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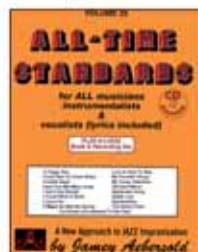


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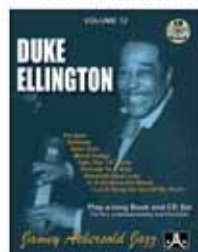
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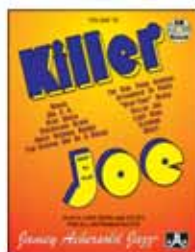


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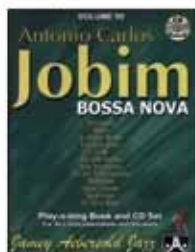


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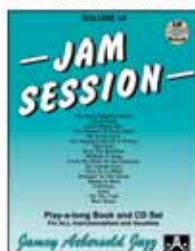


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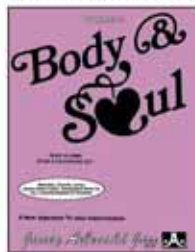
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VOLUME 77 - NUMBER 3

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**POSTMASTER:** Send change of address to: DownBeat, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688. **CABLE ADDRESS:** DownBeat (on sale February 16, 2010) Magazine Publishers Association



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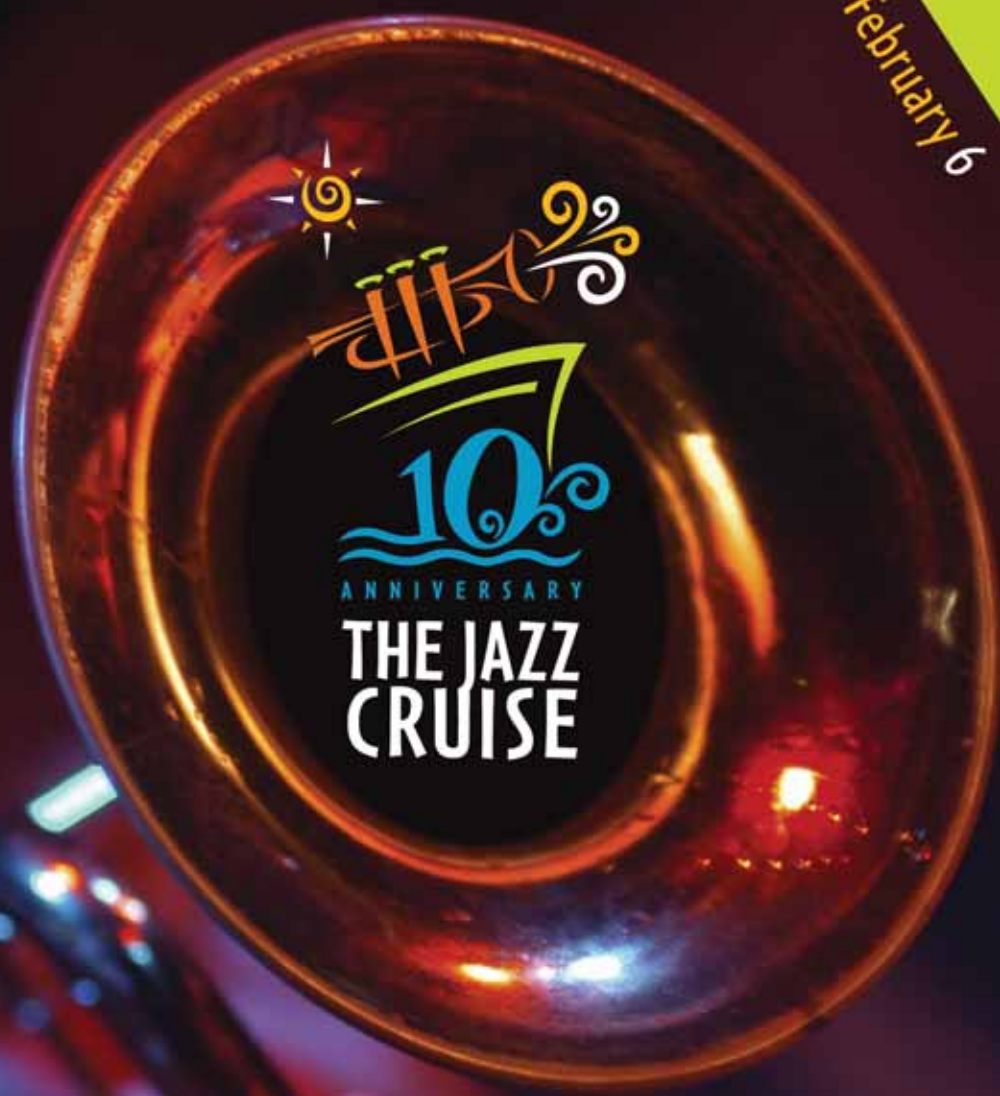
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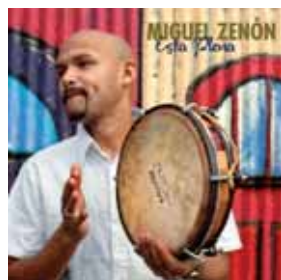
## 26 Ahmad Jamal *Intricacy & Groove* | By Jim Macnie

Jazz fans are probably used to seeing Ahmad Jamal looking regal at his instrument. A big chunk of the pianist's art is based on milking his music for all the dynamics possible, and his posture helps the creativity by bolstering the power. So it's revealing to spend time with the 79-year-old master when he's away from the instrument, and even more novel to catch him in the relaxed atmosphere of the rural Massachusetts village that he calls home. Surrounded by classic New England totems, Jamal exuded a sense of ease—like a guy who knew the answers to a lot of life's questions.

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Sacramento State  
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## Jazz Camp: Not Just For Kids

Here at DownBeat, we love music students. We value them as readers and admire their ambition. The very thought of some of them growing up to become professional artists, and having their performances and recordings covered in these pages, thrills us. Music students with an appetite for jazz are our future, in more ways than one. That’s why we’re always publishing comprehensive jazz school guides and hosting our own annual Student Music Awards, not to mention covering campus jazz news in every issue of the magazine.

But the study of jazz isn’t limited to young players who are currently enrolled in school music programs. Many instrumentalists, vocalists and composers among us are eternal jazz students. Although we finished our formal schooling years ago, we try to keep up our practice routines and check out new instructional books and play-alongs to keep our chops strong and our ears keen. Some of us grownups have even sent ourselves to summer jazz camp, the ultimate environment for learning creative new ways to improvise and interplay with others. Camp, it turns out, isn’t just for kids—at least not when it comes to jazz.

In this issue of DownBeat, we present our annual Summer Jazz Camp Guide, which includes vital information on more than 60 different jazz camps offered across the country and beyond. Aspiring jazz musicians young and old will be in attendance at these summertime gatherings, so if you have the resources and the time, don’t let age be a barrier: Just sign up and go. The jazz camp experience is probably the best schooling available for anyone who’s not currently enrolled in an institution of higher learning. It will give you the chance to really be a student again and will provide you the inspiration to *play*.

Several summers ago, when I attended Jamey Aebersold’s Summer Jazz Workshop (one of the best and most popular jazz camps going), I found myself in the company of peers—not just adults in their thirties, forties and fifties, but teenagers who were easily as accomplished as the rest of us. It was the most fun I’d had woodshedding in years, and the amount of knowledge I gained—about jazz and about my own ability—was staggering.

Jazz camp is a blast. Take a look through this year’s guide, which begins on page 45. Give camp a try—you know you’ve always wanted to. It will challenge you in ways you can’t imagine and give you the opportunity to make new friends and form lifelong connections. It will renew your interest and recharge your creative muse. And it will let you feel just like a kid again.

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## Chords & Discords

### Nostalgia Addition

I enjoyed this year's DownBeat Readers Poll (December '09) winners and I'd like to suggest adding another category: a "Nostalgia" page that would honor the big band years that gave us such great musicians and vocalists. For those of us able to recall those wonderful years, it would be a nice gesture on the part of DownBeat to make this addition. Two vocalists (who are still performing these days)—Peggy King and Harry Prime—immediately come to mind, and I'll bet many of us would be happy to vote for all the other artists who are gone or still with us. It's something to think about for next time around.

*Herb Stark  
Massapequa, N.Y.*

### No Flamenco

I am writing in regards of the review of my album *Calima*, written by Chris Robinson ("Reviews," November '09). I appreciate Mr. Robinson for taking the time to listen to my album and write about it in such a well-respected magazine. While I absolutely respect his opinion about *Calima*, I would like to point to two technical mistakes. The review mentions that I play an acoustic guitar. This is not correct. I play a classic guitar (also called Spanish guitar). These are two completely different instruments with different sizes, woods, and most importantly, different strings (the classic guitar is made by nylon strings, whereas the acoustic guitar is made by metal strings). In addition, I am surprised to be considered a flamenco guitar player. I have never played flamenco and have no training in flamenco; instead my training is in classical music. Other critics have mentioned that one can sense some flamenco influences in my music. This may be true because I am from Spain, but I am not a "flamenco guitarist," as any flamenco guitarist would tell you. In fact, flamenco music is never played with an acoustic guitar.

*Diego Barber  
dibari@hotmail.com*

### More Bass, Especially Holland

I was reading about Jaco Pastorius and I noticed he was voted into DownBeat's Hall of Fame a little bit after he died. I also took note that he was only one in four bassists elected to the Hall of Fame. The other bass players in the hall are very deserving but I couldn't help



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14 Riffs  
18 European Scene  
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24 Players

**WBGO's Stylish 30th Celebration**

WBGO's 30th anniversary celebration was a night to remember for the greater New York City area, celebrating the station's 30th anniversary in style at the Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York on Nov. 5, 2009. The event featured the 30th anniversary concert, a tribute to the station's 30th anniversary, and a special presentation. The 30th anniversary concert featured a lineup of jazz greats, including Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Thelonious Monk. The special presentation featured a tribute to the station's 30th anniversary, and a special presentation. The 30th anniversary celebration was a night to remember for the greater New York City area, celebrating the station's 30th anniversary in style at the Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York on Nov. 5, 2009. The event featured the 30th anniversary concert, a tribute to the station's 30th anniversary, and a special presentation. The 30th anniversary concert featured a lineup of jazz greats, including Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Thelonious Monk. The special presentation featured a tribute to the station's 30th anniversary, and a special presentation.

**DownBeat In The House**

I had the second-by-second thrill of being present at WBGO's "Champions Of Jazz" benefit at New York's Frederick P. Rose Hall ("The Beat," January). And was DownBeat ever in the house! That night will have eternal swing in my memory just as DownBeat does so well what the Bible teaches: "save what remains." DownBeat: a living archival treasury of all that is "Jazz, Blues and Beyond."

*Francis Scanlon  
New York City*

but notice that Dave Holland is missing. Is Downbeat going to wait until he dies to vote him in? Try and name a bad album he has played on. Try and name even a subpar album he has played on. The man plays the bass in an extraordinary way and has played with the best. He has followed in the footsteps of Miles and recruited younger talent to play with him in hopes that they will attempt to build a career. Quite simply, the man is one of the biggest draws in jazz music today and always puts on a beautiful show.

*Austin Smith  
austin@swschmitz.com*

### Correction

Jon Gordon's 2008 CD *Within Worlds*, which received a 4½-star rating, should have been included in the January issue's listing of best albums of the decade.

DownBeat regrets the error.

Have a chord or discord? E-mail us at [editor@downbeat.com](mailto:editor@downbeat.com).



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# The Beat

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## Uptown Swing

### *The National Jazz Museum in Harlem continues expansive programming*

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem has seen steady growth since arranger-conductor-historian Loren Schoenberg became executive director in 2001 after the United States Congress provided \$1 million for development. The following year the fledgling organization moved into its current office on East 126th Street, and in 2005 Christian McBride came on board as co-director. And Schoenberg's recent plans for this New York institution that saxophonist/attorney Leonard Garment founded in 1997 are increasingly ambitious. "The programming we've been presenting has been growing exponentially," Schoenberg said.

Case in point: Throughout December, McBride hosted a weekly series called Christian's Listening Party, which featured him discussing his career, including the evolution of his bands, his film work, his favorite recordings and his appearance in all-star settings.

"We're getting more support from subscribers, and word has spread throughout the community more in the past year than at any other time in the five years since I've been on board," McBride said.

The Listening Party took place at the NJMH Visitors Center, which is open to the public and presents seemingly nonstop educational and cultural activities. McBride likens it to an intimate club. The events include the Harlem Speaks series featuring artists and business leaders, Jazz for Curious Listeners sessions discussing jazz fundamentals, Jazz for Curious Readers sessions related to the written word, and the Saturday Panels series of films, discussions and music.

NJMH has also spread its wings beyond the space itself, on the second floor of a nondescript building a stone's throw from the aboveground 125th Street Metro North train station. It sponsors live programming, including the Harlem in the Himalayas series at the Rubin Museum of Art in the Chelsea neighborhood—which was the setting for Schoenberg conducting the NJMH All-Star Big Band in archival Duke Ellington music (including tunes the band never



National Jazz Museum board chairman Arthur H. Barnes (left), Christian McBride and museum executive director Loren Schoenberg

recorded) as well as "The Far East Suite" on Dec. 18—and at The Players club in Gramercy. In April, NJMH will begin a new Friday night series at the Dwyer Cultural Center in Harlem, with an emphasis on jazz-related dance music that the museum hopes will attract younger audiences.

In addition, NJMH hosted a panel on the early jazz-related writings of author Jack Kerouac, hosted by Kerouac scholar Sarah Villa, and Jonathan Batiste launched the new NJMH performance series, Jazz Is: Now!, which features the pianist and his band playing and interacting with the audience.

"We're a good team," Schoenberg said. "We've had several thousand people attend our programs that take place 52 weeks a year. But we need more room. We cram some 70 to 100 people into our events."

In 2002, the NJMH began its search to find another space to expand with a listening library and performance theater. After being stymied in its attempt to take over the shuttered Victoria Theater next to the historic Apollo Theater on 125th Street, last March the museum was chosen to be part of a major redevelopment project in Harlem, at the long-vacant indoor marketplace Mart 125 across the street from the Apollo.

While the Victoria Theater project involved a

21-story development of hotel rooms and condos with the museum occupying a 10,000-square-foot space on the fourth floor, Mart 125 will also be 10,000 square feet but more accessible. "So we're going to take that sprawling novel we were going to write and compact it into a novelle," Schoenberg said.

With support from the city government augmented by a major capital campaign, the \$15 million project is scheduled to open in the spring of 2012. Even with the current economic downturn, Schoenberg is encouraged: "City agencies have signed off on this, and they want it to happen now. Even in these dire times, a modest cultural program can flourish." He adds that the Nov. 24 fundraiser at The Players featuring Batiste and vocalist Grady Tate raised \$150,000.

In a statement when the project was announced, NJMH board chairman Arthur H. Barnes enthusiastically said that soon "everyone will have even more of a reason to take the 'A' train to a corridor" that has historically played such a major role in the development of jazz.

"Jazz is such an important part of Harlem, which is where the music evolved," said Schoenberg. "That's why we want the museum to be a catalyst and cultural anchor for the community. Jazz is not a conventional music. It's an experience."

—Dan Ouellette



## Riffs



**Jazz Underground:** W. Eugene Smith's photographs and audio recordings of the jazz musicians who jammed at his New York loft in the '50s and '60s (including the above shot of Thelonious Monk) are on display at the New York Public Library For The Performing Arts. The exhibit of more than 200 images, audio recordings and film footage will run through May 22. Sam Stephenson's accompanying book, *The Jazz Loft Project* (Knopf), is also available.

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

**McPartland's New Title:** Queen Elizabeth II named Marian McPartland an Officer of the Order of the British Empire on Jan. 1.

**Blues Benefit:** Lonnie Brooks, Eddy Clearwater and Jimmy Dawkins will team up to perform a charity concert called *Out Of The Blues 2* at Chicago's House of Blues on March 11. The benefit is for Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center, a Chicago-area rape crisis center.

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

**SFJAZZ Honors Hutcherson:** SFJAZZ will honor Bobby Hutcherson at its annual gala on May 8 at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco. Also, saxophonist Mark Turner, trumpeter Avishai Cohen and pianist Edward Simon have joined the SFJAZZ Collective. Details: [sfjazz.org](http://sfjazz.org)

**Cuban Release:** Justin Time has released Cuban pianist Roberto Fonseca's *Akoka* disc in the United States. Along with the disc, Fonseca will also tour the East Coast in late February and early March. Details: [robertofonseca.com](http://robertofonseca.com)

**RIP, Earl Gaines.** Nashville, Tenn.-based r&b singer Earl Gaines died on Dec. 31. He was 74. Gaines' best known song was "It's Love Baby (24 Hours A Day)," which he recorded in 1955 with Louis Brooks & His Hi-Toppers.

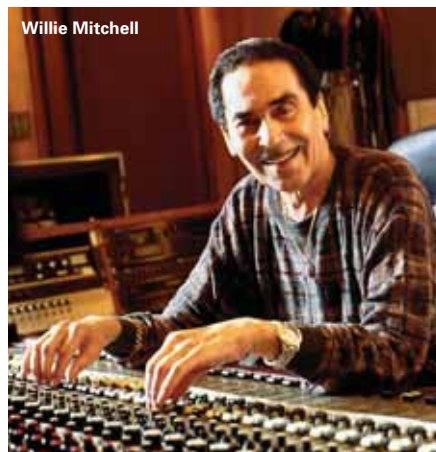
## Willie Mitchell: Diligent and Elegant, Always

Producer, arranger, bandleader, composer, trumpeter and record executive Willie Mitchell died on Jan. 5 in Memphis, Tenn., after a heart attack last December. Despite several hospital stays in his final weeks, he was active right up to the end at his Royal Studio writing horn and string charts and finalizing Solomon Burke and Rod Stewart sessions. Mitchell, 81, who helped establish his city's soul sound at Hi Records, was best known for overseeing Al Green's hit recordings in the 1970s.

Born in Ashland, Miss., Mitchell moved to Memphis with his family as an infant. By his late teens, he was playing trumpet and leading a 10-piece swing and bebop band. He started up a combo in 1954: Members included Phineas Newborn Jr., George Coleman and Charles Lloyd.

"Willie took me under his wing," Lloyd said. "I was about 15 at the time and we played seven nights a week. Elvis Presley and his band used to come to take notes. Willie was an elegant dresser, handsome, the ladies loved him. He was one of the world's greatest treasures."

In the late '50s, Mitchell brought his modern jazz concepts to instrumentals cut for the Home of the Blues label. Soon, he switched over to Hi and recorded "20-75" in 1964. Several more hits followed. Putting down his horn, he established himself as a producer, bringing Green to Memphis for gold records and recording Ann Peebles, O. V. Wright and others. In 1970, he became vice president of Hi, steering a successful course until the label was sold late in the decade. After acquiring



Hi's Royal Studio, Mitchell went on to revive Green's soul career and record the likes of Buddy Guy and John Mayer.

Soft-spoken and humble, Mitchell worked with many of the best musicians in soul music, like The Hodges Brothers and trumpeter Wayne Jackson of the Memphis Horns.

"Whoever Willie recorded, I was on it," Jackson said. "We stood around in that studio all night, sometimes, and received his blessings. He was our hero. He knew how to do things the way he wanted them to sound, that was Willie Mitchell magic."

Just as emotional, Green said, "He was the mecca of soul and r&b." Burke added, "We have lost a king. I'm at a loss for words. The name Willie Mitchell will continue to live until the end of time." —Frank-John Hadley

## New Film Revisits Chicago's Chess Records

While Chess Records has long been distinguished for its role in turning the world on to Chicago's blues and r&b legends, it has also become the subject of a second feature film. Director Jerry Zaks' new movie *Who Do You Love* opens this spring and while this depiction may not have the star power of Beyoncé and Adrien Brody in *Cadillac Records* from 2008, it has received the endorsement of Marshall Chess, whose father Leonard and uncle Phil Chess ran the label during its glory years of the '50s and '60s.

"This movie has a lighter feeling," Marshall Chess said. "Chess was the happiest place I've ever been in in my life. We had a lot of fun. All the bantering in the film with the musicians, that's definitely how it went down. And they do get across Chess' importance as being one of the greatest record labels of all time."

Along with that spirit, Chess said he's impressed with Chi McBride's portrayal of Willie Dixon and Robert Randolph's Bo Diddley, noting that the guitarist even nailed Diddley's way of rolling his eyes back. While



Chess does say that this film and its predecessor convey some fiction (both fabricate an affair between his father and a Chess singer), he applauds Phil's major role in *Who Do You Love*. *Cadillac Records* omitted his uncle's significant part in the company.

"My uncle's excited," Marshall Chess said. "He called and asked me to send him five DVDs of the film because he wanted to give them to some waitresses." —Aaron Cohen

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By John Corbett



## The Residents *The Beatles Play The Residents* *And The Residents Play The Beatles*

(7-INCH SINGLE, RALPH RECORDS, 1977)

Among the weirdest record artifacts in my collection is the "registration card" that accompanied this wonderfully strange early 7-inch by the mysterious band The Residents. The single, released in 1977, was produced in a limited edition of 500, with quite beautiful silkscreened cover featuring The Beatles' heads grafted onto naked bodies (female bottoms, male tops, I think). Each one came hand-numbered in pencil in an embossed seal stamp labeled "Official Limited Edition—Ralph Records." As if someone would be counterfeiting them.

The limited number—mine is number 89—is reiterated on the registration card, which is tucked inside a little flap in the interior of the gatefold cover. A text on the card reads: "This record is a limited edition and should be duly registered with the Cryptic Corporation by returning this form with name and address of owner. An annual report of current collector values of Ralph recordings will be made available to Ralph's friends."

I'll readily admit that I didn't register my copy, though I was tempted by the offer of continued updates. What a strange concept, playing on the fetishistic tendencies of collectors, gathering info on the 500 odd (and I mean odd) folks who would buy such a single, sending them some sort of investment review. But this was the subversive '70s, when the idea of twisting the codes of commercialism was an important part of the cultural landscape. The Residents, whose early years in the '60s or early '70s are shrouded in secrecy, loved to tease American fan culture, in this case picking up on the cryptic cult that had grown up around the Beatles. There is, of course, a particularly rabid kind of fanaticism associated with the Fab Four, which flourishes among the "Paul Is Dead" crazies who have sought hidden signs and



messages secreted in Beatles records. Couple this with the Beatles' own interest in backwards recordings and tape music, and you have the nut of the Residents' nasty little homage.

