valedictorian, skipped grades," Kelly said. "It makes sense that the project will be about edu-

cating youths of all races."

Earlier this year, work began on the NSP-commissioned life-size bronze sculpture of Simone as well as the development of Ninafest, an international music festival that will be held in Tryon in 2010.

"It's a trans-world music festival because Nina's catalog does the same thing," Armbrust said. "The industry could never quite figure out where to put her. As soon as you had a handle on her, she threw you a curve."

Armbrust and Kelly are also aware that Simone's intelligence and sensitivity as an artist contributed to the resentment she felt towards the South during the civil rights movement, which she vividly expressed in her song "Mississippi Goddam." Armbrust says that, privately, her feelings were complex.

"She had an amazing intellectual acumen, and the realizations she had about the disparities of race and class were a burden she carried throughout her life," Armbrust said. "It's not as if she didn't connect to North Carolina. Oftentimes, she came without telling anyone. A door would open and she'd walk in—and that must have been quite surprising for many of her relatives."

Those relatives are also sure to respond to



Zenos Frudakis

EUNICE WAYMON-NINA SIMONE MEMORIAL PROJECT

Zenos Frudakis' sculpture of Simone, which will be on public display in downtown Tryon. Kelly, who recorded a tribute to her mother last year, *Simone On Simone* (Koch), served as the statue's life model.

"I have my mother's physique," Kelly said. "Having seen my mom's head on top of my body takes *Simone On Simone* to another whole level. It's beyond anything I could have imagined happening with my life." —Aaron Cohen

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.

Pianist Liam Noble Offers Contrarian's Homage to Brubeck

British pianist Liam Noble doesn't shy away from the reasons he recently decided to record a full album of Dave Brubeck music, simply entitled *Brubeck* (Basho).

"In some ways I thought it was a good way to be contrary," Noble said. "I liked the idea of doing it and having a few people say they don't like it." He also realized the pragmatism of the concept; it could generate interest in his trio, with bassist Dave Whitford and drummer Dave Wickens, and he wouldn't have to set aside time to write a whole new book of tunes.

But ultimately, Noble is a devoted fan of Brubeck. "I knew that there would be actual jazz fans—the ones that go to the gigs—who do like him and who don't have the insiders/jazz musicians thing, that [Brubeck] is not a killing technician or that he doesn't swing like Wynton Kelly or that he comes across as a bit stiff. None of those things seem important to me. I didn't care about the technique as much as the sound."

Noble's thinking has paid off. Since *Brubeck* was released this past April the record has attracted new attention for the pianist, but the substance and merit of the recording easily trump the concept.

"Tunes like 'Blue Rondo À La Turk,' because they're so well known, are almost listened to as pop records," Noble said.

"If you're playing 'A Love Supreme' it's a technical, spiritual and emotional odyssey to try and get into that music and bring something to it. I was almost thinking of *Brubeck* as a nostalgia thing, like the way the Bad Plus approach some material, pop tunes I imagine were part of their youth. That's part of what I wanted to bring to this, to not be a jazz homage as much as playing music that I like."

It certainly required some nerve to tackle Brubeck warhorses like "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo À La Turk." Wisely, Noble radically revamps the arrangements of these pieces, while giving other, lesser-known works such as "Cassandra" and "Autumn In Washington Square" relatively straight readings. Extracting these pieces from Brubeck's rather square persona also allows them to be heard with fresh, less biased ears.

Until the release of *Brubeck*, Noble's reputation has largely been that of reliable, flexible sideman. But various gigs he's had over the years—including significant associations with Moondog, Bobby Wellins and the fiery up-and-coming saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock—and recent collaborations with



Liam Noble

New York-based cello improviser Okkyung Lee and theremin virtuoso Pamela Kurstin show how Noble's versatility and curiosity have prevented him from finding a concrete niche.

"I don't get to focus on one thing before something else comes along, so it all gets muddled up, which I like," Noble said. "I feel it's more healthy."

Indeed, prior to the *Brubeck* project, one of his most striking performances was an all-improvised session with Laubrock and drummer Tom Rainey on *Sleepthief* (Intakt). The recording is alternately explosive and ominous, but even in this context Noble's dense, spiky sound is identifiable as the same one on the *Brubeck* album.

Noble is thinking of employing the *Brubeck* format for another trio recording, but he's realizing that he might need to change his modus operandi when it comes to leading bands.

"I don't like bossing people about," he said. "So when I have bands they've been in pretty open contexts where you just give people the music and say, 'Do what you like,' and keep your fingers crossed." **DB**

Taylor's Mighty Growl, Personal Warmth Made Her Regal

Internationally hailed as Queen of the Blues, Koko Taylor died in her home city of Chicago on June 3 following complications of gastrointestinal surgery. She was 80.

Taylor's numerous awards included Grammy nominations and a NEA National Heritage Fellowship. Not long before a May hospitalization, Taylor had performed at Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the Blues Music Awards in Memphis. Still, Taylor's life wasn't defined by accolades, but rather her sincere rapport with audiences and by her humble and winning personality.

"I hope someday people will look up to me the way people looked up to her," singer Shemekia Copeland said.

Born and raised near Memphis, Taylor—then-named Cora Walton—worked in a sharecropper's cotton fields before moving to Chicago after World War II with the man she soon married, Richard "Pops" Taylor. Richard Taylor encouraged her to sing in South Side



Koko Taylor

blues taverns, where her raw, powerful singing seized the notice of bassist/talent scout Willie Dixon. In 1965, Dixon brought her to Chess Records, and the ensuing million-selling "Wang Dang Doodle" would become her signature song. Taylor recorded nine albums for Bruce Iglauer's Alligator label from 1974 until her death. Taylor's last, *Old School*, was a triumph that she recorded with typical verve and charisma after a miraculous recovery from near-fatal intestinal bleeding in late 2003.

"Koko was the icon of female blues," Iglauer said. "She was a model for up-and-coming singers, and she was determined to communicate with her audience in the most professional manner. She never drank, never partied. It was all about getting there on time and laying out the music."

Guitarist Bob Margolin added, "Every time we hear a woman blues singer growl, Koko will live on." —Frank-John Hadley

California's Jazz Bakery Forced to Move

News that the Jazz Bakery in Culver City, Calif., has been told to relocate has hit the Los Angeles jazz community hard. Earlier this year, the building's owner gave Bakery president Ruth Price until the end of May to clear the building, to make way for a furniture store. But the crisis has forced Price into actions that she says will be beneficial.

"I always wanted to hire a professional fundraiser, but I never thought we could afford one," Price said. "Now I know I can't afford not to."

She added that one gratifying development is how the new Grammy Museum has extended an offer of help.

"They couldn't be nicer," Price said. "They solicited us and offered their concert space for our fundraisers. Even after we relocate, I'd like to keep the Bakery's relationship with the Grammy Museum going."

In a posting on the Bakery's web site (jazzbakery.org) in mid-June, Price stated that



the club has found three potential sites for its new location. Price added that all three locations are on the West Side of Los Angeles.

The Bakery has always been a home for lesser known and developing musicians, a policy that Price insists on maintaining despite the economic uncertainties.

"Our last two bookings were set up long before we knew we would close," Price said. "I could have cancelled them and done a big send-off party, but I wanted to remain true to what the Bakery has always done." —Kirk Silsbee

Soul Power Brings '70s Musical Icons to Movie Theaters

When Muhammad Ali went to fight George Foreman in Zaire 35 years ago, the musicians on the bill (notably James Brown and B.B. King) were as stunning as the heavyweight champs. The fight—and some of the sounds—were captured in the celebrated 1997 documentary *When We Were Kings*. A new film, *Soul Power*, concentrates on the music and hits theaters nationwide this summer.

Director Jeffrey Levy-Hinte, editor on *When We Were Kings*, began thinking about making *Soul Power* while he was working on the preceding documentary's dailies and watching the 125 hours of footage.

"There was so much dynamic material that I knew there would be a film there," Levy-Hinte said. "It was like looking at a block of marble and seeing there will be a great sculpture."

Scenes from *Soul Power* include Brown



tearing through the film's title track, Bill Withers' subtle soul-folk blend, Congolese singer Tabu Ley Rochereau and a surprising moment when the Spinners' Phillippe Wynne stepped into the ring with Ali. The film also shows how much West African audiences revered salsa musicians like Celia Cruz and the Fania All-Stars at that time.

"They had such an immediate, direct connection," Levy-Hinte said. "Ray Barretto playing conga is not an accident—he's back home."

—Aaron Cohen

Enright Returns as DownBeat Editor

With this issue, DownBeat welcomes back former editor Ed Enright, who takes the place of outgoing editor Jason Koransky.

An accomplished baritone saxophonist and multi-instrumentalist, Enright served as editor of DownBeat from 1996–1999 and prior to that held several different positions within parent company Maher Publications starting in 1990. He has spent the last 10 years performing



as a professional musician and working as a freelance writer for DownBeat and other publications.

"We're happy to have Ed back as a permanent member of the DownBeat family," said DownBeat publisher Frank Alkyer. "In fact, Ed has contributed so much to DownBeat consistently over the past two decades, it's almost as if he never left."



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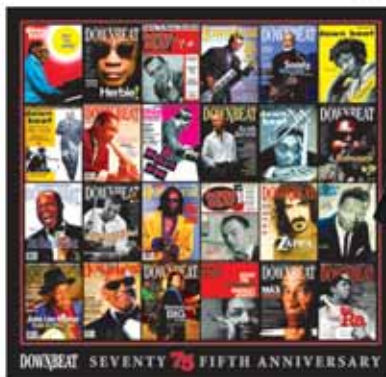
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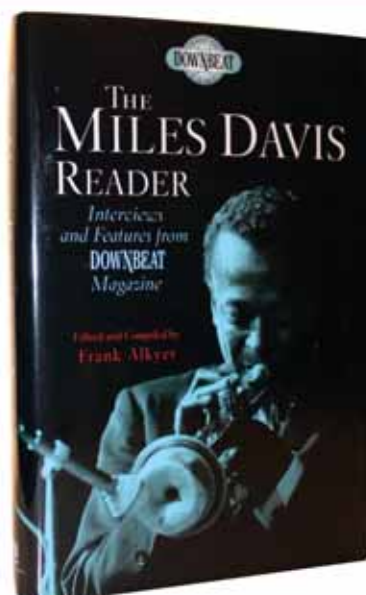
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Backstage With ...

By Ken Micallef

As part of a double headlining bill with Hank Jones at New York's Iridium, saxophonist Frank Wess took part in the club's "Jazz Masters Salute The Broadway Masters" series throughout March. Wess had just returned from Milan, where he had been working with trombonist Slide Hampton. The saxophonist has also played some U.S. dates supporting *Once Is Not Enough* (Labeth Music), his first nonet recording.

Why did you record a nonet now?

I always like that combination because you can sound small, you can sound big, you can sound like a big band, or like a small band. You've got a lot of choices. And with the doubles on different instruments it gives you even more room to move.

Do you write differently for a nonet than a sextet or octet?

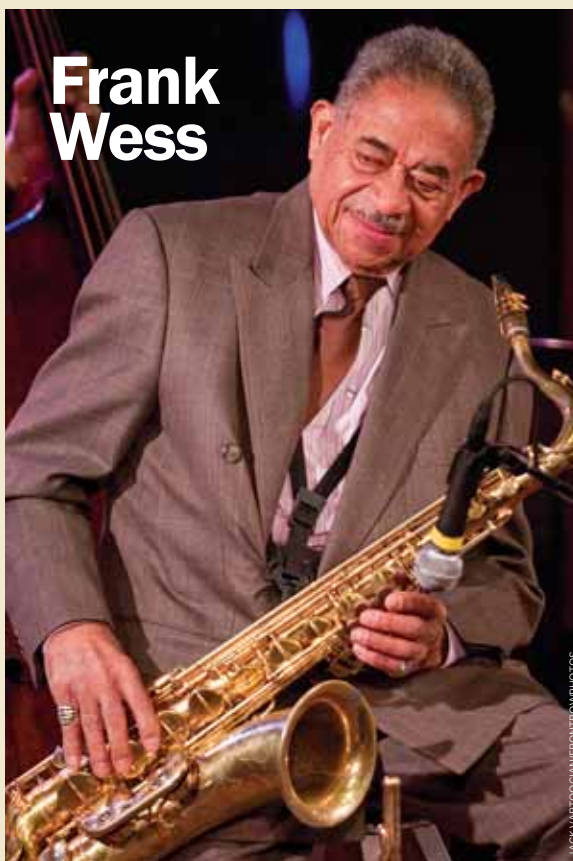
Not really. It's how you arrange and voice it. *Tryin' To Make My Blues Turn Green* was my earlier octet recording.

Will you tour *Once Is Not Enough*?

I hope not! Traveling is much too difficult these days. The service is worse, the planes are less reliable; it's too many people and not enough service. You never know what's going to happen. And they always want to take your instrument and put it where it's not safe. They took my saxophone once and the force of the plane landing bent my whole horn. I couldn't play that night on the gig. They don't care. I had a stewardess pulling on my flute once because she didn't want me put it up overhead. She's pulling on my flute. And don't let 'em see a bass, they'll go crazy.

Hank Jones and yourself have been playing together in different bands for close to 60 years.

Yes, that's right, since 1946. We were in Billy Eckstine's band together. We did nine



Frank Wess

JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTLINEPHOTOS

weeks at the Club Sudan in Harlem with Billy, at 136th Street and Lennox Avenue. We've recorded together off and on. We can always get together, we listen to each other. It's not a problem. Hank does a lot of solo playing so he has a lot of his own stuff. Jones, he is still playing his ass off. He is beautiful.

Do you and he ever reminisce about the old days?

A little bit. Hank always remembers that gig at the Sudan with Billy Eckstine and Fats Navarro, who had a habit of jumping down off of the trumpet riser when it was time for his solo. The reeds were on the floor, then the trombones were higher, then the trumpets were on a riser above that. When Fats would come down for his solo he would jump from the trumpet riser and put his head in Art Blakey's bass drum. This time he jumped off the riser—remember, Fats Navarro was a big boy—and when he hit the trombone riser his leg went right through it! But he stood up and played anyway. Hank always remembers that.

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Cape Town International Jazz Festival Highlights South African, American Bonds

Trumpeter Hugh Masekela celebrated his 70th birthday in front of adoring fans on the closing night of the two-day Cape Town International Jazz Festival in South Africa on April 4. At a press conference a few days earlier, he spoke candidly about the music itself.

"The name jazz has been used very loosely and it has been imposed on every kind of music that is not classical or religious," Masekela said in response to a question regarding the impact of South African jazz on the world at large. His comment, however, spoke volumes about the festival's programming, which leaned heavily toward smooth jazz (Jonathan Butler with David Koz, Ringo Madingozi) and r&b (Incognito, Zap Mama). Nevertheless, straightahead artists such as Al Foster, Dianne Reeves and Dave Liebman helped balanced the equation.

Masekela, who was in exile from South Africa for more than 30 years, concentrated on material from his newest disc, *Phola* (40 Times Square), leading his band on tunes underscored with mindful socio-political messages at the jam-packed Kippies stage in the Cape Town International Convention Centre. While funk-leaning songs like "Malungelo," "Weather" and "The Joke Of Life" and the plaintive cautionary tale "Sonnyboy" delighted fans, older hits such as "Grazin' In The Grass" and "Soweto Blues" roused the enthusiastic crowd. Masekela played his horn sparingly, focusing more on the flugelhorn than the trumpet. But when he burst out with staccato-dotted melodies and brassy tone, he reminded the audience that he still has plenty of fire.

While Masekela made an ideal choice as the grand finale for the festival, he shared that timeslot with four other acts, notably Mos Def and the Robert Glasper Experiment, who were hold-

ing court outside at the Bassline stage, which catered to a decidedly younger crowd. Once Mos Def arrived onstage (30 minutes late), he enthralled the crowd with a mixture of jazz-leaning rap, pop songs and his hip-hop anthems from the '90s. At one point, he extrapolated the chant from John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. The Robert Glasper Experiment gave a particularly compelling set the night before joining Mos Def on the Moses Molelekwa stage. Featuring saxophonist Casey Benjamin, drummer Chris Dave and bassist Derrick Hodges, Glasper exhibited his love for hip-hop and funk more explicitly than he's done with his trio.

On the Rosies stage, Reeves demonstrated how to deliver quality jazz and make it accessible for mainstream or neophyte jazz listeners. Elegant and warmhearted, she balanced jazz standards, r&b (the Temptations' "Just My Imagination" rendered to sublime effect) and with charming originals ("Testify" and her signature, "Better Days"). Her most powerful move was when she segued from conventional jazz scatting during "A Child Is Born" into a South African chant—à la Miriam Makeba—then improvised her recollection of finally meeting South African hero Nelson Mandela a day prior to the show.

Among the South African jazz talent represented, guitarist Philip Malombo Tabane delivered an intriguing performance that often veered into Ornette Coleman's Harmolodics realm. Fronting a quartet composed of an electric bassist and two percussionists, his music suggested African groove but included outbursts of razor-sharp electric guitar licks and open-ended harmonies. Navigating more toward the center but ultimately proving more rewarding was saxophonist McCoy Mrubata's set on the Rosies



stage. A brilliant modern improviser with a knack for unraveling polyphonic melodies based upon Xhosa songs known as amagwijo, Mrubata shared the frontline with trumpeter Marcus Wyatt, who emphasized cogent yet edgy improvisations. Guitarist Louis Mhlanga delivered one of that set's most provocative solos, revealing the powerful influence of John Abercrombie and Pat Metheny. Mrubata, Mhlanga and Wyatt delved deep into crackling modern jazz, engaging in lively dialogue propelled by Kesivan Naidoo's aggressive drumming and Herbie Tsoaeli's bass lines. All of which demonstrated that some South African music that "jazz" is applied to, as Masekela suggested, is indeed credible, exciting jazz.

—John Murphy

Budvar Cheltenham Jazz Festival Presents Jazz in Storybook Setting

In spite of a power failure that knocked out two shows and a travel fiasco that stranded Hugh Masekela's band, this year's Budvar Cheltenham Jazz Festival in England triumphed over adversity with a resoundingly strong program in the present tense. Celebrating its 14th year from April 28–May 4, Cheltenham is the country cousin to the London Jazz Festival. All the venues are within walking distance and the town makes for a smart backdrop, with its stately Regency architecture and tradition of cultural tourism.

This year, trumpet players took pride of place, with Arve Henriksen, Dave Douglas and Taylor Ho Bynum delivering three of the top



performances. Henriksen's playful, hauntingly beautiful set in the Pillar Room (a bar inside the city's historic, 850-seat, flat-floor Town Hall) featured the trumpeter blowing airstreams and crystalline melodies, with or without mouthpiece, adding deadpan speech fragments and falsetto vocals, all manipulated with atmospheric electronics.

Douglas' quintet conquered the crowd at the cozy Everyman Theatre with a powerful set that danced with declarative cheer. Bynum and drummer Harris Eisenstadt teamed with pianist Alexander Hawkins and bassist Dominic Lash in the Convergence Quartet at the Pittville campus of the University of Gloucestershire, offer-

ing intricate compositions and free-improvised excursions with the accent on rich sounds and lyrical, trance-like moods. The concert also showcased the dynamite, free-improv British duo of Chris Cundy (bass clarinet) and Alex Ward (soprano clarinet), and Dutch cellist Ernst Reijseger topped off the program with a ravishing solo set.

In a dark and moving set in the Pillar Room by the Profound Sound Trio, drummer Andrew Cyrille's rolling thunder and bassist Henry Grimes' glissandos spurred British saxophonist Paul Dunmall to a spiritual lift and cry. On a Radio 3 broadcast at the Everyman, Dunmall also offered a solo set on bagpipes.

A tribute to Billy Strayhorn made for an illuminating evening, as actors Clarke Peters and Michael Brandon read a dramatic narrative about the Duke Ellington collaborator and the luxurious, 70-piece BBC Orchestra and hard-swinging Guy Barker Big Band performed classics such as "Take The 'A' Train," "Chelsea Bridge" and "Lush Life." Popular U.K. vocalist Ian Shaw soared on "Daydream," Madeleine

Bell put shivers up spines on "Something To Live For" and Emma Smith's peppy "Jump For Joy" raised the period into full view.

Over at the Daffodil, young British vocalist Lizzy Parks radiated insouciant charm, while American singer Lea Delaria spoiled a fluid scat technique with tasteless stand-up comedy. At the Everyman, in a set with guitarist Phil Robson, festival artist-in-residence Dave Liebman offered tenderness and expressive, angular originality in favor of his fabled hyper-virtuosity.

In a demonstration of commitment to passing on the tradition, Cheltenham presented a crackling set by Jack DeJohnette with a handpicked batch of young British musicians he'd rehearsed, the Jerwood All Stars. Flutist Gareth Lochrane played a killer solo on a tribute to Eric Dolphy, "A Bitter End To A Tender Griot." More kids got into the act at a jubilant, community-vibe festival opener by the Ruach Mass Choir, a London black gospel unit that had mentored local school choirs earlier in the day, to the delight of their parents, who swamped the concert in the gym in nearby Gloucester.

—Paul de Barros

Cleveland's Tri-C JazzFest Turns 30

For the past 30 years, April in Cleveland has been the crucial month for longtime jazz listeners and for youngsters seeking sage advice from the masters. Still considered one of the country's preeminent educational jazz festivals, Tri-C JazzFest was chock full of concerts, master classes, jam sessions and student ensemble competitions that ran the course of the festival's 11 days.

Two artists who have been perennial favorites at the festival kicked off the opening weekend. George Benson showed the crooner side of his personality for a tribute to Nat King Cole, with backing provided by a full string orchestra. The next evening the temperature rose with Eddie Palmieri and his La Perfecta II. Fronting a large unit that included a full percussion section and vocalists, Palmieri's montuno groove afforded inspiration for dancing on such iconic pieces as "Azucar Pa' Ti."

Chicago flutist Nicole Mitchell and her Black Earth Ensemble emphasized richly variegated originals. While the soloists often soared into the stratosphere, tight ensemble passages put swing at a premium. "Afrika Rising" functioned as a travelogue in and of itself, with an engaging programmatic approach. Demonstrating that her talents went beyond just composing, Mitchell's flute work was equally impressive, particularly on the tour-de-force "Journey For Three Blue Stones."

Later in the week, Randy Weston and Roy Haynes played a double bill. Weston's solo set touched on many of his original compositions





Nicole Mitchell

before he waxed rhapsodic for a medley of Duke Ellington and Fats Waller numbers that tied together sections of stride and ballad artistry with earthy African rhythms. Haynes pulled out all the stops, while bolstering his status as one of the music's most dynamic drummers. Alto saxophonist Jaleel Shaw and pianist David Kikoski made the most of their leader's elated prodding.

The festival ended on a high note with the debut TCJF Soundworks, co-led by Cleveland's Howie Smith and Glenn Holmes. Featuring trumpeter Sean Jones, the seven-piece band tackled the works of McCoy Tyner, who had been on the bill the first year of the festival. By varying ensemble combinations and touching on less obvious numbers such as "Three Flowers" and "Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit," the diversity of Tyner's music became fodder for performances that spoke well for the group's viability as a repertory unit.


—Chris Hovan






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Logan Richardson Determined Concerto Designer

A son of Kansas City, where the codes of swing blossomed during the 1930s, saxophonist Logan Richardson knows about that hard-to-describe entity known as the “jazz tradition.” But while he was playing standards like “Misty” at age 14, no such repertoire appears on Richardson’s sophomore release, *Ethos*, issued on Greg Osby’s imprint, Inner Circle.

On the disc, Richardson collages 15 compact originals into a quasi-concerto for alto framed by an ensemble, aligned in varying configurations of voice, vibraphone, guitar, cello, bass and drums. The proceedings demonstrate that Richardson’s ties to the jazz lifeblood lie as much in his notion that “the tradition itself means to move forward”—an ethos that links him to Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman and Oliver Lake, all referenced therein—as in his command of the raw materials that such forebears deployed to fuel their musical production.

“When we learn about Bird and John Coltrane, we’re supposed to take in and draw from all their music, but also learn about ourselves,” Richardson said. “As a child, you naturally mimic whoever is around you—their laugh, the tone of their voice, how they say things, their personality—and then branch off and start developing your own ideals. But many musicians seem to think it’s cool to say back exactly what they were taught for the rest of their lives. That seems stagnant.”

Richardson’s career has been anything but stagnant since 2007, when he released *Cerebral Flow* (Fresh Sound), his similarly configured debut. Recently home from a week in Spain with Nasheet Waits’ Equality Quartet, he was anticipating a springtime Minnesota engagement with pianist Jason Moran, concerts with trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and pianist Jesse Elder, and summer work with vibraphonist Stefon Harris. More consequentially, Richardson was a month removed from his first European leader tour, an eight-city Italian sojourn with Waits, Akinmusire, bassist Joe Sanders and vibraphonist Mike Pinto.

“The way the music transformed nightly turned me on, and I decided to make changes,” Richardson said. Whatever label accepts his next document will present a unit comprising Richardson, Waits, Moran, Akinmusire, Sanders and fellow Missourian Pat Metheny, who contacted Richardson after hearing him on Moran’s Big Bandwagon debut at Town Hall.

“It was the first time he’d seen me, but he knew about me from his brother, Mike, who lives in Kansas City, and he had my albums and liked them,” Richardson said. “It was like an e-



ELEKTRA CARRAS

mail from a peer, only it’s Pat Metheny. He doesn’t want to say, ‘OK, dude, I want to play with you.’ So I was like, ‘What can I do to make this happen?’”

Pragmatically, Richardson is not of the mindset to let opportunities slip by.

“I’m an extreme optimist, a major dreamer,” Richardson said. “I was never someone to get discouraged. If someone dissed me or made me feel bad, it made me come back stronger the next day. That’s maybe an element of coming up how I did. The ghetto of Kansas City. Not too much to no money. My mom was extremely supportive, and after years of showing my dedication—I didn’t date or go to parties because I thought it would interfere with my progress musically—I finally got my own horn.”

After briefly attending Berklee College of Music in Boston, Richardson moved to New York in 2001 to study at the New School. His teachers included Mark Turner and Steve Wilson, as well as Greg Tardy and Joe

Chambers, both early employers, along with Waits, with whom he developed, as Richardson puts it, “a big brother scenario.” Until Waits brought him on the road in 2007, Richardson “made money and survived” as a woodwind repairman and instrument-builder at Manhattan’s Sam Ash Music store. During those years, he read *As Serious as Your Life*, Valerie Wilmer’s collective biography of the individualists of the ’60s whose spirit he seems to channel.

“She quoted Anthony Braxton that the next musicians will not only devise new musical systems but actually build their own instruments to bring forth new sounds and ideas,” Richardson said. “It made sense because of what I was doing and made me think on a different scale. You have to get lost to find the most beautiful oasis that nobody knows about. I spent so much time restricting and not letting everything in. Now I think that everything is valid, it’s just a matter of how it makes you feel.” —Ted Panken

Shaynee Rainbolt 🌟 Golden Age Visitor

When singer Shaynee Rainbolt took the Jazz Bakery stage in Los Angeles last fall, her instrumental backing revealed a special format: a rhythm section with four trombones, conducted by Hollywood's legendary Russ Garcia. As Rainbolt sang Garcia's songs from her self-released *Charmed Life* CD, the composer himself led the crack ensemble. It was something new, yet with an unmistakable sense of an earlier era.

Rainbolt's work with Garcia can be traced to her extensive background in the musical theater. When an injury laid her up for convalescence, she stumbled upon his music on the Internet.

"His soundtrack for the movie *The Time Machine* just blew me away," she said. "I researched him and found out about his work with singers and I knew I had to work with him. He had this backlog of material—often with his wife Gina's great lyrics—and it was the natural progression for me to sing an album of Garcia [material]."

The 92-year-old Garcia was one of the busiest Hollywood arrangers in the 1950s and '60s. He wrote for Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Tormè and Julie London among many others. His arranging classes at the fabled Westlake School of Music included students Bill Holman

and Jimmy Giuffrè, and "Four Brothers" was written as a homework assignment for Garcia. He penned *The Professional Arranger Composer Book*, a groundbreaking text for budding music writers. Engineer Andy Waterman, who recorded *Charmed Life* in his Umbrella Media studio, studied Garcia's book.

"It was an important part of my training," Waterman said. "After I opened my studio, I did a number of projects with Russ. When we did the album with Shaynee, I was impressed with how controlled she sang. She's got this trained, legit voice. She could have belted, but she understood the romance and drama of the songs. Russ' style evokes the film noir era of Hollywood music—it has mystery, longing and darkness. He's comfortable with the minor 9th."

Rainbolt's musical acumen isn't the only aspect that impressed Waterman. "She's representative of our new music business," he said. "She conceived this album and made it happen. That's a far cry from the days when singers did what were they told by record label a&r men."

Garcia, who has been living in New Zeland



JOHN ABBOTT

since 1965, felt that Rainbolt's project was worth interrupting his beatific lifestyle.

"I work if I feel like it these days," he said. "Shaynee sent me a tape and I liked it. She sang with a beat and she sang the meaning of the lyrics, I liked that. I also like how beautiful her voice is."

—Kirk Silsbee

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Jeff Albert 🌟 Crescent City's Next Wave Rolls Through Chicago

While trombonist Jeff Albert's 20-plus-year career features music played with some first-generation musicians who helped define his hometown of New Orleans' funk and r&b, he's recently been collaborating with the free-improvisers who've built a community in Chicago.

"My initial connection to Chicago was through recordings," Albert said. "I picked up some early Ken Vandermark 5 things, and really dug what Jeb Bishop was doing."

Trombonist Bishop joined forces with Albert to form the Lucky 7s, which released *Farragut* (Lakefront Digital) in 2006 and just released *Pluto Junkyard* (Clean Feed).

"Jeb's trio was here in the fall of 2003, and that performance opened my mind and ears," Albert said. "It's not that I started to copy Jeb's stuff so much as hearing his stuff helped me find mine. Right around that same time, [saxophonist] Fred Anderson and [drummer] Hamid Drake did a show in New Orleans with [saxophonist] Kidd Jordan and [bassist] William Parker which was amazing, and it pushed me into exploring more of their music and the music of their associates."

At that time, Albert's already multi-faceted career had included recording stints with Deacon John's Jump Blues, Gatemouth Brown and



ZACH SMITH

Aaron Neville, among other New Orleans greats. He also worked in horn sections behind Stevie Wonder, Bonnie Raitt and Ronnie Milsap, and touring with the Tommy Dorsey and Harry James orchestras. Cruise ship and salsa gigs, playing with the reggae band Cool Riddums, Sista Teedy, and performing as an extra and substitute with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra took him down other avenues altogether.

Albert said that he and Bishop "eventually developed a friendship through some online trombonist communities. Initially, it was around exciting topics like the best way to remove the lacquer from vintage Conn trombones, but it

moved into a genuine friendship that isn't music-dependent."

Hurricane Katrina's disastrous impact on Albert's hometown made this friendship a life-saver.

"A couple of weeks after Katrina I was talking to Jeb about ideas for places to book my quartet in Chicago, because there wasn't anything happening here yet, and I needed badly to play music for a variety of reasons," Albert said. "He suggested that when I come up, we also do a co-op group with my band and some Chicago guys. This idea became the Lucky 7s. Quin Kirchner, who was the drummer in my quartet pre-Katrina, had

Ben Wendel 🌟 Intertwined Coasts

This past spring, saxophonist Ben Wendel returned to Los Angeles after a stint at New York's Jazz Gallery in support of his debut, *Simple Song* (Sunnyside Records). For him, it was a typically busy week. Between juggling a self-managed solo career and various other side gigs, he also teaches weekly private lessons at University of Southern California as an adjunct professor. But even with a diverse resume that includes gigs with drummer Ignacio Berroa and rapper Snoop Dogg, writing music for film and co-leading the modern jazz combo Kneebody, Wendel, at 33, considers himself a late bloomer.

"I'm not a spring chicken in terms of having been on the road a lot," Wendel said. "But this is my first experience, specifically, as a leader, dealing with a tour, booking flights and hotels."

While Wendel says that he kept busy as a sideman, it took a while for him to feel confident in presenting music onto a disc that was specifically his. "With some people, it comes naturally; other people kind of fall into [a solo career], because they're lucky or some hyper-talented

prodigy," he said.

His debut disc exhibits a strong presence, not just in terms of displaying his flinty tenor sound and supple, conversational improvisations, but also his compositional guile. Except for a soft-hued but rhythmically kinetic rendering of John Coltrane's "Lonnie's Lament" and a version of Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovable Thing," on which he overdubs himself on various saxophones and bassoon, *Simple Song* showcases all originals.

Featuring members of his West Coast band (bassist Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz and guitarist Larry Koonse) and his East Coast ensemble (drummer Nate Wood and keyboardist Adam Benjamin) as well as pianists Taylor Eigsti and Tigran Hamasyan, *Simple Song*, as the title suggests, places a premium on compositional craft. But when asked if he sees himself more as a composer or a saxo-



KIM FOX

phonist, he argues that those artistic sides are intertwined inside. "I think Wayne Shorter is the perfect example of that. He's someone who is an incredible composer and a distinctive saxophone improviser," Wendel said.

Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, but raised in Los Angeles, Wendel studied music at

returned to Chicago, which is his hometown, and bassist Matthew Golombisky also ended up in Chicago after being forced out of New Orleans by the flood. The three of us made up the New Orleans portion of the band, and Jeb asked [vibraphonist] Jason Adasiewicz, [cornetist] Josh Berman and [saxophonist] Keefe Jackson to be the Chicago component. We met for a week in late February, early March of 2006, and rehearsed and played four gigs that we recorded."

At the same time, Albert expresses hope for musical diversity growing in his hometown.

"There is a gathering movement of creative musical activity in New Orleans," Albert said. "One aspect of that is the Open Ears Music Series, which I founded and co-curate with Justin Peake and Dan Oestreicher. The idea of Open Ears is directly descendent from some of the musician-run series in Chicago, specifically the Emerging Improvisers presentations at the Hungry Brain. I spent some time picking Josh's brain about what made their stuff work at the Brain, and his advice and guidance have been crucial in our success with Open Ears, which has been running for about a year-and-a-half now.

"I haven't really given much conscious thought to the traditional New Orleans-Chicago connections," Albert continued. "There seems to have always been some flow between the cities, but my initial draw to Chicago was simply that I liked the music that was being made there. The first Lucky 7s performance, which happened to be Mardi Gras 2006 at the Empty Bottle, elicited an appropriate line from [percussionist] Michael Zerang: 'The last time New Orleans cats started coming up here, it was pretty good for the music.'" —John Ephland

Eastman School of Music in New York. Whereas many aspiring jazz artists who make it to the East Coast tend to migrate to New York City—especially if they've gone to school in Manhattan—Wendel headed back to Los Angeles, which provided him with a diverse pool of musicians who weren't necessary jazz players.

"It's such an industry town; you get a lot of experience doing commercial film work, you can also end up in different genres—hip-hop, rock—that's why my resume is pretty wide-ranging."

The city also allowed Wendel to focus on developing a singular voice.

"Here, people are more isolated and it gives you the space to hone your craft without all the intense, crazy pressure of New York. In New York, there are so many brilliant musicians—you can get lost in the mix and lose your sense of identity or a sense of where you're headed. I feel lucky, because I'm entering my solo career a little older and I have a good network of friends. It won't be like starting from ground zero." —John Murph



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Christian McBride

Acoustic Bassist of the Year | By Ted Panken | Photos by Jimmy Katz

Late in the afternoon of Friday, May 8, Christian McBride stood in the foyer of David Gage's Tribeca bass atelier, poised to play-test the latest addition to his arsenal. There was little time to spare—McBride had 15 minutes to retrieve his car from the parking lot, and it was a mere 90 minutes until gig time at the Blue Note with James Carter's new band with John Medeski, Adam Rogers and Joey Baron. Still, McBride couldn't restrain himself. Beaming at his new possession like a father cradling a newborn, he put forth an elegant, funky one-chorus blues that the prior owner, the late Ray Brown, might well have cosigned for his own. Then McBride packed with a single efficient motion, enfolded Gage and his wife with a hug and exited the premises, grabbing the car keys with two minutes to spare.

McBride was elated for reasons that had less to do with the excellence of the bass than with the pass-the-torch symbolism of the occasion. His new instrument had not come cheap, but he seemed to regard his possession of it to be more in the nature of an inheritance than the result of a transaction.

"It means the world to me, but I don't think I'll get that sentimental about it," said McBride, who performed with Brown and John Clayton throughout the '90s in the singular unit Super Bass. "In my heart I'll know it's Ray's bass, but I'm going to play what I need to. We had a father-son type of relationship. I don't want to sound selfish, but I feel I *should* have it, since John has one of Ray's other ones."

Barely out of his teens when he joined Super Bass, McBride, now 36, was anything but a neophyte. Out of Philadelphia, he moved to New York in 1989 to attend Juilliard, and quickly attained first-call status. By the fall 1993, when McBride made his first extended tour with Joshua Redman's quartet with Pat Metheny and Billy Higgins, many considered him a major figure in the jazz bass continuum.

Perhaps this explains the vigorous criticism that certain elders launched McBride's way in the latter '90s, when he began to revisit the electric bass, his first instrument, as a vehicle to investigate more contemporary modes of musical expression.

He recalled a backstage visit from Milt

Jackson after his band, opening for Maceo Parker, played a little tune that wasn't a swing tune.

"Milt asked, 'Was it necessary?'" McBride laughed heartily. "I said, 'What do you mean, necessary?' He said, 'That ain't the kind of stuff you're supposed to be doing.'"

"I stood there and took it, because I loved Milt. But I had to ask myself: At what point am I allowed to get away from bebop? Is there some graduation process where Ray Brown or Hank Jones or Tommy Flanagan comes to Bradley's and gives me my diploma? Why do I feel that I'm going to get in trouble if I decide to get a little funky? I knew stretching out wouldn't affect my bebop playing or make me alter my sound."

Brown, a fixture on L.A.'s commercial scene who, as McBride notes, "played pretty good electric bass" himself, was anything but judgmental about his protegee's populist proclivities. "Ray never said a negative thing to me," McBride said. "His whole thing was about pocket. As long as it had a toe-tapping quality, he was into it. He loved that I brought my own thing to Super Bass as opposed to trying to play

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like a bebop guy.”

Over the past decade, McBride’s penchant for adapting his “own thing” to any musical situation, however tightly formatted or open-ended, has brought him copious sideman work with a crew of auditorium-fillers, among them Sting, Bruce Hornsby, David Sanborn, Herbie Hancock and Metheny. Last year he concluded his four-year run as creative chair for Jazz at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, for which he had booked 12 concerts a year since 2005. Among the highlights were projects with Queen Latifah and James Brown (his idol), a 90th birthday celebration for Hank Jones and also such high-concept jazz fare as Charles Mingus’ *Epitaph*. McBride hasn’t neglected his jazz education commitments—per his annual custom since 2000, he spent a fortnight as artistic director at Jazz Aspen Snowmass, and he maintained his co-director post at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, an employer since 2005. If this weren’t enough, McBride also assumed artistic director responsibilities at the Monterey and Detroit Jazz Festivals last year, producing new music for the various special projects and groups represented therein.

The impact of all this activity on McBride’s Q-rating was apparent when the three Metheny devotees sharing my table at the Blue Note said that his name, and not Carter’s, was their prime incentive for shelling out the \$35 cover. McBride did not disappoint. Playing primarily acoustic bass, he constructed pungent lines that established both harmonic signposts and a heartbeat-steady pulse around which the band could form consensus. He also brought down the house with a pair of astonishing solos. On the set-opener, “Mad Lad,” a stomping rhythm variant by Leo Parker, McBride bowed a fleet-as-a-fiddle, thematically unified stomp, executing horn-like lines with impeccable articulation, intonation and time feel. To open the set-concluding “Lullaby For Real Deal,” by Sun Ra, he declaimed a wild Mingusian holler, then counterstated Carter’s baritone sax solo, chock-a-block with extended techniques, with a theme-and-variation statement that ascended to the mountaintop, danced down again and concluded with an emphatic *flavoosh!* on the E string.

At the Rose Theater two weeks earlier, McBride performed equivalent feats of derring-do with the Five Peace Band—Chick Corea and John McLaughlin’s homage to the 40th anniversary of their participation on Miles Davis’ *Bitches Brew*. Halfway through the final leg of a seven-month world tour, the band addressed the repertoire in an open, collective manner, and McBride switched off between acoustic and electric feels with equal authority. On one McLaughlin-penned piece, he laid down crunching funk grooves on the porkchop, at one point mirroring a staggeringly fast declamation by the leader so precisely as to give the illusion that the



tones were merged into one hybrid voice.

“Technically, I could have done that 10 years ago, but I don’t think my confidence would have been there to try it,” McBride remarked. “From playing electric so much more on sessions and gigs, now I have that confidence on both.”

He elaborated on the sonic personality that each instrument embodies.

“The acoustic bass is the mother, and the electric bass will always be the restless child,” he said. “Sometimes the energy of a restless child is cool to have around. It gets everybody up, and it keeps you on your toes. But the mother is always there, watching over everything—a wholesome feeling. The acoustic bass isn’t as loud, but it’s so big—it grabs all the music with a big, long arm. It encircles it. The electric bass is clearer, more in your face, but it doesn’t have that wisdom.”

From the jump, McBride conceptualized the acoustic as an oversized electric bass. “Clarity was always the center of my concept,” he said. “The instrument’s range and frequency means you can feel the pulse that makes you move, but it’s hard to hear the notes. Much as I hate to admit it, I mostly hated bass solos, because I could never understand what they were playing. Notes ran into each other, and some cats would be out of tune—outside of first or second position, it gets dicey. I found that cats who play very clear and have good melodic ideas tended to be from the low-action, high-amplified school. When they’d start walking, all the pulse would go. Then, bass players with a really good sound and feel, who make you want to dance, when they soloed it was, ‘Ummm ... go back to walking.’

“So my whole style was based on balancing

the two—to play with a serious clarity of tone and still have the guts and power of the true acoustic bass. When I walked or accompanied somebody, I wanted that soloist to feel they had the best tonal, rhythmic and harmonic support possible, but I also didn't want to bore the hell out of people when I soloed."

The notion of balance—triangulating a space between deference and self-interest, between pragmatic and creative imperatives, between acoustic and electric self-expression—is perhaps McBride's defining characteristic. "I've always tried to live in the middle," McBride said. "I'd be a good U.N. diplomat!"

During his teenage years in Philadelphia, at the urging of mentor Wynton Marsalis, McBride focused on the unamplified, raise-the-strings approach to bass expression, which "seemed to be the new religious experience for young bass players coming to New York," he said. As his reputation grew, he staunchly adhered to this esthetic even through several bouts of tendinitis—although once, upon bandleader Bobby Watson's insistence, he did relent and purchased an amp for a Village Vanguard engagement.

Not too long afterwards, Brown heard McBride for the first time. "Ray said, 'Why are you young cats playing so hard? You don't need your strings up that high.' I thought, 'Shut up, and listen to Ray Brown.' I saw him a few nights later, and it hit me like a ton of bricks. Ray seemed to be playing the bass like it was a toy. He was having fun. Playing jazz, he had that locomotion I heard in the great soul bass players, like James Jamerson, Bootsie Collins and Larry Graham. He wasn't yanking the strings that hard. He had the biggest, fattest, woodiest sound I'd ever heard, and most of it was coming from the bass, not the amp. At that point, I slowly started coming around. I was able to find a middle ground where, yes, it's perfectly fine to use an amplifier. It's not the '40s any more."

McBride has always prided himself on being able to take on multiple projects at the same time. But in 2008, he bit off more than he could chew. "By October, I was ready to collapse," McBride said. "Then I thought, 'Oh, I've got to go to Europe for five weeks; I can't collapse.' Everybody was like, 'You're in town for three weeks? Let's book some record dates.' My brain was saying yes. But my body was like, 'If you don't go somewhere right now and sit in the dark for about three weeks, I'm unplugging on you.' I'm trying to edit '09 a little bit.

"I'm ready to sink my teeth into my own music and see what I can finally develop on my own. Maybe one day I can be the guy leading an all-star tour or calling some other cats to come on the road with me."

Towards that end, McBride was ready to tour with a new unit called Inside Straight, with saxophonist Steve Wilson, pianist Peter Martin, vibraphonist Warren Wolf and drummer

Ulysses Owens, whom he had assembled for a one-week gig at the Village Vanguard during summer of 2007 and reconvened to play Detroit. "I hadn't played at the Vanguard since 1997, and thought it was time to go back," McBride related. "Lorraine Gordon said, 'Of course you're always welcome at the Vanguard. But don't bring that rock band you usually play with!'"

Said "rock band" was a plugged-in quartet with Geoff Keezer, Ron Blake and Terreon Gully, which McBride first brought on the road in 2000 to support *Science Fiction*, the last of his four dates for Verve, to bring forth McBride's all-encompassing view of jazz.

Indeed, the group's extreme talent far exceeded its recorded documentation or gig opportunities. "We got defaulted as a fusion band, which was inaccurate," McBride said. "It seemed our gigs always got stuck in when I had two nights off with Pat or Five Peace Band, and it was hard to change hats quickly and think things all the way through. But we all like music that has a lot of energy. It could be funky or free, it could be bebop or dixieland swing, or it could rock. As long as that jazz feel is underneath, what's on top doesn't really matter."

Funk, freedom and rock are absent from *Kind Of Brown* (Mack Avenue), McBride's recent debut date with Inside Straight and his first all-acoustic presentation since *Gettin' To It*, his 1995 opening salvo on Verve. "I call it one of those 'just in case you forgot' recordings," said McBride, who will celebrate his 20th anniversary as a New Yorker this summer making weekly hits with a big band and recording *Conversations With Christian*, a still-in-process project comprising 20 duo performances and interviews with select friends and mentors.

"I came to New York to play with all the great modern jazz musicians I could, and I became known doing that in the Paul Chambers-Ray Brown spirit," said McBride, noting that he has recently felt the itch to return to "some good foot-stomping straightahead."

McBride has traversed a conceptual arc not dissimilar to the path of such contemporaries as Roy Hargrove and Redman, who embraced contemporary dance and popular music during their 20s but recently have returned to more acoustic, swing-based investigations. "We were the generation that was able to assimilate all that had happened before us, and at some point decided to use hip-hop or certain types of indie rock, great music that not too many jazz people were keeping their ear on," McBride observed. "It's no different than what any other generation of jazz musicians did."

A member of the last generation to receive a full dose of the heroes of jazz's golden age, McBride is now well-positioned, through his educational activities and increasing visibility as a public spokesman, to facilitate the torch-passing

process. His present views, informed by deep roots in black urban working-class culture and the attitude towards musical production that he absorbed during his formative years, are not so very far removed from those of his mentors.

"Everybody's nice now, but a lot of hard love came from those legends," he said. "At Bradley's, if you played a wrong change, you'd hear some musician at the bar going, 'Unh-unh, nope, that's not it.' They'd ream you on the break. After they finished, they'd buy you a drink. All of us wear those moments as badges of honor. When you see young cats doing the wrong thing, it's not a matter of actually being mean or being nice when you pull them aside and tell them what's happening." McBride often advises younger musicians not to bridle at the notion of marinating in situations they're not used to or that make them uncomfortable.

"The people behind the scenes play on this idea of faction-race-gender-class, groove-versus-no-groove, intellectual-versus-street," he said. "We're in a period where the less groove or African-American influence, the more lauded the music is for being intellectual, whereas the guys who are grooving—that's [regarded as] old, we've been hearing that for over half a century, we need to come further from that. The more European influence you put in your music, the more you can be considered a genius.

"At first, I thought it was racial. Maybe it is to a certain extent. But the white musicians I know who like to sink their teeth into the groove can't get any dap, either. Part of it might be backlash from when the record labels were dishing out the cash to advertise and market some straightahead young lions who frankly didn't deserve it. The recording industry did real damage to the credibility of young jazz musicians who were really serious about building on the tradition. It almost took an 'American Idol' twist—some new hot person every six months. When it happened to me in New York, I remember thinking, 'That could change tomorrow.'"

McBride learned early that music is as much a business as an art form, and that to sustain a career requires labor as well as talent. "My focus was always on being good," he said. "If I'm the best musician I can be, I won't have to worry whether someone thinks I'm hot or not; I'll just be working with all the musicians that I can. That's where I got my outlook to always try to find the middle ground."

He intends to retain this attitude. "You see musicians reach a point where they no longer have to take certain gigs—and they don't," he said. "Some of us think, 'They've lost that edge; they don't have that passion like they used to.' I never wanted to become one of those guys. My chops start getting weird. The pockets start getting funny. There's a reason Ron Carter is still as active as he is. He's playing all the time. Ray Brown was like that. They keep that thing going."

DB



Sonny Rollins

Jazz Artist of the Year
Jazz Album of the Year



The Colossus has seized the day, once again. Tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins, who was featured prominently in last month's 75th Anniversary issue, has been named our Jazz Artist of the Year. To top it off, his CD *Road Shows, Vol. 1* (Doxy/EmArcy), which earned a 5-star review by Shaun Brady in DownBeat's February 2009 issue, takes top honors as Jazz Album of the Year. We asked three of our critics to weigh in with their takes on what makes the man and his latest recorded release so appealing.

When questions about the vitality, relevance and enjoyment value of jazz today are raised, Sonny Rollins stands as our music's irrefutable answer. He walks onstage slower and stiffer than in his youth, back slightly bent, but when he blows the tenor saxophone clenched between his lips, cleaving the air with the horn that is his lifeline to the world, he straightens, swells and looms, huge, a master of gritty beauty and earthy truth.

Truth and beauty, real because never predictable, suffuse *Road Shows, Vol. 1*, Rollins' selected highlights from 27 years of performances worldwide. Genuinely modest, famously self-critical, he makes no promises about his shows except that he'll try his best, but his every phrase seems driven by purpose. He intends to convey his personal experience, through sound, into meaning all listeners can share. He doesn't talk much about this, dictates no particulars, boasts no grand theories, yet he is among the few who can really do it. In a successful concert, Rollins sweeps the audience up so we recognize his aspirations, realize his crises and are struck

Jazz Artist

129 Sonny Rollins

- 83 Joe Lovano
- 51 Chick Corea
- 49 Ornette Coleman
- 44 Wayne Shorter
- 38 Bill Frisell
- 37 Hank Jones
- 32 Branford Marsalis
- 28 Charles Lloyd
- 25 Keith Jarrett
- 25 Wynton Marsalis
- 20 Anthony Braxton
- 20 Herbie Hancock

Jazz Album

76 Sonny Rollins, *Road Shows, Vol. 1* (Doxy/EmArcy)

- 44 Joe Lovano, *Symphonica* (Blue Note)
- 42 Charles Lloyd Quartet, *Rabo De Nube* (ECM)
- 40 Jim Hall/Bill Frisell, *Hemispheres* (ArtistShare)
- 29 Rudresh Mahanthappa, *Kinsmen* (Pi)
- 21 Donny McCaslin, *Recommended Tools* (Greenleaf Music)
- 21 Jeff "Tain" Watts, *Watts* (Dark Key)
- 17 Kurt Rosenwinkel, *The Remedy* (ArtistShare)
- 16 Atomic, *Retrograde* (Jazzland)
- 16 E.S.T., *Leucocyte* (Emarcy)
- 16 Dave Holland Sextet, *Pass It On* (Dare2)
- 15 Roy Hargrove Quintet, *Earfood* (Emarcy)
- 15 Joshua Redman, *Compass* (Nonesuch)
- 15 Bobo Stenson Trio, *Cantando* (ECM)

by his revelations. He plays for us and we're convinced that what he plays is what we, also, feel and would play if only we could.

With his passionate lyricism, expressive immediacy, warmth and humor, personal integrity and position of honor within the main course of jazz history, Sonny Rollins remains at age 79 more than a hero. He is in 2009 just what a record album called him in 1956: a colossus. Not a cold one, though. His music overflows with the heart and soul of a man.

—Howard Mandel

In light of the new (read: historical) Freddie Hubbard album *Without A Song: Live In Europe 1969*, resurrected from the Blue Note vaults posthumously, Sonny Rollins' decision to cull through his audio archives now to compile last year's *Road Shows, Vol. 1* is indeed welcome. Equally important is that he's calling the shots, agreeing to document what he deems are his best performances and having the freedom to release multiple volumes on his own Doxy label—all of which will become more fodder for the Sonny canon. These days if Rollins were attached to any record company—major or indie—it's highly unlikely that he would have such creative license to release this new live material, which his fans have been craving.

What's remarkable about *Road Shows, Vol. 1* is the degree to which Rollins sustains his tenor saxophone solos, a rarity for improvisers. He's arguably the only saxophonist alive who can never take too many choruses. He never rolls with the flow or engages in egotistic acrobatics. He gusts, he hushes, he swings. He's an extemporaneous painter splashing color, a poet who chooses notes carefully, a choreographer who dances to the beat of his own phrases. In his playing, there is a searching ebullience, awestruck mystery, in-the-moment creativity.

My favorite moment comes when the band stops and lets Rollins sing alone at the end of the ballad "More Than You Know." It's heavenly.

—Dan Ouellette

When one considers the element of jazz greatness that's so intriguing for listeners and players alike, the feeling of joyous collective freedom comes most clearly to mind. It is the elation of that "sound of surprise" when one hears something that lifts him/her to another place. It's a zone that fans of tenor titan Sonny Rollins know well.

Rollins has made it clear for much of his 60-year career that he feels no need to be fashionable in his musical choices. The performances on *Road Shows, Vol. 1*, taped at seven venues across the globe circa 1980–2007, have little to do with his classic Blue Note and Prestige recordings, yet they show a musician honoring the past with continuing growth and change,

much as the world around him shifts and moves onward.

We're told that Rollins seldom feels that his concert recordings are worthy of release, yet the spirit embodied in his playing comes to the fore in his discovery of new vistas such as those heard here on the opening "Best Wishes" and "Blossom," where he tears into the music with sweeping authority and abandon. There are moments of indecision on "More Than You Know," while "Easy Living" is nonpareil. "Tenor Madness" works in small ways, and

the calypso "Nice Lady" ably covers one of Rollins' favorite genres. The closing "Some Enchanted Evening" is a slight disappointment, with Rollins merely skirting the melody repeatedly.

The sidemen play minor roles, but noteworthy are the contributions of drummer Al Foster, pianist Mark Soskin and trombonist Clifton Anderson.

Although this album is short of masterpiece status, it is a most worthy documentation.

—Will Smith

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Hall of Fame

108 Hank Jones

- 71 Freddie Hubbard
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- 32 Benny Golson
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- 27 Louie Bellson
- 26 Oliver Nelson
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- 23 Scott LaFaro
- 23 John McLaughlin
- 20 Ahmad Jamal
- 19 B.B. King
- 19 Hank Mobley

Hank Jones

Hall of Fame | By Howard Mandel

Pianist Hank Jones is a courtly gentleman of the old school, who wears a coat and tie for an interview conducted in his own lodgings and is forthright about his approach to music.

"I try to play evenly," Jones says with genuine humility about his style, which is widely regarded as maintaining the highest standard for keyboard playing in the contemporary vernacular. "I don't take too many excursions, I don't go too far away from the melody, I don't go out in the deep water. I want the listener to understand what I'm doing. I try to stay pretty much right down the middle and yet keep it interesting."

In these efforts he has succeed magnificently, though he understates the depths he's mastered—as well as the progressive broadening and continuity of what's "right down the middle" of jazz that he has established and documented in more than 450 recordings under his own leadership and with the greatest vocal and instrumental stars from the '40s through today. At 91, Jones is universally acknowledged to be what his frequent collaborator Joe Lovano calls "a treasure": a man of experience who embodies the wit, warmth, elegance, swing, sagacity, ongoing productivity and open-minded creativity we hope for from all artists and too rarely find. Besides the respect—no, *awe*—of his colleagues and international audiences, Jones has been the recipient of numerous honors, being designated a Jazz Master by the National Endowment for the Arts, given a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and now inducted into

Down Beat's Hall of Fame.

The pianist takes this all in stride (pun intended) as befits a man who began professional life at age 13 under the esthetic sway of Fats Waller, Art Tatum, Earl "Fatha" Hines and Teddy Wilson. "I'm just trying to keep up with the other guys," he insists, those "guys" being the pianists he's known and admired. His conversation is laced with references to the late Oscar Peterson, Erroll Garner, Bill Evans, Tommy Flanagan and John Lewis, as well as George Shearing, Barry Harris, Marian McPartland and diverse next-generation players. But one wonders: Who can keep up with Mr. Jones?

His schedule of bookings would be a challenge for much younger musicians. When he sat down to talk in the comfortable apartment he sublets in Manhattan while his home in Cooperstown, N.Y., undergoes renovations, he was preparing for a concert in The Hague with the Metropole Orchestra. He was scheduled to perform in July in Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain, fronting his trio with bassist George Mraz and drummer Willie Jones III, as well as at the San Sebastian Jazz Festival in duet with Lovano (they issued *Kids: Duets Live at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola* in 2007).

He and Lovano are performing at George Wein's reconstituted Newport Jazz Festival, and in Monterey with a co-led quartet completed by bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade. Jones is also the guest

Hall of Fame

Legends in jazz, blues and beyond can be elected into the DownBeat Hall of Fame by way of the annual Readers Poll (designated by "R"), Critics Poll ("C") or Veterans Committee ("V"). It all started in 1952 with the readers; the critics got into the game later, in 1961. The veterans started last year. With this month's addition of Hank Jones, Oscar Pettiford and Tadd Dameron, there are 118 DownBeat Hall of Famers, listed below in chronological order of their induction.