On the A-side, "Beyond The Valley Of A Day In The Life," The Beatles are credited with "covering" The Residents. It's not exactly true, but nicely screws up the who-did-what acknowledgement, since the track consists of snippets from Beatles songs (17 in total, plus one John Lennon solo song), arranged a la Residents into a paranoid, noisy, "Revolution No. 9" style Fluxus sound piece, the center of which is a loop of Paul McCartney saying: "Please everybody, if we haven't done what we could have done we've tried." Back before sampling was a musical mainstay, this was still called audio collage. You can hear the blueprint for much of the subsequent Residents music in their dismantling and reconfiguration of Beatles tunes. On the B-side, The Residents cover The Beatles' "Flying" with typical goofy, loping aplomb, adding a sneering recap of the McCartney quote and some mock-sinister cabaret music that sounds dopey but is actually quite brilliant, like much of the first part of The Residents' discography. **DB**

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

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



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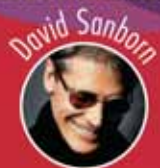
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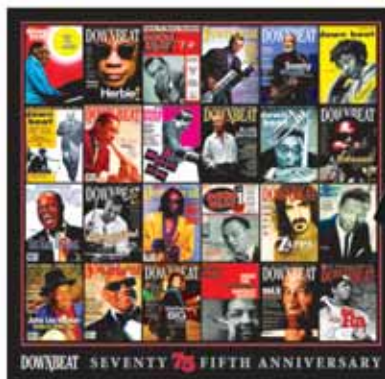
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# The Question Is ...

By Dan Ouellette

## Should there be a Jazz Band video game?

Today's video games, particularly *Guitar Hero* and *The Beatles: Rock Band*, could become gateways for kids to get off their couches and into learning how to play music. What are the prospects for a jazz-centered video game to do something similar?

**Pianist Eldar Djangirov:** That's comical. I know *Guitar Hero*, but I don't play video games. Of course, the impact of these games on my generation has been profound, but never with musicians. But a jazz game? It brings up the question again, what is jazz? Without a definition, the range is so broad. What do we choose to represent jazz? If you're talking about bebop, you have to have a different controller to play. Otherwise it would be retarded. The most accessible you could have would be drumming along with the drummer, which might be feasible by using the controls they have today. Maybe then people would get more interested in jazz.

**Guitarist Roni Ben-Hur:** Anything that will expose young people to jazz is positive, so yes, but with lots of reservation. My concern is that the makers of such a product, in their attempt to draw as large a group as possible to buy it, will water down the music so much that we will end up with some neither-here-nor-there music called "smooth jazz." Anywhere we perform, we find people who become infatuated with jazz, whether they are regular listeners or have just heard it for the first time. This is true of people of all ages, but in a most accentuated way with children. Our problem is that most of the people who run large media corporations don't believe this to be true, and still think that jazz alienates listeners and viewers. Having a video game with Wes Montgomery's music on it would be very hip, and I'm sure kids would enjoy it, but that's a very long shot.



**Saxophonist Marcus Strickland:** I don't see any reason why not. The many trials, tributes and eras of Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Art Blakey, Charles Mingus, etc., would make a great platform from which to develop an interactive video game. I don't think it will gain any more popularity or fans for the music, though. Like most mass media ventures with jazz, it will mostly be of interest to those who already appreciate this music—sort of like preaching to the choir. The money necessary to develop and market such a game would be better spent toward developing more cohesion among jazz festivals in the U.S., which would make touring here a lot more lucrative for the bands. Giving an ordinary customer a choice between a jazz video game and a rock video game seems to be more awesome than effective.

**Saxophonist Noah Preminger:** If a jazz game would increase appreciation for jazz, why not? But you need enough interest in the first place to get people to support it. On a creative level, what exactly would you do with a game like that, though? Jazz is one of the most expressive and individualized types of musical art forms, so how would you incorporate that in a video game? Could a game present the opportunity to the player to get a sense of improvisation, to come up with interesting music? They should make a video game that has the player practice with a metronome, sing and memorize lyrics to jazz standards and learn scales. How many people who play *Guitar Hero* actually go out and learn how to play an actual guitar?

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

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## Sprawling London Jazz Festival Embraces Local Heroes

The London Jazz Festival has evolved over 40 years into a hydra-headed giant lasting 10 days each fall. The festival's November program listed more than 50 venues, some of them way out in the suburbs, but, even with just central locations, there was too much going on to make rational choices. For instance, on a single Sunday evening there were simultaneous appearances by pianists Chick Corea (with Stanley Clarke and Lenny White), Robert Glasper (with Bilal) and Vijay Iyer. As if that wasn't enough, the same night saw singers Melody Gardot, Gretchen Parlato and Naturally 7 in different venues.

After a varied 45-minute solo set at the Southbank Centre, Iyer brought out local hero Talvin Singh to join him on tablas, and the implicit polyrhythms became explicit, especially in Stevie Wonder's "Big Brother." If Iyer frequently played minor chords with a hint of menace, the support set by Poland's Leszek Mozdzer opted for minor-chord melancholy, reminiscent of Fryderyk Chopin and risking boredom, but for the support of Swedish bassist Lars Danielsson. More absorbing and more varied was Italian pianist Stefano Bollani, who also had a four-night residency with different lineups, an inevitable highlight being his reunion with trumpeter Enrico Rava.

European musicians were not consigned to support status. In the major concert venues, there was an evening devoted to the ageless Cleo Laine and John Dankworth at Royal Festival Hall, another for John Surman at Queen Elizabeth Hall to celebrate his 65th birthday, and



Tomasz Stanko

DAVID SINCLAIR

yet another at the same hall fronted by returning local Dave Holland. Trumpeter Tomasz Stanko abandoned his all-Polish quartet to start a new Scandinavian quintet at Southbank, whose Finnish drummer, Olavi Louhivuori, was impressive. Rather than submerging himself in European traditions, Stanko is (like Rava) capable of being influenced by his native culture while applying an approach that is jazz through and through.

Hearing Stanko entailed missing Sonny Rollins at the Barbican, but there was still opportunity to hear British trombonist Dennis Rollins at the Southbank. Born of Jamaican parents, Dennis Rollins has toured with Maceo Parker and Courtney Pine among others, and his new trio with organist Ross Stanley put the spotlight on his own work as never before. Other locals at major venues included Canadian-born trumpeter Jay Phelps, who not only did a quintet set but took part in a chatty "history of jazz" presentation. Promising jazz-fusion came from Leah

Gough-Cooper, a Scottish saxophonist leading fellow Berklee students at Southbank's Frontroom.

There were also appearances by bands from France and Ireland, the latter group named *Métier* and featuring Irish-Filipino drummer Seán Carpio in post-Wayne Shorter music by bassist Ronan Guilfoyle. His dedication of "The Devil's Triangle" to "bankers, property developers and politicians" went down well with the audience. France's *Orchestre National de Jazz* did moody post-Gil Evans versions of Robert Wyatt songs at the Barbican's FreeStage, some with pre-recorded vocals by Wyatt. John Scofield and the Piety Street Band put a smile on everyone's face at the Southbank, with an unexpected starring role for British-born New Orleans resident Jon Cleary on keyboards and vocals. Reviving gospel numbers such as "Over In Gloryland," once a staple of trad-jazz bands, this was music for troubled times and went down a storm.

—Brian Priestley



Charles Lloyd

TONY LOWE/EARL GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY

## Jazz Musicians, Beat Poets Attempt Reconnection at Los Angeles Festival

On paper, the concept behind "A Night of the Beats"—a bringing-together of poetry and live jazz at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles—appeared provocative, possibly ear-opening. The Dec. 8 event capped off the adventurous "West Coast, Left Coast" festival presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Off paper, however, things got sketchy at times, as the oral Beat poetry and jazz traditions blurred and kept bumping into each other's best intentions. At best, some nostalgic "period piece" vibes were conjured up from the land of berets and bongos. At worst, it became clear why the poetry-meets-jazz tradition has mostly

gone the way of the dinosaur.

Longtime Santa Barbara-based saxist Charles Lloyd, joined by his stellar band of the moment (pianist Jason Moran, bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Eric Harland), first backed poet Michael McClure, but remained cool and tentative—filling the supportive role—until the spoken word portion ended and the band was allowed to stretch. Lloyd himself explored the spoken word zone, with some ecstatic Vedantic recitation acting as a verbal equivalent of his subsequent worshipful, Coltrane-esque abandon on tenor sax.

After intermission, a fine band of West

Coast-connected players—pianist Allan Broadbent, drummer Peter Erskine, alto saxophonist John Handy, Bay Area-bred Joshua Redman and Los Angeles Philharmonic jazz advisor Christian McBride—kicked off the second set. The band then aurally illustrated the flow of words, sometimes in pat, generic ways, from the spoken word contingent of McClure (reading his “Mercedes Benz”), David Meltzer (reading Allen Ginsberg’s “America” and his poem about Lester Young’s later years) and Exene Cervenka (from the band X, and a fine poet herself). Cervenka made salty, wry music of Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s timeless and pointed

50-year-old poem “I Am Waiting” (as in, “I am waiting for the Age of Anxiety to drop dead”).

Kurt Elling arrived at the end of the program. “Consider me your after-dinner mint,” the singer joked. He deftly blended music and texts, scatting in his way, and splitting the difference between the contrasting mediums at hand. He lent his sonorous tones to Jack Kerouac’s “American Haiku” and “Charlie Parker,” scatting in the cracks, glided into poetry of Gregory Corso and William Burroughs, and generally put some heat and words-to-music artistic savoir-faire back into the night.

—Josef Woodard



Henry Grimes

ABDUL SULAYMAN

## Hometown Rashied Ali Tribute Features Drummers, Reunions and Mixed Results

Family and friends of Rashied Ali honored his memory on Oct. 25 at the Philadelphia Clef Club. Their “Musical Tribute To Rashied Ali” had an informal quality befitting a hometown celebration. Acts culled largely from Philadelphia’s music and performing arts scenes paid tribute to Ali but often did not directly reflect his music or legacy.

The Rashied Ali Band, which opened the program, provided an exception. Ali recorded the group during the last years of his life. Ali’s brother, Muhammad Ali, subbed for the late drummer, alongside tenor player Lawrence Clark and pianist Greg Murphy. The trio performed a spirited brand of free-jazz, highlighted by Muhammad Ali’s strong solo.

Organizers devoted the meat of the program to drummers, perhaps to a fault. More than 10 appeared in succession, and all but one performed unaccompanied. In light of previous solo turns by Ronnie Burrage and Cornell Rochester, the performances became increasingly redundant. But diminutive drummer Nazir Ebo, at 9 years old, demonstrated a surprising command of the kit; he also excelled during a jam session

that followed the program (Ebo is the younger brother of drummer Justin Faulkner, who has received national exposure since joining Branford Marsalis’ quartet).

Bassist Henry Grimes and pianist Dave Burrell performed unaccompanied. Burrell’s brief improvisation sounded unscripted and undistinguished. Grimes played violin; the music rambled and raised questions about his technique on the instrument.

The concert’s highlight, by far, turned out to be a group that featured former members of Ornette Coleman’s electric band Prime Time. The reunion included guitarist Charlee Ellerbe and the tandem of bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma and drummer Grant Calvin Weston, who enjoy a following around Philadelphia. The group also featured Rashied Ali’s son and brother, respectively Amin Ali (electric bass) and Umar Ali (conga). The group closed out the tribute with Ellerbe’s untitled composition over a funky vamp. Aside from Elliott Levin’s screechy tenor saxophone, which detracted from the focus, the high-energy performance suggested the group has something to say.

—Eric Fine

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## Leonardo Cioglia Fundamental Storyteller

Bassist Leonardo Cioglia celebrated his 38th birthday last November on the narrow bandstand of Manhattan's compact The Bar Next Door. Veteran drum master Duduka Da Fonseca sat on Cioglia's right. To the bassist's left was young guitar hero Mike Moreno. Various friends and fans packed the room, and as the second set progressed, Cioglia called upon a few of them—saxophonists Marcus Strickland and David Binney, and vocalist Maucha Adnet—to sit in.

Three nights later at the Zinc Bar, Cioglia convened Moreno, saxophonist John Ellis, harmonica player Gregoire Maret and drummer Adam Cruz to celebrate another milestone—the release of his self-produced debut, *Contos* (Quizamba). On the disc, a world-class sextet performs 10 Cioglia originals marked by strong melodies, up-to-the-minute harmony and a melange of pan-American rhythms. As often happens in New York, the Zinc Bar unit navigated the repertoire with strong collective cohesion and individual derring-do.

"I write the compositions to stand alone regardless of the instrumentation," said Cioglia, best known as a samba jazz first-caller, and increasingly visible by dint of regular work with Da Fonseca's quintet and trumpeter Claudio Roditi. "It's great to play other people's music, but to write original music is fundamental as a form of expression."

The album's title (*contos* is the Portuguese word for "stories") signifies Cioglia's intention to pay homage to his maternal grandparents, recently deceased, who were both in their nineties in the early '00s when he thought of the project.

"My grandfather was a tropeiro, a Brazilian cowboy from Minas Gerais who built his life from the bottom up," Cioglia said. "My grandmother was his first cousin. She married him when she was 15, and they had 16 children. He had so many tales to tell, so many interesting things to say about life. I wanted to give them an album that depicted my vision of them. Of course, they would have related more to a sound from their region. Now, my grandparents are so

much of who I am and how I see Brazil, and I've studied that music. But I don't live it. The music I've chosen to live is jazz, and jazz incorporates elements from everywhere."

Cioglia can similarly find the sources of his jazz sensibility within his lineage. His Italian paternal grandfather played viola in an orchestra, and his father, an engineer who had studied philosophy and was at one point a Catholic priest, played violin seriously. After singing in a children's choir until his voice changed, Cioglia—who attended an American school in Brasilia, his home town—took up electric bass and played punk rock. Jazz entered the picture when he heard Charles Mingus' *Pithecanthropus Erectus* and Jaco Pastorius in Weather Report, and in 1993, after a year as an exchange student in a British Columbia high school with a good jazz program, and a subsequent eight months back home during which he focused on the historic Brazilian canon, he enrolled in Berklee College of Music, where he immersed himself in the codes of hardcore jazz.

"I realized quickly that I could study bebop forever, but ultimately I'm a kid from Brasilia," Cioglia said. "I wasn't born in Rio in a favela [slum]. I needed to research more of my country's music to find myself within that."

During Cioglia's remaining years in Boston, he engaged in serious research on "all kinds of Brazilian music so I could pick what stuck with me" and formed a band—the young Anat Cohen was a member—with which he could "take all this research and play instrumental music with it." He took a position with an Internet startup, which brought him to New York in 1999. When it folded in 2001, Cioglia decided to refocus on music. He found small-venue band gigs, supplementing them with lucrative deejay jobs. After one such event, Brazilian guitarist Guilherme Monteiro introduced Cioglia to Da Fonseca, launching the sequence of events by which Cioglia joined New York's mix of informed musical hybridizers.

"I'm less a soloist than a band bass player—I like putting together a project and playing a bass part," Cioglia said. "I could record three or four albums, not only original music, but my arrangements of standards—for example, composers from Minas Gerais or the music of Chico Buarque. Hopefully people will think, 'Wow, this guy is connected with roots, but he's also connected to his present and calls upon musicians who are always thinking ahead.'"

—Ted Panken



JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

## Benny Reid 🌟 Clear, Not Smooth

Alto saxophonist Benny Reid pays attention to details when it comes to composing and recording. On his sophomore disc, *Escaping Shadows* (Concord), layered alto saxophone, piano, keyboards, guitar, bass, drums and voices resonate with crisp clarity. When that sonic sheen gets paired with Reid's intricate compositions and melodic focus, his music embodies a realm that can entice staunch jazz fans along with novices more inclined to radio-friendly pop.

"My music tends to be through-composed: I have many melodies and many sections with different harmonies and different grooves," Reid said. "The pop influence is prevalent because of the appearance of there being less going on, but in reality it's not true. If you have a good melody, it can kind of disguise everything else."

*Escaping Shadows* takes sonic, and compositional, cues from Reid's 2007 Concord debut, *Findings*. Although some of the music for both discs dates back to 2002, Reid said that on the newer one, more time and a larger budget helped him meet his artistic goals.

"I was more involved on the production side of things," he said. "It was important to obtain a certain sound with this record and to put a little polish on it. I feel like I was more concise—my compositions didn't have to be as long."

Although Reid wields an incisive, citrus tone on the alto and improvises remarkably, he sees himself as a composer. He tends to write picturesque, episodic compositions that lean toward the earnest and singable.

"A catchy melody drives a song," Reid said. "After that, harmony is the vehicle to enhance it. Oftentimes in jazz, there's so much emphasis on harmony, because people improvise over that and are able to really show off their musical skills. But melody is the gem of the song. And sometimes it can be easily forgotten or avoided."

Because of Reid's melodic sensibility, his frontline partnership with guitarist Richard Padrón, and layers of keyboards and wordless vocals, his music is often compared to Pat Metheny's. It's something that Reid is comfortable with, considering that he cites Metheny as a significant influence. "The comparison is certainly valid, but what I'm doing has its own twist," he said.

Also, like Metheny, Reid sometimes gets lumped into the smooth jazz category, which is something that he takes in stride.

"It's a little bothersome because it's not smooth jazz," Reid said. "Smooth jazz is a sound that's kind of similar all around and has a repetitive nature to it. Harmonically, my music



DEVIN DEHAVEN

has constant changes; the solos are constantly changing. But if you want to call it smooth jazz then play it on the smooth jazz radio stations, because I'll take that audience, too. I don't care what you call my music, just be careful not to pigeonhole it the wrong way." —John Murph

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## Robby Ameen Swinging Impurities

To hear drummer Robby Ameen tell it, some fragmentation can be a good thing for music.

"Ten years ago you would do an acoustic jazz record or a funk record and there was this dichotomy," Ameen said. "But those categories and boundaries don't exist anymore. Certainly as a drummer, you can express yourself and be just as profound playing a straight eighth-note rhythm as a funk rhythm as long as it all still swings. That's a positive development."

A veteran of recordings and live performances with Ruben Blades, Dizzy Gillespie, Paul Simon, Dave Valentin, Kip Hanrahan and Eddie Palmieri, Ameen brings considerable experiences to bear on his debut as a leader, *Days In The Life* (Two and Four). In keeping with his borderless view of music, Ameen's disc plies Latin with metal, fusion with funk, along with Afro-Cuban beats. Though his music is arranged through a Latin lens, it doesn't end there.

"I didn't want to make a pure Latin jazz record because everyone is mixing so much up now," Ameen said. "There is so much informa-



JONATHAN MOVER

tion now and everybody loves playing so many different styles. Sure, my music leans in the Afro-Cuban tradition, but you can be super funky in the Afro-Cuban tradition and in acoustic jazz, too. It's a very New York-sounding record in that sense."

Ameen surrounds himself with some of New York's most adventurous players on *Days In The Life*, along with West Coast keyboardist John Beasley. The group navigates Ameen's twisting, turning, deceptively odd-metered

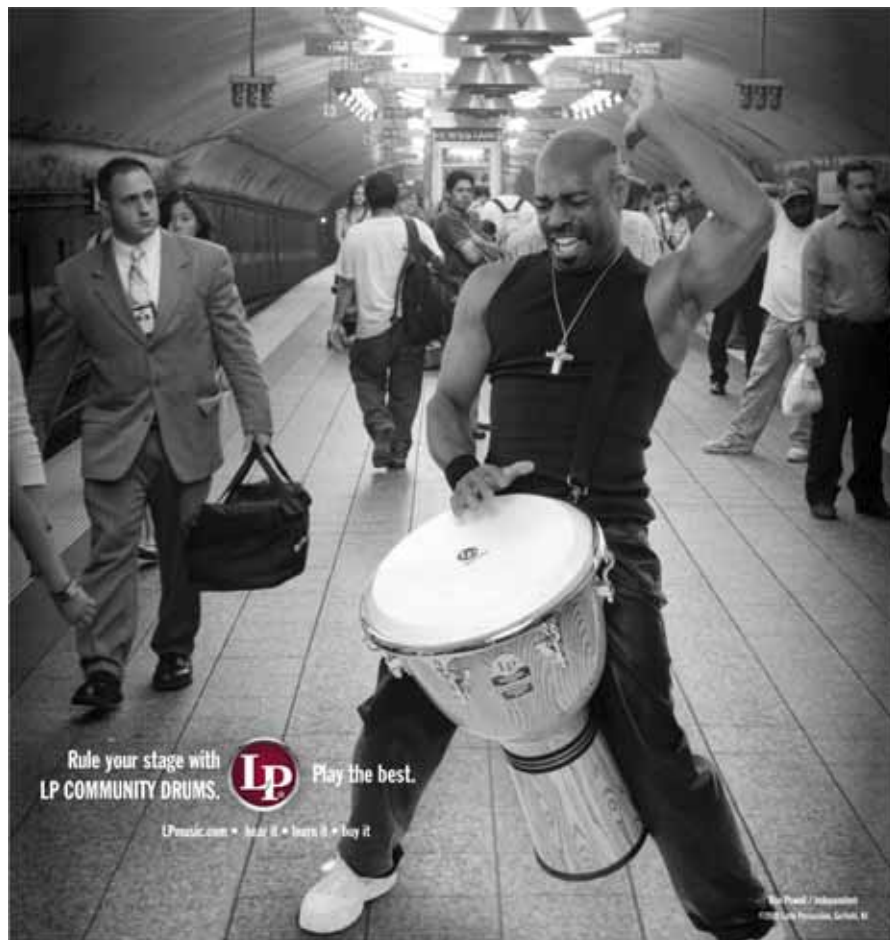
arrangements with the ease of a top-flight jockey. The disc's time twisters include "Una Muy Anita" (4/4 cha cha cha), "Sound Down" ("an Afro-Cuban 6/8 with straightahead jazz," Ameen explains), "Ceora" (a super slow guaguanco) and "Baakline" (an Arabic dumbek groove played in 7/4). Ameen also creates a metal-meets-New Orleans hybrid in "Skateboard Intifada," projected via a barrage of warring cymbals, double bass drum attacks and a polyrhythmic approach.

Before arriving in New York City in the early '80s, Ameen worked his hometown streets of New Haven, Ct., learning conga, timbale and bongo rhythms from former Cal Tjader conguero Bill Fitch. As a high school student, he spent uncouneted hours riding the bus to Middletown, Ct., where he studied with New Orleans drumming master Edward Blackwell.

"Ed had taught something extremely heavy: 'Unorthodox Stickings,'" said Ameen, who went on to graduate with a degree in literature from Yale. "He'd have you play around the drums and instead of sticking it the comfortable way you'd stick it the uncomfortable way. It swung differently because the movement would bring out the dance in the rhythm. For instance, if you're playing triplets with the downbeats on the rack tom and remaining notes on the snare, the logical sticking is RLR-LRL. But Ed made you play it RRL-LLR-RRL with the first left of the triplet on the rack tom and right of the second triplet on the floor tom. When you sped it up it created a lurch in the rhythm which gave it a different kind of swing. I still do that."

"Jack DeJohnette said he thinks of rhythm like clothes falling around in a washing machine," Ameen continued. "Clothes are going around at the same tempo, but other clothes are falling or making sounds and hitting the basket at almost random times. It's an interesting way of thinking about groove. The tempo is still there and it's even, but where you might be accenting or bringing ideas out might not be as regular as playing two and four. In my music, that all comes out."