1952 Louis Armstrong (R)	Roy Eldridge (C)	1985 Sarah Vaughan (R)	2000 Lester Bowie (C)
1953 Glenn Miller (R)	Django Reinhardt (C)	Zoot Sims (C)	Clark Terry (R)
1954 Stan Kenton (R)	1972 Gene Krupa (R)	1986 Stan Getz (R)	2001 Milt Hinton (C)
1955 Charlie Parker (R)	Clifford Brown (C)	Gil Evans (C)	Joe Henderson (R)
1956 Duke Ellington (R)	1973 Sonny Rollins (R)	1987 Lionel Hampton (R)	2002 John Lewis (C)
1957 Benny Goodman (R)	Fletcher Henderson (C)	Johnny Dodds (C)	Antonio Carlos Jobim (R)
1958 Count Basie (R)	1974 Buddy Rich (R)	Thad Jones (C)	2003 Wayne Shorter (C)
1959 Lester Young (R)	Ben Webster (C)	Teddy Wilson (C)	Ray Brown (R)
1960 Dizzy Gillespie (R)	1975 Cannonball Adderley (R)	1988 Jaco Pastorius (R)	2004 Roy Haynes (C)
1961 Billie Holiday (R)	Cecil Taylor (C)	Kenny Clarke (C)	McCoy Tyner (R)
Coleman Hawkins (C)	1976 Woody Herman (R)	1989 Woody Shaw (R)	2005 Steve Lacy (C)
1962 Miles Davis (R)	King Oliver (C)	Chet Baker (C)	Herbie Hancock (R)
Bix Beiderbecke (C)	1977 Paul Desmond (R)	1990 Red Rodney (R)	2006 Jackie McLean (C)
1963 Thelonious Monk (R)	Benny Carter (C)	Mary Lou Williams (C)	2007 Jimmy Smith (R)
Jelly Roll Morton (C)	1978 Joe Venuti (R)	1991 Lee Morgan (R)	2008 Michael Brecker (R)
1964 Eric Dolphy (R)	Rahsaan Roland Kirk (C)	John Carter (C)	Joe Zawinul (C)
Art Tatum (C)	1979 Ella Fitzgerald (R)	1992 Maynard Ferguson (R)	Jimmy Blanton (V)
1965 John Coltrane (R)	Lennie Tristano (C)	James P. Johnson (C)	Harry Carney (V)
Earl Hines (C)	1980 Dexter Gordon (R)	Gerry Mulligan (R)	2008 Erroll Garner (V)
Bud Powell (R)	Max Roach (C)	Ed Blackwell (C)	Jo Jones (V)
1966 Charlie Christian (C)	1981 Art Blakey (R)	1993 Dave Brubeck (R)	Jimmie Lunceford (V)
Billy Strayhorn (R)	Bill Evans (C)	1994 Frank Zappa (C)	Keith Jarrett (R)
Bessie Smith (C)	1982 Art Pepper (R)	1995 J.J. Johnson (R)	2009 Hank Jones (C)
1968 Wes Montgomery (R)	Fats Navarro (C)	Julius Hemphill (C)	Oscar Pettiford (V)
Sidney Bechet (C)	1983 Stephane Grappelli (R)	Horace Silver (R)	Tadd Dameron (V)
Fats Waller (C)	Albert Ayler (C)	1996 Artie Shaw (C)	
1969 Ornette Coleman (R)	1984 Oscar Peterson (R)	1997 Nat "King" Cole (R)	
Pee Wee Russell (C)	Sun Ra (C)	Tony Williams (C)	
Jack Teagarden (C)		1998 Elvin Jones (C)	
1970 Jimi Hendrix (R)		Frank Sinatra (R)	
Johnny Hodges (C)		1999 Betty Carter (C)	
1971 Charles Mingus (R)		Milt Jackson (R)	

of honor at the 30th Detroit International Jazz Festival, which has built its Labor Day weekend programming around the theme "Keepin' Up with the Joneses," a nod to brothers Thad, Elvin and Hank, and a celebration of other family dynasties.

While it's accurate to describe Hank Jones as a titan of a dynasty, his status does not rest on the achievements of a family band. Rather, he is a "patriarch of the Detroit piano legacy," as pianist Geri Allen, a fellow Detroit-area native and one of Jones' most ardent followers, puts it. Hank worked only occasionally with his younger brothers Thad and Elvin, innovators of big band composing and traps drumming, respectively. They're deceased—Thad since '86, Elvin since '04—and Hank misses them, of course. But Jones doesn't live in the past so much as the present and foreseeable future. He knows who he is, where he's come from, what he's done and how to continue.

"You've got to live your age," he says—wisdom that has many possible interpretations, but seems to mean to him that time travels on and if we're lucky, we go with it. He's been lucky and isn't about to stop.

"It takes a lot of concentration," Jones continued, in response to a comment that he seems to be capable of every opportunity, collaboration and repertoire directed his way. "Whatever you're doing, give it 100 percent concentration. Really focus on that thing. That's what I have to do. I took that idea from my father, one of the most upright men I've ever known. He served as a great role model. He was a clean-living person. He didn't drink or smoke, and he was a Christian. I've followed his way of doing things, and it's worked out pretty well.

"You see, there is no magic involved in playing the piano. It takes continuous hard work. Whatever skills are involved, it's a matter of practice. It's always necessary to practice everyday. If you can do that, then you can maintain whatever skills you have, and perhaps even *increase* your skills."

Jones emphasizes the most tried-and-true dictums of music pedagogy. "When I first started I studied classical music," he said. "That gave me a foundation, something every pianist needs. If I were asked for some guidelines, they would be: Study, know the piano, study with the best teacher you can find at the very beginning. Because if you don't learn the right way to play, it will be pretty hard to change that way later. If you use the wrong technique, it's very hard to get rid of. That's what I would advise young people."

As a young person himself, Jones evidently practiced what he preaches, because he began gigging with upper Midwest "territory bands" while in his teens. In his early 20s he left home on saxophonist

Lucky Thompson's promise of a gig on 52nd Street with Hot Lips Page. Promise realized, Jones went on to work with Andy Kirk, Billy Eckstine, Coleman Hawkins, Ella Fitzgerald and Ray Brown, enlisted in Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic touring cast and by the 1950s was much in demand.

Jones accompanied, recorded and toured with Sarah Vaughan, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman and Cannonball and Nat Adderley's band. He anchored the rhythm section for virtually everyone who recorded for the Savoy label. Then he served for 17 years in the CBS television studio band, limiting himself to sessions close to home—Billie Holiday's *Lady In Satin*, John Coltrane's *Bags And Trane*, Dakota Staton's *The Late, Late Show*, Wes Montgomery's *So Much Guitar*, Roland Kirk's *We Free Kings* and dates with Johnny Mathis and Bobby Darin. He sat in with the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra when it was established at the Village Vanguard in 1968. In the mid '70s Jones emerged from his staff job to labor on Broadway in *Ain't Misbehavin'* for five years. One might say Jones two-handedly restored Fats Waller's reputation—hear his utterly enjoyable Waller tribute album *A Handful of Keys*.

After leaving the show over a contract dispute, Jones re-engaged with personal pursuits that he'd put on hold during his CBS tenure. He immersed himself in solo piano bookings and albums, acclaimed duets ("a very difficult format to work with ... the problem being two pianists seldom think alike harmonically"), tours and records with the Great Jazz Trio (combinations of Ron Carter, Buster Williams, Eddie Gomez and Tony Williams, Al Foster, Jimmy Cobb) and one-offs with brilliant, original talents like Charlie Haden (*Steal Away*), Dave Holland and Billy Higgins (*The Oracle*), and Mandinka bandleader Cheick-Tidiane Seck (*Sarala*). He also sustained a long relationship with tenor saxist/flutist Wes, most recently co-starring on *Hank And Frank* (2004) and *Hank And Frank, Vol. 2* (2006). Whatever he does bears dependable attributes: the Hank Jones stamp of excellence, taste and style.

"My style? How did it come about?" Jones is surprised to be asked. "After you've heard a lot, when you've digested many different styles, sooner or later you develop an idea of your own. You want to play your way. Which may or may not be similar to somebody else. If you're lucky, it doesn't sound like somebody else. That's what students should aspire to: Develop their own style, their own interpretations. They can play the same compositions, but their own way. And it should be pleasing to listen to. Although that's another matter, a matter of taste.

"The way I look at it, taste comes from listening to a great variety of people, and either accepting or rejecting portions of it all. What you retain is what you embody in your conception of what that particular composition should sound like. That becomes known as taste. The method you use, the dynamics, everything that goes into performing, that becomes you, your taste.

"I try to use my imagination and think of something that's relevant, not only to the harmony, but to the melody, then you try to make something out of it. It's like building a house. You start with a basic design, then you try to build it and embellish as you go."

Asked about what he wants to do next, Jones says, "Oh, so many things," but doesn't detail them beyond, "I have more records in mind." Asked what he likes to do besides make music, he pauses.

"I like to watch TV, certain programs I like. I used to play golf a little bit, but I don't do that any more. I don't drink, don't gamble, don't play cards, don't smoke, don't do anything like that. Chase girls? No, I don't do that!

"But you know what? We were talking about concentration, right? What does it take to concentrate? First of all: Interest. You have to have interest in what you're doing and be absorbed in what you're doing, completely focused. That, combined with knowledge, with ability, with perception, with creativity—all of that's involved.

"You think about what's put before you, that's what you concentrate on. You don't think about why you're doing it or how you're doing it, but when you *are* doing it, you see the results. It's a very strong force. I don't know what's involved. But when you have it, you can hear it. If you don't have it, you can hear it. You can't hear it if you don't have it." **DB**

Veterans Committee Hall of Fame

By Ira Gitler

[Editor's Note: A number of important jazz artists who are no longer with us clearly deserve to be included in the DownBeat Hall of Fame. Our Veterans Committee, designed specifically to rectify that situation, recently voted to induct two historic jazz legends who have been overlooked in the past.]

Oscar Pettiford

Bassist Oscar Pettiford was a driving force who illuminated the jazz scene through the 1940s and '50s. He picked up the torch from Duke Ellington bassist Jimmy Blanton, who had brought the instrument into the modern era through his pizzicato, hornlike solo lines before meeting an early death in 1942.

Pettiford was born on an Indian reservation in Okmulgee, Okla., on Sept. 30, 1922. One of 11 children, he played in a family band that toured all over the Midwest and the South. By age 10, he was fronting the band, singing, dancing and twirling a baton. Pettiford played piano, trombone and trumpet before moving into the ensemble as a bassist at age 14. Not enamored of bassists who did a lot of slapping or rode the instrument as if it were a horse, he gravitated toward "serious instrumentalists"—players such as Milt Hinton with Cab Calloway, Billy Taylor of Ellington's band, Jimmie Lunceford's Mose Allen and Fletcher Henderson's Israel Crosby.

Hinton came to Minneapolis with Calloway in 1942 and found Pettiford working in a war plant. The family band had shrunk to five pieces and was scuffling. Hinton encouraged Pettiford to not let his talent "go down the drain" and convinced him not to be afraid of New York. When Charlie Barnet's band came to town two months later, Barnet hired Pettiford and took him to New York. There he worked with Thelonious Monk at Minton's and Roy Eldridge at the Onyx Club on 52nd Street. Pettiford joined Dizzy Gillespie at the Onyx in a co-led quintet that was the first group to play the music that soon would be called bebop.

One of the numbers Pettiford contributed to the book was "For Bass Faces Only," which Gillespie recorded with his big band in 1946 as "One Bass Hit." Other well known pieces of his include "Something For You" (also recorded under the titles "Max Is Makin' Wax" and "Chance It"), "Tricotism," "Swingin' Till The Girls Come Home," "Bohemia After Dark" and "Blues In The Closet."

After playing in California with Coleman Hawkins' group and Boyd Raeburn's big band, Pettiford joined Duke Ellington's orchestra in the fall of '45 and in the next three years established himself as one of the top bassists in jazz. In '49 while with Woody Herman, he broke his arm during a game with the band's softball team. During his convalescence he took up the cello and came up with a dextrous pizzicato that was imbued with the feeling of Charlie Christian's guitar style.

From '52 to '58, Pettiford led small groups and an innovative 13-piece band that was formed for a Town Hall concert and went on to play several times at Birdland. In '58, Pettiford left for Europe and settled in Copenhagen, where he exerted a strong influence on the talented teenage Danish bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen.

On Sept. 8, 1960, Pettiford died at the hands of what doctors described as "a polio-like virus."

Pianist Dick Katz, who played in Pettiford's small groups and big band, said: "If I had to sum up Oscar, I would say that he should be ranked with the select group of great jazz artists, beyond merely one of the great jazz bassists."



Oscar Pettiford



Tadd Dameron

Tadd Dameron

Born Tadley Ewing Peake in Cleveland, Ohio, on Feb. 21, 1917, Tadd Dameron was a self-taught pianist who learned jazz rudiments from his saxophone-playing brother, Caesar, and was heavily influenced by Duke Ellington and George Gershwin.

His first professional playing took place during his high school years as a singer with trumpeter Freddie Webster. When the band's pianist quit, Dameron became the emergency replacement. He left Oberlin college in similar fashion when Blanche Calloway's orchestra came to play a prom and its pianist, Clyde Hart, fell ill. Tadd filled in and left town with the band. From Calloway he went to Zach Whyte's band, replacing Sy Oliver. In 1940 he moved to Kansas City, where he wrote for Harlan Leonard's Rockets. This is when he first met and jammed informally with Charlie Parker. Then, Dameron did war plant work in Chicago and Lima, Ohio, before coming to New York in '42 to write for Jimmie Lunceford, later contributing to the books of the Benny Carter and Teddy Hill bands.

Dameron met Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Kenny Clarke at Minton's and sat in with the Gillespie-Oscar Pettiford group at the Onyx Club on 52nd Street. In the next few years his compositions, such as "Cool Breeze" and "Our Delight," were played by Billy Eckstine and Gillespie's big bands. In '47 he led his own quintet on 52nd Street with Fats Navarro on trumpet and recorded for Savoy. His big break came in '48 when he led a sextet that was in residence as the house band at the Roost on Broadway and recorded for Blue Note. By using wide voicings, sometimes four octaves apart, he made the trumpet and two-tenor saxophone front line sound like a larger ensemble.

His writing for large orchestras was also unique. Dexter Gordon, commenting on playing Dameron's charts in the Eckstine band, said, "The parts he writes are so melodic in themselves. It's almost as if every part was lead, in that sense. Usually when a cat writes the secondary parts ... they vary as to the sound and the interest and so forth. But with Tadd, his parts were always beautiful. A lot of times I'd play the fourth parts and they were beautiful ... Tadd is really the romanticist of the whole period—he's a poet."

Dameron was a mentor to many, including Sarah Vaughan (who recorded what perhaps is his most beautiful song, "If You Could See Me Now"), Clifford Brown and Benny Golson (both of whom played in Dameron's nonet that recorded for Prestige in '53).

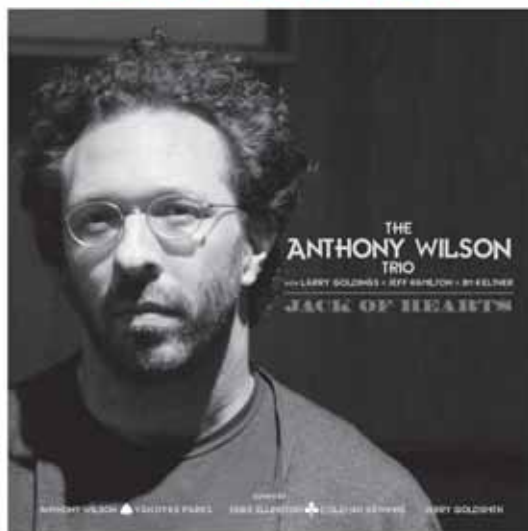
In the early '50s Dameron became involved with heroin, and although he continued to record, his career was interrupted intermittently. In '58 he wound up in the Federal Narcotics Hospital in Lexington, Ky. During his rehabilitation he wrote the music for trumpeter Blue Mitchell's LP *Smooth As The Wind* for Riverside, which came out in 1961. In June of that year, Dameron was released and resumed his life in New York. He was able to conduct the orchestra on his last album, *The Magic Touch*, and also subsequently wrote material for recordings by Milt Jackson, Sonny Stitt, Benny Goodman, Tony Bennett and Vaughan. Cancer took his life on March 8, 1965.

Dameron was an urbane, well-read man who once characterized himself by saying, "I'm the most misplaced musician in the business because I'm a composer. I'm not an arranger or a pianist. They forced me to be an arranger because nobody wanted to play my tunes unless I would write them out. I don't like to arrange music. I like to direct the band, I like to rehearse the band. I like to supervise a date, to bring out the beautiful things that are happening in other arrangers."

In 1953, while rehearsing his band for a recording date, he said, "Make those phrases flow. When I write something it's with beauty in mind. It has to swing, sure, but it has to be beautiful."

With Dameron long gone, his music lives on: "Hot House," "Lady Bird," "Our Delight," "Casbah," "On A Misty Night" and "Soultrane," just to name a few. Many fine musicians continue his legacy by putting their own spin on these classics. **DB**

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Rudresh Mahanthappa

Rising Star Jazz Artist
Rising Star Alto Saxophone
By Shaun Brady

To me, fusion was the Yellowjackets,” laughed Rudresh Mahanthappa. Despite his ambitious recent projects integrating jazz and South Indian music, and more recently electronics, the Brooklyn-based altoist rejects the fusion tag as inappropriate.

His resistance is justified. More properly, Mahanthappa could be considered a hybridist, having created a new form whose cross-cultural parentage is evident but inextricably blended. His music is marked not by the heavy accent of a non-native speaker, but by the lilting inflections of a fluid multi-linguist.

While he welcomes the attention that’s been paid to his recent work, Mahanthappa expressed some trepidation that the focus has been more on process than on results. His influences, like those of frequent collaborators such as pianist Vijay Iyer and guitarist Rez Abbasi, are interwoven with his experience growing up as a first-generation hyphenate-American.

“The concept of the melding of these two cultures being more important than the music itself is disturbing to me,” he said. “People like me and Vijay and Rez are uniquely equipped to deal with this particular synthesizing of ideas, because we’re living it culturally every day. So it’s not so much about trying to achieve the goal of putting these two things together—If that’s your goal at the outset, it becomes this exotic cut and paste, more about people playing in the same room than about playing together.”

Mahanthappa’s first explicit engagement with his heritage was at least as much a social as a musical statement. His 2004 CD *Mother Tongue* (Pi) confronted a certain American cultural ignorance, asking the question, “Do you speak Indian?” to a number of Indian-Americans and basing its melodies on their replies in several of the myriad languages actually spoken on the subcontinent.

Last year’s *Kinsmen* (Pi), the debut CD by Mahanthappa’s Dakshina Ensemble, a collaboration with Carnatic saxophonist Kadri Gopalnath, was lighter on the cultural critique but just as fraught with technical difficulties. The project had its inception more than 15 years earlier, when Mahanthappa’s brother bought him a Gopalnath album called *Saxophone Indian Style* on a lark. The music within had a profound impact.

Over the next several years, Mahanthappa caught Gopalnath live on a couple of the elder saxophonist’s rare U.S. visits, and in 2003 actually broached the subject of a collaboration. It became a reality a few months later under the auspices of New York’s Asia Society.

Mahanthappa visited Gopalnath in India in 2004. The music that resulted weaves together East and West like a tapestry, forming a rich, colorful image in its fullness. “There are a lot of bad fusion projects where somebody just harmonizes a raga the same way they would harmonize ‘Bye Bye Blackbird,’” Mahanthappa said. “It’s pretty dreadful. Figuring out how to avoid that was important.”

Growing up in Boulder, Colo., Mahanthappa’s Indian-American heritage had been, at most, a casual influence on his life. But later in his development, Mahanthappa felt compelled to explore the music. In 1994, he traveled to India’s Jazz Yatra Festival with a student group from Berklee College of Music and returned with an altered perspective.

“The music was incredibly inspiring,” Mahanthappa said. “I obviously felt connected to it, but I also felt like I could sit down with those records and play along with them, try to extract things the same way I did when I

Jazz Artist, Rising Star

63 Rudresh Mahanthappa

- 46 Anat Cohen
- 43 Vijay Iyer
- 41 Jason Moran
- 36 Lionel Loueke
- 36 Esperanza Spalding
- 29 Mary Halvorson
- 23 Miguel Zenón
- 21 Mike Reed
- 20 Donny McCaslin
- 19 Julian Lage
- 17 Chris Potter

Alto Saxophone, Rising Star

128 Rudresh Mahanthappa

- 82 Miguel Zenón
- 65 Dave Binney
- 59 Jaleel Shaw
- 33 Steve Lehman
- 32 Jon Irabagon
- 35 Steve Wilson
- 29 Grace Kelly
- 27 Ted Nash
- 22 Matana Roberts
- 18 Antonio Hart
- 17 Yosvany Terry



MICHAEL JACKSON

sat down with Coltrane records and Charlie Parker records.”

Shortly thereafter, fellow saxophonist Steve Coleman introduced Mahanthappa and Iyer, leading to a friendship and musical partnership that has flourished over the past decade. The two were in the initial stages of integrating Indian concepts into their own music, and each approached those concepts from a different angle—Mahanthappa interested in the melodic side, Iyer the rhythmic.

The altoist’s first attempt to form a project exploring those interests came in Chicago in 1996, while he was earning his masters at DePaul University. The sax/guitar/tabla combo never gelled to his satisfaction at the time, but he revived the idea recently as the Indo-Pak Coalition, which also issued its first CD, *Apti* (Innova), last year. The trio features Abbasi and tabla player Dan Weiss.

“It’s three people who are dealing with the Western musical language and the Indian musical language at the same time,” Mahanthappa said. “So things are a little more malleable compositionally, in that we don’t necessarily have to adhere to Indian structural elements.”

Samdhi, the latest progression on Mahanthappa’s musical path, features guitarist David Gilmore, bassist Rich Brown, drummer Damion Reid, mridangam player Anand Ananthakrishman and Mahathappa playing alto and laptop. The quintet further blurs stylistic boundaries, supplementing the composer’s Indo-jazz expression with a responsive, improvising computer instrumentalist.

“In doing *Kinsmen* I realized there were some more complex things I wanted to work on,” Mahanthappa explained. “I also want to get more inside of this electronic stuff. The idea for Samdhi was to integrate all of this into a new piece that was not so blatantly Indian.”

In addition to the aforementioned groups, Mahanthappa’s ongoing projects include Mauger, his collective trio with bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Gerry Hemingway; MSG, a trio with Irish bassist Ronan Guilfoyle and Indian-French drummer Chander Sardjoe; and Raw Materials, his ever-evolving duo with Iyer.

“I don’t feel like I’m still struggling to figure out how Indian I am or how American I am,” Mahanthappa concluded. “I’m very much at peace with the fact that it’s a constant exploration.”

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Roy Haynes
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B.B. King
Lee Konitz
Joe Locke
Lionel Loueke
Joe Lovano
Rudresh Mahanthappa
Christian McBride
Donny McCaslin
James Moody
Sonny Rollins
Josh Roseman
Poncho Sanchez
Christian Scott
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Gary Smulyan
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Shemekia Copeland

Rising Star Blues Artist/Group

By Michael Jackson

Despite her notoriety as the archetypal “blues belter,” Shemekia Copeland prefers the handle “Miss Meek.” Her offstage demeanor is disarmingly unassuming, the more remarkable given her blue-chip lineage as the daughter of Grammy-winning guitar slinger Johnny “Texas Twister” Copeland.

Turning 30 this year, Copeland has made a career shift after fulfilling her four-album contract with Chicago’s Alligator Records, with whom she waxed her bruisingly brilliant debut *Turn The Heat Up* at age 19.

Copeland’s manager, John Hahn, struck a deal with Telarc to release this year’s *Never Going Back*, for which he brought in producer Oliver Wood and rootsy jazz heavies Marc Ribot, John Medeski and Chris Wood.

The dozen tracks on *Never Going Back* cut a wide swath, embracing topical social criticism, a Percy Mayfield dialogue about suicide, the obligatory selection from her father’s canon and a surprising Joni Mitchell cover.

Anxious to evolve personally and also advance the blues genre, Copeland, modest yet very direct, is outspoken about contemporary society and its ills, yet full of admiration for her peers and elders.

Never Going Back is taken from the title of the noirish Hahn/Wood narrative “Never Going Back To Memphis,” and though the abbreviation hints at her bold new direction, blues fans needn’t feel relegated. As Wood said, “Shemekia wanted to express herself differently than in the past, so we chose an eclectic bag of tunes. The songs were chosen for their message of empowerment, with a few quirky exceptions.” Wood said the intent was to take Copeland out of her blues comfort zone—they even ran a Hank Williams tune that didn’t make it on the CD—but Wood reminds, “Shemekia gives the blues to anything she sings.”

So, does *Never Going Back* herald the end of Copeland’s days (to namecheck her previous Alligator releases) of being “wicked” and “talking to strangers”?

“No!” she laughed during an interview at Buddy Guy’s Legends in Chicago. “Those records are a part of me. I had a good marriage with Alligator, it was just time to move forward.” In preparing for the new record, “We tried to pick songs that were a little deeper than the typical blues themes of partying and broken relationships,” she said.

The opener, “Sounds Like The Devil,” deals unequivocally with political and religious hypocrisy. “I’ve always been critical of the world, I just refused to talk about it,” Shemekia said. “I thought politics and religion were things nobody wanted to hear about musically. Why the hell would I force them to listen to that when they are on their off day, out Friday night having a drink? But with all the stuff going on right now, it was impossible not to deal with it.”

Despite her love of gospel and her own moral code, Copeland didn’t want to sound preachy, since the duplicity of those who labor their ethical point but don’t live it is at the root of her misgivings. “Guys who claim they live by the Bible but have bastard children, that is what ‘Big Brand New Religion’ is all about on my album,” she said.

Copeland grew up in what she contends was one of the roughest neighborhoods in Harlem; crack dealing was rife and she attended more juvenile funerals than she cares to remember. When she sings her father’s

Blues Artist/Group, Rising Star

64 Shemekia Copeland

36 Derek Trucks

21 Susan Tedeschi

20 Marcia Ball

20 Otis Taylor

19 Carolina Chocolate Drops

17 Eric Bibb

17 John Németh

15 Cedric Burnside

15 Janiva Magness

14 Lucky Peterson

13 Keb’ Mo’

“Ghetto Child,” she ain’t faking.

“Born a Penny” underscores her lack of pretension. “I was born a penny, and I don’t wanna be no dime,” she insists. “I know what I am, and you can’t make me be what I don’t want to be.”

Recent shifts in Copeland’s life have adjusted her outlook. She moved to Chicago a couple years back to be closer to bassist Orlando Wright, who plays with Buddy Guy and is now her fiancé. How does it feel being in the town that gave rise to Barack Obama?

“The world is definitely changing, although unfortunately we find it is somewhat the same, as much as it’s changed,” she said.

The night Obama was elected, Copeland was performing in a mess hall in Iraq as part of a Bluesapalooza tour. “It’s easy to sit in your quiet, safe house, not in a warzone, and talk crap about what goes on over there,” she said. “But those young men risking their lives for our country, all they want is a piece of home, a hug and a kiss. I wouldn’t hesitate to go back to Iraq for those guys.” Some of this philanthropy comes across in “Broken World,” a heartfelt track that Copeland described as “equal parts hope and frustration.”

Discussing her primary influences, two male soul singers stand out: Otis Redding and Sam Cooke. The blowtorch power of Tina Turner is also detectable in her early work. “Tina is such an awesome entertainer, and that aspect is important to me,” Copeland said. Gladys Knight, Mavis Staples and the late Koko Taylor are other women she admires. “With Koko every note comes from her toes up to her head. Mavis has the ability to just moan and give you goose pimples.”

But what of her less obvious interest in Joni Mitchell? Wood encouraged Copeland to make the plunge with “Black Crow” (from Mitchell’s 1976 folk/rock/jazz album *Hejira*). Mitchell wrote the song when traveling alone across America, and Copeland’s traversing of the globe from an early age has made her similarly wistful.

“I was hesitant at first doing one of Joni’s songs, but after listening to the lyrics I realized she had written it for me,” she said. “I mean, ‘I took a ferry to the highway/Then I drove to a pontoon plane/I took a plane to a taxi/And a taxi to a train.’ The other day I had finished a show and my mother called and asked, ‘What are you going to do now?’ I replied, ‘I’ve got to take a train to the bus and the bus to my car and then I have to drive home.’”

“‘Well,’ she said, ‘then I guess you are a black crow.’”

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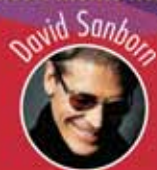
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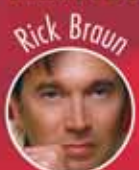
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Chick Corea

Electric Keyboardist
of the Year

By Aaron Cohen

It's no accident that two of Chick Corea's best-known bands have been named Circle and Return To Forever (RTF). The winner of this year's Critics Poll in the Electric Keyboard/Synthesizer category has always been a step ahead of the next technological trends. But during 2008 and 2009, he's also been going back to his own past, and showing how much his associations from the 1960s and '70s mean to today's jazz audiences.

Last year, Corea appeared on *DownBeat*'s cover as RTF's classic lineup of himself, Al DiMeola, Stanley Clarke and Lenny White reconvened for a wildly successful tour. The reunion has already resulted in the 2-disc *Return To Forever Returns* (Eagle Records) and the DVD *Return To Forever Returns: Live At Monreux* (Eagle Eye). A few months ago, he joined up with guitarist John McLaughlin—his colleague from Miles Davis' seminal work in fusion—to form the Five Peace Band with such younger musicians as Christian McBride and Kenny Garrett along with drummer Vinnie Colaiuta (alternating on some live gigs with Brian Blade). This group's self-titled live disc was released this year (Concord).

When he had the chance to take a short break between tours, a relaxed-sounding Corea made it seem like his own joviality and wise observations make him as much of a magnet for his new crew as his landmark music.

Like his take on a seemingly easy life on the road with the Five Peace Band.

"One of the beauties of making music and working with artists in general—especially in jazz—is that age sort of disappears," Corea said. "We're commonly linked with the traditions we love and when we get together, there doesn't seem to be any age barrier. Especially onstage. On the bus, I don't follow the TV shows that the young guys had been watching—and I'll be talking about Steve Allen—but, musically, the energy of the young guys is refreshing. It's a nice exchange between what John calls us old hippies and the young cats."

Still, it's the ties between those old hippies that made the Five Peace Band happen after several years of percolating.



Electric Keyboard/Synthesizer

- 161 **Chick Corea**
- 147 Herbie Hancock
- 119 Uri Caine
- 76 John Medeski
- 60 Craig Taborn
- 23 Jim Baker
- 20 Wayne Horvitz
- 15 Gil Goldstein
- 14 Geoffrey Keezer
- 14 Lyle Mays
- 13 Hiromi
- 13 Jason Lindner

"I could roll it back to the '70s when John and I were running around with our bands and we became good friends since we first met," Corea said. "Around 1969 we played a little bit together, recorded with Miles and developed a mutual admiration for each other that lasted through the decades. We always—in one way or another—would mention wanting to do something with each other. And while we sat in with each other, we never really did a project together. Then, when my schedule opened up, I proposed this project to John and it clicked in and we tried to nail a schedule down and it came together."

Corea also mentions his 60th birthday celebration in December 2001 at New York's Blue Note as his incentive to reconvene RTF and dive into building new performance opportunities with musicians like McLaughlin. That three-week event included Corea performing with veteran colleagues like Michael Brecker, Roy Haynes and Gary Burton, new partners like Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and such groups as Origin and his Akoustic Band. In his unique method of making his releases unabridged, the results comprised the 10-DVD box set *Rendezvous In New York* (Image Entertainment) in 2005.

"When I had that celebration at the Blue

Note and gathered a lot of the guys I worked with in bands of mine, the whole concept of not wanting to go back to something that's 'old' left me," Corea said. "The richness I had with music was actually the friendships I developed with my musical partners, and they were timeless. It all seemed fresh to me, even though we weren't playing new compositions. The jam sessions seemed fresh, and I blew away the idea that reunions were bad. These relations are endless. So getting together with Stanley Clarke and Lenny White especially, it was a long time coming that we hadn't played together, and it was very joyous."

What has obviously changed is the electric keyboard's inherent technology, though it's a testament to Corea's victory in this category that he continues to experiment with the sounds he gets from them.

"I play an extensive keyboard rig for Return To Forever and paired it down for the Five Peace Band," Corea said. "I've been trying to work out what is the most suitable kind of instruments to use to get the kind of musical impact that I like. I've tried different approaches in programming sounds, improvising my sound design as I play. I also enjoy going back to getting the sound going from my old Fender Rhodes, while there's a new Mini Moog Voyager that I enjoy playing. But to haul around a huge set of keyboards was like carry-

ing a ball and chain, so I'm trying to make my rig compact. I'm also going to try a looser approach for my next tour. With the Five Peace Band, I used a couple Yamaha Motif keyboards and brought my own patches and only needed to use four of five different sounds that suited me for the kind of music I was playing."

At first, Corea said that he felt trepidation about the ways that musical instrument companies have been trying to duplicate the sound of an acoustic piano in a digital format. Still, he recognized that it's not just music, but the related worlds of film and computers that have accelerated the digital process with affordable software's convenience. Meanwhile, he adds that Yamaha's recent Avant model has made him more comfortable with the technology.

"If I'm playing a Fender Rhodes, I don't think of it as a piano—not even remotely," Corea said. "In the same way, when I play a digitized piano sound, I approach it as that instrument, not as a piano, and then I can kind of make it work. But now, with the Yamaha Avant, you sit down at that instrument and the in-built speakers bring it close to an acoustic piano feel. The keyboard is exactly an acoustic piano keyboard and whatever they did with the sampling gave it a wide dynamic range."

Last year, Corea recorded with keyboardist Hiromi, and their pairing was released a few months ago as *Duet* (Concord). As he recalled

meeting her in Tokyo when she was a teenager, he marveled at how she has become "quite a musician and a great young pianist." Such an observation leads to the question of what advice he would give any young artist.

"Pleasure is being able to do what you like to do, and there's so much in life that can go against that from authoritarian figures who keep you from pursuing something you would like to do," Corea said. "So it's a matter of strength and integrity for any young person to pursue something they're interested in. As for education, the old concept of the apprentice system still works. You learn from one of the masters in your area, and that's how I learned. Any successful person, if you look into it, they learned that way."

Corea is giving himself plenty of time and space to keep making his own new pursuits throughout the rest of the year. In the fall, he'll tour as a trio with Clarke and White. But he's particularly looking forward to a rare summer tour as a solo act.

"I've never toured solo," Corea said. "I've always done solo piano concerts as fillers—a couple here or there upon requests sometimes, but never a whole tour, especially during the active summer concert months. It's going to be a refreshing relief after Return To Forever and the Five Peace Band. I get back to myself and see where the kid is at."

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Historical Release

131 Anthony Braxton, *The Complete Arista Recordings* (Mosaic)

- 122 Miles Davis, *Kind Of Blue 50th Anniversary Collector's Edition* (Columbia/Legacy)
66 Dizzy Gillespie Big Band, *Showtime At The Spotlite: 52nd Street, New York City, June 1946* (Uptown)
32 Lester Young, *The Lester Young/Count Basie Session 1936-1940* (Mosaic)
26 Ornette Coleman, *Town Hall, 1962* (ESP-Disc)
21 Dave Brubeck, *Live At The Monterey Jazz Festival 1958-2007* (Monterey Jazz Festival)
21 Art Tatum, *Piano Starts Here* (Sony Classics)
19 Nina Simone, *To Be Free* (Columbia/Legacy)
17 Miles Davis, *Broadcast Sessions 1958-59* (Acrobat)
13 Benny Goodman, *The Columbia and OKeh Benny Goodman Orchestra Sessions* (Mosaic)
13 Charlie Parker, *Washington, D.C., May 23, 1948* (Uptown)
13 Return To Forever, *The Anthology* (Concord)

Jazz Group

99 Keith Jarrett *Standard Trio*

- 62 Wayne Shorter Quartet
61 SFJAZZ Collective
58 Branford Marsalis Quartet
56 Dave Holland Sextet
47 Charles Lloyd Quartet
31 The Bad Plus
28 Ornette Coleman Quartet
24 Pat Metheny Trio
22 Brad Mehldau Trio
21 E.S.T.
21 Bill Frisell Trio

- 21 Phil Woods Quintet

Jazz Group, Rising Star

52 Mostly Other People Do The Killing

- 48 Vijay Iyer Quartet
40 Fly
30 SFJAZZ Collective
28 Miguel Zenón Quartet
25 Mike Reed's People, Places & Things
22 The Bad Plus
18 Jason Moran Bandwagon
18 Matt Wilson's Arts & Crafts
15 Nik Bärtsch's Ronin
15 Fieldwork
14 Mary Halvorson Trio

Big Band

196 Maria Schneider Orchestra

- 121 Mingus Big Band
107 Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra
83 Vanguard Jazz Orchestra
65 Carla Bley Big Band
51 Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra
51 ICP Orchestra
31 Millennial Territory Orchestra
28 Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band
23 Charlie Haden Liberation Music Orchestra
21 Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet
18 Charles Tolliver Orchestra
18 Gerald Wilson Orchestra

Big Band, Rising Star

59 Jason Lindner Big Band

- 51 John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble
42 Marcus Shelby Jazz Orchestra
40 Millennial Territory Orchestra
33 Charles Tolliver Orchestra
33 WDR Big Band
29 Darcy James Argue's Secret Society

- 26 Exploding Star Orchestra
26 Bob Mintzer Big Band
20 Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band
18 Satoko Fujii Orchestra New York
15 Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra

Trumpet

171 Dave Douglas

- 143 Wynton Marsalis
92 Terence Blanchard
81 Nicholas Payton
75 Roy Hargrove
67 Enrico Rava
49 Tom Harrell
38 Wadada Leo Smith
31 Kenny Wheeler
30 Terell Stafford
24 Tomasz Stanko
23 Steven Bernstein
23 Jeremy Pelt
23 Randy Brecker

Trumpet, Rising Star

86 Christian Scott

- 75 Jeremy Pelt
65 Ambrose Akinmusire
63 Peter Evans
57 Sean Jones
41 Ingrid Jensen
40 Taylor Ho Bynum
36 Avishai Cohen
23 Corey Wilkes
21 Maurice Brown
18 Arve Henriksen
16 Darren Johnston
16 Joe Magnarella
16 Cuong Vu

Trombone

169 Steve Turre

- 148 Roswell Rudd
106 Conrad Herwig
102 Wycliffe Gordon
89 Robin Eubanks
58 Ray Anderson
35 George Lewis
32 Slide Hampton
27 Bob Brookmeyer
22 Gianluca Petrella
19 Wayne Wallace
15 Wolter Wierbos

Trombone, Rising Star

70 Josh Roseman

- 67 Steve Davis
45 Marshall Gilkes

- 39 Gianluca Petrella
33 Vincent Gardner
32 Jeb Bishop
32 Isaac Smith
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25 Troy Andrews
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219 Wayne Shorter

- 147 Branford Marsalis
129 David Liebman
105 Jane Ira Bloom
68 Evan Parker
45 Steve Wilson
40 Jane Bunnett
34 Bob Wilber
24 Chris Potter
21 Roscoe Mitchell
21 Joshua Redman
21 Sam Rivers

Soprano Saxophone, Rising Star

64 Marcus Strickland

- 57 Steve Wilson
51 Anat Cohen
46 Ravi Coltrane
34 Donny McCaslin
32 Michael Blake
30 Jane Bunnett
22 Chris Potter
21 Stefano di Battista
20 Jane Ira Bloom
19 Tim Ries
11 Eli Degibri
11 Sam Newsome

Alto Saxophone

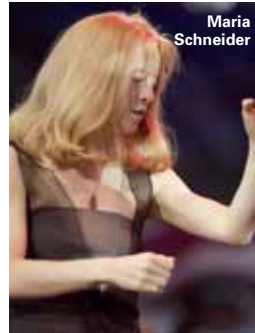
167 Lee Konitz

- 156 Ornette Coleman
139 Phil Woods
104 Kenny Garrett
70 Miguel Zenón
61 Greg Osby
55 Rudresh Mahanthappa
42 Bobby Watson
29 Anthony Braxton
29 Bud Shank
15 Steve Wilson
14 David Sanborn
14 John Zorn

Tenor Saxophone

211 Joe Lovano

- 201 Sonny Rollins
79 Chris Potter
63 Joshua Redman



- 60 Branford Marsalis
58 Wayne Shorter
49 Charles Lloyd
27 David Murray
25 Eric Alexander
23 James Moody
23 Evan Parker
21 James Carter

Tenor Saxophone, Rising Star

102 Donny McCaslin

- 52 Marcus Strickland
51 Chris Potter
48 Tony Malaby
45 Seamus Blake
45 Mark Turner
36 Grant Stewart
24 Ravi Coltrane
20 Joel Frahm
18 J.D. Allen
17 Ron Blake
17 Anat Cohen

Baritone Saxophone

264 Gary Smulyan

- 208 James Carter
80 Ronnie Cuber
78 Hamiet Bluiett
64 Joe Temperley
50 Scott Robinson

50 John Surman
34 Claire Daly
32 Mats Gustafsson
22 Ken Vandermark
19 Cecil Payne
16 Howard Johnson

Baritone Saxophone, Rising Star

102 Claire Daly

83 Scott Robinson
51 Mats Gustafsson
25 Vinny Golia
24 Alex Harding
22 James Carter
20 Lauren Sevia
19 Aaron Lington
17 Dave Rempis
16 Ken Vandermark
14 Jason Marshall
12 Charles Evans

Clarinet

195 Don Byron

111 Paquito D'Rivera
108 Eddie Daniels
98 Ken Peplowski
70 Anat Cohen
63 Marty Ehrlich
61 Buddy DeFranco
49 Michael Moore
33 Louis Sclavis
30 Evan Christopher
24 Dr. Michael White
21 Victor Goines
21 Ben Goldberg

Clarinet, Rising Star

202 Anat Cohen

65 Chris Speed
42 Evan Christopher
34 Ben Goldberg
25 Louis Sclavis
23 Victor Goines
23 Michael Moore
21 Ken Peplowski
19 Greg Tardy
17 Harvey Wainapel
15 Rudi Mahall
14 Gebhard Ullmann

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142 James Moody

105 Lew Tabackin
95 Frank Wess
91 Nicole Mitchell
72 Charles Lloyd
63 James Newton
60 Jane Bunnett
47 Sam Rivers
33 Hubert Laws
31 Dave Valentin
27 Jamie Baum

23 Henry Threadgill

Flute, Rising Star

132 Nicole Mitchell

86 Jamie Baum
44 Jane Bunnett
44 Ali Ryerson
40 Holly Hofmann
34 Anne Drummond
32 Robert Dick
16 Chris Byars
13 Erika von Kleist
10 Douglas Ewart
10 Magic Malik
10 Steve Wilson

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132 Keith Jarrett

129 Hank Jones
74 McCoy Tyner
68 Jason Moran
66 Herbie Hancock
66 Brad Mehldau
55 Martial Solal
44 Chick Corea
43 Cecil Taylor
37 Kenny Barron
27 Ahmad Jamal
24 Bill Charlap

Piano, Rising Star

68 Vijay Iyer

62 Gerald Clayton
54 Jason Moran
44 Aaron Parks
36 Robert Glasper
35 Stefano Bollani
32 Hiromi
30 Marcin Wasilewski
26 Luis Perdomo
25 Lafayette Gilchrist
23 Bill Charlap
15 David Hazeltine

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246 Dr. Lonnie Smith

240 Joey DeFrancesco
159 Larry Goldings
63 John Medeski
47 Sam Yahel
20 Rhoda Scott
20 Gary Versace
18 Tony Monaco
17 Amina Claudine Myers
14 Barbara Dennerlein
13 Mike LeDonne
13 Melvin Rhyne

Organ, Rising Star

135 Gary Versace

92 Sam Yahel
66 Tony Monaco
51 Barbara Dennerlein
50 Chris Foreman
36 Dan Wall

28 Akiko Tsuruga
27 Wil Blades
24 Mike LeDonne
21 Jamie Saft
16 Larry Goldings
13 Radam Schwartz

Electric Keyboard/Synthesizer, Rising Star

104 Craig Taborn

39 Uri Caine
38 Matthew Shipp
37 Jamie Saft
35 Wayne Horvitz
33 Geoffrey Keezer
26 Marco Benevento
20 Django Bates
20 Thomas Lehn
18 Adam Benjamin
18 Jason Lindner
17 Hiromi

Guitar

204 Bill Frisell

111 Jim Hall
110 Pat Metheny
87 John Scofield
66 John McLaughlin
56 Russell Malone
44 Nels Cline
30 Peter Bernstein
30 Kenny Burrell
28 John Abercrombie
25 Marc Ribot
24 Pat Martino

Guitar, Rising Star

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57 Mary Halvorson
45 Anthony Wilson
42 Julian Lage
33 Ben Monder
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29 Nels Cline
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21 Lage Lund
16 Joe Cohn
15 Mike Moreno

Acoustic Bass, Rising Star

125 Esperanza Spalding

61 Avishai Cohen
53 Larry Grenadier
45 Ben Allison
37 Scott Colley
36 Omer Avital
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27 Todd Sickafoose
24 John Hébert
23 Reuben Rogers
16 Devin Hoff
16 Peter Washington

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198 Steve Swallow

133 Christian McBride
125 Stanley Clarke
72 Marcus Miller
45 Victor Wooten
34 Richard Bona
28 John Patitucci
20 Jamaaladeen Tacuma
15 Bob Cranshaw
15 Al MacDowell
15 Michael Manring
11 Matthew Garrison

Electric Bass, Rising Star

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45 Richard Bona
45 Hadrien Feraud
26 Matthew Garrison
18 Drew Gress
18 Victor Wooten
17 Linley Marthe
16 Reed Mathis
13 Tal Wilkenfeld
12 Richie Goods
10 Tony Grey
10 Skúli Sverrisson

Drums

161 Roy Haynes

141 Jack DeJohnette
100 Brian Blade
85 Jeff "Tain" Watts
81 Paul Motian
71 Matt Wilson
39 Lewis Nash
33 Hamid Drake
31 Billy Hart
23 Eric Harland
23 Herlin Riley
20 Nasheet Waits

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53 Matt Wilson
38 Marcus Gilmore
35 Antonio Sanchez
32 Nasheet Waits
29 Francisco Mela
25 Terreon Gully
25 Paal Nilssen-Love
23 Gerald Cleaver
23 Tyshawn Sorey
21 Ari Hoenig

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86 Hamid Drake
79 Cyro Baptista
67 Kahil El'Zabar
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38 Marilyn Mazur
35 Trilok Gurtu
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21 Han Bennink
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Following are the 120 critics who voted in DownBeat's 57th Annual International Critics Poll. The critics distributed up to 10 points among up to three choices (no more than five points per choice) in each of two categories: Established Talent and Rising Stars.

David Adler: Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Weekly, JazzTimes, Time Out New York, DB

Don Albert: DB, Jazz Journal International, Financial Mail

Frank Alkyer: DB

Glenn Astarita: All About Jazz, JazzReview.com, DB

Peter Bastian: Jazzthetik, Jazzpodium, Jazz'N'More

Raul Bernardo: Espresso

Larry Birnbaum: Stereophile

Dick Bogle: DickBogle.com

Brett Bonner: Living Blues Magazine

Philip Booth: DB, Jazziz, Bass Player, Billboard, St. Petersburg Times, Las Vegas City Life

Fred Bouchard: DB, All About Jazz

Michael Bourne: DB, WBGO-FM

Jack Bowers: allaboutjazz.com

Herb Boyd: DB, Network Journal, Amsterdam News, Black Scholar

Shaun Brady: DB, JazzTimes, Philadelphia Daily News, Philadelphia Citypaper, Philadelphia Metro

Pawel Brodowski: Jazz Forum

Stuart Broomer: Toronto Life, Musicworks, Point of Departure, Signal to Noise

Forrest Bryant: DB, Jazz Observer

Nate Chinen: New York Times, JazzTimes, BBC

Aaron Cohen: DB

Thomas Conrad: Stereophile, JazzTimes

John Corbett: DB, Chicago Reader, WNUR-FM

Owen Cordle: The News & Observer, JazzTimes

Joe Cuniff: DB

Barry Davis: DB

Paul de Barros: Seattle Times, DB

R.J. DeLuke: Albany Times-Union, All About Jazz, DB

Joe Dilberto: Critic

Len Dobbin: Coda, Mirror

Bob Doerschuck: DB, CMA Close Up

Bill Douthart: DB, Bigshot

Alain Drouot: DB, WNUR-FM, Cadence

José Duarte: Jazzportugal.ua.pt

Leila Dunbar: DB, Reuters

Alex Dutilh: Jazzman

Gudrun Endress: Jazz Podium

Ed Enright: DB

John Ephland: DB, Relix, Traps

Eric Fine: DB, JazzTimes

Maurizio Franco: Music Jazz, Musica & Dischi, Musica Oggi, Radio Svizzera Italiana

Jack Fuller: Chicago Tribune

Andrew Gilbert: Seattle Times,

Boston Globe, San Jose Mercury News

Ira Gitler: DB, Swing Journal

Frank-John Hadley: DB

James Hale: DB, Signal to Noise

Dave Helland: BMI.com, Grammy.com

Geoffrey Himes: Washington Post, JazzTimes, DB, Offbeat, New York Times, Baltimore City Paper

C. Andrew Hovan: All About Jazz, Jazz Review, DB

John Howard: DB, L.A. Jazz Scene

Michael Jackson: DB, Jazzwise

Robin James: Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, DB

Todd Jenkins: DB, All About Jazz, Jazz.com, American Songwriter

Willard Jenkins: DB, JazzTimes, Jazzwise, Independent Ear Blog, Openskyjazz.com

Fred Jung: All About Jazz

George Kanzler: JazzTimes, Hot House, All About Jazz

Bob Karlovits: DB

Yoshi Kato: DB, San Jose Mercury News

Larry Kelp: East Bay Express, Oakland Magazine, San Francisco Performances, KPFA-FM

Jason Koransky: DB

Kiyoshi Koyoma: Swing Journal, NHK-FM, Jazz Tonight

John Kreibergs: The Pitch

David Kunian: Offbeat, Gambit Weekly, DB

Rob Leurentop: VRT Radio

John Litweiler: Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago Sun-Times, SIMA.org.au, Coda

Jaap Ludeke: JazzFlits

Matthew Lurie: DB

Jim Macnie: DB

Howard Mandel: DB, NPR

Peter Margasak: DB, Chicago Reader, Signal To Noise

Jeff McCord: DB, Texas Monthly, Kut.org

John McDonough: DB, Wall Street Journal

Peter McElhinney: Style Weekly

Bill Meyer: DB, Chicago Reader, Signal to Noise, The Wire, Magnet, Dusted

Ken Micallef: DB, Remix, Modern Drummer

Virgil Mihaiu: DB, Steaua/Jazz Context, Jazz.Pt Magazine, Jazz.Ru Magazine, Musica Progressiva

Massimo Milano: Il Manifesto, Rumore

Bill Milkowski: JazzTimes, The Absolute Sound

Dan Morgenstern: Jersey Jazz, Annual Review of Jazz Studies

John Murph: DB, JazzTimes

Jack Fuller: Chicago Post Express, NPR, The Root

Mitch Myers: DB, Magnet, NPR

Michael Nastos: All Music Guide, Cadence

Ron Netsky: City Newspaper, DB

Jon Newey: Jazzwise, Performing Musician

Stuart Nicholson: Jazzwise, Jazznytt, Jazzit, OJ, Jazzzeit, Jazz Special, Jazz.com, JazzTimes

John Norris: Coda

Jennifer Odell: DB, People, Utne Reader, MSN Music

Dan Ouellette: DB, Stereophile, Napster.com

Ted Panken: DB, Jazziz

Thierry Peremarti: Jazzman

Terry Perkins: DB, JazzTimes, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, All About Jazz

Michael Point: DB, Blues Revue, Round Rock Leader

Norman Provizer: DB, KUVO-FM

Doug Ramsey: JazzTimes, Wall Street Journal

Guy Reynard: Critic

Derk Richardson: The Absolute Sound, Playback Music Magazine, SFGate.com, Oakland Magazine

Russell Arthur Roberts: L.A. Jazz Scene

Chris Robinson: DB, Earshot Jazz

Jon Ross: DB

Antonio Rubio: Correio De Manha, Jazz.Pt, DB

Mark Ruffin: XM Satellite Radio

Lloyd Sachs: DB, No Depression.com

Gene Santoro: New York Daily News, Weider History Group, Chamber Music

Robert Rusch: Cadence

Phil Schaap: DB, Stop Smiling

Chris Sheridan: Jazz Review

Bill Shoemaker: DB, Point of Departure

Kirk Silsbee: DB, Jazziz, Mojo

Will Smith: JazzTimes, DB

Thomas Staudter: DB

Zan Stewart: Star-Ledger

W. Royal Stokes: Jazzhouse.org

Andrew Sussman: Critic

Laurence Svirchew: DB

Otakar Svoboda: Czech TV, Czech Radio

Ron Sweetman: Coda

Eliot Tiegel: Television Week

Chris Walker: Mix, DB, JazzTimes, Double Bassist, L.A. Jazz Scene, California Tour & Travel

Herb Wong: Jazz Educators Journal

Josef Woodard: DB, Los Angeles Times, JazzTimes, Santa Barbara Independent, Opera Now

Scott Yanow: JazzTimes, Jazziz, L.A. Jazz Scene

31 Eyvind Kang

25 Diane Delin

25 Jeff Gauthier

23 Miri Ben-Ari

22 Zach Brock

21 Jason Kao Hwang

18 Aaron Weinstein

17 Mark O'Connor

17 Jessica Pavone

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113 Béla Fleck (banjo)

83 Erik Friedlander (cello)

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33 Grégoire Maret (harmonica)

33 Dino Saluzzi (bandoneon)

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24 Howard Johnson (tuba)

23 Peggy Lee (cello)

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33 Grégoire Maret (harmonica)

29 Hendrik Meurkens (harmonica)

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18 Scott Robinson (bass saxophone)

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51 Karrin Allyson

49 Tierney Sutton

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13 Harris Eisenstadt
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41 Gerald Wilson
38 Vince Mendoza
36 Jim McNeely
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26 David Weiss
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22 Bob Belden
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16 Guillermo Klein
15 John Clayton
13 Vijay Iyer
13 Marcus Shelby

24 Mat Domber
23 John Zorn
22 Matt Balitsaris
22 Todd Barkan
16 Branford Marsalis
14 Jeff Gauthier
13 Larry Klein

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28 Matt Balitsaris
24 Greg Osby
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18 Craig Street
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16 North Mississippi
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12 Dr. John
12 John Mayall

24 Buddy Guy, *Skin Deep*
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23 Shemekia Copeland,
Never Going Back
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18 Joe Louis Walker,
Witness To The Blues
(Stony Plain)

17 Rory Block, *Blues
Walkin' Like A Man*
(Stony Plain)
17 Susan Tedeschi,
Back To The River
(Verve Forecast)
16 Derek Trucks, *Already
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13 Lil' Ed and the Blues
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12 Amos Garrett, *Get
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68 Taj Mahal, *Maestro*
(Heads Up)



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Reviews

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

52 Jazz
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Otis Taylor

Pentatonic Wars And Love Songs

TELARC 83690

★★★★½

If you haven't hipped yourself to Otis Taylor yet, please do. This gravel-voiced, Denver-bred stringster/vocalist is a true original who, as a lyricist, catapults the pain and pleasure of old-time blues into a sort of Oprah Winfrey present. You want contemporary vocabulary for the blues? How about depression, lesbian lovers and child molesting? Taylor brings present-day psychology to classic situations, too, like plain vanilla murder. With just a few words, often repeated obsessively, he sketches a situation then gnaws down the emotional bone.

Here, he performs with jazzers Jason Moran, Ron Miles, Tarus Mateen and Nasheet Waits, a change of pace that gives a rich new texture to his work. Unfortunately, echoey backup vocals and strings muck up some of the tracks, particularly the ones his daughter, Cassie, sings on.

Taylor starts with a classic persona, a traveler pining for someplace familiar, where he can find "some heat"—and he's not just talking about the weather. Miles' sweet, rolling cornet—as with Bill Frisell—leavens the singer's languid longing, while Moran's piano adds an irresistibly rococo touch. "Silver Dollar On My Head" recalls a Greek uncle whose grandmother applied this curious money cure, but at bottom it's really about numbing yet another form of pain. "Lost My Guitar" is so obsessive/compulsive you know it's not just about a guitar. "I'm Not Mysterious" is ostensibly about love between two young children, but the line "I got a little red wagon, you can use it anytime" erases any inkling of innocence. "Young Girl Down The Street" bumps and grinds with unadulterated lust, reinforced by Gary Moore's insinuating electric guitar.

Banjo enters the picture on "Country Boy, Girl," and so does a Lightnin' Hopkins bravado, as the country narrator tells a city girl he's got the goods. Moran totally gets the Taylor vibe on "Walk On Water," which rises to a long jazz jam, with Miles and Moran chewing the fat and Taylor doing a somber scat. The religious imagery is powerful. But the masterpiece here is "Dagger By My Side," a classic "went down to the river" murder saga with the twist that the killer is suddenly stunned to realize his victim loves him—and that his life is over, too. Taylor's all alone here, just him and his delta blues guitar; the effect is mesmerizing.