—Ken Micallef



Jessica Lurie (left), Chris Stromquist, Sue Orfield, Tina Richerson and Amy Denio

MARK SULLO



## The Tiptons 🌟 Rebounding Voices

To call The Tiptons a jazz group would also be misleading. And to call The Tiptons an all-female band is definitely misleading. Yes, the group got its name from big-band saxophonist/pianist Billy Tipton, who lived as a man in a woman's body for 50 years and whose identity was discovered upon her death. But that's old news. Twenty years old, to be exact.

"I co-founded The Tiptons on Election Day, Nov. 8, 1988," said alto saxophonist/clarinetist Amy Denio. "We were originally called Phlegm Fatale, but changed the name when we discovered the story of Billy Tipton in 1989. We renamed ourselves the Billy Tipton Memorial Saxophone Quartet."

They eventually disbanded. It was 2002 when another former member, alto/tenor saxophonist Jessica Lurie, suggested they regroup, which led to a tour and their eighth album, *Short Cuts*. Renamed The Tiptons, the new band has gone through some personnel changes and released four more albums, including their newest, *Laws Of Motion* (Zipa!/Spoot Music). Tenor saxophonist Sue Orfield and baritone player Tina Richerson have also joined the group.

Last year this all-woman quartet became a quintet, adding drummer Chris Stromquist of Slavic Soul Party and Kultur Shock. "Chris is a fantastic drummer and able to capture and fill in what the band needs as well as push us as players," Lurie said. "His strengths in Balkan, Latin, jazz, funk and rock music let us as composers and players go wherever our music takes us." Denio adds, "Since 2002, we've toured and recorded with several different drummers and percussionists, and now with Chris on board, we've reached the best formation of the group, ever. He has a great, feline feel to support our compositions and improvisations."

*Laws Of Motion* also sports a lot singing, which hadn't been typical for the group.

"I began singing in the group when I was learning Sue Orfield's 'Sleepytown,'" Denio said. "My part included a difficult altissimo passage, and so I sang it instead. Vocals in the mix adds a nice human element to our compositions. We began to include more and more vocals, since we all love singing anyway, and it breaks up the monotony of 'all sax all the time.'"

On *Laws Of Motion*'s "Sind" (arranged by Denio but written by Gabriella Schiavone of the female vocal group Farualla), the group's vocals navigate the unusual time signatures in local dialects and mix in a little nonsensical verbalisms. The link between Lurie's "Fallout" and Denio's "Raisa" illustrates how the band can take funky afrobeat stylings and head right into a waltz with Algerian rai affectations.

"Each of us plays very individually yet we lock effortlessly as a group, which is something that does come from years of playing and listening together," Lurie said.

"Tina Richerson comes from a hard-bop background," Denio added. "Sue is a stellar blues and funk musician. Jessica and I contribute the more atmospheric and Balkan-influenced compositions."

"We're also engaged in many new collaborations that help us grow as a group," Lurie added. "Whether it's working with the dancer/choreographer Pat Graney, Estonian punk band Ne Zhdali, visual artist Danijel Zvezelj and filmmaker Aric Mayer, free improvisers Lolita from Slovenia, DJs in Ghent, Belgium, or this past July collaborating with an Austrian yodeling choir."

"People from all walks of life come to our concerts," Denio said. "Like blue-haired grandmothers next to blue-haired punks, and an instantaneous community is created at each concert. We have taken the free spirit of jazz and are running with it."

—John Ephland



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# INTRICACY & GROOVE: At Home With **Ahmad Jamal**

Jazz fans, or at least jazz fans who hit the clubs with any regularity, are probably used to seeing Ahmad Jamal looking regal at his instrument. There's a formal vibe to the great pianist's approach. He sits upright, his wrists are hung purposefully and his arms are cast in a way that sanctions a full spectrum of sound. A big chunk of Jamal's art is based on milking his music for all the dynamics possible, and his posture—like that of most imposing instrumentalists—helps the creativity by bolstering the power. Long story short, the guy's got a definite serious side.

So it's relatively revealing to spend time with the 79-year-old master when he's away from the instrument, and even more novel to catch him in the very relaxed atmosphere of the rural Massachusetts village that he calls home. Jamal was out doing a couple of errands before he was spotted ambling toward his front door from across the tiny village green. Though he had a stack of papers in his hand (business never truly leaves you alone, right?), he looked content with his surroundings. And why not? He's found some privacy—one of his longstanding wishes—living off the beaten path.

Surrounded by classic New England totems (tiny white post office, a few little shops, bare trees, rolling hills, babbling brook), Jamal exuded a sense of ease—like a guy who knew the answers to a lot of life's questions. The pressures of jazz clubs and concert halls were banished here. The sprawling home with the two Steinway grands and the waterfall looming just outside the picture window is a haven—one that the pianist appreciates more and more as his 80th birthday looms. So it's not a shock that he ignored the ringing of the phone while setting down some cider and cheese for his guest.

"I don't like to answer phones," he says while raising his eyebrows. "There are too many distractions in our lives, and I'm pretty happy when I'm at home. These days I'm doing exactly the right amount of work. I only perform on special occasions. The upcoming month of April is one special occasion. And I'm leaving tomorrow for a weekend at Yoshi's in San Francisco—I guess that's a special occasion as well." He chuckles at the end of his thought, but it's a Cheshire Cat grin—is he serious about only working occasionally? Itineraries show that he's had plenty of gigs around the world in the last few years, and lots of fans believe he's operating at his creative zenith these days.

One thing's for sure: After six-and-a-half decades of setting up shop

By Jim Macnie // Photography by Jimmy Katz

on bandstands around the world, Jamal has earned himself some breathing room. Jack DeJohnette, another global traveler and a guy who makes his home in the woods (which, as the crow flies, isn't that far from Jamal's getaway), knows how restorative rural living can be.

"Having some quiet around you definitely provides a chance to recharge," says the drummer. "Check the trees, birds, mountains—step back for a minute. And that seeps into the music, sure."

If that's the case, maybe you can take the title track from Jamal's new album as a lifestyle anthem. "A Quiet Time" opens with a riff-based surge of activity from the bandleader's small ensemble of piano, bass, drums and percussion, but immediately settles into a melody that sounds like a leaf falling from a branch. All the signature Jamal elements are in place: the exquisite touch, the profound grace, the mercurial improv choices. Though they've been there for decades—certainly since he made his first big career splash with *At The Pershing: But Not For Me*, the 1958 powerhouse that rode the charts for more than two years—these days everything about his playing is a bit sharper, a touch more vivid, a smidge more fanciful.

*A Quiet Time* is filled with audacious maneuvers. Frequent tempo changes, sudden melody switcheroos and unexpected flourishes are the norm. Some are feints that broaden the music's character—zigging one way while zagging another. Each is subtly accomplished, complementary to its predecessor while offering an individualistic perspective. Several are guided by a steely sense of control that has long been part of the pianist's artistic personality.

"Ahmad knows *exactly* what he's doing at every second," enthuses pianist Bill Charlap. "Yes, he improvises on the spot, but those [moves] have got absolutely nothing to do with chance. Without question, his playing has completely evolved throughout the years."

Check the YouTube video of a Jamal festival gig with George Coleman where the pianist conflates snippets of "Stolen Moments," "Midnight Sun" and "Fascinating Rhythm" while interspersing his references with free-floating abstractions. He smiles as each new notion comes into his head, and he smiles even more as he executes them. "What I try to do is stimulate thought processes," he told me in an inter-





view 20 years ago. “Playing at the optimum level is the challenge.”

Bob Zimmerman is a 69-year-old Bay Area jazz fan who caught Jamal at Yoshi’s a few nights after my Massachusetts visit. He’d wanted to see the pianist for years, but had never gotten around to it. He liked the hard-charging action he heard on the bandstand.

“I knew his style had changed from the ’50s,” Zimmerman said. “He used to play in a light swing mood, but he’s more aggressive and improvisational these days. The word I used to use is *avant garde*; that might not be right. Whatever you call it, the way he plays is the essence of what jazz is all about.”

“De-vel-op-ment,” whispered Jamal while sipping some cider in his kitchen, “where would we be without it? When I first heard the young Bud Powell, he was playing fluid, really fluid, a lot more like [Art] Tatum. It was different; not the same as we know him now. It’s all about de-vel-op-ment.”

Zimmerman had posted to one of the Jamal YouTube videos, talking about being at the Yoshi’s gig and mentioning the standing ovation the audience gave the bandleader. “It was great to see him live,” he said. “You get a real appreciation for his artistry. Sometimes [in jazz] that doesn’t come across on studio records.”

**T**he most famous audience to see Jamal live was that crowd at the Pershing Hotel. Routinely cited as one of jazz’s classic records, *But Not For Me* was recorded in January of 1958, when the proud Pittsburgh native was 28, and Chicago was his home. Bassist Israel Crosby and drummer Vernel Fournier helped him make the magic.

“If you’re looking for an argument that pleasurable mainstream art can assume radical status at the same time, Jamal is your guide,” writes Ben Ratliff in an entry about the album in the *New York Times Essential Library* series. From the hard gallop of “Surrey With The Fringe On Top” to the pop melodicism of “Poinciana,” the three men bring an infectious elan to some rigorous musicianship.

“Ahmad’s challenge is to juggle the intricacy with the grooves,” says DeJohnette. “His music always has a groove. That’s something I can definitely relate to. Groove is a common denominator that brings people in, but it’s also a relief from the intricacy. Ahmad’s always doing a balancing act with that.”

“Everyone in the band is an arranger on that date,” says Charlap. “A trio is about three equal parts making a whole. I was 11 or 12 years old when I first heard it. The guys I was really aware of were Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson—both masters of the trio. When I heard Ahmad’s group, well ... it sounded like a completely modern point of view. He could be a big band at one moment, a small group at another, a singer at another. Every note means something.”

Pianist Randy Weston, four years Jamal’s senior, has a former retailer’s perspective on the



Pershing music. “When ‘Poinciana’ came out, I was managing a record store on 125th Street. We played the record in the shop all the time. People would stop in their tracks. It has feeling, a spirit. Fournier with that New Orleans beat, and Ahmad with that natural swing. We sold cases of that thing. In other words, I was selling Ahmad’s records before I even met him.”

**P**art of the pianist’s narrative is the fact that he was sage on the instrument as a tyke. As a 3-year-old, his uncle asked him to repeat some piano phrases, and it turned out the kid had no problem doing so. From there it was lots of lessons, lots of raised eyebrows, and a leap into the deep end with Liszt etudes and other high water marks of the classical canon. There was a poignant exchange in Jamal’s kitchen when he was asked to recall those baby days.

Can you still see the room and the piano in your mind’s eye now?

“As clear as day,” he responds. “I can see the upright my mother had in the house. I can see my uncle Lawrence asking me, ‘Can you play this?’ Of course, I was only 3. But I played every note.”

How did it come about? Was he goading you or fooling around?

“He was just having fun with a kid: ‘I bet you can’t do this.’ He was my mom’s brother-in-law. In-laws were like blood relatives to us. On one visit he decided to tease me a bit, never dreaming that it would be a catalyst to me playing to sell-out crowds at La Salle Pleyel in Paris and having one of the most successful instrumental recordings in history.”

Did you ever run away from the piano? Were you ever looking out the window thinking, I wish I was out there with my friends? Or were you wildly dedicated?

“Of course I thought about playing baseball

and running around—doing what all the other kids were doing. But I was more involved in music. I kept going to Apple Avenue to my teacher’s house, taking my weekly lessons, and eventually playing with the older guys around town. Those ‘baby days’ were gone quick. George Hudson made me leave my happy home at 17 years old. Ha! I went straight from infancy to adulthood. I was always serious. If you see that classic video [from *The Sound of Jazz* show] with Ben Webster, Hank Jones, Papa Jo and them hanging around the piano, you know I was serious.”

So there wasn’t that much time for kid stuff?

“I did plenty of *adult* stuff. I was leading a group at 21, and it’s a big responsibility to keep men working. On the road at 17, started my own group in 1951—that’s adult stuff, OK? I grew up quick.”

But you’re also a guy with an easy laugh.

“Well, now I am! I should be able to have an easy laugh at 79, right? But it took me a long time, and it’s a careful laugh, careful. This life is nothing to play with. You can’t take it for granted. Savor every moment. I was 29 on that video clip; I’m 79 now. Let me tell ya [*snaps his fingers*], it went like that.”

**J**amal’s acclaim may stem from his three-piece recordings (the term “trio” is not part of his vernacular; he prefers to call the bulk of his work “small ensemble” pieces), but he’s made records with George Coleman’s tenor and Ray Kennedy’s violin joining the crew, and recently percussionist Manolo Badrena has become part of the extended family. A year-and-a-half ago, he was front and center for a Jazz at Lincoln Center celebration that found nuggets from his songbook rearranged for large ensemble. Seems like the one format he’s dodged to some degree—at least as far as the recording studio goes—is the solo realm. He’s quick to

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remind that zealots will recall that he did a solo stint at the Palm Tavern in Chicago during early '50s.

I encourage him to describe what was going on there. What was it like?

"What was going on there was the rent," comes the answer. "I was there because of the bills. I was paying \$7 a week for a room, and I had to make a living. Eventually I started making \$32 per week at one of the big department stores. I was making kitchen cabinets for 80 cents an hour before I got my card transferred from Pittsburgh to Chicago—it took a while. So

it wasn't a meteoric rise for Mr. Jamal. I paid my dues."

The pianist does admit to enjoying his solo sessions these days, however. He says he's happiest when he has uninterrupted time to spend with the two regal Steinways that are always beckoning from his oversized music room. It's a rustic, barn-like space jutting off from the main house, and the walls are covered with been-there, done-that memorabilia: posters, newspaper clippings, award citations and such. He considers it a sanctuary of sorts, and is often in there working on ideas and honing his chops. When I

ask him if he'd run through some of the Liszt etudes that were part of his earliest schooling in that Pittsburgh parlor, he doesn't have to think long about the answer.

"I've got two words for you: 'Im-Possible.' Not going to happen." Then a smile takes over his face. "You'll hear my [solo] recordings one of these days. I have a sound engineer, and he set me up in [the piano room]. I take my time. My schedule is interesting. You never know when I'll go to that room. When I think I have something meaningful enough, I'll punch it [into the recorder], and I'll come out with it."

There's one fan who'd like to hear Jamal sans ensemble. "Ahmad's a spontaneous composer," says DeJohnette. "He once came to my house, immediately sat at the piano and started to play. 'What tune is that?' I asked him. And he said, 'Oh, man, that's nothing. I'm just messing around.' But it came out arranged, with really advanced moves both rhythmically and harmonically. Now, he's not the only person who can do that, but he does it to such a high level that there's a personal stamp put on it. You immediately know it's him.

"I think he *should* do some solo concerts—he's amazing on that level. There's a lot of pressure with that, but the results can be great. Keith [Jarrett] certainly knows about that. You don't have to wait on the drummer or bassist; you create the atmosphere yourself. If you're in the right frame of mind, it's rewarding."

Jamal isn't hazy on the challenges of working alone. "Everybody's not Art Tatum," he says bluntly. "That's all I can tell you. But I don't worry about it. Just playing solo for the sake of playing solo means nothing to me. We all have different fingerprints. Some of us sit comfortably with that role of the soloist, and some of us are much better ensemble players. Horace Silver, for example: ensemble player and ensemble writer—one of the most gifted out there. Did you ever see Horace play solo? I don't think so. He played solo *at home*. We have to do what we're comfortable with. I don't solicit soundtracks—Quincy Jones does that, Johnny Mandel does that. Don't get much better than Quincy Jones and Johnny Mandel, right? You got to do what's best for you."

The small ensemble action of *A Quiet Time* sure sounds like it might be best for our hero. Bassist James Cammack and percussionist Badrena are on board; so is drummer Kenny Washington, a newcomer to the Jamal fold. "I wouldn't even begin to guess what Kenny might bring to the table," says Washington's longtime bandmate Charlap. "He's a great artist and he'll embrace what he's surrounded by, but something tells me Ahmad is full of surprises."

Jamal says he wasn't quite ready to record, but thought the timing might be right after the success of 2008's *It's Magic*. And back to that nature vibe—Badrena has a few ways of generating chirping birds and marsh peepers in "Paris



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After Dark” and “The Love Is Lost.” The boss says he likes that kind ingenuity, and digs what the two drummers do together. “We rehearsed and it felt right,” Jamal says. “When I go in the studio, it’s to make a good record; I think this is one of ‘em.”

DeJohnette was playing the disc the day we chatted. “I know why Ahmad uses Manolo,” he says. “It’s because he listens, he’s musical and he puts things in places where they make sense. Kenny works well, too. He pushes when necessary, and is calm when it’s needed. Those two really complement each other.”

One of the record’s zeniths is Weston’s wonderful “Hi-Fly.” Jamal has played it for years, but says this performance finally brought it to an “acceptable” level. “Randy is one of the great writers in our community, no question,” assures Jamal. “Great pianist, of course, but a great writer, too. I hope he likes what we’ve done.” Jamal blocks and tinkles while his rhythm section glides; thanks to what saxophonist Ted Nash calls the pianist’s “profound clarity,” it’s impossible not to follow his every move. “Hi-Fly” comes alive anew.

“I haven’t heard it yet, no,” laughs Weston. “But I know it’s cool. If it’s Ahmad, it’s going to be cool. Anytime you go to see him, you see all the other pianists sitting in the audience. They’re all getting a lesson. Ahmad’s our royalty.”

Jamal mentioned that work-wise, April 2010 will be one of his “special occasions.” It’s then that he returns to his beloved birthplace to play his large ensemble music. He says it will be similar to the Lincoln Center show he commandeered back in September of 2008, a presentation by his small ensemble followed by a big band romping through his canon. Jamal was impressed by the New York event’s musician-ship; one of the more animated tunes on *A Quiet Time* is entitled “After JALC.” Predictably, it’s unpredictable, steadily amending its mood in a fetching contour that accounts for bouncy swing and recital hall flourishes. Nash, a longtime member of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, says that show’s personality was a little different than most.

“There was a certain kind of excitement about playing with him that I haven’t actually seen before,” Nash says. “I noticed that when everyone got up to play it was like, ‘Man, I want this to be special, this cat’s a bad motherfucker.’ He was surrounded by the big band, with all sorts of people who wanted to solo. He could have been, ‘Well, I want this to be a background for me, so I can shine.’ But you could tell that wasn’t his motive. His motive was to have fun, make music and hear everyone else play—basically create an environment where everyone felt like playing.

“The way he comped wasn’t the generic way that lots of pianists play with chords in the middle of the keyboard, just filling things up. He gave lots of single line responses. He’d come back and throw things out at you, directly from

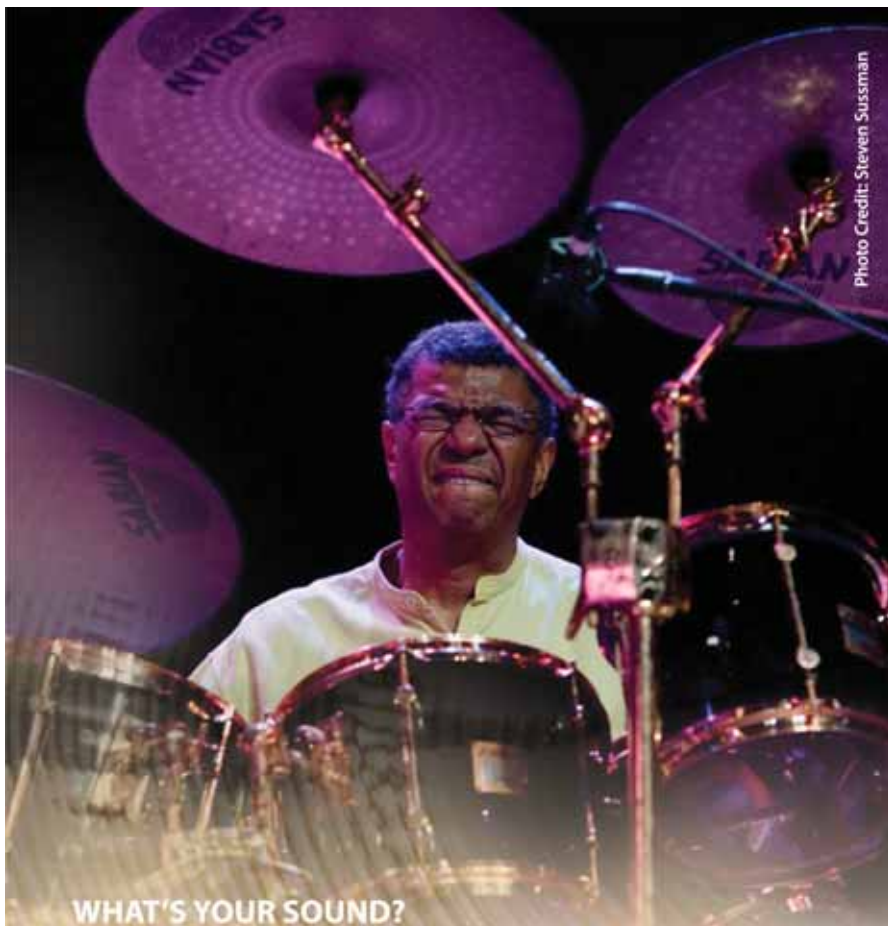
what you played. It was really interesting because it made you stop, and allowed him to respond, and then you felt like playing something else—that’s something I don’t feel with a lot of piano players. It’s really quite engaging. I guess that’s another reason people focus in on him. He makes them hone in.”

“The Aftermath,” “Should I” and “Devil’s In My Den” were all part of the program. Jamal, who eschews the word “jazz” in favor of the phrase “American classical music,” says he’s always tickled to be surrounded by that amount of action, but it’s not put together easily.

“Lotta work,” he sighs, “lotta work. But great musicians, one of the finest ensembles on Earth. What a correct place Wynton Marsalis has made for the music. It demonstrates how it should be housed. We played Marciac [a jazz festival in France] together, and I went back to see his show. We had a great time. The guys that work with him: spectacular. So I wrote “After JALC.”

And what does he hear in that music?

“Everything,” he says proudly. Almost on cue the phone rings again. “But I would like to hear some more. That’s what we’re always shooting for: just a little bit more.” **DB**



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# Hiromi

## Exposes Her Inner Self

By Dan Ouellette

Hiromi smiles. For the camera, on stage, when she encounters fans off stage here in the States as well as in her homeland of Japan. Besides her dazzling array of pianistic brilliance, that's her gleeful trademark, much as it was with Tito Puente, whose joyous ear-to-ear grin was as dynamic and catchy as his timbales blasts.

The petite Hiromi beams in ecstasy, as if nothing can cloud over that fetching visage. Nothing, that is, except for the vagaries of New York City traffic. Running a half-hour late for an interview in her dressing room at the Blue Note before her trio date backing Stanley Clarke and Lenny White, Hiromi bustles up the stairs, unrecognizable because she is decidedly not smiling. She's anxious about her tardiness and apologetically asks for forgiveness. In fact, the epitome of confidence on the bandstand seems flustered.