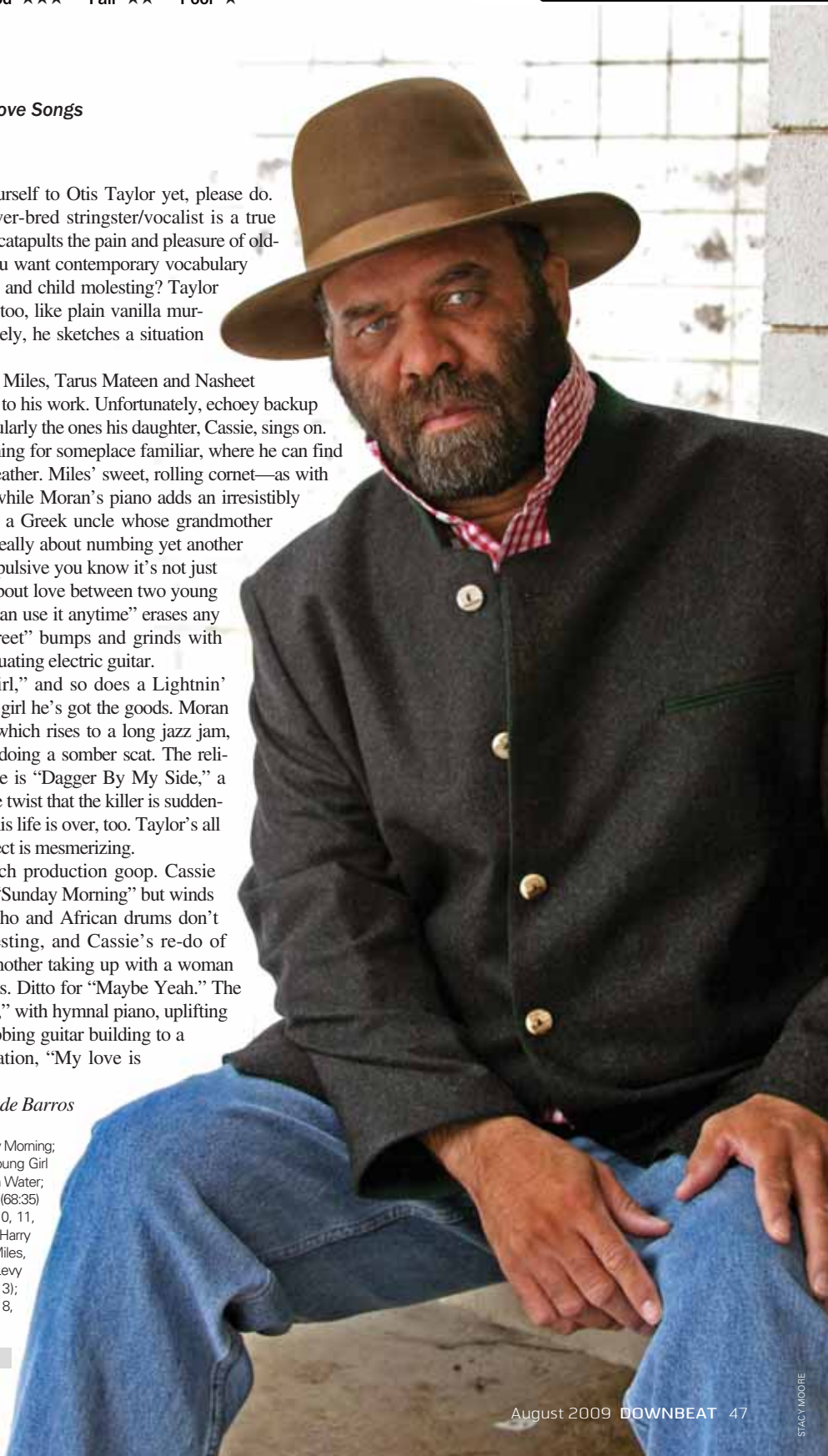
More's the pity that other tracks have too much production goop. Cassie Taylor gives a shot at her father's obsessiveness on "Sunday Morning" but winds up just sounding repetitive. Atmospheric cornet echo and African drums don't make "Talking About It Blues" any more interesting, and Cassie's re-do of Taylor's classic "Mama's Best Friend" (about his mother taking up with a woman and leaving his father) is a mess of whispered vocals. Ditto for "Maybe Yeah." The production works better on the closer, "If You Hope," with hymnal piano, uplifting cornet, Procol Harum organ, martial snare and throbbing guitar building to a ripe climax that makes you think Taylor's declaration, "My love is blind," may not be such a good thing. Great stuff.

—Paul de Barros

Pentatonic Wars And Love Songs: Looking For Some Heat; Sunday Morning; Silver Dollar On My Head; Lost My Guitar; I'm Not Mysterious; Young Girl Down The Street; Country Boy, Girl; Talking About It Blues; Walk On Water; Mama's Best Friend; Maybe Yeah; Dagger By My Side; If You Hope. (68:35)

Personnel: Taylor, vocals, guitar, banjo; Cassie Taylor, bass (2–5, 10, 11, 13), vocals (2–4, 10, 11); Tarus Mateen, bass; Gary Moore (2, 4, 13), Harry Tuft (2), John Richardson (6, 7), guitar; Jason Moran, piano; Ron Miles, cornet; Nasheet Waits, drums; Brian Juan, organ (6, 13); Valerie Levy Franzese, cello (2, 3, 4, 13); Chuck Hugenberg, violin (2, 3, 4, 13); Mohammed Alidu (1), Mawuenyaaga Mensah (2), Fara Tolno (3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11), percussion; Jae Taylor, backup vocals (3).

» Ordering Info: telarc.com



Tortoise

Beacons Of Ancestorship

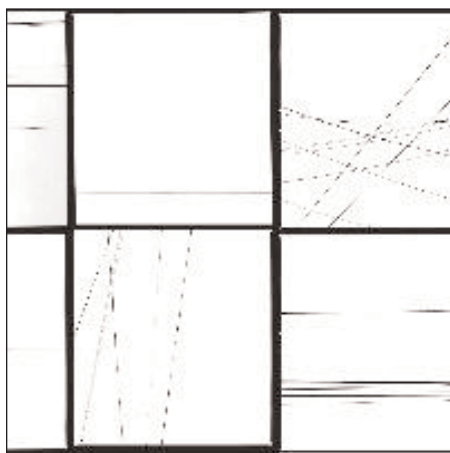
THRILL JOCKEY 210

★★★★½

I only half understand why the term “minimal” is used in reference to the skittish music of Tortoise. Sure, the Chicago-based progstrumetal outfit has a few pieces that make hay with repetition, but the bulk of their tunes slice and dice their rhythms in genuinely unexpected ways, fracturing assumed trajectories and mocking a GPS musical culture that tells us exactly how a piece is going to get from A to B. Maybe those writers meant minimal as “stark,” though the band’s rich textures and inspired use of dissonance kind of deep-sixes that idea, too.

One thing’s certain, there won’t be anyone positioning *Beacons Of Ancestorship* as stark or minimal. Like the new Yeah Yeah Yeahs record, it’s a big bold statement that trades the ensemble’s signature guitar/vibes/snare sound for a swan dive into the synth end of the swimming pool. It’s also a big enough break to flummox a couple people I tried to run a “Blindfold Test” on. With an esthetic based on experimentation, it’s no shock to see John McEntire, Jeff Parker and company amending their artistic persona, but the shift of *Beacons* borders on seismic.

The art of juxtaposition has been essential to Tortoise’s work, and it still makes for some of this program’s more arresting moments; these guys are masters at uniting oppositional fragments. But this baby has sweep. “Prepare Your Coffin” is all about liftoff and aggression. If the band once exploded Esquivel’s space-age bache-



lor pad music for a sense of cranky cool, they’re now firing photon torpedoes and having Todd Rundgren lead Return to Forever through ELP’s *Tarkus*. It has a certain cheese to it, but it’s also refreshing. The group hinted at such hummable melodies on 2001’s *Standards*, and this

new disc inventively expands on them.

Tunefulness also provides an element that’s been lacking since Tortoise’s inception: emotion. Somewhere between the boho testosterone and hummable themes, I’m getting the feeling that these guys are really into their performance this time around. Previously they’ve been intriguing, but icy. “Yinxianghechengqi” is a big-bottomed rager—a Last Exit outtake sans Peter Brötzmann. The ersatz Brazilian beats of “Gigantes” conjure an algebra class taking place during Carnavale. At some points here, you wonder why it took ’em so long to reveal their party side.

Rolling Stone once called ’em a jam band; the Village Voice heard them as hip-hop. Never mind that tired “post-rock” tag. Might be best to consider this their disco album. —*Jim Macnie*

Beacons Of Our Ancestors: High Class Slim Came Floating In; Prepare Your Coffin; Northern Something; Gigantes; Penumbra; Yinxianghechengqi; The Fall of Seven Diamonds Plus One; Minors; Monument Six One Thousand; De Chelly; Charteroak Foundation. (43:51)

Personnel: John McEntire, drums, modular synthesizer, ring modulator guitar, electric harpsichord; Jeff Parker, guitar, bass; Dan Bitney, bass, guitar, percussion; John Hemdon, drums, vibes, keyboards; Doug McCombs, bass, lap steel.

» Ordering info: thrilljockey.com



Darren Johnston

The Edge Of The Forest

CLEAN FEED

★★★★

Bay Area trumpeter Darren Johnston has more than enough going for him as a player to justify a recording that puts him center stage. He’s got a smart, bracing sound, clearly knows his creative music reference points (Lester Bowie, especially, but also Baikida Carroll, Bobby Bradford, Olu Dara, Dave Douglas) and has great taste. Refreshing, then, that on this beautiful quintet date he shares the feature so democratically. And his bandmates do the Canadian-born musician and his thoughtful, substantive compositions proud.

The tunes include attractive and useful structures, like the odd ostinato head on “Foggy,” but often, as on that piece, they open up wide, providing both space and something nutritious to chew on. When the bassline recedes, the role of Rob Reich’s accordion is subtly revealed—the sea moving out and leaving behind a tidepool teeming with life. The ensemble swings

Jack DeJohnette/ Danilo Pérez/ John Patitucci

Music We Are

GOLDEN BEAMS KRM 1150

★★★★

This all-star trio, briefly summated on stage in 2005 and recently revived in the studio, makes for a somewhat erratic but agreeably avant garde combination. The music is occasionally mellow and lyrical (“Soulful Ballad,” “Michael”) but more characteristically simmering with a quiet but prickly intrigue of abstraction and inner tensions. Each man moves in a roomy orbit, often independent but always conscious of the others. The skittish, touch-and-go contacts can be playful, even when they sometimes contain more space than music. Other times the elements coalesce into a percus-



sive density. Expect some ups and downs.

Everybody doubles on “Tango African,” a relatively mellow tune with Argentine flavors in which the trio briefly becomes a sextet. DeJohnette overdubs a fragile but warm little descending theme on melodica, while Pérez converses with himself

on piano and Fender, burrowing into the inner life of the music and forms around him. There are also a few stray guitar-like lines from Patitucci’s six string electric bass.

Silence and sound are equal partners in “Earth Prayer,” the first of three open collective improvisations, and frankly an utterly vapid still life that seems to evoke slow-motion images of a primordial nature stirring from a long sleep. Oddly, its random quality generates

a certain level of anticipation, as if something might suddenly spring from this haphazard haze. But any sense of expectation is a red herring, since nothing ever happens. Such are the perils of chance. Similarly, “Ode To MJQ” comes to life so slowly from DeJohnette’s agonizingly stark landscape of pings and clangs, the first four or five minutes could easily be dumped. But as his rolling tom toms begin to rumble, so does Pérez’s thorny imagination. We get still more open improvisation on “Earth Speaks,” but in considerably more lively and animated form. The piece grows in terse, percussive little twitches in which each player cautiously probes the other. But Patitucci’s mournful bowed string bass ultimately becomes the controlling voice, imposing an almost classic rigor over the music. He casts a similar authority over the more somber “Panama Viejo.”

“Corbilla” is a high-energy ensemble piece that gives DeJohnette his best moments.

The HOT Box

with intensity on “Apples,” which has a more hard-boppish feel; Sheldon Brown’s tenor shows sensitivity and guts. The economy of Johnson’s writing is tested on the title track, which aims a ballad waltz at some big-band voicings, with success—here’s sweetness without sticky sentimentality.

Smith Dobson V’s drumming is poised and relaxed, without any explosive tight-fistedness, and Devin Hoff is one of the most impressive musicians on the West Coast. But the biggest treat comes in the form of Ben Goldberg’s clarinet playing, which continues to grow in depth. Goldberg’s fantastic trio disc *Plays Monk* (with Hoff and Scott Amendola) was one of the best records of 2007. Here he’s just glorious, with everything that makes a creative clarinetist memorable, which means he emphasizes the wood. And as much weight as his sound carries, so does his sense of lyrical invention. Right out of the box, on “Be The Frog,” he’s there with so much to offer, and when he and Brown square off for an unaccompanied dialogue, it is potent while retaining a degree of reserve.

As for Johnston’s own playing, it definitely merits attention. He’s got chops in the brave new world of trumpet (Axel Dörner to Peter Evans), as he shows on “Broken,” but he’s a melodically driven player who can in the course of the same track evoke Joe McPhee and nod at deep funk. Someone to watch, on trumpet, of course, but as a composer and bandleader as well.

—John Corbett

The Edge Of The Forest: Be The Frog; Foggy; Cabin 5; Broken; Apples; The Edge Of The Forest; Sippin’ With Lou. (59:48)

Personnel: Darren Johnston, trumpet; Ben Goldberg, clarinet; Sheldon Brown, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Devin Hoff, bass; Smith Dobson V, drums; Rob Reich, accordion (2).

» Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Drummers never thrive, after all, in low gear, and this gives him license to fly. Pérez is the main counterweight, and rides DeJohnette with a punchy, two-fisted dissonance, seasoned with aggressive vamps. He also engages Patitucci in an arresting sequence of close-quarter trade-offs before turning back to DeJohnette, who keeps the undertow churning.

Accompanying the CD is a 25-minute DVD informally documenting the rural Catskill session. The conviviality conveys a sense of fun not always apparent in the music.

—John McDonough

Music We Are: Tango African; Earth Prayer; Seventh D 1st Movement; Seventh D 2nd Movement; Soulful Ballad; Earth Speaks; Cobilla; Panama Viejo; White; Ode to MJQ; Mitchel. (62:32)

Personnel: Danilo Pérez, piano, keyboard; John Patitucci, basses; Jack DeJohnette, drums, melodica.

» Ordering info: goldenbeams.net

CDs »	CRITICS »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Otis Taylor <i>Pentatonic Wars And Love Songs</i>		★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★½
Tortoise <i>Beacons Of Ancestralship</i>		★	★★★	★★★★½	★★★★
Jack DeJohnette/John Patitucci/Danilo Pérez <i>Music We Are</i>		★★★	★★★	★★★★½	★★★
Darren Johnston <i>The Edge Of The Forest</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

Critics' Comments

Otis Taylor, *Pentatonic Wars And Love Songs*

Who knew his hidden inspiration would turn out to be Astral Weeks? The repeated phrases and flowing grooves create a mystical feel, and Taylor’s gruff voice is convincing throughout. At some points the mercurial nature of the tunes makes the program seem somewhat wan, but one thing’s certain: he ain’t your typical blues dude.

—Jim Macnie

Take a dream team with Moran, Waits, Miles et al. and give them absolutely nothing to work with. The songs have no formal tension, don’t change, and as a result everyone sounds like he’s noodling. Taylor has a warm Taj Mahal-ish voice and still isn’t singing the everyday blues, but he can’t get out of first gear so the Pentatonic Wars end in a stalemate.

—John Corbett

Taylor voices a catalog of life’s laments with empathy in original tunes sometimes closer to Bruce Springsteen’s blue collar temper than the blues form. Daughter Cassie projects a warm, country vulnerability on “Sunday Morning.” Back up band is excellent, with Jason Moran bubbling to the top more than once, especially on “Young Girl Down The Street.”

—John McDonough

Tortoise, *Beacons Of Ancestralship*

I love how these guys take vernacular vocabulary—flamenco, slamming backbeats, wah-wah bass guitar, Duane Eddy twang, industrial clanking—then recombine it into their own codes. Intellectual populism at the DNA level—and always highly listenable.

—Paul de Barros

Constantly in motion but going nowhere, this whirlpool of disembodied techno synthetica pounds simultaneously on both one’s ear and one’s patience. Press kit shovels on the praise with words like “lo-fi noise ... processed ... robotic.” All true enough, but hardly words of praise where I come from.

—John McDonough

Tortoise has everything you need to make it the greatest indie band in the world. But culling the sum of the parts is not always enough for the Chicago band, and on record their main problem is one of over-reaching. In the most stripped-down passages, Beacons is the perfect mix of tensile strength and instrumental-rock intelligence.

—John Corbett

Jack DeJohnette/John Patitucci/Danilo Pérez, *Music We Are*

White-hot trio interplay (“Seventh D,” both movements) with especially wonderful Pérez (“Earth Speaks”) offset by startlingly weak free improvisations and droll melodica-centered songs. When all six of them are playing at once (each man his own partner), everyone seems to be trying to make space for his doppelgänger, which makes for a clumsy match of mixed-doubles.

—John Corbett

A melodica here, some bowed bass there—its potpourri vibe gets a little frustrating after a while. But the chemistry that each of these vignettes comprises is flatly amazing, and the trio’s deep interaction creates a through line for the zig-zagging agenda.

—Jim Macnie

I want to like this so much better than I do, especially after seeing the companion DVD, but for all the earnest, sensitive interaction, the music rarely takes off. “Panama Viejo” cuts to deep melancholy and “Ode to MJQ” is smartly minimalist, but the rest comes off as slightly precious, even sentimental.

—Paul de Barros

Darren Johnston, *The Edge of the Forest*

Three old horns find unexpectedly eccentric new voices in this soft-spoken mischief. There is an acerbic charm and emotional detachment at work that is cool, consistent, smartly calculated and positioned just so between straight jazz (“Apples”) and uneasy awkwardness. The ensembles often have a lovely quirky elegance. Worth the risk.

—John McDonough

It bubbles with exciting improv passages, it swings in about six singular ways, and it sends a message: out music is lots of fun. The trumpeter brings a nice élan to the performances, and in several spots the tunes tilt toward that wondrous plane John Carter’s ensembles worked on.

—Jim Macnie

Wow! Son of Dave Douglas in a killer pianoless quintet with the chipper, slit-it-wide-open vibe of the Dave Holland classic *Conference Of The Birds*. Johnston’s all over the horn, smearing and sliding, but with crystal-clear ideas. The constant swarm of horn lines keeps interest high. Jumpy, sometimes whimsical music with lots of breaks in the time, doubled-up solos and great writing.

—Paul de Barros

Joe Lovano Us Five

Folk Art

BLUE NOTE 94345

★★★★½

Joe Lovano's recorded music continues to vary from album to album. He even flips the personnel based on the kind of music he's playing. Two extreme examples say it all: *Trio Fascination* (1998) and *Viva Caruso* (2002), where small-group jazz with Dave Holland and Elvin Jones contrasts wildly with orchestral music performed as a tribute "from one great Italian tenor to another." Lovano's group Us Five expresses yet another divergence. Playing jazz but unconventionally so, this band peels back the layers of sophistication jazz is so wont to entertain. *Folk Art* is more emotional than cerebral. And yet, the "folk art" abstractions and (relatively) simpler forms no doubt suggest a well-thought-out game plan.

Folk Art may be a concept album in that it stands apart with a theme, with different methods of achieving a certain satisfying small-group interplay. Each track, contrasting with the one that preceded it, still somehow manages to echo the theme that this music is more elemental, if only in execution. But before the new listener gets the idea this record could double as a field recording, Us Five starts out in a fairly conventional vein, with an uptempo swing number faintly echoing the changes to "Giant



Steps." The straightahead groove of "Powerhouse" is followed by a circle in a round of sorts, as the band plays off a simple progression. Where "Powerhouse" suggests jazz's typical virtuosic impulse, "Folk Art" jumps right in with a plain execution, with more room for feeling the music.

A highlight of the CD is hit upon early with the percussion pause in this song's middle, followed by a departure into a more conventional swing groove with piano and tenor before a return to a looser, John Coltrane-like coda with the original sing-songy theme. Ditto the Charles Mingus-flavored floating form of "Wild Beauty." Hence, the template of unusual arrangements mixed with the unexpected is laid out.

Us Five is brimming with talent: pianist James Weidman, bassist Esperanza Spalding and drummer/percussionists Otis Brown III and Francisco Mela are a true unit, navigating the twists and turns of this music as if they were its authors in place of Lovano (Lovano's production, by the way, has the drummers in perfect left-channel/right-channel balance, e.g., the many-faceted flourishes of "Drum Song"). As the album progresses it becomes more and more organic in nature, both in its abstractions as well as its simple melodies. And Lovano uses this format to dig into not only his straight alto sax and alto clarinet but channels the spirit of Rahsaan Roland Kirk, adding his taragato, aulochrome and gongs, no less. It's as if he's in a continual state of summing up even as he keeps on moving forward.

—John Ephland

Folk Art: Powerhouse; Folk Art; Wild Beauty; Us Five; Song For Judi; Drum Song; Dibango; Page 4; Ettenro. (64:47)

Personnel: Joe Lovano, tenor sax, straight alto sax, alto clarinet, taragato, aulochrome, gongs; James Weidman, piano; Esperanza Spalding, bass; Otis Brown III, Francisco Mela, drums/percussion.

» Ordering info: bluenote.com

Frank Wess Nonet

Once Is Not Enough

LABETH MUSIC 101

★★★★

As a youngster, Frank Wess was one of the two tenor sax sparkplugs in Count Basie's '50s band. Here the veteran channels his glorious history with a midsize unit that packs an orchestral punch. The charts and the playing swing straight ahead without pretense. These are journeyman tunes in journeyman arrangements, played by a fine unit of seasoned players. Young pianist Gerald Clayton is the exception, and he shines discreetly on the ballads.

Except for three standards, it's Wess' book on this collection, and he proves himself a well-rounded writer. He offers swing bounces ("Once Is Not Enough," "Sara's Song"), a shuffle ("You Made a Good Move"), a wistful ballad ("Dementia"), a brisk "I Got Rhythm" variation ("Backfire") and, of course, a blues ("Tryin' To Make My Blues Turn Green"). "Dementia" and "Fly Me to the Moon" are flute features for both Wess and Ted Nash. Swing is the common denominator throughout, and even the ballads have subtle propulsion.

Terrell Stafford's trumpet burns brightly on the fiery "Backfire." Wess acquits himself well, though his attack doesn't have the snap it once did. Conversely, he didn't play ballads with his present depth as a Basie star. Ted Nash shadows Wess on the flute heads; as soloists, Wess is clipped and piping, Nash fluent and rangy. Dennis Mackrel's chart on "Once" has flowing brass choruses. Some might consider this swing-oriented outing as quaint. Foursquare in intent, and true to tradition would be more accurate.

—Kirk Silsbee

Once Is Not Enough: Once Is Not Enough; Sara's Song; You Made A Good Move; Dementia, My Darling; Sweet And Lovely; Backfire; Lush Life; Fly Me to the Moon; Tryin' To Make My Blues Turn Green. (60:10)

Personnel: Frank Wess, tenor saxophone, flute; Frank Greene, Terrell Stafford, trumpets; Steve Turre, trombone; Ted Nash, alto saxophone, flute; Scott Robinson, baritone and bass saxophones, flute; Gerald Clayton, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Winard Harper, drums.

» Ordering info: frankwess.org



Gary Burton/ Pat Metheny/ Steve Swallow/ Antonio Sanchez

Quartet Live!

CONCORD JAZZ 31303

★★★★½

Gary Burton in recent years has gone the reunion route, revisiting artistically and commercially successful projects of yore, including last year's Grammy-winning pairing with Chick Corea. Now comes a live performance (at Yoshi's in Oakland) with his recently reunited Quartet, a fluid group that originated in 1967 with bassist Steve Swallow and expanded its palette in the early '70s with the addition of a then-teenaged Pat Metheny. Joining on drums is Metheny Group regular Antonio Sanchez.

The group's sound—light and airy, grooving but mostly mellow, and built on a deft mix of acoustic and electric instruments—remains as appealing as it was the first time around. Thanks to myriad musical paths that Burton, Metheny and Swallow have traveled in the intervening years, the interplay and improvisations are more sophisticated than ever, beginning with Chick Corea's buoyant "Sea Journey" and continuing with a set that includes a pair of floaty Carla Bley tunes and Keith Jarrett's "Coral," a gorgeous ballad. And Metheny's guitar synthesizer (on his "Question And Answer") and Sanchez's earthy, urgent playing give the group a more contemporary musical tint.

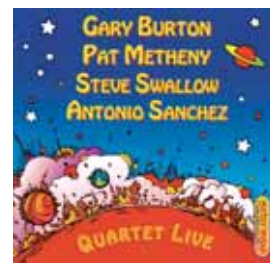
The moods and textures here are impressively varied, too, with Swallow's multicolor, shape-shifting "Falling Grace," one of several showcases for the quicksilver grace of the bassist's five-string work; Metheny's laid-back, stairstepping "B And G" and darting, barn-burning "Missouri Uncompromised"; and Burton's stately, classically influenced "Hullo, Bolinas."

—Philip Booth

Quartet Live!: Sea Journey; Olhos De Gato; Falling Grace; Coral; Walter L.; B And G; Missouri Uncompromised; African Flower; Hullo, Bolinas; Syndrome; Question And Answer. (79:22)

Personnel: Gary Burton, vibraphone; Pat Metheny, guitar; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums.

» Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com



Peter Zak

Seed Of Sin
STEEPLECHASE 31641
★★★★

Pianist Peter Zak thrives in the classic piano-bass-drums format. His music always sustains a high degree of clarity, and his bands have an innate crispness. Bassist Paul Gill has been on all the trio records, while Quincy Davis makes his standout debut here on drums. Of the 10 tracks, three are originals, including the powerful "Horace's Dream" and the contemplative "Shala."

In his deft melodic artistry, Zak can be strong-fingered and assertive as a bandleader, and his disciplined rhythm section sticks close to him at all times. Davis provides dynamic counterpoint to Zak, and his frequent percussive flourishes are swinging and well conceived. The title track is a wonderful Wayne Shorter composition, and most of the other tunes are equally interesting choices, including Charlie Parker's "Perhaps," Eubie Blake's "Memories Of You" and Billy Strayhorn's "All Day Long."

Comparisons to Bill Charlap's working trio would not be totally unfair, but Zak is a focused, original player with fine taste and great chops. The album closes with an eight-minute version of Herbie Hancock's "King Cobra," and the driving performance shows Zak, Gill and Davis in sync and having a ball.

—Mitch Myers

Seed Of Sin: All Day Long; Minor Apprehension; Propinquity/ Poor People's March; Horace's Dream; Shala; Perhaps; Seed Of Sin; Memories Of You; King Cobra. (66:48)

Personnel: Peter Zak, piano; Paul Gill, bass; Quincy Davis, drums.

» Ordering info: steepchase.dk



Charnett Moffett

The Art Of Improvisation
MOTEMA 00021
★★★

Charnett Moffett is something of an overachiever, a virtuoso player of various basses who to his credit relentlessly tries on new sounds and goes where few of his colleagues dare to go—from fusion to free jazz. For his eighth recording as a leader, Moffett doesn't break with that approach. It's risky, and the results feel a bit scattershot.

There are musical treasures to be savored here, though. "Elements" is an astonishing unaccompanied workout on upright bass, its Eastern-hinted, dissonance-edged theme driven by fleet runs, slaps and harmonics. Bowed bass tops the churning, two-chord groove of the trio piece "The Awakening." Fluent fretless takes the lead on the Caribbean-tinged "We Pray," which features layered bass riffs, and the pulsing "Swing Rock."

On "Dreams," inspirational spoken word, courtesy of Moffett's sister Angela Moffett, is juxtaposed with rambunctious rhythm-section propulsion and RJ Avallone's wandering trumpet. And the session closes out with the wah-wah bass incantations of "Star Spangled Banner," a bracing, Hendrix-esque nod to musical freedom.

—Philip Booth

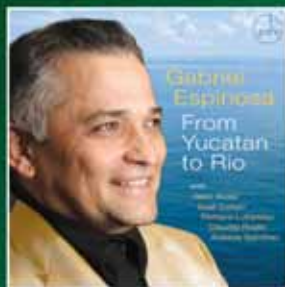
The Art Of Improvisation: We Pray; Moses; The Story; Dreams; Elements Of Life; Call For Peace; The Awakening; Swing Rock; Enlightenment Part I; Enlightenment Part II; The Art Of Improvisation; Star Spangled Banner. (59:02)

Personnel: Charnett Moffett, upright bass, fretless electric bass guitar, piccolo bass; Will Calhoun, Eric McPherson, Charnett Max Moffett, drums; Scott Brown, keyboards; Pat Jones, acoustic guitar; Shane Barnes, electric guitar; RJ Avallone, trumpet; Angela Moffett, spoken word; Yungchen Lhamo, vocals.

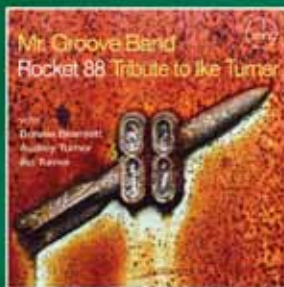
» Ordering info: motema.com



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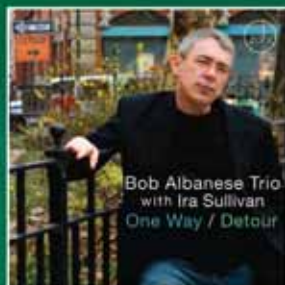
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GABRIEL ESPINOSA — From Yucatan to Rio

"Brazilian jazz filtered through Mexican sensibilities. Everybody is playing and singing up a storm for a rousing time that just doesn't quit. High octane throughout ... solid adult jazz that ... is sure to fit into the earbuds ... delightfully winning set that's hard to resist."