"I took my parents out to dinner in the East Village at this great noodle place," says Hiromi Uehara, who turned 30 last year and has been living in the U.S. since 1999, first in Boston while attending Berklee College of Music and for the last five years in Brooklyn's Park Slope neighborhood. "It's been maybe eight years since the last time they came to visit me. They're so happy to see me playing with Stanley and Lenny at the Blue Note. This will be their first time seeing them and being here." Their daughter's embrace of the music has proven to be contagious.

Have they been big jazz fans? "Oh, no," she says, relaxed now, punctuating her remarks with giggles and at times grasping for the correct English word to capture the sentiment of her remarks. "They had no idea what jazz was until I got into it. Now they love it."

Hiromi's 10-year career living in the U.S. and traveling around the world inspired her sixth album as a leader, *Place To Be* (Telarc). Her first solo album, the disc is a tour de force travelogue of sorts. It documents the memories of her unlikely journey from being a fledgling pianist studying as a jazz composition major to becoming a maturing virtuoso whose mentors and fans include Ahmad Jamal (who produced her 2003 debut, *Another Mind*) and Chick Corea (who collaborated with her on their recent double CD *Duet*).

"I wanted to play simply in the most challenging setting," says Hiromi of the new CD, an acoustic piano mix ranging from hushed lyricism to rollicking rock. "I wanted to play solo, to expose myself, to be naked. But I also want this to be archival. Ten years from now I know I won't be playing the same. As I looked back over the last 10 years when I was in my twenties, I wanted to write music about the places I'd been. In that respect it's like a travel journal." She wrote snippets of material on the road that served as heads or section fragments that she later created into songs that range from recollections of her extracurricular Berklee days jamming after hours with friends (the whimsical "Cape Cod Chips," which she says reminds her of passing the chorus on to the other guys even though she is going it alone) to her road journeys (her baroque-meets-contemporary take on the 17th-century classical piece "Pachelbel's Canon," inspired by a stroll through Erfurt, Germany, where it was composed).

*Place To Be* opens with "BQE," a flight-of-the-bumblebee jaunt that features Hiromi's speeding right hand and pointillistic left. The flash of

virtuosity is established with the fitting setting: the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, which she says is "a wild ride because everyone drives nuts." While she doesn't have a car in Brooklyn, she frequents the BQE going to and from the airport. Thus "BQE" represents her frenzied New York footprint.

On "Pachelbel's Canon," Hiromi opens the piece with an experiment in prepared piano, making it sound like a harpsichord by placing a metallic ruler on top of the strings. "I was just being a naughty kid," she says jokingly. "I wanted to try to get a feeling of what I heard when I was walking down a street in the old part of the town, with the old buildings and churches. But then as I walked into the modern part, I wanted to make the music transition from the past to the present." That's when she moves into a jazzy blues on the piano. "It was hard to keep playing and take away the ruler. In my past few albums, I've been recording music that I can play live, so I knew I had to take the ruler out myself without anyone helping."

Throughout the CD, as well as on her earlier outings, the emphasis is on what Hiromi calls a "big energy" attack, which she describes as an elan vital that "makes people happy, that allows them to dream." She singles out two inspirations: basketball star Michael Jordan and Chinese martial arts master Bruce Lee. "I have this huge poster of Michael Jordan where he's jumping in the air, and you can see the faces of the crowd in the background," she says. "It's as if everyone in the crowd is jumping. The whole arena is united; it's one. That's what I'm looking for in music. I want everyone to feel as if they are playing, that they have a part of the music. I want to connect with the audience in that way."

As for Lee—to whom she's dedicated two songs on previous albums, "Kung-Fu World Champion" and "Return of Kung-Fu World Champion"—Hiromi says she's a huge fan, even though she doesn't practice martial arts. "When Bruce Lee fights, it's all about improvisation," she explains. "He has to have all the moves that come from daily practice, but when he fights he never knows where the other person will be kicking or punching him. It's the same when I go on stage. I can practice, but I have to be ready to go with the moves of the other people I'm playing with."

On the subject of improvisation, Hiromi says she learned how to sketch and color outside the lines of the classical material she was practicing when she was a young girl. Born in Shizuoka, Japan, in 1979, she began to take lessons on the piano when she was 6. Her first teacher, Noriko Hakita, proved to be the perfect mentor because not only was she classically trained but she also loved jazz, especially pianists such as Oscar Peterson and Erroll Garner. The initial jazz LP Hakita played for Hiromi was Garner's classic *Concert By The Sea*, recorded in 1955. "That was my first jazz experience," says Hiromi, who was 8 at the time. "I heard dancing in the music. I didn't understand what improvisation was, but I was thinking, wow, this music makes me happy, and it was swinging my body."

Hakita then gave Hiromi the basics. "She told me that all the notes Garner played weren't written down," Hiromi says. "She told me to play what you feel at the moment along with chords. That's when I started improvising with the classical pieces I was learning. Noriko was a special teacher. She didn't tell me to play just what was written. She let me go



wherever I wanted. I'm sure I'm playing music today because of her."

Hiromi's admiration for Hakita continues today. "Noriko told me from day one that music doesn't come from the fingers to the ears," Hiromi says. "It comes from heart to heart. If you don't deliver the music from heart to heart, there's really no meaning for it to exist."

Hiromi's introduction to improvisation at such an early age bore fruit when she was 17. She was visiting Tokyo to take a lesson at a music school, where by coincidence Chick Corea was practicing on a piano for his upcoming show in the city. "I decided to say hello to him, to meet him," she says. "He asked me to play something for him. Then he asked if I could improvise. I told him yes, so I sat down at the other piano in the room, and we played free improvisation for a while."

Corea asked Hiromi if she was free the next night and asked her if she'd be interested in playing a song together at the end of his show. Hiromi stayed an extra night in Tokyo and, as Corea had promised, performed with him on stage.

In 2006, Hiromi creatively rendezvoused with Corea again at the Tokyo Jazz Festival as a duo in an hourlong set, which impelled him to ask her to record an entire album of piano duets. That resulted in the *Duet* CD, which became the No. 1-selling record in Japan in 2007. They per-

formed together for three nights at the Blue Note in Tokyo and later in front of nearly 6,000 people at the famed Budokan arena.

While Hiromi enjoyed success in Japan beginning as teenager performing with orchestras (including a gig when she was 14 performing with the Czech Philharmonic at its home base) and later writing advertising jingles, she decided to further her education by enrolling at Berklee in 1999 as a jazz composition major—not a performance major, she hastens to point out. "I was basically studying the instruments I didn't play," she says. "I studied orchestra and big band charts, which is what I always wanted to do. As for playing the piano, I did that at night jamming with the guys. Daytime I was at school studying the great arrangers and composers; at night, I was having fun and learning in a whole different way, meeting all these amazing musicians. It was a treasure chest."

As she was coming down the home stretch for earning her degree at Berklee, Hiromi took a string arrangement class with Richard Evans. He was so impressed by an arrangement she wrote for a standard that he asked her to work on an arrangement of one of her own compositions. He asked her to bring some tunes to work on. "Richard saw the potential I had as a writer," Hiromi says, "but he had no idea that I could play the piano. So I brought a demo CD

in, and he asked me who was playing the piano. I told him, it's me."

Once again, Evans was so taken that he offered to have a good friend of his listen to her piano playing. The friend turned out to be Ahmad Jamal, who initially said that he wasn't much interested in listening to a student. But Evans insisted and played the recording over the phone to him. Jamal's curiosity was piqued, he requested the CD demo of the song "The Tom And Jerry Show," met Hiromi over dinner and then almost immediately hooked her up with Telarc to make her debut recording, *Another Mind*, which he and Evans produced.

"After that all these things came together," says Hiromi, who still talks with Jamal on a regular basis. "Ahmad opened all these doors to me. I knew his music, and here I was having dinner with him and talking about putting a record out. It's like a scene from a movie, but I never thought something like that would happen to me."

Since *Another Mind*, Hiromi recorded four CDs (not including *A Place To Be*) and two DVDs that capture her dynamic performances, with plenty of smiling action. Her band Sonicbloom features guitarist and Berklee teacher Dave Fiuczynski, who serves as the perfect complement to the bandleader. "I was always a fan of Dave's Screaming Headless Torsos, so for my first album I asked him to play," says Hiromi. "He's edgy and experimen-

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tal. He's always trying to open up sounds that have never been played before. I appreciate that. I love his attitude toward invention."

With Sonicbloom, Hiromi often pumps up the volume with electric keyboards, sometimes playing acoustic piano with her left hand and electric with her right. "I grew up watching videos of all the guitarists at Woodstock, and I loved Jeff Beck," she says. "I loved how guitarists could bend the sound and sustain a note as long as they want. Wow, I thought, I can't do that with the piano. How can I get that effect? That's when I discovered what an electric keyboard could do."

At the Blue Note, Hiromi takes the stage and maintains eye contact with Clarke, who had enlisted her to play on his trio album *Jazz In The Garden* (Heads Up) with White. Live, she tilts her head back and serves up rapid tinklings, double-hand pounces, chordal stomps. During the inspired moments of full drive, she stands up from her piano bench and instigates the intensity. At the end of the set, which featured tunes from Clarke's CD, she and her elders receive a standing ovation.

Her parents, who were sitting at the same cramped table as impresario George Wein, are pleased.

Upstairs, White praises Hiromi's performance. "Hiromi's great, but she's still a young artist," he says. "The one thing that's been good is that she isn't afraid to ask questions. By doing that, she's able to grow. Playing this kind of music that Stanley and I are so familiar with requires having some knowledge of what happened when we were developing it so that it can be represented in the right way. Hiromi didn't come in and just start playing. She asked questions first, which made it enjoyable for us. It's been a growing experience for all of us."

Clarke echoes White's assessment. During the set, he introduced the Return to Forever tune "No Mystery" by saying that when he first put the music in front of Hiromi, he didn't expect her to be able to play it. Much to his surprise, he told the crowd, she sailed right through it. "She's young, and she has an incredible amount of technique," he says, adding that he knows now that he can give her any piece of music. "But she's still learning how to play this music correctly because there are so many subtleties that have to be learned. I agree with Lenny, it's great to play with her because she asks questions. She knows what she doesn't know. That's the sign of someone who's really intelligent about the music."

As for her launch into "No Mystery," Clarke says that she's getting into it. Still, he figures she's only mastered 80 percent so far. "She makes mistakes every night," he says, "but they're so fast you don't hear them."

"Working with Stanley and Lenny has been an unbelievable experience," Hiromi says. "It's like school—the best school you can find. Playing with amazing musicians is the best way to learn."

Does she know how she was chosen for

Clarke's *Jazz In The Garden* project? No, and she didn't ask. Clarke says that enlisting her was a combination of her being recommended both by former Heads Up boss Dave Love and Corea. "I wanted to do the trio album, and as I was thinking about the pianist, I thought that I could call a McCoy or Herbie," he says. "But I thought it would be interesting to have Hiromi. She has the facility on the piano that could give Lenny and me the opportunity to explore."

Clarke adds that he likes Hiromi's spirited energy. "She has a lot of joy," he says. "She's genuinely happy to be out there with us, and

who wouldn't be?"

Hiromi says that she's always been passionate about the music and playing the piano. Not even the rude awakening of what life on the road was like could deter that love. "I didn't know about this part of what it takes to be a musician," she says. "The amount of travel, sleeping in a different bed every night. It's hard. But we put ourselves through this all for the magic time on the stage, so we'd better enjoy it even if we feel exhausted. When I go on stage, finally I can play; I can connect with the audience to let them know how happy I am. I feel so lucky. It's like a miracle." **DB**



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# Inside/Outside Amsterdam with Michael Moore

By Kevin Whitehead

The biannual Dutch Jazz Meeting held at Amsterdam's Bimhuis is a showcase for international presenters. Selected bands play 25-minute sets they hope will lead to bookings in New York, Sarajevo or Hong Kong. The first night of December 2008's edition, U.S.-born alto saxophonist, clarinetist and bass clarinetist Michael Moore gets his shot. His newish quartet, heard on the CD *Fragile*, includes fellow expat and drummer Michael Vatcher—a frequent bandmate since they were teens in Northern California—and younger Dutch colleagues Harmen Fraanje on piano and Clemens van der Feen on bass.

Like that CD, on Moore's Ramboy label, the set begins with "Paint As You Like," a clarinet ballad with pretty changes. In the lower register, Moore evokes the poise and lyricism of vintage Jimmy Giuffre, though Moore's style was already well along before he'd heard him. But where Giuffre shied from high notes, Moore ascends to the upper reaches, without sacrificing his luminously warm sound, as touching (and often melancholy) as any modern jazz clarinetist gets.

"Round And Round" starts with an out-of-tempo intro for alto and drums, then eases into jittery time-playing. Moore's centered alto sound and thoughtful melodic variations betray admiration for Lee Konitz, but a raucous Earl Bostic tone peeps out, too. On alto especially, Moore obliterates distinctions between inside and outside playing. His superior harmonic ear lets him cut through chord changes in odd but tuneful ways. Still, in the middle of a tender moment he may sputter like Evan Parker, despoiling the mood. A pet mannerism: unleashing a blast of pure, audible air through the alto, flushing away any taint of sentimentality.

Moore introduces the next one—"Families Be So Mean" (also on *Fragile*)—in English. "Fortunately, not my family," he says. Fraanje plays some romantic introductory chords seasoned with bluesy ripples. When Moore enters on bass clarinet, the tune's revealed as a long-count blues with altered chords, its lovely hook halfway between a birdcall and field holler. His blues choruses are free of cliché or self-conscious mood-bucking; he stays in the upper register, sweet but with a rasp in it. Next, Van der Feen solos with a bow, roughs up his pure tone with bluesy bends. Moore comes back in adding a hint of Sidney Bechet tremolo. He gets more emphatic, then brings it down for a whispered out-chorus.

Now they're warmed up, with a few minutes left on the clock. Moore is a master of quirky micro and macro timing: He can throw himself into or tug against swing's powerful pull, and build a set's momentum slowly. But when you improvise, you sacrifice some control.

A stagehand comes over, signals him. Michael announces, in Dutch, sounding surprised, "They tell me we're out of time."

At 55, Moore—no relation to the jazz bassist or filmmaker of the same name—occupies a peculiar insider/outsider position on the Amsterdam scene. He speaks excellent Dutch, lives (with his wife, the singer Jodi Gilbert, and their 19-year old son Reuben) in an airy apartment overlooking a picturesque canal in the city's center. He has played in some of the best ensembles in Holland—has spent half his life in the band that epitomizes creative Dutch music in all its swinging, anarchic, melodic inside/outside glory: Misha Mengelberg's ICP Orchestra.

Even so, he used to taunt the A'dam scene's boosters with the rhetorical question, "Dutch jazz—what's that?" He made the first record under his own name, 1988's excellent *Home Game*, when he was in the thick of Dutch musical life. But his quintet was as New York as a potato knish: pianist Fred Hersch—a friend since they were at the New England Conservatory in the '70s—and three collaborators from Michael's brief, pre-Amsterdam Manhattan days, trumpeter Herb Robertson, bassist Mark Helias and drummer Gerry Hemingway. Subsequently Moore would join a longrunning Hemingway quintet, and record in trios with him and pianist Marilyn Crispell, with Hemingway and Hersch, and (in a Giuffrian mood) with Hersch and Helias.

"When I made *Home Game*, I was feeling a bit torn," Moore says, sitting in his front room that looks out on the canal. He's tall, affable, usually soft-spoken, and thinks before he talks. "I really liked working for Misha and Maarten Altena and Guus Janssen, and how they structured their music. But there was this whole other world I also wanted to be a part of. You couldn't put a tune like 'Providence' in front of ICP's Wolter Wierbos or Ab Baars—they're fantastic musicians, but don't think harmonically like that."

"Providence," from *Home Game*, is a 19-bar tune kicked off by a three-note, falling sixth/rising second hook that gets twisted around and then dropped into a lower key before the chord sequence climbs back home. "But when I went to New York and played it in the quintet, I was amazed how quickly they understood what I wanted without me telling them."

Moore still carries a U.S. passport, and works in the States or with Stateside musicians when he can. He's featured on Dave Douglas' fine 2004 quintet album *Mountain Passages*, and recorded and toured the U.S. playing Bob Dylan tunes with Michael Vatcher and bassist Lindsey Homer as the co-op Jewels And Binoculars.

Moore's taste in composers is eclectic—Duke Ellington, Hoagy Carmichael, Burt Bacharach, Brian Wilson, Irving Berlin. But his interests are global. From time to time he also plays Brazilian music or contemporary Portuguese fado, will arrange a melody from Madagascar, or write compositions inspired by Croatian folk music.

He loves trios: with ICP cellist Tristan Honsinger and Amsterdam keyboardist Cor Fuhler; with Apple accordion player Will Holshouser and drummer Han Bennink, Moore's ally in ICP; and a trio that toured widely in the 1990s, Clusone 3 with Bennink and cellist Ernst Reijseger.

*Holocene* (2007) was for still another trio, with New York cellist Erik Friedlander and accordionist Guy Klucevsek. This one in particular catches Moore's bucolic, pastoral side, as on the diatonic earworm "Trouble House." Moore needs the stimulation of city life, but the painterly countryside lies close by, and he likes biking out on the polders, among noisy flocks of waterfowl, and little villages that stud the flat grassy landscape.

In 2008, Palmetto released a download-only Moore/Hersch duo album *This We Know*—mostly their tunes, but also the Cuban ballad "Green Eyes" and Thelonious Monk's "Four In One." It's mostly lyrical, with a few weird bits, like Moore's flushed-air intro to "Langrage": hot sauce splashed on the good linen.





"He's a wonderful collaborator," Hersch says. "Michael and I started playing together at New England in 1975, and I soon realized what a superb natural improviser he was. He gets a great sound on all his instruments, and has true curiosity about so many different kinds of jazz and other musical genres. He has a relaxed presence, and is able to find his own voice in anybody else's music. That's a rare talent."

Continent hopping has given Moore plenty of creative freedom, and more settings and styles to dive into. If leaving New York cost him some of the recognition he deserves, he wouldn't have turned out as he did if he'd stayed.

"When I first toured with ICP in 1982, it was difficult to find my place between Peter Brötzmann and Keshavan Maslak"—two very loud saxophonists, the latter now known as Kenny Millions. "Since then I've played a lot more different kinds of music, have found ways to adapt to and contribute to a lot more different musical fantasies than I had up till then. Playing with Han and Ernst, there'd be points where I couldn't contribute anything, would have to stop. I hear that in some improvisers: they can't deal with particular textures or areas."

"When I was new here and met Wolter and Ab, they were really strong players, but Han and Misha were stronger, and I felt that was from their immersion in the jazz tradition. Now there are young jazz musicians in Holland who have no interest in free improvising, and I think that makes their music less interesting than it might be. It's really two different disciplines. Learning to play 'good jazz' is almost like going back in time to how people thought about music then. It requires a different way of listening than playing improvised music."

These are more than academic concerns—no, scratch that, these are literally academic concerns—now that Moore teaches one day a week in Groningen in the Netherlands' north, at the Prince Claus Conservatory's "very New York-oriented" jazz program. New York stars like Don Braden,

Ralph Peterson and David Berkman each come over every eight weeks, for an intensive week of instruction. Moore says, "I don't have lesson plans. Sometimes we'll work on a jazz tune, sometimes we'll improvise, and sometimes I'll be like Steve Lacy and work on technical things, concentrate on small areas. It's all about getting students to listen in certain ways."

"I question the value of learning 'Giant Steps' in a student's second year. The best reason I've heard is, people play it at sessions in New York. Which is a hell of a good reason to learn it, if that's what you plan to do. But school should also be a place to meet people who have the same fantasies as you, to help you explore your own music."

He'd rather teach students compositions by Herbie Nichols, whom Mengelberg has championed since the 1950s. "I have them look at a tune like 'House Party Starting,' how it starts in D-flat and five bars later you're in C: D-flat/C augmented/C, a very interesting harmonic movement. There are lots of moments in his music that don't conform to traditional harmonic patterns, and there's something about the way he weds melody and harmony that's very impressive."

For a while, not so long ago, pianist Achim Kaufmann would come by Moore's place every few weeks whenever they were both in town, and they'd play through the Herbie Nichols songbook. They've recorded together in a few varied settings, including a Kaufmann quartet, and a trio with Vancouver drummer Dylan van der Schyff.

Kaufmann, who comes from Cologne, had been two years in Amsterdam when he called Moore out of the blue in 1998. "He said, 'Come by, let's play,'" Kaufmann says. "I brought some tunes, and I think we improvised a bit. Soon after that he called me for a quartet gig—that's unusual, play with a guy once and he offers you a gig. But Michael's always interested in new people." They already sound comfortable with each other on Kaufmann's *Double Exposure* (Leo), recorded in '98.

"In Cologne I'd already known his albums *Home Game* and *Neglige*"—Moore's second CD, with Vatcher, Reijseger and English

# TIA FULLER

## decisive steps

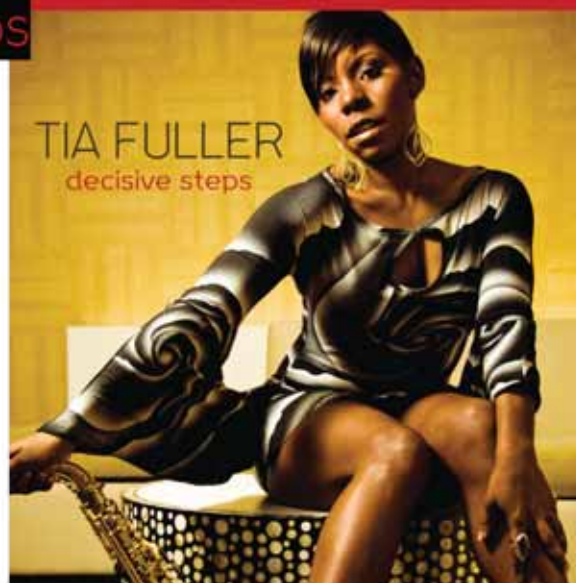
"Tia Fuller stakes her claim to being one of the finest new musicians on the scene."

- All About Jazz

After criss-crossing the globe with Beyoncé the last two years, musician, educator, composer and saxophonist **Tia Fuller** turns the spotlight on herself with *Decisive Steps*, her sophomore release on Mack Avenue Records.

Tia makes it her mission to translate emotion into sound; ensuring that even in those moments where words cannot articulate, feeling has a voice. *Decisive Steps* draws influences from many genres – jazz, blues, and gospel among them – to create an inspirational and unique sound of its own.

Features drummer **Kim Thompson**; bassist **Miriam Sullivan**; Fuller's sister, **Shamie Royston** on piano and Fender Rhodes; with special guests trumpeter **Sean Jones**; bassist **Christian McBride**; vibraphonist **Warren Wolf**; and tap dancer **Maurice Chestnut**.



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pianist Alex Maguire. “Michael has a really beautiful sense of melody and harmony, but also nice ways of developing tunes, having little games inside them. It was fascinating to hear how they work.”

**T**he Dutch musical landscape has changed some since Moore first visited in the late '70s, tipped off by his trombone-playing older brother Gregg that Amsterdam had opportunities for open-minded musicians like them. (They got started playing with their father, saxophonist and pianist Jerry Moore. Michael plays good piano, too.) When Moore was getting established in the '80s, Holland's much vaunted “subsidy system”—under which musicians and venues received some government support—favored improvisers like Bennink and Mengelberg. Then the funding began to shift toward bop-oriented musicians coming out of the country's several conservatory jazz programs. Now the money is drying up for everybody.

Moore likes and has hired younger, well-schooled traditional players, like Fraanje and Van der Feen, and Rotterdam trumpeter Eric Vloeimans. He's also played with older traditionalists like singer Soesja Citroen and saxophonist Gijs Hendricks.

“Recently I read where [a Dutch newspaper critic] said that [a younger Dutch saxophonist] has finally brought together these two worlds, the jazz and the improvised. That negates a hell of a lot of music of the last 25 years.” Take for instance the music made by his co-op Available Jelly, which grew out of an old Gregg Moore band; they might free improvise and play Ellington's “The Feeling Of Jazz” back to back. Their 1993 album *Monuments* is a classic, and a good indicator of how well suited Michael's melodies like “Shotgun Wedding” and “Achtung Circus” are to slippery interpretation. The current lineup is Michael Moore, Vatcher, cornetist Eric Boeren, trombonist Wierbos, ICP bassist Ernst Glerum and Slovenian tubist Goran Krmar. So at this point the band is half Dutch.

“I started going native immediately when I got here, but I realize I'll

never really be part of Dutch culture,” Moore says. “Maybe that's why I've been reading so much Donald Richie lately: he's constantly talking about that tension.” Richie, an American scholar of Japanese cinema, is a classic insider/outsider.

“This is a small, proud nation, and the Dutch like to hear their local heroes, of which I'm decidedly not one. No Dutch label has ever asked me to make a record.” (One reason is surely that he so extensively documents his own stuff, available via [ramboymusic.com](http://ramboymusic.com).) “But then, I did just play the Dutch Jazz Meeting with my own quartet.”

**O**ne wintry Sunday evening in Amsterdam, Anne Guus Teerhuis, a pianist from one of Moore's student ensembles, leads a cafe gig a few blocks from Michael's flat. Teerhuis, the 2009 winner of the YPF Jazz Piano Competition, has invited Michael to sit in. The musicians are backed against a wall, so close to folks' tables they could steal their drinks. Drummer Borislav “Bobby” Petrov ingeniously suggests an entire drum kit using a tiny set up. For the Moore fan, it's a special treat to hear him romp on standards.

After one set has run rather long, Moore slides into the “52nd Street Theme,” the traditional break tune musos play a quick chorus of to get off stage. But Teerhuis' trio is having such fun, they don't want to stop, funneling Moore into a second chorus, and a third, and on and on. Moore goes along, gets into it. When it's finally over, the pianist plays the intro to another number, and off they go again.

This says something about young Dutch jazz musicians: about their enthusiasm, and what gets lost in translation. When's the last time an American band played anything after the break tune?

Moore says later, “A lot of the peaceful, slow music I've made in the past was in reaction to other things I was doing at the time. But I get kind of claustrophobic these days when I hear music that's too contained. Having control all the time—I'm bored by that.”

DB



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Michael Cuscuna

# Jazz Producers: A New Reality

By Nate Chinen

Manfred Eicher was not satisfied. In the engineer's booth of a Manhattan recording studio, he shifted his weight, grimacing slightly. "The way you arrived at the ending, it's not concluded," he said, via intercom, to the five jazz musicians visible through the glass. "Also, the beginning was kind of stiff." He requested more tremolos from the pianist. Then, sensing discomfort, he darted out to deliver his point in person. "Like a river," he said encouragingly, mimicking a flowing motion with both hands.

Eicher, the founder of ECM Records, had traveled from his home base of Munich to produce an album by the Italian trumpeter Enrico Rava. It was the second day in the studio, and the sixth take of a tune called "Lady Orlando"—no, make that the seventh. Restarting with a ripple, the song drifted along. Eicher nodded in the booth. "Yes, it had very good moments," he said, inviting the musicians to hear a playback.

The scene, while typical of an ECM affair, was highly unusual for a jazz record date. That's because most jazz albums these days are made without a producer's guidance, or with only the slightest of supervision. In a contrast to almost every other corner of recorded music, where producers have grown more and more prominent, jazz musicians overwhelmingly go at it alone. Few, it seems, give the matter a second thought.

But that may not necessarily be a bad thing. Jazz musicians have always been the masters of their own sound. And jazz delivers a more unmediated product than pop; the purpose of a typical album is to capture something that already exists in three-dimensional space. What often goes unexplored is the way in which jazz artists, particularly in the up-and-coming camp, have adjusted to the task of self-direction. Their adjustments have inevitably begun to affect the nature of the art.

The perilous state of the industry, and jazz's tenuous foothold within it, has fed this culture of rugged independence. "In the past you had a lot of label-driven projects," said James Farber, an engineer whose credits include many ECM releases (including that Rava session, *New York Days*, released last year). "That's a major change, because most of the producers were from labels. Now the labels are close to nonexis-

tent, compared to the way they used to be. A lot of the artists I work with are just making the records themselves and then figuring out a way to put them out, whether it's through a label or their own means."

While sales for jazz albums have been notoriously slim for ages, the churn of releases hasn't faltered. That's partly because a new album still serves a purpose: It can generate coverage in the jazz press, and yield vital club and festival bookings. And given the available digital recording technology, it's easy for musicians to keep an oar in the water.

What a producer might bring to the table isn't all that easy to determine. "A jazz producer is supposed to do essentially whatever's needed," Michael Cuscuna, a seasoned veteran of the profession, said recently. "That ranges from being a psychologist to being a translator between the musicians and the engineer." Many of the celebrated producers active in jazz's midcentury golden age, like George Avakian and Orrin Keepnews, share a legacy of near-invisibility.

But some other examples are instructive. Norman Granz proved himself an innovative strategist not only on the stage (with his *Jazz at the Philharmonic* tours) but also in the studio (with an American songbook concept that hasn't aged). Later there were pop-savvy producers like Creed Taylor, who spearheaded some of the more successful crossover efforts of the 1970s, and Joel Dorn, whose death in 2007 closed the book on a pugnaciously passionate career that encompassed jazz along with soul and r&b.

Teo Macero, who died in 2008 at 82, took a famously hands-on approach in his longtime association with Miles Davis. The albums he produced for Davis in the 1950s range in tone from naturalistic candor to a bright orchestral shimmer, while their collaborative output in the 1960s, especially in the jazz-rock era, suggests an immersive tapestry. More than a few albums involved his razor blade splices.

On the current landscape, the only major jazz producer who exerts similar pull is Eicher, though his interventions are less manual than atmospheric. Many of his jazz artists describe their producer in terms suggestive of a partner.

"He is part of my creativity," the Polish trumpeter Tomasz Stanko said.

Acknowledging his reputation as a strong-willed but attentive presence in the studio, Eicher compared himself to a film director who coordinates both the actors and the crew, all the way to final cut. "Like a movie has a beginning and an end," he said, "you should create a record that has its own dramaturgy."

But only a handful of other labels still devote comparable resources to instrumental jazz, with release schedules that fluctuate wildly. And the producers at these outposts tend to take a low-key approach. "You want to know when to get out of the way," Eli Wolf, a producer at Blue Note, said. "Because you want to capture the spontaneity and magic of what jazz is, on record. And fundamentally, it's a live music."

That reasoning would explain why small jazz labels like Palmetto and Sunnyside often turn out albums indistinguishable in quality from their better-funded counterparts. (Most Palmetto releases are respectfully produced by Matt Balitsaris, the label's founder.)

But there are also many releases that fall short of this standard, including a few with producers who do more harm than good. "I remember one recording where the producer asked me to use somebody younger," the pianist Kenny Barron said just after mixing his most recent Sunnyside album, *The Traveler*, which he produced himself.

Bill McHenry, a tenor saxophonist, similarly recalled his first session as a sideman: "It was a small label and there was a producer there, and the guy was really stupid. We're supposed to do two days in the studio, and he was happy with it after the first day. So that was it. 'We're done, guys.' We made this record in like three hours."

In this context, it's no surprise that musicians like McHenry speak favorably of their experience with Fresh Sound New Talent, a shoestring operation based in Barcelona that underwrites recordings on a case-by-case basis, settling expenses after the fact. Sessions are often made at New York studios with no supervision besides that of the engineer. "I think it's a healthy experience for young artists," said Reid Anderson, a bassist who has made two debuts on the label, under his own name and then with the Bad Plus. "You get to go in there and say, 'I have this idea





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about how I want this record to sound.”

The label’s founder, an amateur trumpeter and historian named Jordi Pujol, may be the anti-Eicher. One night in Barcelona, he opined that the notion of a coherent and unified label esthetic no longer made sense. “Today every musician is a different world,” he said. “From the moment I decide to record a group, I don’t want to impose any criteria, because what I like is to keep the group’s idea, or the leader’s idea.”

This system reflects a new reality for jazz, one to which many artists have acclimated. “I think musicians in general are better equipped to take a step back and become their own sounding boards,” Cuscuna said. “Musicians are a little more pragmatic these days.” Barron, whose career has encompassed a few different jazz eras, tends to agree. “Players of a generation ago didn’t think they had to be involved,” he said. “But as necessity arises, you learn more and more about what it takes to put a record out.”

For a bandleader renting time in a professional studio, that means understanding how to organize the session, marshal the players, oversee the music and communicate with the engineer, all while the clock is ticking. These skills have effectively become part of the toolset for an up-and-coming jazz artist. “Most of the musicians have a pretty good idea of what’s going on, the various choices that can be made,” Farber, the engineer, said. But he also conceded something: “Whenever an artist produces their own record, I perform many of the functions of a traditional producer.”

At the same time, technology has made it possible—though far from simple, still—for musicians to bypass studios altogether. The current crop of artists seems to have at least considered the option. “Most of the guys from my generation make tracks, or double as on-the-side hip-hop producers,” said Christian Scott, a studio-savvy trumpeter in his mid-20s. He added that he took film-scoring courses as a student at the Berklee College of Music; good preparation, it turned out, for his sweeping jazz-rock albums on Concord. (Roger Brown, the president of Berklee, said he has noticed that many of the school’s sharpest musicians now major in production and engineering.)

Jamie Saft, a keyboardist who doubles as an engineer, enthusiastically attests to more interest in production among jazz musicians. “I’ve seen a huge influx of young artists who take ‘the record’ really seriously,” he said. “It’s not just a calling card to these guys.” At his purposefully cluttered independent studio, which he recently relocated to Woodstock, N.Y., from Park Slope in Brooklyn, Saft encourages musicians to reach for something out of the ordinary. Often this amounts to a rock or fusion esthetic, as with the Dave Douglas album *Freak In* and a couple of his own releases inspired by doom metal.

Meanwhile, an encouraging number of self-released recent albums—by Loren Stillman, Steve Lehman, Jaleel Shaw and Logan Richardson, to limit the examples to bright young alto saxophonists—evinces a cohesive vision as well as a high artistic standard.

Perhaps any one of these albums might have benefited from a second set of ears, to borrow a term used by most jazz producers. (Eicher prefers “a good first listener.”) But the fact that the albums work without such intervention bodes well for the future of the music. At this stage in the game, the most pressing issue isn’t really the slow fade of the traditional jazz producer. It’s the emergence of a new species of jazz producer: the kind who truly produces, in every sense of the word.

“It’s a grueling, painstaking process,” McHenry said of producing his own records, “and I really live and die with each one.” Yet he added that he couldn’t imagine entrusting the task to someone else. And judging by his track record—notably *Roses* (Sunnyside), one of the best jazz albums of 2007—he doesn’t have to.

Anderson offered a similar perspective, pointing out that while the Bad Plus has worked in the past with the rock producer-engineers Tchad Blake and Tony Platt, the results didn’t fundamentally change the band’s sound.

“If the Bad Plus works with Timbaland,” he said, “what’s he going to do, show up with his MPC 3000 consoles and make some beats? We come into the studio and know exactly what we’re going to do. I’d love to work with Timbaland. But it certainly wouldn’t be a Bad Plus record.” **DB**



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### Berklee's Five Week Summer Performance Program

Boston, Massachusetts

**July 10–August 13**

This program annually welcomes about 900 students. The student must be 15 years old by the start of the camp and been playing an instrument for a minimum of six months.

**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** Application fee \$50; \$200 tuition deposit; \$4,050 remaining tuition; \$35 registration fee; \$3,050 housing fee; \$150 comprehensive fee.

**Contact:** (617) 747-2245 or toll-free at (877) BERKLEE (237-5533); summer@berklee.edu; berklee.edu/summer.

### Camp Encore/Coda

Sweden, Maine

**June 30–July 25, July 25–August 15**

This summer will be the 61st season of encouraging young musicians at a beautiful Maine camp location.

**Faculty:** Brent LaCasce, Kevin Norton, Julia Chen, Mike Sakash, Kelley Muse, Jake Saslow.

**Cost:** 1st session (3 ½ weeks) is \$4,600 inclusive, 2nd session (3 weeks) is \$3,850 inclusive, full season (includes both sessions 6 ½ weeks) is \$7,100 inclusive.

**Contact:** James Saltman, (617) 325-1541, jamie@encore-coda.com; encore-coda.com.

### College of Saint Rose Summer Jazz Program

Albany, New York

**June 29–August 6**

During this program, students will be divided into two jazz ensembles: students who will be entering grades 7-9 and students entering grades 10-12. Both bands meet every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 6-8 p.m. This program gives area school musicians an opportunity to continue developing their musicianship throughout the summer.

**Faculty:** Paul Evoskevich, Matthew Cremisio, Danielle Cremisio.

**Cost:** \$310.

**Contact:** Paul Evoskevich at paule@strose.edu.

### COTA CampJazz

Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania

**July 26–August 1**

Students ages 13 through adult will play in small ensembles based on ability and experience. This camp also features lunchtime faculty concerts and master classes.

**Faculty:** Phil Woods, Rick Chamberlain, Jim Daniels, Bill Goodwin, Eric Doney.

**Cost:** \$450; Room and board is \$395.

**Contact:** campjazz.org.

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

Hamilton, New York

**June 27–July 11, July 4–18, July 11–24 (two-week sessions); June 27–July 18, July 4–24 (three-week sessions); June 27–July 24 (four-week session)**

Jazz education, performance, ensembles and combos, improvisation, theory, harmony, composition, arranging, conducting, guest artists and master classes are all included in this camp. Enrollment is approximately 200

students between the ages of 10 and 18.

**Faculty:** Sean Lowery, Tom Christensen, Rick Montalbano.

**Cost:** Varies from \$859 to \$4,223 depending upon a two-, three-, or four-week session.

**Contact:** (866) 777-7841; easternusmusiccamp.com.

### George Vance Summer Bass Workshop 2010

Bethesda, Maryland

**July 6–10**

This workshop gives attendees the opportunity to work with world-renowned bassist Francois Rabbath. Faculty evening recitals and student solo recitals are also a part of the curriculum. Bassists of any ages and experience levels are encouraged to attend.

**Faculty:** Francois Rabbath, Tony Bianco, Nicholas Walker, Etienne Lafrance, John Hamil, Tracy Rowell, Ira Gold, Ted Botsford.

**Cost:** \$475.

**Contact:** summerbassworkshop@gmail.com.

### Hudson Jazz Works

Hudson, New York

**August 12–15**

This weekend immersion in jazz improvisation and composition includes individual and group instruction and will cover technique, harmony, accompaniment, rhythm, composition and the art of duo playing.

**Faculty:** Armen Donelian, Marc Mommaas and Jim McNeely.

**Cost:** \$575.

**Contact:** info@armenjazz.com, marc@mommass.com.



## Jazz Intensives: Jazz & Brazilian Workshops

Bar Harbor, Maine

**July 25–31 (guitar, bass, vocals) and  
August 1–7 (all instruments and vocals)**

Experienced high school players and adults work and learn with world-class faculty. The workshops focus on jazz and Brazilian music through hands-on classes with vocalists joining trios and ensembles. Faculty-led jams, concerts, a lobster bake and options for on-site kayaking are also included.

**Faculty:** Roni Ben-Hur, Nilson Matta, Amy London, Bill McHenry and John Cooper.

**Cost:** Tuition: \$860 (including lodging and meals: \$1,325).

**Contact:** Alice Schiller, (888) 435-4003, study@jazzintensives.com; jazzintensives.com.

## KoSA International Percussion Workshops & Festival

Castleton, Vermont

**July 27–August 1**

The KoSA International Percussion Workshop and Festival is celebrating its 15th anniversary this summer and welcomes students of all ages and levels to participate in daily classes, rhythm sections and nightly festival concerts.

**Faculty:** Past faculty has included John Riley, Ndugu Chancler, Memo Acevedo, Dom Famularo and Aldo Mazza.

**Cost:** TBD.

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

## Litchfield Jazz Camp

Kent, Connecticut

**July 11–August 6**

Some classes at this camp at the Kent School include combo, theory, composition, improv, jazz history and the business of music. Some electives are Latin big band, r&b band, boot camp for jazz musicians and jazz college fair night. Instruction is offered in all major instruments and voice.

**Faculty:** Don Braden, Sheila Jordan, Junior Mance, Steve Davis, Dave Stryker.

**Cost:** Starting from \$900 (day student for one week) to \$4,550 (residential student for four weeks).

**Contact:** (860) 361-6285; info@litchfieldjazzfest.com; litchfieldjazzcamp.com.

## New York State Summer School of the Arts

Saratoga Springs, New York

**June 26–July 10**

The New York State Summer School of the Arts is a two-week residential intensive for New York state high school age students. The camp focuses on performance, skills in improvisation and jazz styles.



Litchfield Jazz Camp



Hudson Jazz Works

**Faculty:** Todd Coolman, Curtis Fuller, Bill Cunliffe, John LaBarbera.

**Cost:** \$1,300; tuition assistance is available based upon financial need.

**Contact:** (518) 474-8773; nysssa@mail.nysed.gov; emsc.nysed.gov/nysssa/SJS/.

## New York Jazz Summer Workshop

New York, New York

**July 29–August 1, August 5–August 8, August 12–15**

This experience includes three summer workshops: A four-day guitar workshop with Vic Juris and Rez Abbasi, a four-day improv/rhythm workshop with Marc Mommaas and Tony Moreno and a four-day vocal workshop with Hillary Gardner and Joshua Wolff.

**Faculty:** Vic Juris, Rez Abbasi, Marc Mommaas, Tony Moreno, Hillary Gardner and Joshua Wolff.

**Cost:** \$575.

**Contact:** info@newyorkjazzworkshop.com; newyorkjazzworkshop.com.

## New York Summer Music Festival

Oneonta, New York

**June 27–August 7**

This six-week camp is divided into three sessions of two weeks each for musicians of all levels between the ages of 11–25. The camp includes more than 50 ensembles and classes with over 40 public performances each summer. Visiting artists who have provided free master classes and concerts include Wycliffe Gordon, John Patitucci and Donny McCaslin.

**Faculty:** Over 50 faculty members from Curtis, Manhattan School of Music, Juilliard, NY Pops, Maria Schnieder Big Band, Philadelphia Orchestra. Full listings on web site.

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

**Contact:** Keisuke Hoashi, NYSMF Director of Communications, info@nysmf.org; nysmf.org.

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For all the info, go to [necmusic.edu/jazz40](http://necmusic.edu/jazz40)



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[jborla@aol.com](mailto:jborla@aol.com)  
630-416-3911

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Fernando Jones teaching the blues

COURTESY FERNANDO JONES

## New Chicago Camp To Teach Students True Summertime Blues

Growing up in the tough South Side of Chicago, Fernando Jones found music to be his escape from gangs and violence. A guitar player since the age of 4, Jones is now an adjunct faculty member in the music department at Columbia College Chicago and also heads up the new Contemporary Urban and Pop Music (CUP) degree. This summer he will launch Blues Camp, a free, exclusively blues camp on Columbia's campus with the intent of giving students a place to learn, play and grow as musicians.

"We are lucky to have the support of a major college like Columbia," Jones said. "I am looking forward to reaching kids who would never have [otherwise] been able to participate in an opportunity like this."

The camp runs from July 4-9 and has received sponsorship from The Blues Foundation, Guitar Center, The Chicago Federation of Musicians, The Mary Barnes Donnelley Family Foundation and Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation. Students in middle school and high school will be able to participate in the camp free of charge. Dunlop USA has also donated guitar picks and strings to the camp as a part of a gift package that each student will receive.

Beginning in March, students from the Chicago area can audition at various locations that are listed on the camp's Web site ([blueskids.com](http://blueskids.com)). International students and students from across the country can also audition by submitting a DVD of their performance. Also listed on the Web site are the multiple songs that students can choose for their auditions depending on what instrument they play.

"The camp covers all the basic blues instruments: guitar, bass, drums, keyboard

and vocals," Jones said. "We are also adding a section for horn players and string players."

Many professional blues musicians will instruct during the camp including Tim Austin, Buddy Guy's drummer, and Felton Crews, who once recorded with Miles Davis. Columbia students and faculty will teach throughout the week-long camp as well.

During the camp, students will participate in drills, small ensembles and jam sessions. The camp will conclude with a culminating concert on the last day.

"It is a wonderful opportunity for students around the world to learn about authentic Chicago blues," said Richard Dunscomb, Columbia College's music department chair. "We are proud that Columbia College will host this camp, and we are looking forward to having these 50 or 60 students on our campus."

Not only does the camp give students a chance to learn the blues in its hometown, but it also brings students with a common interest together.

"What is cool is I can identify with every age group of kids participating," Jones said. "I know what it's like to be the only guitar player on your block. This camp gives kids who have the same interests and desire that I had an opportunity to play."

Jones also has an answer for anyone who may think that the sunny ideals of a summer camp may seem like an odd pairing with a music that's often portrayed as downhearted.

"Kids are not prejudiced like adults are," Jones said. "There will not be nothing dark or edgy about my camp. If anything, the camp and music will be patriotic, upbeat and fun."

—Katie Kailus

## Summer Jazz Stamford

Stamford, Connecticut

**June 28–July 9**

This camp focuses on combo improvisation, theory and solo construction with master classes for each instrument.

**Faculty:** Ralph Lalama, John Hart, Joe Corsello, Joe Magnarelli, Rick Petrone, Joe McWilliams, Dave Arezzini.

**Cost:** \$650 for 2 weeks;  
\$350 for one week.

**Contact:** summerjazzcamp@aol.com.

## Tritone Jazz Fantasy Camp Cool on the Lake and Jazz at Naz

Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, and  
Rochester, New York

**July 1–16 and July 25–30**

This camp takes place in two locations and includes big bands, small combos, jam sessions, jazz theory and instrument master classes. No auditions necessary, open to every skill level.

**Faculty:** Gene Bertocini, Carolyn Leonhart, Janet Planet, Zach Harmon, John Harmon.

**Cost:** Cool on the Lake: \$895 for tuition,  
\$1,595 with room and board.  
Jazz at Naz: \$775 for tuition,  
\$1,275 with room and board.