—Midwest Record

MR. GROOVE BAND — Rocket 88: Tribute to Ike Turner

Rocket 88 takes the listener through Turner's music, in new recordings, featuring Nashville-based Mr. Groove Band with ex-Ikettes Bonnie Bramlett and Audrey Turner, Ike's last wife. Previously unreleased bonus track "Prancing" is a stunning, original Ike Turner instrumental from his 2007 GRAMMY winning *Risin' with the Blues* sessions!

HENDRIK MEURKENS — Samba To Go!

"New York harmonica & vibes ace Hendrik Meurkens, whose forte is the music of culturally bountiful Brazil, is in a class of his own. Choro and samba rhythms are the primary focus of an engaging 10-track session with Hendrik's working quintet and guests."

—Mark Holston

BOB ALBANESE TRIO — One Way/Detour

With special guest Ira Sullivan on sax and flute, "Albanese shows a skillful, inventive, warm approach in any tempo. This is an exceptionally listenable recording that will have you wondering where this very talented pianist has been hiding all these years."

—Jazz & Blues Report

BOB MOVER — It Amazes Me ...

Hailed by jazz piano legend Hank Jones as "one of the greatest and most underexposed musicians in the history of jazz," New York saxophonist Bob Mover in his ZOHO debut. "Slow, smoky ballads, lustrous sax, Kenny Barron accompaniment, and improbably touching vocals."

—Village Voice

BROTHERS OF THE SOUTHLAND — Brothers of the Southland

Brothers of the Southland aims at nothing less than revitalizing Southern rock by presenting the genre's greatest musicians of several generations in a collaborative all-star format, including singers Bo Bice (ex American Idol 2005), Jimmy Hall (ex Wet Willie, Jeff Beck, Hank Williams Jr.) Henry Paul (The Outlaws, BlackHawk), Dan Toler (Allman Brothers Band), Jay Boy Adams (ZZ Top, The Band), and Steve Gorman (Black Crowes, Jimmy Page).



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Sax Aggression

From grainy introspection to acerbic ecstasy, alto saxophonist David Binney covers a lot of tonal ground on *Third Occasion* (Mythology 0006; 61:50) ★★★ and frequently extends the harmonic range with a small brass section. Pivoting on the panoramic "Squares And Palaces"—an exceptionally well-constructed 15-minute composition—the recording features a first-rate rhythm section: Craig Taborn, Scott Colley and Brian Blade. Sounding particularly dark and resonant, Colley plays a muscular role, freeing Blade to dance lithely. *Third Occasion* has a cinematic quality that accentuates the episodic nature of Binney's nine originals.

Ordering info: davidbinney.com

There's more than a hint of the exclamatory single-mindedness of John Coltrane's *Giant Steps* to Jimmy Greene's *Mission Statement* (RazDaz/Sunnyside 4608; 64:26) ★★★½. The title makes it plain that Greene aims to lay his saxophone bona fides on the table for those who haven't heard the 34-year-old on his way up. He strings together long, pirouetting runs, accented by plangent squeals straight out of Trane's book. Bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Eric Harland may be better known now as Charles Lloyd's rhythm mates, but they've been with Greene since 2002—along with pianist Xavier Davis—and the longevity is evident in their sympathetic support. Guitarist Lage Lund provides a second compelling lead voice.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Octogenarian Red Holloway has a timeless sound that contains the echoes of decades of music made in Chicago. A DuSable High School contemporary of Johnny Griffin and Von Freeman, Holloway glides through nine pieces on *Go Red Go!* (Delmark 585; 65:21) ★★★ and handles the diverse program—which stretches from Gershwin to Jobim—with an even, graceful groove. The classic organ quartet is filled out by either Henry Johnson or Freeman's brother George on guitar, Greg Rockingham, drums, and tuneful keyboardist Chris Foreman.

Ordering info: delmark.com

Pursuing a loose superhero theme wrapped in a string of absurdly punning



Jerome Sabbagh:
spirit strikes

song titles, *Adventures* (Boxholder 055; 69:41) ★★★ introduces veteran adventurer Charlie Kohlase's highly resourceful septet. Powered by two drummers and featuring a blustery front line of two reeds, Jeff Galindo's trombone and Eric Hofbauer's guitar, *The Explorer's Club* is a band that can sound like a much larger unit but also shift into raw-boned blowing reminiscent of New York's loft era. "The Star Of The Show," Kohlase's raucous tribute to James Brown, is a standout.

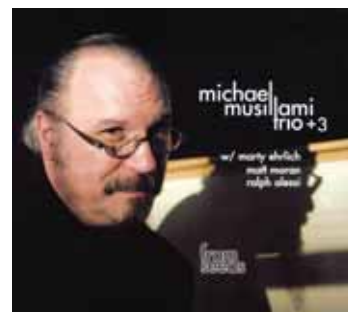
Ordering info: charliekohlase.com

Tony Malaby's excoriating tone is always bracing, and contrasted with Ben Monder's spectral guitar it gains an extra measure of grit on *Paloma Recio* (New World 80688; 57:58) ★★★½. Monder matches him for intensity on "Alechinsky," and Norwegian bassist Eivind Opsvik adds another dissonant layer. With Nasheet Waits playing more freely than he does in many settings, this is a recording that covers a broad scope of moods, with the deeply felt lyricism of "Lucedes" and "Sonota" balancing Malaby's more aggressive pieces.

Ordering info: newworldrecords.org

You don't find many post-bop era musicians recording programs of all standards; fewer still choose to do them in a pianoless trio. French native Jerome Sabbagh relishes the challenge with *One Two Three* (Bee Jazz 028; 46:28) ★★★ and his nerve pays off. Backed by the exceptionally responsive rhythm team of bassist Ben Street and whip-fast drummer Rodney Green, the 39-year-old Sabbagh takes on nine pieces—primarily from the '50s—and ups the ante by doing them live off the floor, without edits or overdubs. Avoiding any of the usual stylistic clichés, Sabbagh lets these compositions speak for themselves. He's not afraid to simply play the melody, although when the spirit strikes him he can spin out inspired improvisations. **DB**

Ordering info: beejazz.com



Michael Musillami Trio + 3

From Seeds

PLAYSCAPE 020109

★★★★½

Guitarist Michael Musillami has a tone that's impossible not to love. Tart, yet round, he uses it on rapidly picked lines that sound like early John McLaughlin and in darting phrases that are accented by his long-time rhythm partners, bassist Joe Fonda and drummer George Schuller. On *From Seeds* Musillami has expanded his trio by adding saxophonist Marty Ehrlich, vibist Matt Moran and trumpeter Ralph Alessi. That makes for a potent sextet, and the guitarist's writing provides a rich variety of settings.

Inspired by Thelonious Monk, "Splayed Fingers" zigzags between tempos and is highlighted by a gorgeous, cascading line that's essayed first by Moran and then echoed by Musillami and Fonda. Ehrlich adds heat as the pace doubles and Alessi takes the piece out with a typically piquant solo. The following "Ga-Ga-Goosebumps" takes the listener in a completely different direction, shifting between Schuller's martial-sounding snare intro to a series of staccato movements that drive home an insistent melodic line. Again, Musillami wastes no time making great use of his new bandmates' strengths—in this case, Ehrlich's biting, burnished tone and Alessi's terrific use of intervals. Not enough variety yet? Musillami turns a perfect trifecta by cranking up a retro-sounding metallic tone on the title composition—a corrosive sound that Ehrlich matches on alto. After hammering away with an intensity that recalls the punk jazz/no wave era, Fonda and Schuller steer things into a near-rumba coda.

A blues dedicated to a flagging wisteria plant and a sharply etched anthem for composers who continue to work in pencil slow the pace and showcase Moran's work-effective doubling of Alessi's lead on "Wisteria Hysteria Blues" and lovely sprays of notes on "Graphite."

In his liner notes, Musillami is candid about his concern over adding new voices to his 7-year-old trio. He needn't have worried; it was a great decision.

—James Hale

From Seeds: Splayed Fingers; Ga-Ga-Goosebumps; From Seeds; Wisteria Hysteria Blues; Graphite; Bill Barron. (56:22)

Personnel: Michael Musillami, guitar; Ralph Alessi, trumpet; Marty Ehrlich, alto sax; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Joe Fonda, bass; George Schuller, drums.

» Ordering info: playscape-recordings.com

Chick Corea & John McLaughlin

Five Peace Band Live

CONCORD 31397

★★★★

There's something for everyone in this generous sonic souvenir of the world tour of the one-time-only super-group assembled by leaders Chick Corea and John McLaughlin. The two-disc live set taken from the band's European tour offers two hours of stylistically diverse but uniformly superlative music as it segues from full-band fusion fireworks to a delicate duet on a standard to impassioned blowing sessions and even some avant-garde experimentation. Throw in a guest appearance of historic importance and *Five Peace Band Live* delivers a substantial jazz experience of unusual quantity and quality.

In the more than four decades that have passed since Corea and McLaughlin worked together, they had never combined their talents in a touring group until the Five Peace Band project. They apparently wanted to make up for lost time as they attempt to demonstrate the full depth and diversity of their expertise by not only visiting the past and present of fusion but also delving into samba, bebop and several unusual hues of blues.

With alto saxist Kenny Garrett, a fellow Miles Davis alumnus, the band was intended to be an improv unit, as its temporary nature would imply. It is, however, a tribute to the leaders, but especially to the rhythm section of bassist Christian McBride and drummer Vinnie Colaiuta, that the live music doesn't sound like just a high-level jam session.

The peripatetic Corea, seemingly involved in a major new project every year, provides more piano than usual, while McLaughlin's playing retains its precise velocity even as his work has evolved to include silence as well as speed.

Half the songs are more than 20 minutes long, and all of them (with the exception of the glorious duet finale) offer at least a dozen minutes of music. Fusion fans expecting little more than greatest hits from the past will be surprised by the forward-looking nature of the majority of the material, as well as by its diversity. Three contemporary McLaughlin compositions and two by Corea, who also contributes an arrangement of Jackie McLean's "Dr. Jackle," wherein McBride delivers a breath-taking bass solo, provide the core of the concert.

Garrett, who distinguishes himself on every song, shines especially bright on McLaughlin's "New Blues, Old Bruise," a tune that also serves as a Colaiuta feature. But it is in the rapid-fire, three-way trading on "Señor C.S." that he leaves no doubt his role in the band is that of an equal.

Corea's "Hymn To Andromeda," ushered in quietly with just piano and bowed bass, is the set's most ambitious and extended selection.

The excitement of the new dominates the set



but it is the sublime satisfaction of the old that is most rewarding. Herbie Hancock joins the band for a fascinating 20-minute revisit to the Davis era as the band navigates "In A Silent Way" and "It's About That Time" with more creative confidence and seasoned sensibilities than in their youthful days.

The concert closer, a brilliantly nuanced and beautifully performed Corea/McLaughlin

duet rendition of "Someday My Prince Will Come," is a far cry from the frenetic full band opener "Raju" and serves as a fitting and proper denouement for the proceedings.

—Michael Point

Five Peace Band Live: Disc 1—Raju; New Blues, Old Bruise; Hymn To Andromeda (68:01). Disc 2—Dr. Jackle; Señor C.S.; In A Silent Way/It's About That Time; Someday My Prince Will Come (71:06).

Personnel: Chick Corea, piano and keyboards; John McLaughlin, guitar; Kenny Garrett, saxophone; Christian McBride, acoustic and electric bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Herbie Hancock, piano (7).

» Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com



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PAULINHO GARCIA

"Singer-guitarist Garcia always caresses the ear, but this disc offers an impressive collection of original compositions steeped in Brazilian musical culture. Each is a revelation." – Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune*, March 2009.



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Chicago Stories

Nick Moss & The Flip Tops: *Live At Chan's, Vol. 2* (Blue Bella 1012; 79:10) ★★★½ Whereas much Chicago blues today seems fit for a mausoleum, guitarist Moss' take on the music sounds as fresh as the moment when it was recorded onstage in mid-2008. He's reached his maturity, supplying a tough-minded precision and inventiveness to the utilitarian guitar licks required for his originals and old standbys like "Five Long Years" and "I'm Ready." As a singer, Moss has improved by leaps and bounds. Guest guitarist Lurrie Bell

also knows how to communicate emotions with ease, his 12-bar bona fides established in the 1980s.

Ordering info: bluebellarecords.com

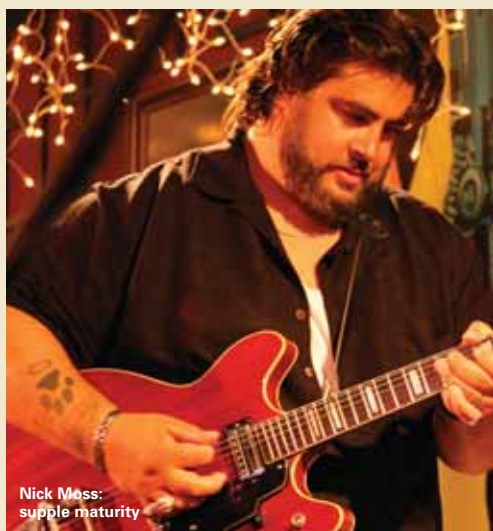
Shirley Johnson: *Blues Attack* (Delmark 798; 63:45) ★★★ In a perfect world, Johnson would be headlining blues festivals all over. Formerly employed by Buster Benton, Johnny Christian and Eddie Lusk, on her own since the early '90s, this Chicagoan exudes a wise self-containment whether singing Maurice John Vaughn's shuffle "You're Reckless" or taking a soul direction on the Ray Charles classic "Unchain My Heart." She brings formidable interpretative honesty to a salty slow blues about cheating she penned with Vaughn, "You Shouldn't Have Been There." Trumpeter Kenny Anderson's horn arrangements increase the appeal of five tunes.

Ordering info: delmark.com

Billy Boy Arnold/John Primer/Billy Branch/Lurrie Bell: *Chicago Blues—A Living History* (Raisin' Music 1003; 34:48/40:09) ★★½ Four midlifers—harp players Arnold and Branch and guitarists Primer and Bell—lead the charge on a 21-song program that traces the music from its up-from-the-Delta urban beginnings in 1940 (the Sonny Boy Williamson I-identified "My Little Machine") on to the '90s (Buddy Guy's "Damn Right, I've Got The Blues"). The ensemble performances are generally vibrant and satisfying, though vocals can tax your patience.

Ordering info: raisinmusic.com

And This Is Free—*The Life And Times Of Chicago's Legendary Maxwell Street* (Shanachie 6801; 100:00 DVD/58:56 CD) ★★★½ The DVD part of this multi-pack captures all the fascinating hustle and



Nick Moss:
supple maturity

KATE MOSS

bustle of the West Side street marketplace in the mid-'60s. Foremost in quality is the titular Mike Shea-directed documentary, filmed on 16 Sundays, with several blues and gospel performers featured. Also impressive: Shuli Eshel's shorter film, *Maxwell Street: A Living Memory—The Jewish Experience in Chicago*. The modestly enjoyable CD comes packed with 17 studio-made tracks from guitarist Blind Arvella Gray (minus two left-hand fingers) and other local bluesmen.

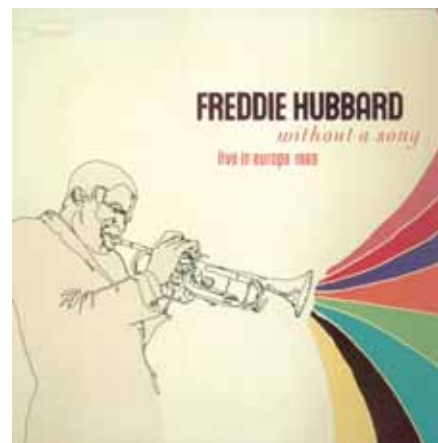
Ordering info: shanachie.com

Zora Young: *Sunnyland* (Airway 4765; 56:57) ★★★ Long deserving of wider recognition, Young brings a jittery, caffeinated edge to her singing that deepens the tension present in songs she wrote or got from guitarist Hubert Sumlin, saxophonist-producer Sam Burckhardt or the Sunnyland Slim songbook. She's absent on three songs and quick to yield to soloists on a few more—but that's permitted because this is a democratic tribute to the late great pianist with the aforementioned and other pals of Slim together in the Windy City studio.

Ordering info: airwayrecords.com

Muddy Waters: *Live At ChicagoFest* (Shout! Factory DVD 11304; 55:22) ★★★ Onstage in 1981, Waters displays the distinguishing features of a blues titan—start with complete control of a rich language of inflections and perfect constructions on the three basic chords. Mojo Buford on harp and the rest of the pick-up band address the emotionalism of "Mannish Boy" and 11 more favorites with fond regard. Rail-thin Johnny Winter joins singers Mighty Joe Young and Larry "Big Twist" Nolan as guests. **DB**

Ordering info: shoutfactory.com



Freddie Hubbard

Without A Song: Live In Europe 1969

BLUE NOTE 97093

★★★½

By the time Freddie Hubbard made this European tour, he'd already scaled the heights of modern jazz. Though he was drifting as a recording artist, Hubbard was well established as a leading trumpeter and a celebrated sideman-turned-bandleader.

Here, he chose to showcase his talents with a lean, talented quartet. Pianist Roland Hanna provides apt counterpoint to Hubbard's brawny, lyrical styling, and driving drummer Louis Hayes is properly anchored by bassist Ron Carter. The first two tunes were representative of what Hubbard was working on at the time, as "Without A Song" and "The Things We Did Last Summer" both appeared on *The Hub Of Hubbard* in 1970.

Still, the heart of this collection finds Hubbard looking back at his roots and leading the way with chops intact. Averaging 10 minutes in length, these performances allow the players to solo extensively. Hayes stretches out nicely on "A Night In Tunisia" and Hanna takes plenty of spotlight time, but it's Hubbard who makes the sparks fly on Red Garland's "Blues By Five," demanding comparison to Miles Davis.

"Body And Soul" is another highlight, as Hubbard takes the classic and makes it his own—far more than when he first recorded the ballad in 1963. "Space Track" is the title number from another 1970 Hubbard LP, and this arrangement again improves on the studio version. Closing with a vintage piece from his own repertoire, Hubbard puts the band through its paces on an abbreviated version of "Hub-Tones," which only leaves us wanting more. —Mitch Myers

Without A Song: Live In Europe 1969: Without A Song; The Things We Did Last Summer; A Night In Tunisia; Blues By Five; Body And Soul; Space Track; Hub-Tones. (69:39)

Personnel: Freddie Hubbard; trumpet; Roland Hanna; piano; Louis Hayes; drums; Ron Carter; drums.

» Ordering info: bluenote.com

Martial Solal

Live At The Village Vanguard

CAM 5030

★★★½

If anyone still had any doubts about pianist Martial Solal's abilities, this dazzling solo set will erase them in no time. When this recording was made he had just turned 80, but his fingers are as nimble as ever and his mind is still impressively sharp. Moreover, he amazes without being bombastic or relying heavily on pyrotechnics.

Among the standards he tackles, "Round Midnight" is a favorite of his. His unique reading shows what an inexhaustible well of possibilities this piece offers. With "On Green Dolphin Street," Solal gives a condensed jazz history lesson as he seamlessly weaves a musical patchwork. Solal is indeed a master at dislocating the material at hand, sometimes making it hardly recognizable, and at shifting tempos abruptly and effortlessly. And don't forget his trademark humor.

To round out a program of standards, the French pianist includes a couple of originals. "Centre De Gravité" gives him the opportunity to explore the deepest tonalities of his instrument, sounding almost cavernous. The Thelonious Monk-ish "Ramage," on the other hand, lends itself to the twists and turns Solal uses throughout the program and lands in a most unexpected spot, a nursery rhyme of his own creation. —Alain Drouot

Live At The Village Vanguard: Intro 1; On Green Dolphin Street; Lover Man; I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Centre De Gravité; Ramage; Round Midnight; Have You Met Miss Jones; The Last Time I Saw Paris; Intro 2; Corcovado. (49:27)

Personnel: Martial Solal, piano.

» Ordering info: camjazz.com



The Dorf

The Dorf

LEO 523

★★½

A progressive big band can't exist without some form of underwriting. There's not enough of an audience to support a large group of players using the format as something more than an exercise in nostalgia.

Saxophonist Jan Klare deserves praise for forming and maintaining the Dorf since November 2006, when it started monthly concerts at a jazz club in Dortmund, Germany. He's recruited a pool of around 30 musicians, and between 15–25 come together once a month to spend the day rehearsing, developing new pieces by the leader and giving an evening concert.

Unfortunately, based on the group's debut recording, the once-a-month gatherings have yet to yield compelling repertoire. Beyond the band's impressive firepower, too many of the pieces draw on the bombast of rock and '70s fusion. "Blast" captures the high-speed exhilaration of heavy metal, with the horns adeptly aping chugging guitar riffs, but the effect falls limp when the screaming electric guitar solo kicks in. "Miniatures" finds Klare leading the group through a fast-moving shuffle where the ensemble's skill with collective improvisation shines, while "Torn" has small groupings of players interacting on a high level. But too much of the album favors a monolithic attack, and when the '80s-sounding synthesizers kick in, it's too much to bear. —Peter Margasak



The Dorf: Overture; Blast; Film; Technoid; Miniatures; Torn; Licht. (52:00)

Personnel: Jan Klare, composer; the Dorf, orchestra.

» Ordering info: leorecords.com

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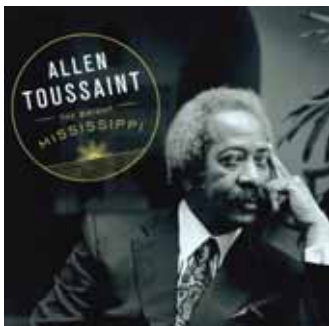
August 2009 DOWNBEAT 55

Allen Toussaint
The Bright Mississippi
 NONESUCH 480380
 ★★★★★½

In his liner notes to *The Bright Mississippi*, producer Joe Henry recalls the “history lesson in American musical alchemy” he got from New Orleans r&b legend Allen Toussaint during the making of the 2005 benefit album *Our New Orleans*. Playing his arrangement of Professor Longhair’s “Tipitina,” the pianist mixed everything from pre-war jazz to European classical music to parlor folk, stirring it all with the blues. “It sounded like nothing I’d ever heard and like *everything* I’d ever heard,” writes Henry.

From that epiphany sprang *The Bright Mississippi*, a mostly instrumental survey of jazz classics on which, working in varied settings with a great cast anchored by Henry’s stellar rhythm section of bassist David Piltch and drummer Jay Bellerose, Toussaint invigorates and enriches songs you thought you had heard the final word on. In so doing, he demonstrates how all musical roads, and rivers, and streams in America lead to New Orleans.

On a stunning duo treatment of the trad jazz warhorse “Dear Old Southland,” Toussaint dances around trumpeter Nicolas Payton—who has never played with greater pungency—with bracing tango and swing effects. Spanking notes on acoustic guitar, the remarkable Marc Ribot



channels his inner Django Reinhardt for a striking band rendition of “West End Blues,” then taps his inner Wes Montgomery for a duet with Toussaint on Django’s “Blue Drag.” Spiked with second line rhythms, Thelonious Monk’s “Bright Mississippi” springs Payton and clarinetist Don Byron like a finely calibrated wind-up toy.

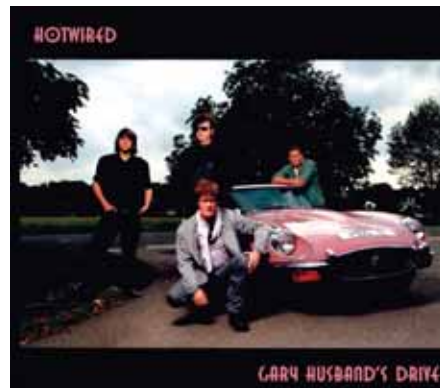
Duetting with the leader on Jelly Roll Morton’s “Winin’ Boy Blues,” pianist Brad Mehldau plays against type by digging in with both fists and engaging in out-of-time trickery. In an elegiac zone, Branford Marsalis warms the Ellington-Strayhorn “Day Dream” with his lyrical tenor.

An inescapable current of post-Katrina sadness flows through *The Bright Mississippi*, the emotional center of which is Toussaint’s one vocal, on Leonard Feather’s “Long, Long Journey.” But with those rolling left-hand notes and buoyant stair-stepping rights, and the generosity and grandeur of his melting pot vision, Toussaint invokes nothing but joy.

—Lloyd Sachs

The Bright Mississippi: Egyptian Fantasy; Dear Old Southland; St. James Infirmary; Singin’ The Blues; Winin’ Boy Blues; West End Blues; Blue Drag; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Bright Mississippi; Day Dream; Long, Long Journey; Solitude. (61:33)
Personnel: Allen Toussaint, piano, vocals (11); Don Byron, clarinet; Nicholas Payton; Marc Ribot; acoustic guitar; David Piltch, bass; Jay Bellerose, drums/percussion; Brad Mehldau, piano (5); Joshua Redman, tenor saxophone (10).

» Ordering info: nonesuch.com



Gary Husband’s Drive

Hotwired
 ABSTRACT LOGIX 015
 ★★★★★½

Drummer/keyboardist Gary Husband was once considered a Tony Williams clone on steroids, his muscular fusion rhythms sandblasting records by Allan Holdsworth, John McLaughlin and U.K. funksters Level 42, among others. But in recent years, Husband has expanded his skill set and musical direction. Whether playing synths with McLaughlin and Billy Cobham or releasing solo piano recordings, Husband has shown himself to be a man capable of reinvention.

Hotwired debuts Husband’s visceral straight-ahead quartet Drive with stellar results. Britain’s finest typically do their homework. Here, Husband’s drumming is a study in the greats, with references to Elvin Jones and Williams creating combustible tinder under an equally flammable front line. “10/4” dances a winding odd-metered groove, as Julian Siegel’s tenor interweaves with Richard Turner’s blatting trumpet growls. Husband dons mallets for the atmospheric “The Agony Of Ambiguity,” then flows Elvin-like full-set triplets for the hard-bop “Deux Deux’s Blues,” which layers a meaty pulse under Wayne Shorter-esque melodic phrases.

“Take The Coltrane Around” is all speedy bebop, the album’s high-velocity showcase where Husband’s drumming recalls Ralph Peterson Jr. for firepower and unruly aggression. Opener “The Defender” offers another drag-the-river-for-bodies blowout, as the trumpet/tenor front line intimates curt New Orleans-inspired melodies while Husband kicks nasty Latin punches. Bonus track “Take 5” opens with Husband’s light-as-air drum solo before the quartet reinterprets it beyond anything Dave Brubeck would recognize.

—Ken Micallef

Hotwired: The Defender; Heaven In My Hands; 10/4; The Agony Of Ambiguity; Deux Deux’s Blues; Take The Coltrane Around; One Prayer; Angels Over City Square; Take 5. (70:14)
Personnel: Gary Husband, drums, piano, synthesizer; Richard Turner, trumpet, electronics; Julian Siegel, tenor and soprano saxophone; Michael Janisch, bass.

» Ordering info: abstractlogix.com

Luciana Souza
Tide
 VERVE 01646
 ★★★★★

Silky-voiced Souza keeps those lickety-split samba duos (some in breathtaking unison) with guitarist Romero Lubambo as the poison arrow in her quiver while she lobs wistful pot-shots at gentle folk-pop. She’s co-writing tunes with husband/producer/bassist Larry Klein that recall pristine yearnings of Erin Bode and Joni Mitchell, but she won’t forget the carnival clubbing in Rio. If the subject matter is similarly jet-set—*cariocas* and *angelenos* share an arch hipness through endless partying and bottomless bottles—the delivery on the West Coasters is neurotic and non-plussed, more catatonic than laid-back.

Contrasting openers, salty “Adeus America” and smoky “Fire And Wood,” lay a sandy bed for an album that teeters between surefooted sass and world-weary worry. The guitars adapt



to the roles, Lubambo as sure-fire, detail-oriented literalist and Larry Koonse as sad, hollowed smoothie.

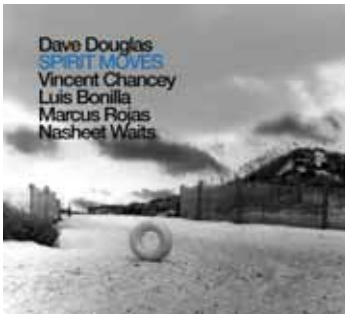
Souza’s contralto, warm and inquisitive, caresses her poignant daydreams, buoyed with Goldings’ cool, sustained keyboard auras, with mere feathery wisps of Coliauta’s brushes or Baptista’s hand-drums. e.e. cummings settings continue Souza’s wide-eyed grappling with love and faith

through restlessness and rootlessness; a line like “one querying wave will always whitely yearn” evokes empty beaches, breakfast vodka and anonymous anomie. As ever, Souza’s subtlest gesture and vocal nuance make the experience palatable, the ride unforgettable.