**Contact:** (585) 377-2222;  
bob@tritonejazz.com.

## Vermont Jazz Center Summer Jazz Workshop

Brattleboro, Vermont

**August 8–14**

This multi-generational camp has no age requirement and features small group study in instrumentals, vocals and composition.

**Faculty:** Sheila Jordan, Jay Clayton, Howard Brofsky, Pete Yellin, Harvey Diamond, Helmut Kagerer.

**Cost:** \$1,400.

**Contact:** 802-254-9088;  
info@vtjazz.org.

## William Paterson University

Wayne, New Jersey

**July 18–24**

This week-long camp features small group performances and rehearsals, classes in improvisation, arranging and jazz history.

**Faculty:** Dr. Billy Taylor, Mulgrew Miller, Jim McNeely, Steve LaSpina, Marcus McLaurine.

**Cost:** \$689 resident tuition,  
\$989 including room and board.

**Contact:** (937) 720-2354.



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Photo: Jazz Bassist, alumnus, and Juilliard Jazz Artist-in-Residence  
Christian McBride performs with student Eddie Barbash, on alto sax.  
Photo: Hiroyuki Ito



## MIDWEST

### Birch Creek Music Performance Center

Egg Harbor, Wisconsin

**July 19-31, August 2-14**

This camp provides students with advanced training and the opportunity to perform publicly alongside pros in the jazz industry. Birch Creek offers sessions in percussion, steel pan and symphony. Enrollment is limited to 50-54 students ages 14-19 and student-to-teacher ratio is 2-to-1.

**Faculty:** Jeff Campbell, Tom Garling, Reggie Thomas, Clay Jenkins, Bob Chmel, Rick Haydon, David Bixler, Ron Carter, Jim Warrick.

**Cost:** Tuition, room and board is \$1,785.

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

### Interlochen Arts Camp

Interlochen, Michigan

**June 26-July 17, July 18-August 9**

This three-week camp offers students in grades 9-12 an opportunity to experience a comprehensive set of jazz offerings that will take their improvisation and performance skills to a new level and feature daily master classes, sectionals and combos.

**Faculty:** Paul Brewer, Robin Leigh Connell, Vernon Howard, Paul Johnston, David Kay, Matthew Warnock.

**Cost:** \$4,115, financial aid is available.

**Contact:** (800) 681-5912;  
admission@interlochen.org;  
camp.interlochen.org.



Interlochen Arts Camp

### Janice Borla Vocal Jazz Camp

Naperville, Illinois

**July 18-23**

This camp fosters the solo jazz vocalist's artistic concept, musical knowledge and performance skills. The curriculum includes vocal jazz techniques, styles and repertoire, improvisation, master classes, student jam sessions and more. Students ages 14-adult are welcome.

**Faculty:** Janice Borla, Jay Clayton, Madeline Eastman.

**Cost:** \$625 for commuters and  
\$890 for residents.

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

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### Keith Hall Summer Drum Intensive

Kalamazoo, Michigan

**June 20-25**

Students of all ages learn all aspects of jazz drumming including drum choir ensemble and rehearsals and performances with a New York rhythm section at a local jazz club in this camp at Western Michigan University.

**Faculty:** Matthew Fries, Phil Palombi and others.

**Cost:** \$450 (dorms available).

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

### McNally Smith College of Music-Jazz Workshop

St. Paul, Minnesota

**June 26-July 2**

McNally Smith faculty and fellow professionals from the music industry teach this workshop.

**Faculty:** Scott Agster, Jerry Kosak, Sean McPherson.

**Cost:** Early registration discount if registering by March 15 is \$400 with supervised housing available for \$600.

**Contact:** (800) 594-9500, sean.mcpherson@mcnallysmith.edu; summercamps.mcnallysmith.edu.

### Music For All Summer Symposium

Normal, Illinois

**June 21-26**

Music educators instruct during this week-long camp that includes concerts every evening. Open to high school students.

**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** Past participant \$489, early bird registration (before March 31) \$539, (after March 31) \$619.

**Contact:** 800-848-BAND (2263); musicforall.org/programs/symposium.

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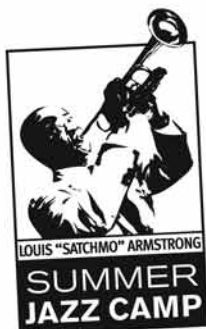
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**www.louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com**

Photo courtesy of the Louis Armstrong House Museum



### Northern Illinois University Jazz Camp

DeKalb, Illinois

**July 18-23**

This camp is for jazz musicians of all skill levels who want to focus on a creative approach to improvisation and ensemble playing. Camp-goers will attend rehearsals, jazz styles and business of music seminars, instrument master classes, jam sessions, sectionals, group classes and more, all taught by NIU jazz faculty, alumni and students. This camp is for students who have completed grades 8-12.

**Faculty:** Ron Carter and other NIU faculty members and graduate students.

**Cost:** \$455 until June 1, \$515 after June 1.

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

### Northwoods Jazz Camp

Rhineland, Wisconsin

**May 12-15, 2010**

During this four-day camp, students learn improvisation, jazz vocabulary, repertoire, big band reading and interpretation, jazz theory and history. They play and perform with the eight professional faculty members each night in concert, with a big band the final night. Student must be 21 and over unless accompanied by an adult.

**Faculty:** Kim Richmond, Clay Jenkins, Scott Whitfield, Lee Tomboulia, Tom Hynes, Jeff Campbell, Tim Davis and Betty Tomboulia.

**Cost:** Student, single occupancy room \$795.  
Student, double occupancy room \$665.

**Contact:** Holiday Acres, (715)-369-1500;  
northwoods jazzcamp.com or  
Kim Richmond at jazzkim@kimrichmond.com.

### Steve Zegree Vocal Jazz Camp

Kalamazoo, Michigan

**June 27-July 2**

This camp at Western Michigan University targets high school and college students and teachers and professional and amateur singers along with rhythm section players.

**Faculty:** Steve Zegree, Duane Davis, Michele Weir, Peter Eldridge, Diana Spradling and Michael Wheaton.

**Cost:** \$495 plus room and board.

**Contact:** wmugoldcompany.com.

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**Fred Hersch**, visiting artist, piano, combos

**Billy Hart**, visiting artist, drumset, combos

**John Campos**, Western Sound Studios

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[www.keithhallmusic.com](http://www.keithhallmusic.com)

### STEVE ZEGREE VOCAL JAZZ CAMP

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June 27-July 2, 2010

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## Summer Jazz Workshops

New Albany, Indiana

**July 4-9, July 11-16, July 3-4, July 10-11**

This camp features two week-long sessions and three two-day sessions. Participants get master classes on their instruments, ear-training sessions, free concerts by the all-star faculty each night, jazz theory classes, small group/combo rehearsals and more. All ages and abilities are invited.

**Faculty:** Jamey Aebersold, Hunt Butler, Steve Allee, Rufus Reid, Dave Stryker.

**Cost:** \$495 plus dorm accommodations

and meal plan.

**Contact:** Jason Lindsey, 1-800-456-1388, ext. 5;  
jason@jazzbooks.com.

## The Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Music Camp

Cleveland, Ohio

**July 11-16**

Students in grades 8-12 can partake in this camp which focuses on playing, composition, improvisation, rhythms, styles, history and culture.

**Faculty:** Enrique Haneine, Peter Brainin,

## Maryland Summer Jazz Camp Festival



Alex Hernandez, Eric Dregne.

**Cost:** \$550.

**Contact:** (440) 572-2048.

## Twin Cities Jazz Workshop

Minneapolis, Minnesota

**July 12-30**

The camp emphasizes improvisation and playing in a combo setting. Students meet three hours each day to learn and prepare material for a final concert at the Dakota Jazz Club. Camp goers must be 13 and older.

**Faculty:** Doug Little, Kevin Washington, Zacc Harris, Viviana Pintado.

**Cost:** \$205.

**Contact:** (612) 871-3534;  
info@tcjazzworkshop.com,  
tcjazzworkshop.com.

## UMSL Jazz Combo/Improv Camp

St. Louis, Missouri

**June 13-18**

Students from beginner to advanced experience jazz improvisation and combo playing, master and jazz theory classes, jam sessions and daily concerts.

**Faculty:** Jim Widner, Dave Pietro, Dave Scott, Scott Whitfield.

**Cost:** \$299.

**Contact:** umsl.edu.


## The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Jazz Workshop Summer Camp

Omaha, Nebraska

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**Cost:** \$330 for commuters/  
\$630 for residential.

**Contact:** Pete Madsen, (402) 554-2297,  
petermadsen@unomaha.edu.

### The University of Toledo 2010 Summer Jazz Institute

Toledo, Ohio

**June 13-19**

Instrumental and vocal jazz is taught at this week-long camp for students of all levels ages 14 and up. The instrumental track emphasizes the development of jazz improvisation, style and composition skills, while the vocal track focuses on developing skills in jazz style, rhythm and scat singing.

**Faculty:** Jon Hendricks, Vic Juris, Claude Black, Gunnar Mossblad, Norm Damschroder, Stephanie Nakasian and Mark Byerly.

**Cost:** \$450.

**Contact:** (419) 530-2448; jazz@utoledo.edu.



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June 14-18, 2010

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### UNT Jazz Vocal Workshop

June 20-25, 2010

Workshop Director: Paris Rutherford

### UNT Jazz Winds Workshop

(Sax, Trumpet and Trombone)

July 12-17, 2010

Workshop Director: Mike Steinel

### UNT Jazz Combo Workshop

July 18-23, 2010

Workshop Director: Mike Steinel

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University of Toledo  
Summer Jazz Institute

## SOUTH

### Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp

New Orleans, Louisiana

July 6-24

Students at this camp held at Loyola University will receive beginner and advanced instruction in piano, bass, drums, percussion, guitar, brass and woodwind instruments. Students must be 10-21 years old, actively involved in a music education program in school (or have a private instructor) and have studied their instrument for at least two years.

**Faculty:** Wycliffe Gordon, Norma Miller, Edward "Kidd" Jordan, Clyde Kerr Jr., Marlon Jordan.

**Cost:** Local/New Orleans student \$300; out-of-state student \$750; resident student (student living on college campus) \$4,500.

**Contact:** (212) 987-0782;  
[jazzcamp@louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com](mailto:jazzcamp@louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com);  
[louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com](http://louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com).

### University of North Carolina Wilmington Summer Jazz Workshop

Wilmington, North Carolina

July 18-23

This workshop is geared toward 9th through 12th grade students and covers virtually every aspect of jazz studies including music theory classes and jazz history with individual lessons and evening performances. This workshop also features opportunities to work one-on-one with jazz faculty and guest artists.

**Faculty:** Frank Bongiorno, Tom Davis, Steve Bailey, Joe Chambers, Bob Russell, Jerald Shynett, Andy Whittington.

**Cost:** \$475 for tuition, housing and three daily meals during the workshop.

**Contact:** Dr. Frank Bongiorno, (910) 962-3395, [uncw.edu/music](http://uncw.edu/music).

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## SUMMER 2010 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### JAZZ CAMP: (youth 12-17)

Week 1: July 18-23

Week 2: July 25-30

### JAZZ RESIDENCY:

(adults, advanced youth)

August 1-6

### 2010 FACULTY INCLUDE:

Dave Douglas

Taylor Eigsti

Larry Grenadier

Eric Harland

Tootie Heath

Julian Lage

Junior Mance

Charles McPherson

Nicholas Payton

Joshua Redman

Reuben Rogers

Randy Weston

REGISTER ONLINE [www.stanfordjazz.org](http://www.stanfordjazz.org)



**University of Miami  
Frost School of Music  
Young Musicians' Camp**

Coral Gables, Florida

**June 21–July 2, July 6–July 23**

This camp is open to instrumentalists and vocalists ages 7–18. The jazz programs are broken into three levels: intermediate (middle school), pre-college (high school) and honors (by audition only). Curriculum varies by level.

**Faculty:** Ed Maina, Brian Murphy, Nicky Orta, Felix Gomez, Brian Potts, Aaron Lebos, Lisanne Lyons, Ira Sullivan and Nestor Torres.

**Cost:** \$575–\$1,250.

**Contact:** (350) 238-8937;  
youngmusicianscamp.com.

**UNT Jazz Combo Workshop**

Denton, Texas

**July 18–23**

This week-long workshop is open to all jazz instruments including saxophone, trumpet, trombone, guitar, piano, bass and drums. Students ages 14 and up and of all skill levels will partake in combos, improvisation, theory and master classes.

**Faculty:** Ed Soph, Lynn Seaton, Stefan Karlsson, Brad Leali and Mike Steinel.

**Cost:** \$445 (plus room and board).

**Contact:** michael.steinell@unt.edu;  
jazz.unt.edu/workshops.

**University of North Texas  
Jazz Winds Workshop**

Denton, Texas

**July 12–17**

Students ages 14 and up can take part in this week-long winds workshop that includes combos, big band, improvisation, instrumental master classes, sight-reading and basic technique. This workshop is open to students of all skill levels.

**Faculty:** Jay Saunders, Mike Steinel, Rodney Booth, John Wasson.

**Cost:** \$445 (plus room and board).

**Contact:** michael.steinell@unt.edu or  
jazz.unt.edu/workshops.

**Lynn Seaton Jazz Double  
Bass Workshop at the  
University of North Texas**

Denton, Texas

**June 14–18**

Students of this workshop will learn upright technique, develop walking bass lines and participate in small groups as well as bass ensembles.

**Faculty:** Lynn Seaton.

**Cost:** \$445 plus room and board.

**Contact:** jazz.unt.edu/workshops.

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[www.esm.rochester.edu/summer](http://www.esm.rochester.edu/summer)



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THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

### Phil Dwyer Academy of Musical and Culinary Arts Summer Music Camp



## WEST

### Brubeck Institute Jazz Camp

Stockton, California

**June 27-July 3**

This camp at the University of the Pacific offers students in grades 8-12 instruction in big band, combos, improvisation, master classes, jazz history and theory.

**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** Resident, \$625; commuter, \$525.

**Contact:** (209) 946-2416;  
[musiccamp@pacific.edu](mailto:musiccamp@pacific.edu).

### CSN/Tom Ferguson Jazz Combo Camp

Las Vegas, Nevada

**July 18-23**

This one-week program at the College of Southern Nevada is open for vocalists and instrumentalists of all abilities and ages and is designed for improving improvisation, theory and jazz choir skills.

**Faculty:** Dick McGee, Walt Blanton, Matt Taylor, Bob Bonora, Chris Davis, Gary Queen, Dave Loeb, Mark Wherry.

**Cost:** \$150, or \$165 including T-shirt.

**Contact:** Carolyn Barela, (702) 651-4110,  
[carolyn.barela@csn.edu](mailto:carolyn.barela@csn.edu).

### Eastern Washington University Jazz Dialogue High School Summer Camp

Cheney, Washington

**August 1-7**

This instrumental and vocal camp includes daily big bands or jazz choir, 12 levels of jazz theory and improvisation, master classes on every instrument, small groups or vocal solos, listening sessions and faculty concerts. Students entering 9th grade through college are eligible to attend.

**Faculty:** Benny Green, Greg Gisbert, the Bob Curnow Big Band.

**Cost:** \$525.

**Contact:** Rob Tapper, (509) 359-7073,  
[rtapper@ewu.edu](mailto:rtapper@ewu.edu); [ewu.edu](http://ewu.edu).

### Eastern Washington University Jazz Dialogue Middle School Summer Camp

Cheney, Washington

**July 24-29**

This instrumental educational experience includes daily big bands, six levels of jazz theory and improvisation, master classes each day, small groups listening sessions and evening concerts featuring faculty and staff. Students entering 6th grade through 9th grade are eligible to attend.

**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** \$430.

**Contact:** Rob Tapper, (509) 359-7073,  
[rtapper@ewu.edu](mailto:rtapper@ewu.edu); [ewu.edu](http://ewu.edu).

### Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival

Fairbanks, Alaska

**July 18-August 1**

The study and performance festival at the University of Alaska features artists-in-residence and guest artists for opera and musical theater, choral groups, creative writing, filmmaking and visual arts. This two-week camp is for adults ages 18 and up.

**Faculty:** Study and perform with Vince Cherico, Josh Davis, Vardan Ovsepiyan, Giacomo Gates, Ron Drotos.

**Cost:** \$100-\$400.

**Contact:** [fsaf.org](http://fsaf.org).

### Great Basin Jazz Camp

Twin Falls, Idaho

**July 12-16**

Students ages 15 through adult will learn jazz phrasing, performance skills, sight-reading and one-on-one instruction. They will also be able to participate in big band and small group

ensembles.

**Faculty:** Bruce Forman and Carl Saunders.

**Cost:** \$435 to \$485. Commuter rate available.

**Contact:** info@greatbasinjazzcamp.com;  
greatbasinjazzcamp.com.

### Jazz Aspen Snowmass

Aspen, Colorado

**June 23-July 3**

The JAS Academy is an "all-scholarship" intensive one week program open to graduate level jazz musicians.

**Faculty:** Christian McBride, Loren Schoenberg.

**Cost:** TBD.

**Contact:** (970) 920-4996; jazzaspen.org.

### Jazz Camp West

La Honda, California

**June 26-July 3**

Jazz Camp West is an eight-day jazz immersion program for instrumentalists, vocalists and dancers. The camp includes workshops, personalized instruction, student performances, faculty concerts and late-night jams. The camp hosts 250 participants of all ages and levels.

**Faculty:** Includes 45 all-star faculty members.

**Cost:** \$890-\$1,070 according to accommodation.

**Contact:** Stacey Hoffman, (510) 287-8880,  
stacey@jazzcampwest.com;  
jazzcampwest.com.

### Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee Jazz Camp

Mammoth Lakes, California

**July 11-18**

The Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee is open to students between the ages of 13 and 17 and all instruments are welcome. The camp focuses on improvisation, instrumental technique, harmony and scales.

**Faculty:** Corey Gemme, Bill Dendle, Anita Thomas, Jason Wanner, Eddie Erickson.

**Cost:** \$595.

**Contact:** (916) 927-5222; bdendle@winfirst.com.

### Mel Brown Workshop

Monmouth, Oregon

**August 1-7**

Students ages 13 and up can improve their performance skills and knowledge of jazz by partaking in this camp that covers guitar, piano, tenor saxophone, alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, acoustic/electric bass, flute, trombone, trumpet and voice.

**Faculty:** Stan Bock, Renato Caranto, Keller Coker, Robert Crowell, Clay Giberson, Carlton Jackson, Warren Rand, Derek Sims, Tim Gilson and Chris Woitach.

**Cost:** \$100 deposit; rooming on campus \$595 in addition to deposit; commuting to campus \$475 in addition to deposit.

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**Contact:** (503) 838-8275;  
melbrowworkshop@wou.edu.

## Port Townsend Jazz Workshop

Port Townsend, Washington

**July 25-August 1**

This workshop is open to musicians of high school age and older. Camp-goers will receive daily coaching in a small group setting from world-class faculty. Master classes, theory and special topics classes, and performances by faculty and guest performers are included in the camp.

**Faculty:** John Clayton, Benny Green, Jimmy Heath, Tootie Heath, Terrell Stafford.

**Cost:** \$725 tuition, \$515 room and board.

**Contact:** Gregg Miller, (360) 385-3102x109, gregg@centrum.org.

## Sacramento State Summer Jazz Camp

Sacramento, California

**July 11-16**

Sacramento State University will host its Summer Jazz Camp featuring the Jim Widner Big Band. This week-long camp is open to students 14 and older who have spent at least one year of study on their instruments. The students will participate in big band rehearsals, sectionals, master classes, improvisation, theory and arranging.

**Faculty:** Dave Pietro, Mary Fetting, Tom Luer, Chip McNeill, Josh Murray, Aaron Lington, Mike Vax, Josh Harner, Steve Roach, Jim Widner, Ken Kehner, Gary Hobbs, Steve Homan.

**Cost:** \$925 residential tuition fee, \$425 commuter tuition fee.

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

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

Palo Alto, California

**July 18-23, July 25-30 (jazz camp);**

**August 1-6 (jazz residency)**

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	<b>BASS</b> Nilson Matta Avery Sharpe	<b>PIANO</b> Junior Mance Rachel Z	<b>TRUMPET</b> Russ Johnson Claudio Roditi	<b>AND MANY, MANY MORE</b> *subject to change

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17 and the jazz residency is designed for adults. Recent faculty have included Wycliffe Gordon, Ray Drummond, Branford Marsalis, Mulgrew Miller and Joshua Redman.

**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** \$995 per week (jazz camp),  
\$1,095 (jazz residency).

**Contact:** (650) 736-0324;  
info@stanfordjazz.org;  
stanfordjazz.org.

## University of Northern Colorado Jazz Camp

Greeley, Colorado

**July 18-23**

Open to middle school, high school and college students, the camp includes four student jazz bands and eight student combos. Students participate in master classes and courses in jazz improvisation, jazz theory and jazz listening as well as nightly faculty combo concerts and performances by the Colorado Jazz Orchestra.

**Faculty:** Dana Landry, Erik Applegate, Jim White, Clay Jenkins, Don Aliquo, Paul McKee, David Caffey, Andy Dahlke, Nat Wickman, Dave Stamps, Kevin Whalen and Steve Kovalcheck.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$385 plus \$250 for room and board if staying on campus.

**Contact:** (970) 351-2394; uncjazz.com.

## Vail Jazz Festival Summer Workshop

Vail, Colorado

**August 28-September 6**

This 10-day workshop gives high school age jazz musicians an opportunity for one-on-one learning on an instrument, along with several performance opportunities as part of the Vail Jazz Festival. Students are nominated by educators and chosen by workshop leaders.

**Faculty:** Clayton Brothers Quintet: John Clayton, Jeff Clayton, Terrell Stafford, Bill Cunliffe and Lewis Nash.

**Cost:** Scholarships are available once accepted.

**Contact:** Howard Stone, (970) 479-6146,  
vjf@vailjazz.org.

## Yellowstone Jazz Camp

Powell, Wyoming

**July 11-16**

This camp is for students entering high school through adults. Students can participate in one of three big bands and one of six jazz combos. Classes in improvisation and theory are also offered.

**Faculty:** Neil Hansen, Art Bouton, Greg Yasinitsky, John Harbaugh, Mike Hackett and Tony Baker.

**Cost:** \$595 including tuition and room and board.

**Contact:** neil.hansen@northwestcollege.edu;  
(307) 754-6427.

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## July 18-23, 2010



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Andy Dahlke, saxophone  
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# INTERNATIONAL

## Ijamjazz Summer Jazz Camp

Bonefro, Italy

**June 19–July 9**

This three-week summer jazz camp focuses on theory and a small ensemble performance curriculum that features concerts at several hilltop villages in Molise, Italy. Open to students 16 and up.

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

**Cost:** \$4,500.

**Contact:** Peter Barbieri, [peter@ijamjazz.org](mailto:peter@ijamjazz.org); [ijamjazz.org](http://ijamjazz.org).

## International Music Camp, Summer School of Fine Arts

International Peace Gardens  
(North Dakota and Manitoba border)

**July 18–24**

This camp features junior high and high school jazz band sessions as well as vocal jazz and “kick start” for beginning jazz rhythm section players. Students will study jazz theory and improvisation, perform in combos and big bands (vocal ensembles for vocal jazz students), attend master classes and will have the opportunity to take private lessons.



**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** Tuition is \$345 before May 1.

**Contact:** (701) 838-8472; [internationalmusiccamp.com](http://internationalmusiccamp.com).

**Contact:** (800) 541-8401; [info@kosamusic.com](mailto:info@kosamusic.com); [kosamusic.com](http://kosamusic.com).

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- ★ Jazz at Naz, Rochester, NY  
July 25-30

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## Keep An Eye Summer Jazz Workshop

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**June 28–July 2**

Held in conjunction with New York’s Manhattan School of Music, this week-long workshop features lessons, master classes, lectures, concerts and opportunities to jam with musicians from all over the world.

**Faculty:** TBD.

**Cost:** £480 (about \$775).

**Contact:** [summerjazz@cva.ahk.nl](mailto:summerjazz@cva.ahk.nl); [conservatoriumvanamsterdam.nl](http://conservatoriumvanamsterdam.nl).

## KoSA Cuba

Havana, Cuba

**March 7–14**

The KoSA Cuba One-Week Study Program and Fiesta del Tambor allows students of all ages and skill levels to be immersed in Cuban rhythms, music and culture while taking classes in conga, bongo, timbales, bata, drum set and more. Daily activities include workshops, ethnomusicology lectures, cultural trips and nightly concerts.

**Faculty:** Giraldo Piloto and his band Klimax, Julio Lopez Sanchez, Jean Roberto San Cristobal, Panga, Yaroldy Abreu, Adel Gonzales, Oliver Valdez.

**Cost:** Varies depending on package; Full Participants Single-Occupancy Package: \$2,185.

## The MacEwan Summer Jazz Workshop

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

**August 15–20**

The MacEwan Summer Jazz Workshop is designed for students 13-20 years of age who are serious about music. The workshop will provide students with an opportunity to learn, rehearse and perform jazz music in combo and big band formats.

**Faculty:** Grant MacEwan University Music Faculty.

**Cost:** \$395.

**Contact:** Brenda Philp, (780) 497-4303, [philpb@macewan.ca](mailto:philpb@macewan.ca).

## Oberlin Jazz

Arezzo, Italy

**July 4–August 3**

Work and study in small ensemble formats with world-class jazz musicians from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Perform at international venues and gain exposure to a global network of jazz professionals. This camp is open to jazz musicians at the college level including graduating high school seniors. Program participants will study Italian with a complete immersion in the language and culture.

**Faculty:** Billy Hart, Robin Eubanks, Bob Ferrazza and Peter Dominguez.

**Cost:** \$4,000.

**Contact:** [new.oberlin.edu/conservatory/summer/oberlin-in-italy/](http://new.oberlin.edu/conservatory/summer/oberlin-in-italy/).



Twin Cities Jazz Workshop



Stanford Jazz Workshop

### The Phil Dwyer Academy of Musical and Culinary Arts Summer Music Camps

Qualicum Beach, British Columbia, Canada

**July 19-23, 26-30, August 2-6, 9-15**

The Phil Dwyer Academy of Musical and Culinary Arts Summer Music Camp is composed of five week-long camps that include West Coast Jazz, Vocalist Week with Dee Daniels, Adult Week, String Workshop and East Coast Jazz.

**Faculty:** Ingrid Jensen, Phil Dwyer, Christine Jensen, Jon Wikan, Dee Daniels, Ian McDougall, Mark Fewer.

**Cost:** Every camp costs \$650 (Canadian) and \$300 (Canadian) for room and board.

**Contact:** info@pdamca.com; pdamca.com.

### University of Manitoba Summer Jazz Camp

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

**August 5-21**

This week-long summer jazz experience welcomes players of all ages and abilities.

**Faculty:** Steve Kirby, Jimmy Greene, George Colligan, and guests.

**Cost:** \$409 (Canadian) plus GST, subject to change.

**Contact:** Warren Otto, w\_otto@umanitoba.ca, (888) 216-7011 ext. 6037, umanitoba.ca/summer.

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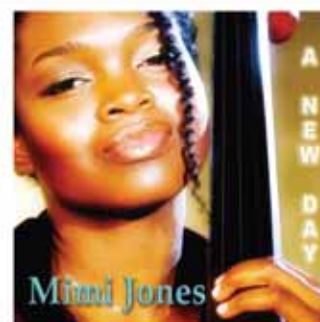
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## A Trumpeter's Virtual Life Model

Brian Groder exists in a virtual world. The trumpeter works in and around New York, but the Internet has expanded his musical reach beyond the city. His measured speech jolts with excitement when talking about MySpace, which connects lesser-known artists with new audiences online. The digital landscape has also given Groder's pedagogical material new life: He offers free downloads of scale studies and motive worksheets on his Web site. Most importantly, the Internet has helped Groder uncover compositional inspiration.

"One of the great things about MySpace is I was able to listen to great jazz and great improvisators from around the world that I had never heard of," Groder said. "Some of them gave me ideas for musical things that I wanted to investigate."

Groder—a skinny man who has more salt than pepper in his hair and sports a tiny soul patch—has been the leader of his own ensemble since 1990, releasing five albums on the homemade imprint Latham Street Records. He grew up on Latham Street in Brooklyn, N.Y., and that's where his musical parents fostered the trumpeter's early love of big band recordings. Now living elsewhere in the city he's called home for most of his life, Groder makes a living composing, teaching and gigging.

All this is accomplished without a major label. Not having the financial support of an established record company has stunted the reach of his music on radio and other traditional circles, but as a musician who only answers to himself, Groder can fully realize his artistic visions. Everything from the design of each release to distribution is in Groder's hands, but that can easily push actual musicianship to the background.

"If you're involved in releasing your own material, sometimes you get removed from the music because you're making phone calls," he said.

Compositionally, Groder also finds inspiration in his students. His educational style is a free exchange of ideas. Young musicians learn from a seasoned player who can provide real-world lessons, and he fields prodding questions about complex work that provide a fresh perspective on the material. "Students have asked questions that made me go, 'Oh wow, I never thought about that,'" he said.



"What's so great about it is it's someone else's mind zeroing in on a concept that you're just not aware of yourself."

The ability to spend time with someone who has put educational concepts into practice is invaluable. When he was gigging in Philadelphia early in his career and performing in Atlantic City show bands in the '80s, experienced horn players helped him develop as an artist. "That was a mentorship; you didn't study that in school," Groder said. "Not all great musicians are teachers, but a lot of them are, and there is a tradition of wanting to pass that on."

Blogs and social networking sites have made it easier for independent musicians to develop an audience and make a living, and Groder sees the Internet fueling even more changes in the way listeners access independent recordings. In the future, the trumpeter would like to see dissemination of new music on a more generalized level. He predicts a move away from segmentation and specific genre classifications.

"When everything is screened and squeezed down into narrow perspectives, the general population doesn't have enough knowledge to know what is being offered," he said.

—Jon Ross



### Chicago Goes West

From across North America comes a unique instrumentation—Chicago Goes West releases their debut trio album. Ten tracks, with compositions from all members: James Davis (trumpet), Nicolas Bédard (bass) and Karl Schwonik (drums).

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### Patricia Lowe Smiling Inside

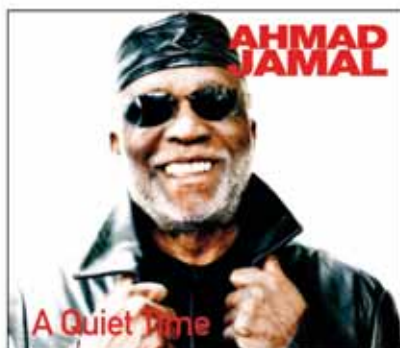
This afro-jazz album, released February 2010, features Patricia Lowe (vocals), Roberto Taufic (electric and acoustic guitar), Stefano Rizzo (double bass), Gilson Silveira (percussion), Alberto Varaldo (chromatic harmonica) and guest appearance from Tony Kofi (sax).

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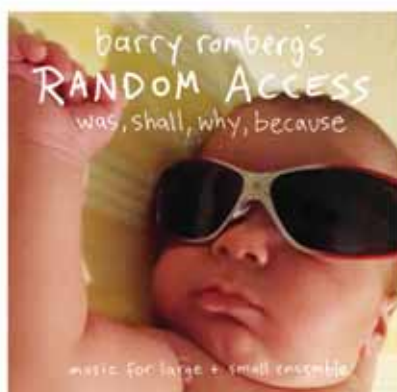
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Fat Cat Big Band

## Fat Cat Big Band Embraces Open Perspective



SAMANTHA MERLEY

Jade Synsteliën

After packing a couple of bags, guitarist Jade Synsteliën drove a 1979 Cadillac Sedan de Ville cross-country from his home in New Mexico to New Paltz, N.Y. He dropped off the car and took a train to Manhattan, where he arrived just months before Sept. 11, 2001. Synsteliën had come of age working as a guitar-for-hire in a variety of bands, but shifted his focus almost exclusively to jazz composition with the goal of leading a big band.

Such a venture was a long shot for someone completely self-taught. But Synsteliën believed his countless gigs served as a substitute for conservatory training. "In that process I learned how to do a lot of different writing," Synsteliën said. "Every kind of formulation you can think of, I worked out a learning experience with these kids that I grew up with."

The big band Synsteliën envisioned would reflect the entire tradition spanning the swing era to the avant-garde. Looking beyond the conventions of jazz, it also would draw from the years he accompanied singers in reggae, ska, funk and Latin bands. Synsteliën assembled the 10-piece Staring into the Sun Orchestra that year at Smalls in Greenwich Village. In 2006 Synsteliën added a bass trombone to the lineup and the band began performing every Sunday at the Fat Cat, another Greenwich Village club. Synsteliën renamed the band the Fat Cat Big Band in tribute to its home base.

Inspired by Duke Ellington, Sun Ra and Charles Mingus, among others, the band now boasts a repertoire of more than 100 original compositions and spotlights young musicians. The compositions and arrangements draw inspiration from everything Synsteliën has ever performed. "The Thing That We Play To As It Goes By" features a reggae beat, while "Meditations On The War For Whose Great God Is The Most High You Are God" sounds

like a Jewish hora. But Synsteliën's compositions typically reflect traditional influences: "F\*ck The Man (Please Vote)," for example, evokes "A Night In Tunisia."

"It's not coming out of the typical mind-set that people associate with big bands nowadays," said Sharel Cassity, the band's alto player. "A lot of people from our generation can relate to it knowing nothing about jazz. It's not refined like someone from a college music program would produce."

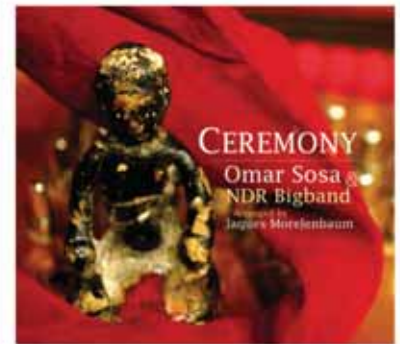
The Fat Cat Big Band issued three albums in 2009 on Luke Kaven's Smalls Records imprint: *Face*, *Angels Praying For Freedom* and *Meditations On The War For Whose Great God Is The Most High You Are God*. Synsteliën plans to release the band's fourth album later this year. The titles of Synsteliën's compositions make light of spiritual and political convictions originating from 1950s and 1960s counterculture.

"I want to end suffering for all human beings and save everybody from death like every other musician," Synsteliën said. "Hopefully, if they're a musician that's what their plan is, because that's the only thing to do with music. Everything else is jive."

Synsteliën decided last fall it was time for the band to take a break from the Fat Cat. The band had become so closely identified with the club that Synsteliën had difficulty booking it elsewhere in New York.

"I'm looking to just get on the road," he said. "To get out of the city and spread this good music to the rest of the United States. I really believe that as musicians and artists it's our job to get everybody listening and paying attention and reading, because if not, everybody's just going to sit there playing with the tech toys and not paying attention to the real important shit."

—Eric Fine



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### Michael Simon *New York Encounter*

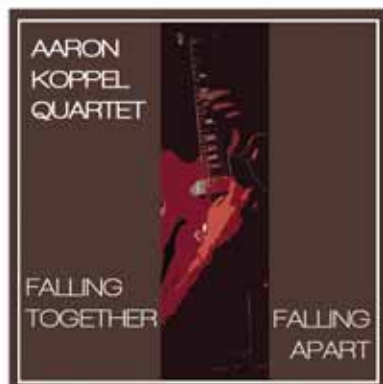
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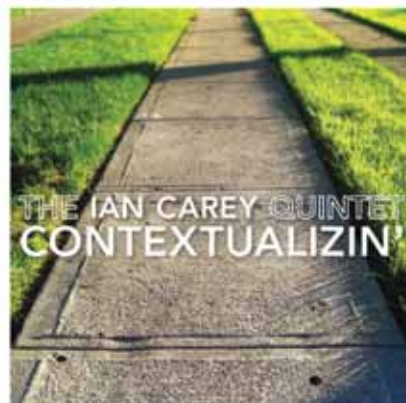
—DownBeat



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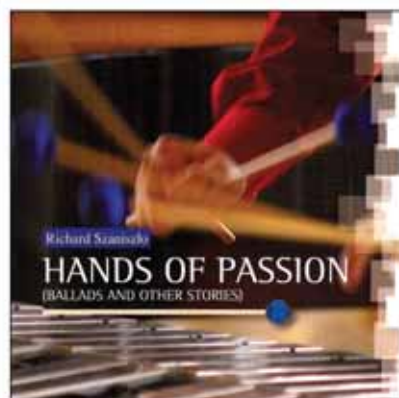
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# Reviews

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## Myra Melford's *Be Bread*

*The Whole Tree Gone*

FIREHOUSE 12 04-01-012

★★★★

With composure and dedication, pianist Myra Melford has steadily expanded and deepened her music since arriving on the scene in the early 1980s. Early studies with Henry Threadgill are still felt down below, in the complex interplay of form and free play, as is a lurking blues base that betrays formative study with Erwin Helfer, but the music is now and has been for quite a while entirely Melford's own, an organic substance imbued with a gentle forthrightness and lack of guile, embracing a kind of basic sonorous melodic impulse that some creative musicians avoid as a matter of course but that she handles with great ease.

On *The Whole Tree Gone*, which follows 2006's *The Image Of Your Body* (Cryptogramophone) as the sophomore release by her working ensemble Be Bread, Melford's music is clearly and expansively unfolded. The group couldn't be more ideally suited to the task. Having collaborated extensively in duo context with Marty Ehrlich, Melford needed a great clarinetist, and she tapped one of today's most in-demand players, reasonably so, the wonderful Ben Goldberg, who can handle any of the many roles required in the pianist's music.

Goldberg likes the natural, un-stressed sound of his instrument, which makes him a nice foil for trumpeter Cuong Vu, who sometimes evokes harsh and abrasive textures, and guitarist Brandon Ross, who doesn't shy away from the dry and the spiky. Followers of Ross and bassist Stomu Takeishi might be surprised to hear them both playing in an all-acoustic chamber jazz setting, but they sound perfectly at home, ever-sensitive drummer Matt Wilson adapting to the low-amp environs. The guitarist saves one of his best solos for disc's end, on "Knocking From The Inside," the album's funkier moment, with dislocated anchoring bass, Goldberg on contra-alto clarinet and Melford punching out a spring-loaded solo.

Melford's compositions, developed over a long period in different contexts, often revel in a temporal layering—slow, arching melodic lines (sometimes startlingly plainspoken) stretch above a more active ground, creating simmering tensions that intensify and disperse. The soloists interact with the backgrounds less in a way of playing "over" them than one of moving in and out, engaging and breaking away, as on the beautiful, eddying "On The Lip Of Insanity" or the radiant "Night." You can hear the leader's interest in Indian music, but in a very subtle way, as an inflection rather than any sort of overt quotation. Melford's strength at the keyboard is clear throughout. She's adept at whorling energy and soft, supportive comping alike—her many faces are all brought to bear on the satisfyingly complete "Moon Bird." —John Corbett

***The Whole Tree Gone:*** Through The Same Gate; Moon Bird; Night; The Whole Tree Gone; A Generation Comes And Another Goes; I See A Horizon; On The Lip Of Insanity; Knocking From The Inside Out. (65:30)

**Personnel:** Myra Melford, piano; Cuong Vu, trumpet; Ben Goldberg, clarinet, contra-alto clarinet; Brandon Ross, guitar, soprano guitar; Stomu Takeishi, acoustic bass guitar; Matt Wilson, drums.

» Ordering info: [firehouse12.com](http://firehouse12.com)



## David Murray

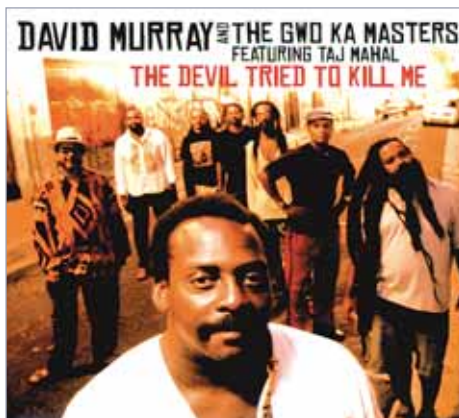
### *The Devil Tried To Kill Me*

JUSTIN TIME 224

★★½

David Murray returns for the third time in a decade or so to the rolling rhythmic roil of the Gwo Ka Masters, a Guadeloupean percussion team that is forever whipping up the music as the blades of a mix master churn dough. The metaphorical yeast is provided mostly by Murray, who has chosen also to shoulder the added weight of ancestor worship in the form of much indigenous chanting and vocalizing. The liner notes make much of Guadeloupe's unique musical heritage. Perhaps, but I suspect such cultural hair-splitting will escape the ears of most listeners for whom it will merely be so much multicultural exoticism. All this may be well and good, but neither good intentions nor authenticity constitute an excuse for diluting the truly interesting Murray, who is not exactly front and center through much of this.

Not that he's always easy or even listenable—"The Devil Tried To Kill Me" gives him little to do but babble and shriek. But between the chants on "Congo" we hear Murray in a



kind of relaxed repose, playing with a tenor timbre that seems to come from some pre-Coltrane place where a warm but urgent sound seemed connected to an age of classic swing and bebop tenors. More than once you may be reminded of Sonny Rollins in his calypso mode slugging away at "St. Thomas" or some other Caribbean theme. Also, "Canto Oneguine" is a swinging little island tune that Murray probes with a playful vigor that lets him stretch out and up into altitudes that make one wonder why he doesn't simply do it the easy way and switch to soprano. Still it is hard not to be

impressed by the sheer muscle by which he projects the tenor so gracefully into distant and unnatural orbits without trading control.

There are a few other vocal cuts worth mentioning (though not in praise), if only because they provide a proscenium for the CD's two guest vocalists. Bluesman-for-all-seasons Taj Mahal offers a bleak and rather undiplomatic essay on Africa that portrays the continent, quite literally, on its deathbed with hope for nothing more than a peaceful demise. Mahal duets with Sista Kee on "Southern Skies," a funky rap against misogyny. Both tracks are repeated in edited versions at the end, supposedly for radio play. Kee also solos on the album's title tune, whose iambic pentameter is seductive but illusory and, as noted, gives Murray nothing to work with. But on the instrumental side, Rasul Siddik proves himself a worthy partner on trumpet to the leader's tenor.

—John McDonough

**The Devil Tried To Kill Me:** Kiama For Obama; Africa; Southern Skies; The Devil Tried To Kill Me; Congo; Canto Oneguine; Southern Skies; Africa. (64:53)

**Personnel:** Rasul Siddik, trumpet; David Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Sista Kee, piano, vocals; Christian Lavisio, Herve Samb, guitars; Jaribu Shahid, electric bass; Renzel Merrit, drums; Klod Kiavue, Francois Ladezeau, ka drums, vocals; Taj Mahal, vocals (2, 3).

» Ordering info: [justin-time.com](http://justin-time.com)

## Arturo O'Farrill

### *Risa Negra*

ZOH 200910

★★★★½

Arturo O'Farrill continues to draw outside and in between the lines of Latin jazz, as he did so hilariously with last year's Claudia Acuña collaboration, *In These Shoes*. Untethered to dogma, the joyful pianist plays fast and loose with genre—literally—refusing to stick to clave or any or other rigidity, yet rarely lapsing into pretentiousness about "new forms." Mostly O'Farrill seems to be just having good fun mixing jazz, classical, rock, Latin and other world beat rhythms, a joy reflected in his punning titles. Compositionally, this album doesn't always live up to its ambitions, but its range of feeling and relaxed melding of traditions makes it appealing, even brilliant at times.

O'Farrill is a "pianistic" player in the best Cuban tradition, not above a grand flourish, and covers the whole keyboard with elegant ease. His tumbling, sparkling solo elevates the opening track, "One Adam 12 Mambo," meant to evoke the mad energy of his son, Adam, when he was younger. But O'Farrill quickly shifts gears, playing silky, sleek lines on Fender Rhodes, on the mysteriously obsessive jazz/rock cut "Goat Check." Furry-toned tenor saxophonist Ivan Renta donates a clever solo on the spirited "Blue State Blues," opening and closing with an allusion to Thelonious Monk's



"Let's Call This," while bassists Ricardo Rodriguez and Boris Kozlov duke it out on acoustic and electric. Alto saxophonist David Bixler delivers the most intriguing track, "The Darkness Is My Closest Friend," a ballad that crosses tender regret with a mournful cry, then blossoms into bluesy medium swing.

The angular, obsessive horn riff and movie-suspenseful atmospherics of "No Way Off" nicely evoke the frustration of being trapped playing on a cruise ship, though the foghorns at the start and finish, no doubt funny at the moment, probably should have been scrubbed (ditto for the ba-a-a-ing that kicks off "Goat Check"—ha-ha). Adam O'Farrill, now 14, steps forward with a nervous horn line of his own, "Crazy Chicken," and solos like a grownup

bopper on it, as well. Rodriguez's bass sounds extraordinarily sweet here. The compositional centerpiece of the album, the two-part "Tabla Rasa" (another punning title, referencing Indian drums meeting Latin rhythms on a blank slate), first evokes a 19th century Cuban salon on a sunny afternoon, parasols and all, with flute and violin, but feels underdeveloped beyond the simple evocation of a mood. Part two, the "Tintal Tintal Deo" (riffing on Dizzy Gillespie's title) stacks tabla rhythms—spoken and played—sarangi-like violin, bravura trumpet and Bollywood drama in a swirl of rhythmic and timbral color that is more structurally sophisticated. Trumpeter Jim Seely's 6/8 funky bopper "Ceviche" struts with sweet simplicity, and O'Farrill closes with a tender solo piano paean to his wife, Alison Deane.

That selfsame Alison plays piano on three tracks and O'Farrill's other son, Zachary, plays drums on his brother's tune. Some family. Wish I could spend some time in *their* living room. But this CD will have to do for now.