—Fred Bouchard

Tide: Adeus America & Eu Quero Um Samba; Fire And Wood; Our Gilded Home; Love – Poem 65; Circus Life; Once Again; Tide; Sorriu Para Mim; Chuva; Amulet. (42:41)
Personnel: Souza, vocals; Romero Lubambo (1, 3, 5, 8, 9), Larry Koonse (2, 4, 6, 7, 10), guitar; Larry Goldings, piano, organ, estey, Fender Rhodes, accordion; Larry Klein, bass; Vinny Colaiuta, drums; Cyro Baptista, percussion (2, 3, 5, 8, 9); Rebecca Pidgeon, background vocals (2, 5).

» Ordering info: ververecords.com



Dave Douglas & Brass Ecstasy

Spirit Moves

GREENLEAF 1010

★★★★

As director of the Festival of New Trumpet Music over the past several years, Dave Douglas has evidenced a dedication to showcasing the varied potentialities of his instrument. His latest ensemble, Brass Ecstasy, expands that same impulse to the whole brass section, offering *Spirit Moves* as something of a CV for the modern brass band.

Of course, not every similarly composed unit can display the multitude of sounds and identities offered by Douglas' all-star quintet. From lurching second-line revels to intricate chamber-jazz complexity, military band precision to smoke-filled nightclub swing, Brass Ecstasy thumbs its collective nose at those who might suggest that a bunch of horns and a drum kit is a somehow "limited" configuration.

The disc opens by transforming singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright's torch-song lament "This Love Affair" into a gin-soaked stumble home, dripping with bitter remorse even without the benefit of Wainwright's wry lyrics. It closes with a mournful take on Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," howled as if by four cats on a fence under the moonlight. The third of the album's pop tunes is a wish-fulfillment emulation of the famed Stax Records horn section on Otis Redding's "Mr. Pitiful."

The rest of the album is made up of Douglas originals, deploying tightly interwoven horn lines to conjure both jaunty grooves ("Orujo") and impressionistic storytelling ("The Brass Ring"). Making his advocacy more explicit are three tunes, situated at the record's center, paying explicit homage to heirs and peers. "Bowie" is a lively example of the parade atmosphere and tongue-in-cheek humor favored by Lester Bowie; "Rava" evokes the ECM airiness of Italian trumpeter Enrico Rava; while on "Fats," the band dons the convincing disguise of a hard-bop unit in honor of Fats Navarro.

—Shaun Brady

Spirit Moves: This Love Affair; Orujo; The View From Blue Mountain; Twilight Of The Dogs; Bowie; Rava; Fats; The Brass Ring; Mister Pitiful; Great Awakening; I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry. (53:13)

Personnel: Dave Douglas, trumpet; Luis Bonilla, trombone; Vincent Chancey, French horn; Marcus Rojas, tuba; Nasheet Waits, drums.

» Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com

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DAVE DOUGLAS

CARNEGIE HALL

Top of the New Pops

Young upstarts are rocking while one band of old-timers proves it's still got something to say.

Bell X1: *Blue Lights On The Runway* (YepRoc

2175; 54:48) ★★★½ The second-best band from Ireland, Bell X1 is the dark horse taking the country's music-of-the-moment baton from the top group (see below). Led by songwriter/vocalist Paul Noonan, the group is everything U2 is not: a pop band with catchy melodies (the spirited "The Great Defector"), a literary sensibility (i.e., the leadoff gem titled "The Ribs Of A Broken Umbrella") and an updated view of commercial musicality infused with subtle electronica. Bell X1's music is fresh and smart and teeming with influences ranging from Talking Heads to the Beat poets. Immensely listenable on both music and lyrics levels.

Ordering info: yeproc.com

The Decemberists: *The Hazards Of Love* (Capitol 14710; 58:48) ★★★★★ Who says the rock opera is dead? Certainly not the Decemberists' leader, Colin Meloy. Inspired by the '60s British folk revival, he's crafted an ambitious 17-song epic tale of two fantasy lovers. This is rock at its artsy best that takes the concept album an impressive step further by mixing in a diversity of styles, from folk rock (the leadoff theme "The Hazards Of Love" and "Won't Want For Love," sung by band member Becky Stark) to gripping prog rock and heavy metal (the thumping "The Abduction Of Margaret" and the turbulent "The Queen's Rebuke/The Crossing"). Interspersed throughout are simple, mood-enhancing instrumental interludes and reprises.

Ordering info: capitolrecords.com

Gomez: *A New Tide* (ATO 0070; 43:48) ★★★★★½ Ten years after scoring the Mercury Prize for its debut, Gomez offers its sixth CD, which bursts with lyrical jewels glowing with shape-shifting experimentation. Gomez is the rare band with three leaders who write and sing superb tunes. On the new CD, the band expands its musical scope, embellishing its songs with unusual textural arrangements that a



U2: anthemic purveyors

dynamics-loving jazz band could admire. "Mix" blends acoustic-guitar simplicity with electronic psychedelia, "Win Park Slope" transforms a Delta-blues twang into a cello-viola classical sway, "Natural Reaction" fluctuates tempo and key, and "Sunset" surprises with an avant swirl of clarinets and alto saxophone.

Ordering info: atorecords.com

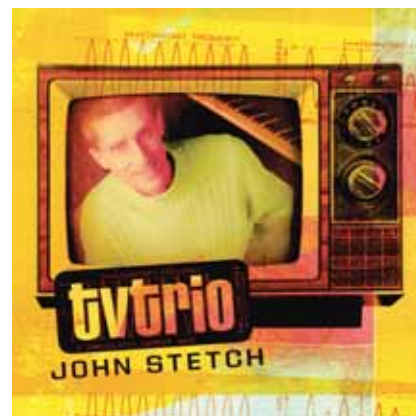
U2: *No Line On The Horizon* (Interscope 12630; 53:48) ★★★★★ Purveyors of anthemic rock at its finest, arguably the world's greatest pop band offers more passion under the guidance of producers Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois, who put the group on the map in the '80s. While Bono still buoys with ecstatic vocals, the Edge riffs percussively and the foursome powers on, there are out-of-the-U2-ordinary highlights, including the shout-chorus "Unknown Caller," the whimsical rocker "Get On Your Boots," the sublime "White As Snow" and the poignant "Cedars Of Lebanon." Bono and the boys may no longer be sought for the wisdom of the day, but between the lines there's still much that speaks spiritually and politically.

Ordering info: interscope.com

Yeah Yeah Yeahs: *It's Blitz!* (Interscope 12735; 41:49) ★★★½ Frontloaded with two tunes ("Zero" and "Heads Will Roll") of punk-meets-techno pop urgency fueled by Karen O's fevered vocals, Yeah Yeah Yeahs' third CD unveils the power trio's new fascination with pulverizing synths. As head-bashing danceable as the leadoffs are, they're ultimately vapid ("Off with your heads/Dance till you're dead"). But the deeper you move into *It's Blitz!* the better it gets thanks to the variety and delivery. The best of the pack are the intimate-turned-brazen "Dull Life," the piano-cello "Runaway," the funky kissing song "Dragon Queen" and the sunny melody "Hysteric."

DB

Ordering info: interscope.com



John Stetch

TV Trio

BRUX 14112

★★★

Cultural touchstones for anyone who has spent too much time indoors, television theme music is sonic crack, daring you to shake its hold on your brain. Just a few seconds of a theme can have a Pavlovian effect: signaling the imminent delivery of 30 or 60 minutes of escapist pleasure.

Pianist John Stetch mines those associations, but twists our expectations by channeling familiar themes—dating from Bugs Bunny cartoons to '70s standbys like "Dallas" and "Love Boat"—through a post-modernist piano trio prism. Although few television themes outside of "Peanuts" have relied on a piano trio, Stetch, bassist Doug Weiss and drummer Rodney Green treat these pieces as they would any standard, despite the bombastic grandeur associated with the "Star Trek" theme or how much lyrics form an integral part of a theme like "The Flintstones."

Stetch can find beauty in the banal, as he does when he transforms the cheesy theme from the low-budget, animated "The Mighty Hercules" into a gentle ballad that Bill Evans might have written. One of his better reconfigurations is finding a Monkish waltz in the structure of "Rocky And Bullwinkle."

Other interpretations seem to be fueled more by the content of the shows, with the theme from "The Waltons" yielding a bouncy, breezy song that might have you picturing John Boy as a budding hipster. "Dallas" eschews the boosterism of the original for a version that speaks to the melancholy of many of the show's plot lines and the open spaces of J.R.'s environment. "The Six Million Dollar Man" lends itself to a mysterious introduction and a Latin beat.

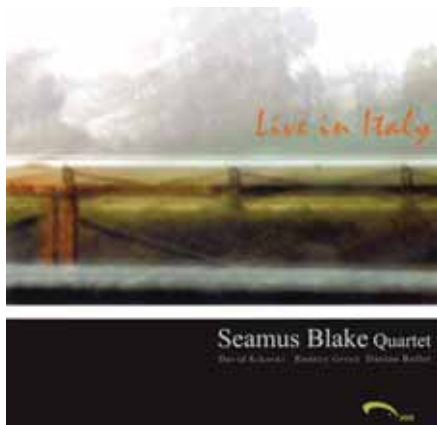
In less-skilled hands, the conceit of *TV Trio* might not carry an entire disc, but Stetch makes these themes into something larger than the old shows themselves.

—James Hale

TV Trio: The Waltons; This Is It (Bugs Bunny); Star Trek; Dallas; Love Boat; The Six Million Dollar Man; Rocky And Bullwinkle; The Mighty Hercules; The Price Is Right; All My Children; The Flintstones; Sanford And Son. (50:30)

Personnel: John Stetch, piano; Doug Weiss, bass; Rodney Green, drums.

Ordering info: johnstetch.com



Seamus Blake Quartet

Live In Italy

JAZZ EYES 005

★★★★½

Some live recordings capture that extra push that comes when musicians face a receptive audience. It is a bonus when, as here, such circumstances are also well-engineered by the sound man.

Italy has long been welcoming to visiting U.S. jazz musicians, and they show the love for Blake and his bandmates at these dates in Palermo, Senigallia and Cesenatico. I doubt I'm the first to extrapolate "kick-ass-ki" from pianist David Kikoski, but he certainly warrants the handle here. As superb a tenorist as Blake is (and few will avoid involuntarily nodding, at the least, to the gloriously funky feel of his altered saxophone sound on the party piece "Way Out Willy"), Kikoski solos with a massively energized, flawless articulation of his own, recalling the buoyant joy of Herbie Hancock at times. It's important to emphasise that the success of this track would be impossible without the bouncy Astroturf laid down by Rodney Green and Danton Boller.

An abrupt mood change segues from "Way Out Willy" and the rugged opener "The Jupiter Line" to the second movement of Debussy's string quartet, which begins like an Italian country folk song and then leaves impressionistic territory with Kikoski delving into more excavations. Blake's "Fear Of Roaming" with its searching long tones whiffs of Kenny Garrett's yearning esthetic, then breaks into swing sections. Like fellow Thelonious Monk Competition honorees Josh Redman and Eric Alexander, Blake has that liquid rhythmic flow and inexhaustible propulsion that sets him apart even when he's peppering with occasional Breckerisms.

The second CD is a match for the first in its mix of material, including Brazilian singer Djavan's melody "Ladeirinha," Kikoski's lapidary "Spacing," a holdover from Blake's old boss John Scofield in "Dance Me Home" and

the mainstream fare of "Darn That Dream" and "The Feeling of Jazz," the latter harking back to Ellington's meeting with Coltrane. Blake suggests what Ellington may have heard in Monk or vice-versa with a nimble quote from "Trinkle Tinkle" during "The Feeling Of Jazz" and shows that formative influences on his own style may have come from Dexter Gordon (the phrasing in a snatch from "Laura") and Stan Getz (the poised dynamics at the end of "Dream," which Blake kicks off with dramatic a cappella). Critics

like to mark these little reference points to prove we are listening, but from the applause at the end of "The Feeling of Jazz," the Italians are glad to be there while the real thing is happening. —Michael Jackson

Live In Italy: Disc 1—The Jupiter Line; Way Out Willy; String Quartet In G Minor; Fear of Roaming (52:89). Disc 2—The Feeling of Jazz; Spacing; Ladeirinha; Darn That Dream; Dance Me Home (53:84).

Personnel: Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone; David Kikoski, piano; Rodney Green, drums; Danton Boller, bass.

» Ordering info: musiceyes.com

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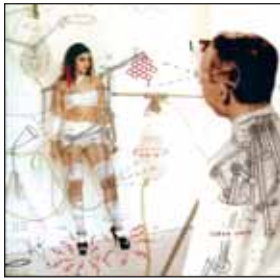
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Fast 'N' Bulbous

Waxed Oop
CUNEIFORM RECORDS
RUNE 227
★★★★

When is a tribute band not a tribute band? Guitarist Gary Lucas and Microscopic Sextet alto saxophonist Phillip Johnston adapt the music of Captain Beefheart (with original material) for their second outing as Fast 'N' Bulbous. The octet's *Waxed Oop* recalls both Beefheart's torrid tales and a loose-knit open mic night. Though Lucas is a former Magic Band member, his take on the old curmudgeon's bludgeoning sounds doesn't stick to formula. In fact, if no one told you Fast 'N' Bulbous was performing Beefheart repertoire, you might never guess.

Sure, Fast 'N' Bulbous emit the bluesy scronch ("Dropout Boogie") and animalistic rhythms ("Smithsonian Institute Blues") of such Beefheart classics as *Trout Mask Replica* or *Safe*



As *Milk*; they also blow smoke up their ass in aimless improvisations and meandering solos ("You Know You're A Man"). "Well" is a lovely respite, Lucas issuing arcing, surreal guitar delays over alto and baritone swells as drummer Richard Dworkin rumbles mallets below.

The four-piece horn section adds a fresh dimension to Beefheart's material, as does Robyn Hitchcock's clever impersonation on "China Pig." Extra kudos to Lucas for a stunning solo version of "Sure 'Nuff 'N' Yes I Do," which lends the album breadth. Ultimately, Fast 'N' Bulbous fails to find that Captain Beefheart magic, but in revisiting his aroma they create something worth pursuing—next time.

—Ken Micallef

Waxed Oop: Sure 'Nuff 'N' Yes I Do; Trust Us; Smithsonian Institute Blues; Dropout Boogie; You Know You're A Man; Well; Ice Rose; Click Clack/Ice Cream For Crow; Woe-Is-Uh-Me-Bop; The Blimp; The Past Sure Is Tense; Blabber 'N' Smoke; China Pig. (52:32)

Personnel: Gary Lucas, guitar; Jesse Krakow, bass; Richard Dworkin, drums; Rob Henke, trumpet; Phillip Johnston, alto saxophone; Joe Fiedler, trombone; Dave Sewelson, baritone saxophone.

» Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com

Jorma Kaukonen

River Of Time
RED HOUSE 217
★★★★

Guitarist Jorma Kaukonen soared into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on his electrifying work with Jefferson Airplane, but his background and future belong to acoustic folk

blues. Much of his post-psychedelic phase has flown under the radar as he's run an innovative guitar camp in southeastern Ohio, only occasionally releasing finely crafted recordings.

River Of Time was recorded at Levon Helm's studio in Woodstock, N.Y., and is in some ways a less ragged and raucous folk blues companion volume to drummer Helm's *Dirt Farmer* masterpiece. As such, it's a satisfying showcase of casual instrumental virtuosity featuring an abundance of finger-picking finesse in the service of songs addressing the human experience with hard-won wisdom.

Kaukonen contributes a half dozen originals so true to tradition and solidly rooted in classic folk blues sensibilities that they segue seamlessly with material by Mississippi John Hurt and Rev. Gary Davis, the latter remaining the major influence on Kaukonen's playing and approach. Kaukonen also appropriates other material from diverse sources ranging from Merle Haggard, via a tasty take on "More Than My Old Guitar" with Helm guesting on drums, to Ron "Pig Pen" McKernan through his early Grateful Dead standard "Operator."

Through the years, Kaukonen has evolved



and personalized his take on Davis, represented here with an upbeat rendition of "There's A Bright Side Somewhere." The guitarist now plays with more a satisfied mind than a questing spirit, and his attitude infuses the proceedings with a warm and relaxed

ambience. His precise but inspired playing is nothing less than masterful, and his deft guitar lines are artfully enhanced and embellished by mandolinist Barry Mitterhoff and multi-instrumentalist Larry Campbell. A couple of instrumentals, including a trio lullaby to his daughter, serve to further spotlight the excellent ensemble interaction.

Kaukonen's vocals are straightforward and effective, never attempting more than they can achieve and communicating the essence of the song without distraction or adornment. They're a perfect accompaniment to the succinct songs and the enlightened instrumental expertise that powers them.

—Michael Point

River Of Time: Been So Long; There's A Bright Side Somewhere; Cracks In The Finish; Another Man Done A Full Go Round; Trouble In Mind; Izze's Lullaby; More Than My Old Guitar; Nashville Blues; A Walk With Friends; Operator; Preachin' On The Old Camp Ground; River Of Time; Simpler Than I Thought. (49:20)

Personnel: Jorma Kaukonen, guitar, vocals; Lincoln Schleifer, bass, baritone guitar, percussion; Larry Campbell, mandolin, cittern, guitar, baritone guitar, percussion, dobro, fiddles, pedal steel; Barry Mitterhoff, mandolin, banjo; Teresa Williams, vocals (7, 8, 11); Myron Hart, bass (8), vocals (11); Levon Helm, drums (3, 5, 7); Justin Guip, drums (8, 10).

» Ordering info: redhouserecords.com



Jim Beard with Vince Mendoza & The Metropole Orchestra

Revolutions
SUNNYSIDE 1227
★★½

There is no doubt that on *Revolutions*, veteran keyboardist Jim Beard has surrounded himself with a well-rounded ensemble of talented players.

Beard may be best known for his work accompanying the late Michael Brecker, but Beard and conductor Vince Mendoza are equally simpatico associates whose careers have intersected for two decades. Choosing some tunes from Beard's early albums as well as collaborating on new works, Beard and Mendoza came up with this decorative music project in 2005 for a Dutch radio broadcast, and then recorded again at a larger session in 2007. Beard's compositions are well realized by Mendoza's ambitious arrangements, and the flexible Metropole Orchestra from the Netherlands does a fine job giving Beard and Mendoza what they want.

Some noteworthy soloists make impressive contributions, including saxophonist Bob Malach, trumpeter Rudd Breus, guitarist Jon Herington and saxophonist Bill Evans. Beard's orchestral music is sometimes too busy and not always swinging, but taken in a larger context his compositions accurately express his musical intents, interests and talents. Mixing old-fashioned film music esthetics with ambitious big band jazz, Beard's music is most successful on the kinder, gentler arrangements. "In All Her Finery" is almost ornate in its orchestral delicacy, while "Crossing Troll Bridge" has a subtle, knowing ambience in the style of Gil Evans' work with Miles Davis on *Sketches Of Spain*. Occasionally bland but always well constructed, *Revolutions* is thoroughly modern music for a very large ensemble—the rest is a matter of taste.

—Mitch Myers

Revolutions: Holiday For Pete & Gladys; Hope; Diana; Lost At The Carnival; Holodeck Waltz; Princess; In All Her Finery; Parsley Trees; Trip; Crossing Troll Bridge. (63:32)

Personnel: Jim Beard, piano, synthesizer; Bob Malach, tenor saxophone; Ruud Breuls, trumpet; Jon Herington, guitar; Paul van der Feen, soprano saxophone; Bar van Lier, trombone; Bill Evans, soprano saxophone; Leo Janssen, tenor saxophone; Marcio Doctor, Latin and ethnic percussion; the Metropole Orchestra; Vince Mendoza, conductor.

» Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



David "Fathead" Newman

The Blessing

HIGH NOTE 7195

★★★★

The Blessing, which David "Fathead" Newman recorded just weeks before he passed away in January of this year, is a swinging, touching and soulful set. My focus rarely wavers from Newman throughout, as he injects as much personality, style and character into each melody as any great singer would, especially on "Someone To Watch Over Me," "As Time Goes By" and Charlie Chaplin's "Smile." He rarely takes multiple solo choruses, but when he does he makes them count. On Milt Jackson's blues "SKJ," Newman says more in 24 bars than some less mature, chops-obsessed players say in a whole album. His highly inflected, vocalesque subtone enunciates perfectly formed phrases that allow him to converse with himself. This solo is a clinic in subtlety, nuance and the communicative power of brevity.

Five rhythm players give the ensemble several timbral choices to consider. Pianist David Leonhardt's "Romantic Night" and "Whispers of Contentment" make full use of these options, as Newman, guitarist Peter Bernstein and vibraphonist Steve Nelson divvy up the front line on both tracks, creating a dynamic and colorful soundscape. Using three chordal instruments can run the risk of cluttering the sound, but Bernstein, Nelson and Leonhardt do a wonderful job of giving each other room and picking their spots while comping, and each man contributes several strong solos throughout. *The Blessing* is a very good final album from one of jazz's legends, one whose depth and meaning increase with each listen.

—Chris Robinson

The Blessing: SKJ; Someone To Watch Over Me; As Time Goes By; Manha De Carnival; Smile; Romantic Night; Chelsea Bridge; Whispers Of Contentment; The Blessing. (55:10)

Personnel: David "Fathead" Newman, tenor saxophone, flute (9); Peter Bernstein, guitar; Steve Nelson, vibraphone; Dave Leonhardt, piano; John Menegon, bass; Yoron Israel, drums.

» Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

HISTORICAL

by John Ephland

It Was A Very Good Year

With *Kind Of Blue*, *Time Out* and *Mingus Ah Um*, Columbia Records ended the 1950s on a roll. While *Kind Of Blue* remains the record of note, parent company Sony/Legacy has come up with a remixed and expanded version of another Miles Davis classic from the same year, *Sketches Of Spain*. As for *Mingus Ah Um*, it's coupled

with another Charles Mingus album recorded in '59 but also released in 1960, *Mingus Dynasty*. The Dave Brubeck *Time Out* release also fudges on '59 by adding live Newport material from later years, including versions of *Time Out*'s "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo À La Turk." A half-hour DVD of Brubeck recently reminiscing on the making of *Time Out* with archival clips of the group is also available.

According to Brubeck, before *Time Out* was issued Columbia Records had "never put a painting on the cover of a jazz album." In the end, both *Time Out* (Legacy 739852; 38:39/54:19) ★★★★★ and *Mingus Ah Um* (Legacy 748010; 76:28/74:28) ★★★★★½ sported abstract, modern art covers. Meanwhile, "Take Five" with "Blue Rondo À La Turk" became the first million-selling jazz instrumental single on the Billboard Hot 100, as the album went on to become the first jazz album to sell a million copies. While much has been said about the album's odd time signatures, it's listenability that's kept *Time Out* from the gimmick dustbin. Ironically, the album's strongest material is its most conventional. Both "Kathy's Waltz" and "Strange Meadow Lark" contain melodies and moods that keep one hearing new things time and again, all mostly in 4/4 time. Alto saxophonist Paul Desmond, bassist Eugene Wright and the scene-changing drummer Joe Morello complemented Brubeck perfectly. This is evident with the good, not great Newport performances from 1961, '63 and '64. (Newport 1958 remains the superior show.)

Mingus' star was also rising, and the commercially successful *Mingus Ah Um* was the main reason why. Along with his concurrent work at Atlantic Records, *Mingus Ah Um* combined the ferocity, elegance and sheer brilliance of Mingus' pen and bandleading. Enjoying an expanded lineup that gave off a big band vibe, the album showcased now-revered material



such as the swinging, stomping waltz "Better Git It In Your Soul" (in 6/4 and 4/4) along with songs that referenced inspirations—the haunting "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" (Lester Young), the hard-charging, heartfelt "Open Letter To Duke" (Ellington), the jaunty, playful "Jelly Roll" (Morton)—as well as himself (the through-composed "Self-Portrait In Three Colors"). Now that all those absurd edits have been restored, along with previously unreleased material from these sessions, this edition of *Mingus Ah Um* is the one to have. *Mingus Dynasty*, on the other hand, was received differently, perhaps due to its emphasis on composition. As a result, the performances are less exciting, with songs that were mostly interesting if not compelling. Still, *Mingus Dynasty* remains an important document of a creative artist at one of his peaks.

The most ambitious work in this batch comes with Davis' *Sketches Of Spain* (Legacy 743949; 45:36/70:10) ★★★★★, his first post-*Kind Of Blue* recording and the third with arranger/composer Gil Evans. The story here is all those alternate endings and takes. Yes, there is a reason for including them, along with relevant, already released versions of "Maids Of Cadiz" (from the first Evans collaboration *Miles Ahead*) and "Teo" (from *Someday My Prince Will Come*). The only live version of the Adagio from Joaquín Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" and two takes of "Song Of Our Country" (from the *Sketches* sessions) are also here. Essentially, this edition is a study of a crucial period in Davis' development. With *Sketches Of Spain*, Davis' music continued its modal moves away from bebop's busy density, opting to highlight his strengths, which emphasized feeling and lyric expression over technique. Evans' compositions—especially "The Pan Piper," "Saeta" and "Solea"—furthered these groundbreaking changes, so obvious with this passionate treatment of Rodrigo's masterpiece. DB

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

Ableton Live 8 Suite: Seriously 'Warped' DAW Platform

Ableton Live burst onto the scene in 2001 and changed the way a lot of people

think about what a DAW can and should do. What's more, the company has relentlessly delivered major updates every year in an industry marked by increasingly long development cycles and plagued by delayed releases—and this year is no exception. Once considered an upstart DJ tool with some recording capabilities, Ableton has transformed into a fully featured and mature DAW platform that continues

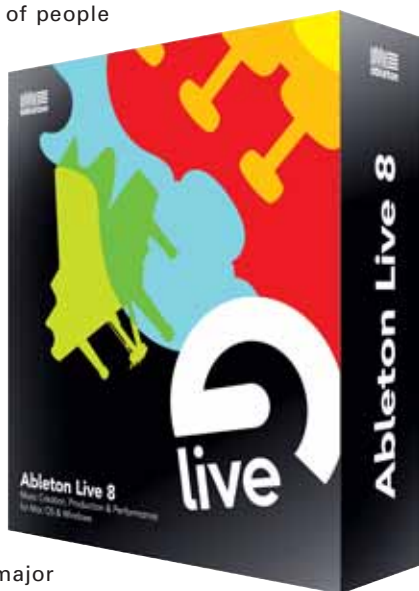
to find ways to make major improvements without sacrificing stability.

The Ableton Suite includes the Live 8 program, as well as a core library of presets, loops and samples. You also get all of Ableton's software instruments, a comprehensive set of orchestral samples, the new Latin Percussion library, version 2 of the Essential Instruments Collection, a huge two-DVD set of their Session Drums and a sizable set of third party content. All in all, this will take up almost 50 gigs of space when installed, but you have the option to only install certain components if you want to save space, or you could set up the library on an external drive if you use a laptop with limited space available.

The Live 8 program gets a revamped Warp engine. Warping has always been the signature feature of this program; it is the method that Live uses to detect and manipulate the tempo of sound clips. Live has always excelled at this, and the new version has a redesigned Warping Engine, as well as a new interface. Seasoned Live users may find it a little disorienting at first, as now clips are dragged to fit a static timeline, which is the opposite of the way Live has previously worked. It is more intuitive, though, and makes more sense—especially for new users. Live also automatically assigns Warp markers to transients, so it's simple to move around individual elements within a clip. A new Complex Pro mode gives you even more control of intricate polyphonic material.

Also new to the program is the Groove Pool, a sophisticated set of tools for applying grooves to MIDI and audio clips on your projects. Grooves are templates that contain tempo and feel information. The coolest thing about this is it is a real-time process, so you can drag different grooves onto your track and audition them before committing them to the clip. You can also extract groove information from any audio clip by just dragging it into the pool, which you can then re-use in any other project you wish. I found this to be pretty amazing with audio clips when it worked, but a little inconsistent. It was, of course, spot-on with MIDI. Add to this the new audio quantization features and you have a robust set of tools to create exactly the feels you want.

There have also been some significant improvements in the inter-



face, including Group Tracks. Using this feature it is simple to create submixes and apply effects to subsets of your tracks. You can also collapse them with a press of a button to preserve screen real estate—a nice touch. You can now preview audio and MIDI clips in the file browser, and you can zoom the interface up to 200 percent to make things clearer in crowded projects. Multiple tracks can be selected and adjusted at once—nice if you want to bring down the volume on five or six tracks at once. These, in addition to many more adjustments, continue to improve the workflow.

New to the suite is Collision, an acoustic modeling synth designed to model mallet and bell instruments. This may sound kind of boring, but when you dive in, you'll find that you can create some interesting timbres. Not only that, but it's easy to use for a modeling synth, and that will help you with some of Live's other offerings. Also added is the new Latin Percussion library, an incredibly comprehensive collection of loops and samples that sound great. There has also been a major upgrade to Ableton's premier synth, Operator. The new version allows you to draw in your own waveforms, which makes for some truly outrageous sound design possibilities. I've only scratched the surface of the new release, but I can already tell that I'm going to spend a lot of time with this one.

I've been a Live user since version 1.5, and I can tell you this is a solid upgrade. If you are already a Live user, it is well worth the price. If you have not given Ableton a try yet, it's an eye-opening experience. It is unlike any workflow you're used to, and can be very inspiring based on that alone. I have also found that people new to computer recording find it easy to use, as they have no preconceived notions about how a DAW should look. Ableton is also a customer-oriented company with a strong user community. You can download a full featured time-limited version (for free) that will give you all functions for 14 days, or you can download a demo version that does not save but will not expire. A host of other new features include a looper, online collaboration and coming MAX support, so check out the latest version for yourself.

—Chris Neville

» Ordering info: ableton.com

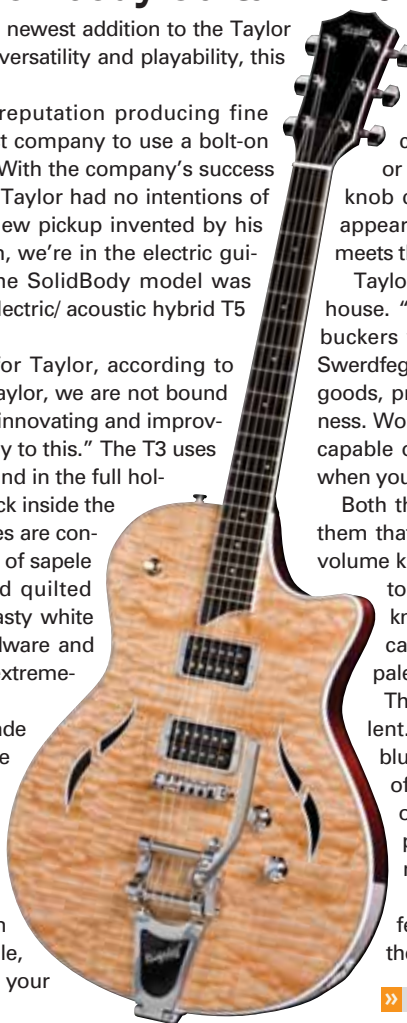
Taylor T3 Semi-Hollowbody Guitar: *Innovation That Inspires*

The T3 semi-hollowbody electric is the newest addition to the Taylor line of guitars. Combining innovation, versatility and playability, this axe is definitely worth a closer look.

Starting in 1974, Taylor built its reputation producing fine acoustic guitars. In fact, it was the first company to use a bolt-on neck design on steel string acoustics. With the company's success in the acoustic market, co-owner Bob Taylor had no intentions of building an electric until he heard a new pickup invented by his design department. "I knew right then, we're in the electric guitar business," Taylor said. In 2007 the SolidBody model was introduced but was preceded by the electric/ acoustic hybrid T5 in 2005.

The T3 was the next logical step for Taylor, according to Marketing VP Brian Swerdfeger. "At Taylor, we are not bound by tradition," he said. "We are always innovating and improving on design, and the T3 is a testimony to this." The T3 uses many of the same design elements found in the full hollowbody T5 but has a wood center block inside the chamber. Like the T5, the back and sides are constructed from a single carved-out piece of sapele wood with a beautiful book-matched quilted maple laminate top trimmed with a tasty white binding. Featuring chrome-plated hardware and a flawless high-gloss finish, this is an extremely attractive guitar.

The 21-fret neck of the T3 is also made from sapele and has a comfortable medium profile and nice hefty frets. One of the guitar's unique features is Taylor's patented T-Lock system, which uses a single bolt to attach the neck to a milled pocket in the body with exacting precision. This results in greater stability and a precise neck angle, not to mention a dream come true for your repairman.



There are two humbucker pickups mounted into the guitar's top along with a six-way adjustable roller bridge and stop tailpiece. The T3 is also available as the T3/B with an optional Bigsby vibrato tailpiece installed, a first for the company. A three-way switch toggles between neck, bridge or combined pickup settings, and a master volume and tone knob complete the picture. At first glance, the T3's electronics appear to be fairly standard, but there is much more here than meets the eye.

Taylor's Style 2 HD (high-definition) pickups are custom made in-house. "They are built to deliver the sweet tones of vintage humbuckers with the high output and versatility of modern design," Swerdfeger said. There is no doubt that the HD pickups do deliver the goods, providing tons of gain while retaining warmth and smoothness. Working with the three-way toggle and control knobs, the T3 is capable of a wide array of great sounds, but the fun really begins when you access the guitar's innovative electronic wiring.

Both the volume and control knobs have a pull switch built into them that greatly expands the T3's versatility. A simple pull on the volume knob activates a coil splitter, delivering single coil capabilities to both pickups along with a host of additional tones. The tone knob pull switch is even more interesting: It places a second capacitor into the tone stack, resulting in completely new palette of lush warm tones.

This guitar plays extremely well, and the intonation is excellent. Its tonal capabilities are incredible and suitable for jazz, blues, rock, fusion or country. The pull knobs are definitely one of the T3's strengths—I found myself using them frequently on the gig. As Taylor's Swerdfeger said, "The T3 does not push you in any one direction, but you can go there if you need to."

Taylor's T3 exhibits the true versatility that many claim but few actually deliver. With a street price of around \$2,400 for the stop tail model, it is an excellent value. —Keith Baumann

» Ordering info: taylorguitars.com

Toca Freestyle Djembe: *Full-Bodied Satisfaction*

Toca Percussion has retrooled its award-winning Freestyle djembe—a chaliced-shaped, single-headed hand drum with roots in the West African countries of Guinea and Mali.

Instead of employing the traditional method of carving the instrument from the trunk of a tree, Toca uses a patented shell made from synthetic PVC material for these djembes. This makes the Freestyle djembe among the lightest and most durable models on the market. The PVC shell produces a bright resonance that allows for easy tone production and makes the drum an excellent choice for school programs and drum circles.

Toca puts hand-selected goat skin heads on the Freestyle djembes, providing an important organic element often lacking in all-synthetic models. The skins on the four djembes I played all had excellent quality heads with even thicknesses and no blemishes.

The new Freestyle djembes feature a low mass bolt tuning system, unlike traditional



djembes that use a somewhat complex rope tuning system. The Freestyle djembes are easily tuned with a small wrench that comes with the drums. The tuning mechanism provides for quick, practically effortless tuning of a wide range of tensions. The bolts on the Freestyle djembes have protective rubber sleeves on them, which protect the player's legs and enhance the look of the drum. A non-slip protective rubber collar is located on the bottom of the instruments.

The new Freestyle djembes are available in two new hand-painted finishes—antique gold and antique silver—to give them a distinctive, North African look. They come with a choice of four different head sizes: 9-inch, 10-inch, 12-inch and 14-inch. The heights of the drums are relative to the head sizes, making the 12-inch and 14-inch versions more of a traditional djembe size and the smaller drums much like a North African dumbek. All sizes produce full-bodied sounds with sharp high-end slaps and satisfying bass tones. —Doug Brush

» Ordering info: tocapercussion.com

1» Aguilar's Bass-Booster

Aguilar Amplification has released the DB 751 bass amplifier, featuring a hybrid preamp that combines the tube-driven tone of the DB 750 with active boost and cut for great EQ control. The DB 751 also features Jensen XLR balanced output, quality whisper fans with speed control and detachable rack ears.

More info: aguilaramp.com

1»



«2

4» Line 6 Extends a Hand

Line 6 has released the X2 XDR955 handheld microphone system, the latest addition to its XDR95 series of digital wireless systems. With a rack-mountable receiver, the system also includes a cardioid microphone with a transmitter at its base and a frequency response of 10 Hz-20kHz for sound clarity at up to 300 feet. The wireless system also incorporates multiple layers of protection that shield its signal from static, interference and dropouts.

More info: line6.com

2» A-T Realism in Stereo

The AT8022 X/Y stereo mic has a coincident capsule configuration that provides smaller housing and produces a stereo image with spatial impact and realism. It also features a compact, lightweight design for camera-mount use. The AT8022 has an 80 Hz high pass filter for easy switching from a flat frequency response to a low-end roll off. It comes equipped with a professional stand clamp, windscreen and protective pouch.

More info: audio-technica.com

4»



«3



6»



3» Ellington Gets Real

Hal Leonard now offers a collection of Duke Ellington's best songs in *The Duke Ellington Real Book*. The melody/lyrics/chords book is presented in classic jazz-font notation and includes more than 100 tunes, including "Caravan," "Come Sunday" and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." Also new from the publisher is a CD-ROM version of the complete *Real Book* as well as a Play-Along Edition with accompaniment CDs for practice.

More info: halleonard.com



5»

5» Ludwig Applies the Gloss

Ludwig had announced the new Element Lacquer Series drums. The drums feature 6-ply shells boasting inner and outer plies of marbled birch and a poplar core. Element Series Drums are reinforced with 2.5mm power snare hoops and are available in four configurations and four high-gloss lacquer finishes accented by the new Classic Keystone lug.

More info: ludwig-drums.com

6» Affordable Martins

With the economy in mind, C.F. Martin & Co. has announced the return of the 1 Series acoustic guitars, first introduced in 1993. The 1 Series is an affordable traditional solid wood guitar in the spirit of the Style 15 and Style 17 models, which Martin introduced during the Great Depression. Created from solid tonewoods, all four models feature Martin's modified hybrid scalloped top bracing.

More info: martinguitar.com

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MICHAEL VOLLAN

Tim Fitzgerald

Wes Montgomery's Subtle Approach to Repetitive Harmony—Anything But Static

The first time I saw film footage of Wes Montgomery was when I got my hands on a well-worn videotape of his performance on the British television show “Jazz 625.” By looking closely at some of the simpler aspects of his approach, I began to internalize the feel, the phrasing, the narrative—all the things that are impossible to notate. It brought more to my own music.

One way that Montgomery would build interest was by switching from single-note lines to octaves to chord solos. But a more subtle way that he would keep the listener engaged, particularly on static harmony, was by changing up his harmonic and rhythmic approaches as the solo progressed. In fact, three of his original tunes on “Jazz 625” include long stretches of just one or two chords that lend themselves well to this sort of investigation.

First, let's look at the harmonic side of things, starting with “Twisted Blues,” a 32-bar tune with the form divided ABAC. The A sections consist of eight bars of alternating G \flat 7 and G7 chords. Since G \flat 7 is the IV chord in a D \flat blues, Montgomery uses some of the same harmonic devices in the first A section that he would use on bars 5 and 6 of a 12-bar blues. In example 1, he uses the D \flat blues

scale—with a slickly added 6th.

But when Montgomery returns to the same chord progression in the second A, he no longer treats the G7 as a passing chord. Instead, he now chooses to outline the G7 chord using Dmin9 and Dmin/maj9 arpeggios to express G13 and G13#11 (ex. 2), engaging the listener with a fresh sound.

In addition to mixing approaches from section to section, he would often change it up within a line. As the long and dramatic opening line to his solo on “Full House” moves from Fmin7 to B \flat 7 and back, he subtly incorporates a G minor idea (fifth measure of ex. 3), bringing in the 9th, 11th and 13th of F minor and giving even more motion to an exciting melodic statement.

When it came to rhythmic variation, Montgomery shined, playing over the barline and shifting phrases by one or two beats, creating polyrhythms by accenting small groupings and by contrasting rhythmically aggressive phrases of upbeats with phrases emphasizing the downbeat—all while maintaining a terrific swing feel and perfect time.

Looking again at the opening of his “Full House” solo, Montgomery creates an ear catching angular phrase by anticipating D \flat 7 by one-and-a-half beats (latter part of ex. 3). In the next A section, he continues to create rhythmic interest by accenting every two beats (with a slide and alternate fingering) and then going early to D \flat 7, this time by a beat (ex. 4).

The uptempo “Jingles” gives several examples of his interesting polyrhythms. Halfway into his first chorus of octaves, he plays two extended phrases accenting the dotted quarter note. To further heighten the effect, he begins the second of these phrases on beat 4 (ex. 5).

As he did on “Full House,” Montgomery then follows a rhythmically aggressive passage with a long line of quarter notes (ex. 6). This release heightens the overall sense of swing and drives the solo. His choice to play quarter notes also sets up his return to more over-the-bar-line and polyrhythmic playing in the following section.

Just as we study how Montgomery would shift gears rhythmically and harmonically, it's also important to notice the timing of when he would do so. These choices result in a warm and swinging esthetic, always grabbing the listener's ears while staying true to the composition. **DB**

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Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 5



Example 6



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Anat Cohen's Virtuoso Clarinet Solo on 'Cry Me A River'

Anat Cohen delivers a spectacular clarinet solo on the standard "Cry Me A River," from her 2007 album *Noir* (Anzic Records). Cohen not only showcases her technical virtuosity on the instrument, but also her musicality.

One aspect she demonstrates is her expansive range. Not only does her solo span over three octaves, from the low E \flat in Bar 10 to the very high G that appears in measures 20 and 24, but often Cohen plays runs that traverse an octave or more (measures 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27). Especially noteworthy are the flourishes in measures 20 and 21, where she runs a scale first from F \sharp to a higher G in the space of one beat, and then in the next measure runs the scale down from G to a low F \sharp .

Notice also how Cohen uses her range, not flaunting it all at once but reserving it for musical effect. For the first 15 bars her lines keep

bouncing off high A \flat , A, B \flat and C. It isn't until measure 17 that a high D finally shows up, and then this (and the E \flat in the same measure) becomes the high point until the highest G finally enters in measure 20, a little over halfway through her solo. She returns to this high pitch at the start of the last A section, and holds it for a full measure. The earlier run was just hinting at this climax.

Cohen shows a tendency to resolve her lines to chord tones on strong beats. She lands on roots in measures 2, 5, 15, 19, 20 and 27, thirds in measures 7 and 10, and fifths in measures 11, 18 and 24. After all this emphasis on chord tones, Cohen wraps up her entire solo by resolving to a ninth, which she has not done anywhere else in the solo. Also worth observing is that although most of these resolutions occur on downbeats, she sometimes comes to



rest on the third (measures 2, 19, and 27) and fourth (5) beats.

Cohen also builds her solo with scalar choices. The first nine measures are almost exclusively the C blues scale, with an emphasis on the flatted fifth. The next six measures are more modal, within C Aeolian but with some chromaticism based on the chord changes. There is the E natural and A natural, which are the thirds against the C 7 and F 7 in measures 12 and 13, and the flat and sharp ninths on the B \flat 7 chord in measure 10. Significantly, there are also flat sixths on the B \flat 7 s in bars 10 and 14, which is the same pitch as the flat fifth she had used so much in the earlier section.

In the second half of measure 15, Cohen plays a G melodic minor run leading into the bridge. Here the song shifts to the key of G minor, and with the E natural as the fifth of Am 7 and the F \sharp as the third of D 7 , G melodic minor fits the chords of this section particularly well. Cohen plays this scale almost exclusively (adding E \flat s in a few places as the flat ninth on the D chord, creating the harmonic minor scale) up until measure 22, where she starts playing an ascending chromatic run that spans two octaves over two measures, slowly and inevitably climbing up to the climax in measure 24.

For the last eight, Cohen recaps the elements she's already set up, but not in such a sectional manner. There are measures of blues scale (25, 26, 30), C Aeolian (27, 29) and chromatic runs (28, 31). A very intriguing lick can be found in measure 26, where Cohen implies a counterpoint by creating a chromatic lower line that goes from C to B to B \flat , with upper blues scale licks inserted between those notes. **DB**

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

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New York's Jazz Standard Youth Orchestra Opens Door to Eager Student Players

It's Sunday brunch time at New York City's Jazz Standard, and The Jazz Standard Youth Orchestra is already onstage and ready to test its mettle. As the room is packed with family and friends, musicians between the ages of 11 and 18 burn through such time-honored standards as "Cherokee," "How Insensitive" and "Billie's Bounce."

"There are people who are worried about the future of jazz, but I'm not," said the band's artistic director, David O'Rourke. "I'm seeing 11-year-olds who want to play." O'Rourke runs this weekly session during the school year for 25 students, where he rehearses them for a few hours before the band performs at 2 p.m. Guitarist O'Rourke generally doesn't play with the band, figuring it's better for the kids to be up there on the bandstand alone.

"He's the type to show you how to swim and then throw you in the Atlantic to show you how to really swim," said 16-year-old pianist Davis Whitfield, a five-year veteran of the program. "Dave never holds back and is always real in what he says and does."

O'Rourke, who originally hails from the small town of Malahide just north of Dublin, Ireland, moved to the United States in 1989 and started teaching to pay the bills. Seven years ago while holding down a regular gig in the house band at Blue Smoke (the upstairs sister restaurant to Jazz Standard), he was approached to lead the Youth Orchestra by club owner James Polsky.

"Jazz Standard Youth Orchestra is cohesive with our club's core, which is dedicated to fostering enthusiasm and appreciation for jazz," said Seth Abramson, artistic director of Jazz Standard, which also hosts a Jazz Discovery program where local public schools can bring their students to an interactive performance free of charge during the weekdays of the school year. "The program introduces music to children at an early age, which ultimately creates a more well-rounded, cultured community."

The open-door policy for students of varying skill levels and ages can make the orchestra especially fun to watch when it's on—at a recent show the kids did a funky version of "Straight No Chaser" that had elements of



Jazz Standard Youth Orchestra

MICHAEL ACERVA

New Orleans second line in it as the horn section nodded heads in unison.

Many of these students already attend performing arts schools and go on to conservatories as well as state schools with strong music programs. O'Rourke doesn't have any empirical data about where they end up, but he has seen many of the estimated 130 young musicians who have passed through the program stick with music for college and post-graduate studies.

O'Rourke has done his best to prepare them for life after the Jazz Standard gigs, worrying that the full houses and nurturing atmosphere will give students a somewhat distorted picture of life as a working musician.

"Some of them haven't thought it out," O'Rourke said. "I'll give them a scenario: You just got a call for a gig. It's a wedding and the pay is \$600, and rent is due. Do you take the gig or do you call your parents and ask them to subsidize your rent while you go out and sit in at jam sessions? Some of them understand and say: 'You take the gig.'"

—*Tad Hendrickson*

Elmhurst College Honors Bill Holman with Honorary Doctorate

On Sunday, May 31, 650 new graduates of Elmhurst College rose and sang the alma mater during their college's Commencement ceremony. Among the graduates was jazz arranger Bill Holman, an honorary degree recipient. As the crowd sang along, Holman leaned over to Director of Jazz Studies Doug Beach and whispered, "This is in E-flat. It should be in C."

This acute musical ear is precisely how Holman earned his Doctor of Music degree from the liberal arts college in Elmhurst, Ill.

Holman's relationship with Beach started when they met back in college. Their correspondence through the years led to the strong relationship between Holman and Elmhurst College, which has been building for more than 20 years. Holman has now composed four commissions for the college's jazz band as well as performed with his own band at the college's annual jazz festival on multiple occasions.



Kenne Briston, Chairman of the Elmhurst College Board of Trustees (left), and Bill Holman

BILL ACKERMAN

"He's always been one of my heros," Beach said. "As an arranger myself, he is a role model. He has done so much for the college, I thought it would be nice if I could nominate him for an honorary degree."

More than a year ago Beach started the honorary doctorate nomination process, which includes presenting each candidate's work to the college's deans, president and board of trustees.

As a widely admired jazz arranger, Holman has worked with many of his influences, including Charlie Barnet, Stan Kenton, Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson, Gerry Mulligan, Peggy Lee and Natalie Cole. In 1975, he started the Bill Holman Band, which has released three albums, one of which won a Grammy for Best Instrumental Composition. Still, he adds that his recent honor is particularly gratifying.

"It was humbling and rewarding to receive the degree," Holman said.

—*Katie Kailus*

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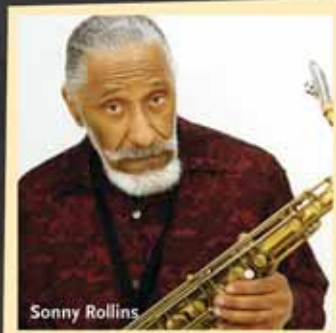
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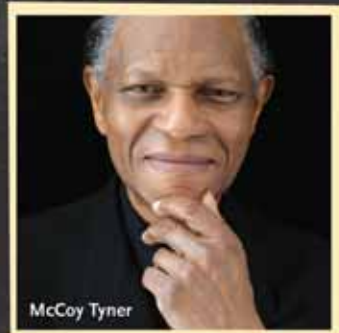
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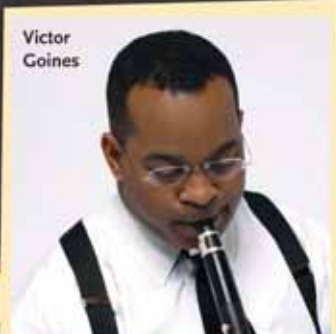
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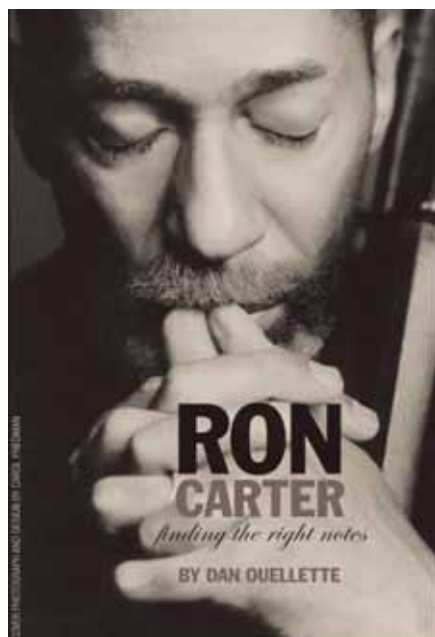
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"I got everything wrong," trumpeter Hugh Masekela said, recalling his first Blindfold Test, in 1967, with Leonard Feather. He earned a better grade on round two, held 42 years later, on a New York press day to publicize a tour in support of *Chola* (Times Square), the latest refinement of his fusion of American jazz with South African township dance music.

Max Roach-Booker Little

"Tears For Johannesburg" (from *We Insist: Freedom Now Suite*, Candid, 1960) Roach, drums; Booker Little, trumpet; Julian Priest, trombone; Walter Benton, tenor saxophone; Abbey Lincoln, voice; James Schenk, bass.

I loved that. I don't know who it is, but it reminds me a lot of the things that Max Roach was doing in the '60s, when he was into African activism, and got guys like Chief Bey to come and play. It could have been Charles Tolliver, or Booker Little, or Cecil Bridgewater. But I'm not good at guessing. 5 stars.

Dudu Pukwana

"Diamond Express" (from *Diamond Express*, Arista, 1975) Pukwana, alto saxophone; Mongezi Feza, trumpet; Frank Roberts, keyboards; Lucky Ranko, guitar; Ernest Othole, electric bass; Louis Moholo, drums.

I don't know when it would have been, but that's Dudu Pukwana on saxophone, when those guys were in London with Chris McGregor as the Blue Notes or later as the Brotherhood of Breath. The guitar player sounded like Lucky Ranko, and probably Mongezi Feza on trumpet. Dudu was one of the most beautiful players. That's a wonderful South African groove. I wish that the South African musicians could be listening to stuff like this. 5 stars.

Wynton Marsalis

"Place Congo" (from *Congo Square*, JALC, 2008) Andre Haywood, trombone; James Zollar, trumpet; Sherman Irby, alto saxophone; Yacub Addy, master drum. Wow, that's beautiful. That sounded like something from the late '60s or early '70s. If Duke Ellington wanted to write an African suite, he would have done an arrangement like that—the voicings, the solos, the contemporary stuff. I suspected that it was him, but I have no idea if it was someone trying to imitate him. I keep hearing people like Chief Bey playing in the drum section. 5 stars.

Jerry Gonzalez and The Fort Apache Band

"To Wisdom The Prize" (from *Moliendo Café*, Sunnyside, 1991) Jerry Gonzalez, flugelhorn, congas; Carter Jefferson, tenor saxophone; Joe Ford, alto saxophone; Larry Willis, piano; Andy Gonzalez, bass; Steve Berrios, percussion. For a time, the piano player sounded like Larry Willis, who was with my first group. The piano solo, the voicings and so on, Larry did nice stuff like that. If it isn't Larry Willis, then the guy tries to play like him—or he influenced Larry. The trumpet player with the beautiful fat tone, I don't know who it might be. Maybe Eddie Henderson. 4 stars.

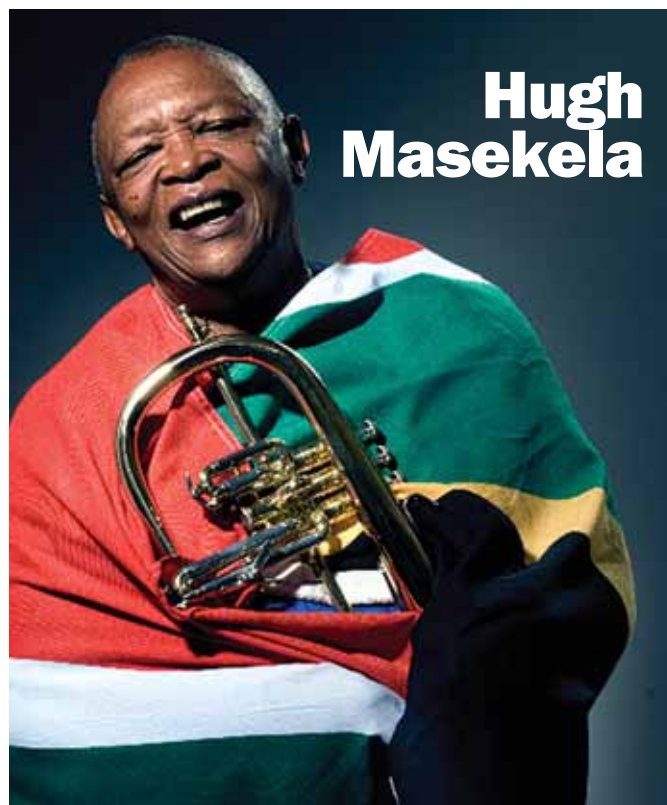
Amir ElSaffar

"Flood" (from *Two Rivers*, Pi, 2007) ElSaffar, trumpet; Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Zafer Tawil: violin, oud, dumbek; Tareq Abboushi: buzuq, frame drum; Carlo DeRosa: bass; Nasheet Waits: drums.

I got thirsty on that one. It was sort of Middle Eastern jazz or Arabic jazz, or maybe Saharan jazz. I had pictures of camels and a lot of sand and sandstorms, and I was dying for an oasis. But thematically, I enjoyed it. 3 stars.

Charles Tolliver

"Chedlike" (from *Emperor March*, Half Note, 2009) Tolliver, trumpet; orchestra. I loved it. If it wasn't the Gil Evans band, then it was somebody who is a big fan of Gil Evans. I have all the things he did with Miles Davis. If the drummer isn't Elvin Jones, it's a great fan. The first night I came to New York, in September 1960, I saw Elvin Jones with John Coltrane, Reggie



MICHAEL WEINTROB

Workman and McCoy Tyner, and I'd never seen a drummer play like that. I don't know the trumpet player. Could it be Johnny Coles? I'm not sure. 4 stars.

Brecker Brothers

"Wakaria (What's Up?)" (from *Return Of The Brecker Brothers*, GRP, 1992) Randy Brecker, trumpet and flugelhorn; Michael Brecker, tenor saxophone; Armand Sabal-Lecco, bass, piccolo bass, drums, percussion, vocals; Max Risenhoover, snare programming, ride cymbal; George Whitty, keyboards; Dennis Chambers, drums.

I loved the arrangement. I have no idea who it is. With Miles Davis and Clifford Brown and Fats Navarro and Dizzy Gillespie, all those guys from that time, and of course Louis Armstrong before that, you could always tell who was playing. Later on, people became technically unbelievable, but you couldn't really say, "There is so-and-so." Having been away from the States for over 18 years, I haven't followed any of the new developments. I loved the melody, a nice children's song kind of thing. 4½ stars.

Dizzy Gillespie

"Africana" (from *Gillespiana*, Verve, 1961) Gillespie, trumpet; Leo Wright, flute; Lalo Schiffrin, piano; Art Davis, bass; Chuck Lampkin, drums.

That felt to me like Dizzy Gillespie, though it could have been Jon Faddis. The flute sounded a little bit like James Moody—I don't know how long ago it was done. I loved the piece, which is very Dizzy-esque. I don't know who arranged it. I remember a time when Dizzy was doing a lot of work with Quincy Jones, but this sounds like something much later. Dizzy was the Svengali and God of the trumpet. So many people came from him. Harmonically, he was amazing. He did beautiful things on the Harmon mute—when he and Miles played it, I threw mine away. **DB**

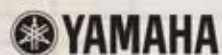
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WE'RE CHANGING THE WAY REEDS ARE MADE, STARTING WITH THE REED BLANK. EVERY BLANK IS DIGITALLY CONTROLLED TO ENSURE AN ULTRA-SMOOTH, FLAT SURFACE FOR BETTER CONTACT WITH YOUR MOUTHPIECE, A PRECISE TAPER FOR A BALANCED CUT, AND A SYMMETRICAL HEEL - SO THAT EVERY Rico REED LIVES UP TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

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