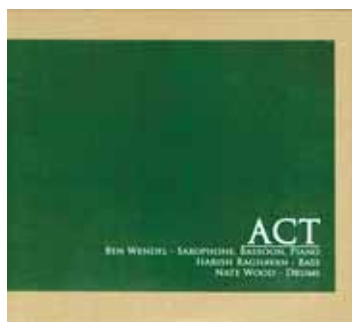
—Paul de Barros

**Risa Negra:** One Adam 12 Mambo; Goat Check; Blue State Blues; The Darkness Is My Closest Friend; No Way Off; Crazy Chicken; Tabla Rasa: El Salon Cubano; Tabla Rasa: Tintal Tintal Deo; Ceviche; Alisonia. (66:48)

**Personnel:** Arturo O'Farrill, piano, Fender Rhodes (2); Alison Deane, piano (5, 7, 8); Jim Seely (1–5, 7–9), Adam O'Farrill (6), trumpet; David Bixler, alto saxophone; Ivan Renta, tenor saxophone (3, 6); Boris Kozlov, acoustic or electric bass (1–5, 9); Ricardo Rodriguez, acoustic bass (3, 6–8); Vince Cherico (1–5, 7–9), Zachary O'Farrill (6), drums; Roland Guerrero, percussion; Badal Roy, tablas (7, 8); Heather Bixler, violin (7, 8); Cecilia Tenconi, flute (7, 8).

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# The HOT Box



## ACT

Act

BJU 011

★★★½

From San Francisco to Boston, a number of scenes are actively nurturing fresh perspectives about improvisation, and the Brooklyn Jazz Underground label is capturing some of that youthful bravado, whether it's borough-centric or not. On this engaging effort, the imprint reaches to L.A. to find the members of the trio ACT test-driving some fertile ideas.

It only takes a few minutes of this debut to clarify just how rousing the group can be. Saxophonist Ben Wendel, drummer Nate Wood and bassist Harish Raghavan (who actually lives in New York) start "News" like they're hurdling towards a village with information about how to prevent a catastrophic attack. Fervor is everywhere, and indeed, it's animation that marks much of the program. Cuing from simple riffs, "Break" and "Act" contain the kind of propulsion that a sax trio needs to grab a listener's lapels. Integration seems paramount to this outfit. There's not a moment when Raghavan isn't feeding a big slab of ideas into the maw of his mates.

All this intricacy is created to serve somewhat simple tunes—another part of the album's charm. "Act," which conjures "The Traveler" by Air, finds a jabbing bass line inspiring a keening horn flourish. Nice contrast. "What Was" is based on a four-note motif, and utilizes bassoon and piano. Its pensive personality telegraphs its origins as part of a suite Wendel is honing for Chamber Music of America.

Similar melodic contours show up on "Oldworld" and "Shamed Into Love." The latter is an Elvis Costello sob story that the trio milks for all the graceful sentiment possible—offering a glimpse into the way they view a traditional ballad maneuver. When combined with the other tracks here (including the bustle through Sonny Rollins' "PentUp House"), it widens their purview and illustrates where their future interests might lie. Intriguing first step, for sure.

—Jim Macnie

**Act:** News; Act; Title; Oldworld; Pentup House; Shamed Into Love; Break; What Was. (52:31)

**Personnel:** Ben Wendel, saxophone, bassoon, piano; Harish Raghavan, bass; Nate Wood, drums.

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CDs ≡	CRITICS »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Myra Melford's Be Bread</b> <i>The Whole Tree Gone</i>		★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★½
<b>ACT</b> <i>Act</i>		★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★
<b>David Murray and the Gwo Ka Masters</b> <i>The Devil Tried To Kill Me</i>		★★½	★★★★½	★★★	★★★
<b>Arturo O'Farrill</b> <i>Risa Negra</i>		★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★½

## Critics' Comments

### Myra Melford's Be Bread, *The Whole Tree Gone*

There's lots of air in this music—between the instruments, between the phrases, and in the sound of the clarinet and the plinky acoustic guitar. And you can't beat Cuong Vu's trumpet smears, Ben Goldberg's crystalline clarinet, or Melford's rambunctious free rumbles. —Paul de Barros

Just as soon as I write that it's the grace of the pianist's pieces that interests me, I find myself leaning toward their skittish nature as well. That could be a best-of-both-worlds deal, but even if it is, there are moments here that seem a bit dry. Sometimes it feels like you have to wait awhile for the action to take place. Or maybe it's just that I really, really like this band's approach to polyphony. —Jim Macnie

Melford concocts eight touchy, restless, unsettled pieces in which exploration and composition intersect in an uneasy but empty tension. A piano-clarinet chase has a certain flinty charm. But stupefying silences and infantile tantrums undermine the music's higher moments of thoughtful civility. —John McDonough

### ACT, *Act*

A very good tenor trio, mostly sans piano. The openness gives Wendel expansive room to move with autonomy without bumping into someone else's comping. His sound has a clean, confident moderation without a speck of sentimentality. Travels easily between choppy mid-Coltrane modes and long, fluent swing lines. Fine bass accompaniment, too. —John McDonough

Three-fifths of Kneebody plays in the classic tenor trio context, sans harmonic instrument, for the most part knocking it out of the park. Slight overdubs unnecessarily add timbre on a couple of tracks. Wendel is fluid and inventive, love that big fat bass sound, and appreciate the weird hay they make with Rollins' "Pentup House." —John Corbett

Flowing freebop tenor with the blunt bray of middle-to-late Coltrane (minus the metallic sound) and some of the meandering, back-of-the-mind ruminations of, say, Threadgill or Ornette. Wendel sounds so comfortable in the skin of the saxophone, exposed before bass and drums only. —Paul de Barros

### David Murray and the Gwo Ka Masters, *The Devil Tried To Kill Me*

Supercharged rhythm vamps are fun, but they don't hold your interest forever. That's why the saxophonist's invitations to vocalists Taj Mahal and Sista Kee are welcome. They help this groove melange go down a lot smoother. Great to see Murray reconnect with Conjure pal Ishmael Reed, too. —Jim Macnie

Gaudeloupean jazz, Caribbean Afropop—it's fun to dance to and Murray can still run circles around most tenor men, particularly up there on the altissimo cliffs. Funny, though, how the old avant-garde claims populist music as its territory now that the mainstream has arrogated jazz as "art." The Ishmael Reed poems sung by Taj Mahal are a nice twist; the Gwo Ka drum masters are somewhat underplayed. —Paul de Barros

In spirit, this reminds me of the classic Conjure records Kip Hanrahan made back in the '80s, replete with Mahal (who sang on them), Ishmael Reed (whose words they were based on) and Murray (who played on them). A little electric harmolodic vibe (with the ever great Jaribu Shahid), gutsy singing (love Sista Kee), and nice blowing by Rasul Siddik and Murray all make for a pleasing ride. —John Corbett

### Arturo O'Farrill, *Risa Negra*

The more energetic material on this cool disc is electric enough that it could jump start a car. I'm less enthralled when the mood gets mellow, but that's relatively rare. Tunes like "Crazy Chicken" have such inherent compositional interest that you could miss the fabulous blowing, but I doubt you will. Weird cultural mash-up with Badal Roy meets with surprising success. —John Corbett

An eager and fiery set of small groups that punch like a big band, due in no small measure to the brass knuckles of Jim Seeley's trumpet. He provides the backbone for O'Farrill's contemporary Latin groove of originals. Also, the leader's son, Adam, only 14, shows precocious trumpet chops on "Crazy Chicken." —John McDonough

It seems like an old-fashioned blowing session (albeit funk-infused), except the tunes are trickier than usual. I could be honing in on the zest born of the obvious camaraderie that the pianist fosters. One thing's certain: The blend of various styles seems cozy in the arms of this brood. —Jim Macnie



## Miguel Zenón

### *Esta Plena*

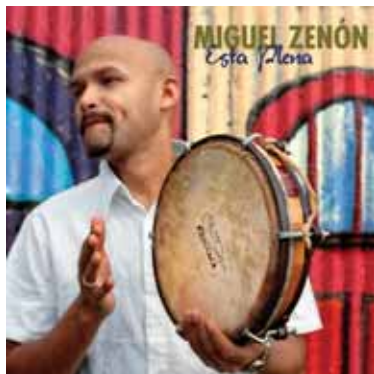
MARSALIS MUSIC 0210064

★★★★★

Miguel Zenón's selection as a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship raised eyebrows, and even more skepticism was cast his way when he was also awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for composition—the first jazz artist to receive both awards during the same year. Given the result, there is no question those fellowships were justified. From the percussive blastoff of “Villa Palmeras” to the last jubilant notes of “Despedida,” *Esta Plena* is a triumph.

The smooth blending of Puerto Rico's plena music—with its oral tradition of “telling the news”—and contemporary jazz is the next step from Zenón's *Jíbara*, introducing lyrics into the saxophonist's standard toolkit. The raw, plaintive voice of Héctor Matos provides a second expressive lead instrument, and the call-and-response with the three-voice chorus adds to the frisson between Zenón's crisply articulated alto and Luis Perdomo's romping, exceptionally percussive, piano parts. Matos, Obanilú Allende and Juan Gutiérrez also add the three hand-held percussion instruments—collectively known as pandero—that are distinctive to plena.

Making those elements work together would



be enough of an accomplishment, but what elevates *Esta Plena* is the amount of variety that Zenón introduces into this fairly tightly defined hybrid form. The title track, for example, shifts between the vocal/pandero combination, choppy piano chords, long tones from Zenón and finally, a spooky mix of the voices that recalls Bill Laswell's

Cuba dub experiments. “Calle Calma” begins with an expressive solo by bassist Hans Glawischnig and then strikes a somewhat languid mood, a powerful contrast against drummer Henry Cole's snare rolls and cymbal crashes. “Villa Coope” looks more toward jazz, mixing Zenón's romantically tinged alto with clanorous piano chords and a rigorous bass line.

What is most obvious through all of this is how assured Zenón sounds—completely in control of both his own instrument and this absorbing new blend of traditions he has created.

—James Hale

**Esta Plena:** Villa Palmeras; Esta Plena; Oyelo; Residencial Llorens Torres; Pandero Y Pagode; Calle Calma; Villa Coope; ¿Qué Será de Puerto Rico?; Progreso; Despedida. (72:12)

**Personnel:** Miguel Zenón, alto saxophone, background vocals; Luis Perdomo, piano; Hans Glawischnig, bass; Henry Cole, drums; Héctor “Tito” Matos, lead vocals, requinto; Obanilú Allende, background vocals, segundo; Juan Gutiérrez, background vocals, seguidor.

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



## Ithamara Koorax/ Juarez Moreira

### *Bim Bom—The Complete João Gilberto Songbook*

MOTEMA 30

★★★

Brazilian singer Ithamara Koorax and guitarist Juarez Moreira marked the 50th anniversary of the bossa nova maestro's seminal 1959 LP *Chega De Saudade* by zeroing in on Gilberto's compositions. The CD continues Motema's “Jazz Therapy” series, benefiting the Dizzy Gillespie Memorial Fund of New Jersey's Englewood Hospital, a godsend to many musicians without health coverage.

Having last heard Koorax's somewhat cluttered ballad album from almost a decade ago, it is a delight to hear compatriot Moreira's nylon strings squeak and hum under her dreamy Portuguese enunciation, in a less synthesized setting. Bossa nova pedants will enjoy liners offering specifics about Gilberto's originals, since he is best known as an interpreter of Jobim, Veloso et al. The whimsy of “Glass Beads” doesn't inspire beard-stroking thoughts of Herman Hesse, more likely rope-skipping; such is the enigma of bossa nova.

The “yada yada” wordless vocals of the brief “João Marcelo,” dedicated to Gilberto's son with Astrud, sparsely trace flute and string passages on the original orchestration while Moreira navigates the harmony. “Valsa,” for Gilberto's daughter Bebel, recalls Bill Evans' “Waltz For Debby,” hopping along with no particular place to go. Moreira plays nimble tribute on one of Gilberto's better known ditties, “Um Abraço No Bonfá.” During Koorax's polite “Minha Saudade” scat she playfully blows some kind of ocarina in place of a phrase, and the duo do a fine job with crystalline readings of “Hô-Bá-Lá-Lá,” the bonus version with English lyrics and electric guitar.

Plenty here for devotees of Brazilian fretwork and pure, bell-clear vocals, but the inquiry might lead you back to the unique triste of Gilberto's own vagabond heart. —Michael Jackson

**Bim Bom—The Complete João Gilberto Songbook:** Bim Bom; Hô-Bá-Lá-Lá; Forgotten Places; Minha Saudade; Você Esteve Com Meu Bem?; Valsa (Bebel); An Embrace To Bonfá; Glass Beads; Joao Marcelo; Undiu; Acapulco; Hô-Bá-Lá-Lá (English version). (41:22)

**Personnel:** Ithamara Koorax, vocals; Juarez Moreira, guitars.

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

## Ben Holmes

### *Ben Holmes Trio*

INDEPENDENT RELEASE

★★★★★

It takes a certain audacity for a trumpeter to make his debut album in the trio setting, but on this killer session New York trumpeter Ben Holmes displays the kind of chops, lyric generosity and clarity that trumps any kind of conceptual daring. Holmes is best known for his affiliations with New York's bustling Balkan and klezmer scenes, including membership in the turbocharged brass band Slavic Soul Party! And while Holmes taps into similar sounds here—including a couple of traditional Eastern European dance and folk tunes—the performances reveal a measured pace that favors patient, melodic extrapolation over frantic, careening velocity.

While the leader's predilection for Eastern European material prompts a certain align-



ment with Dave Douglas' Tiny Bell Trio—which included drummer Jim Black and guitarist Brad Shepik—Holmes, expertly and elegantly supported by bassist Dan Loomis and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza, doesn't tweak nor sensationalize his inspirations. Even when ripping through complex time signatures—like the 11 of the Bulgarian dance

song “Gankino”—the trio emphasizes melody, and Holmes, whether employing a plush, ballad style or a hurtling, rhythmically elaborate fluidity, maintains impressive composure and a full-bodied tone. Despite the deep investment in Eastern European sources, this is jazz through and through.

—Peter Margasak

**Ben Holmes Trio:** Moments Of Recognition; Devil In The Clock; Romanian Folk Song; Gankino; Ballad #1; Jamestown; Lev Tov. (42:48)

**Personnel:** Ben Holmes, trumpet; Vinnie Sperrazza, drums; Dan Loomis, bass.

» Ordering info: [ben-holmes.com](http://ben-holmes.com)

## Violin Breakdown

A frequent sideman for the likes of Béla Fleck and Steve Earle, violinist Casey Driessen has monster chops and an imagination to match. His second recording, *Oog* (Red Shoe 209; 56:15) ★★★★★ twists bluegrass conventions into pretzels, remaking "Conversation With Death" as an amped-up fever dream and feeding Bill Monroe's "Ashland Breakdown" through a sonic blender. What doesn't kill purists makes them stronger. This will put meat on any bones.

**Ordering info:** caseydriessen.com

Eclectica also has strong Flecktones ties, featuring Roy "Futureman" Wooten on drums and vocals and a guest spot by saxophonist Jeff Coffin, but *Streaming Video Soul* (ArtistShare 0068; 53:16) ★★★ reveals that the trio has its feet in the '60s, with musical references to Jimi Hendrix and a sense of wordplay straight out of Frank Zappa. Violinist Tracy Silverman has been playing professionally since 13, and demonstrates a broad spectrum of styles.

**Ordering info:** eclectictheband.com

Spirited and dramatic, *En Homenaje A Astor Piazzolla* (Self-Released; 50:02) ★★★★★ is the product of a Colombian quartet, El Frente, dedicated to the Argentinian tango master's music. No surprise, then, that they play it so well, and with so much zeal. The balance between Manuel López's violin and Alejandro Ruiz's vibes is particularly effective, with Julio Cesar Sierra providing much of the gravitas on piano. Two versions of "Libertango"—one blazing studio take and a slightly more subdued live performance with Rodolfo Mederos on bandoneon—are highlights.

**Ordering info:** mspace.com/elfrentequartet

The influence of piquant violinist Stéphane Grappelli—particularly his work with the Quintette of the Hot Club of France—is so pervasive that there is a cottage industry in Hot Club tribute bands. *Notes Home* (Shandon 002; 56:21) ★★½ illustrates that the trend exists on both sides of the Atlantic. Irishmen David MacKenzie, violin, and Josh Johnston, piano, combine to work through 13 originals inspired by Grappelli and, to a lesser extent, Joe Venuti. While they've learned the style, they add little to what dozens of others have already done.

**Ordering info:** davidandjosh.com

In the studio and onstage, violinist Carla Kihlstedt and pianist Satoko Fujii exhibit impressive chemistry and an ability to range from explosive, atonal bursts to med-

Casey Driessen:  
bluegrass twister



COURTESY CASEY DRIESSEN

itative minimalism. *Kuroi Kawa-Black River* (Tzadik 7720; 50:21/49:43) ★★★★★ combines a studio program of short interactions with long-form improvisations captured live at the 2008 Vancouver Jazz Festival. Even when the duo is thundering hard, nothing seems rushed between them, giving the impression that they are willing to let the music take them—and their audience—to untried places.

**Ordering info:** tzadik.com

While listeners who are attuned to contemporary string ensembles may wish the Quartet San Francisco had a bit more of an edge, *QSF Plays Brubeck* (ViolinJazz 106; 61:10) ★★½ finds some unusual angles inside nine Dave Brubeck compositions, Paul Desmond's "Take Five" and a Christmas standard. Best of all is Matt Brubeck's arrangement of "The Duke," which features gorgeous harmony and stirring counterpoint.

**Ordering info:** violinjazz.com

Remember when fusion music was underplayed rather than overblown and jazz-rock pioneers like Chick Corea and John McLaughlin reflected their appreciation of Miles Davis' sense of dynamics? Transplanted Dane Mads Tolling may not be 30 yet, but on *The Playmaker* (Madsman 01; 60:51) ★★★★★ he exhibits a restraint that would've been at home in Corea's original *Return To Forever*. Oh, yeah, he can also play a nasty version of Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog." With dedications to superstar musicians and sports heroes—as well as stars like Stanley Clarke and Stefon Harris in featured spots—Tolling is nothing if not eclectic. His second recording marks him as someone to watch.

**Ordering info:** madstolling.com

DB

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## VINYL

by Bob Gendron

### Impulsive Propositions

Chad Kassem seemed crazy when he began Acoustic Sounds in 1986 with the purpose of focusing on vinyl. Yet the Louisiana native's staunch belief in the then-fading format proved prophetic. Kassem foresaw the current analog resurgence that's being driven in part by audiophile reissues such as those released on his proprietary Analogue Productions label. Limited to 2,500 copies, these Impulse! classics signify some of the best-sounding—and, at \$50 each, pricey—records you may ever hear.

A model of economic scale and methodical purpose, Oliver Nelson's *The Blues And The Abstract Truth* (A5; 36:24) ★★★★★ is a can't-miss proposition. The 1961 set's compositions thematically play off the standard 12-bar blues structure. Mirroring the sketched-out designs, everything is in the right place. And on the lively 45RPM, the pristine detail of the melodic tapestry is portrayed with immaculate transparency and three-dimensional richness. Paul Chambers' bass moves with the dependable accuracy of a pendulum; the natural decay of Roy Haynes' drumming places you in the studio.

Bold, immediate and massive, the sonic effect on Charles Mingus' *Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus* (AS-54; 42:16) ★★★★★ is akin to hosting a chamber ensemble in your living room. Alternating between sultry, meditative ballads and hard-swinging, joyous romps, the music swarms the senses. Still, the sense of instrumental imaging and separation holds firm even for the wildest passages. Mingus' bass takes on life-size proportions, flush with resonance, woodiness and grain. Jaki Byard's piano re-entrance during "Better Get Hit In Yo' Soul" now takes a more extended stroll through the French Quarter.

John Coltrane's *Coltrane* (A-21; 46:58) ★★★★★ is more noteworthy for its historical import—the first studio album made with the all-star quartet of Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison, and Elvin Jones—than its material. Not to diminish the stature of the breathless (and aptly titled) "Out Of This World" and graceful "Soul Eyes." Or the immersive sound, which peers inside the piano's body, around the edges of Jones' hi-hat and snare hits, and within the sheets of the saxophonist's phrasing. It's just that better Coltrane outings exist.

Inspired by Acoustic Sounds, Music Matters has embarked on what it deems the "Definitive 45RPM Blue Note Reissue



Oliver Nelson:  
purposeful blues

Series." They are also gorgeously packaged and expensive.

Tina Brooks' *Back To The Tracks* (84052, 38:15) ★★★★★—recorded in 1960 but shelved until issued by Mosaic in 1985—receives the treatment afforded a fluid hard-bop album replete with mellifluously blended unison horns and sumptuous tonal colors. Brooks allows his mates plenty of openings, and trumpeter Blue Mitchell seizes on the compositions' r&b flavors. Here's a production so sublime that the pace of the music doesn't sound recorded; instead, it comes across pure, unfettered, live.

Richard Davis' rigid bowing, Bobby Hutcherson's percussive vibraphones, and the overall low-end definition on Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* (84163, 42:04) ★★★★★ are reason enough to warrant attention. But then there's Dolphy's playful blowing, Suesian language, and streaking flute lines, which engage in call-and-response games with trumpeter Freddie Hubbard on the liberating "Gazzelloni." Surreal sonics—Davis' undulating notes aren't just heard but felt, and it's possible to surmise the gauge of his strings—round out a freewheeling trip.

Because it was recorded in concert, Kenny Dorham's *'Round About Midnight At The Café Bohemia* (1524, 56:22) ★★★★★ is more upfront and pronounced yet not nearly as tightly focused or revealing as many Music Matters pressings. The headliner's trumpet flights soar, though, with "Round About Midnight" exhaling with the warm soul of a human being. Yet the stand-out is Kenny Burrell, whose creamy solos and rhythmic chords dart in and out of the pulsing arrangements with daring, rarified elegance.

DB

Ordering info: [acousticsounds.com](http://acousticsounds.com); [musicdirect.com](http://musicdirect.com)

## Terry Clarke

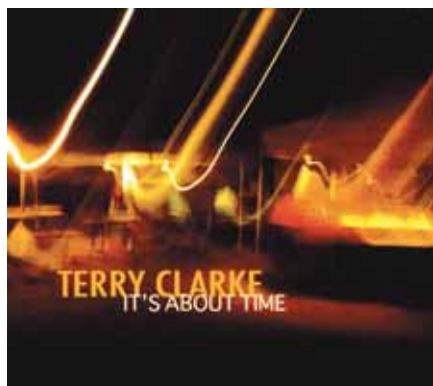
### *It's About Time*

BLUE MUSIC GROUP 7023

★★★★½

*It's About Time* is a remarkable example of group interplay. *It's About Time* is rhythm section plus three saxophonists, each individually parceled out over seven tunes. It is because the rhythm section is so tight, so capable of musical e.s.p., that the rotating of horns in this live recording is almost seamless, regardless of the material being played.

Veteran drummer Terry Clarke is the epitome of taste and one hell of a musical facilitator. Each song is unique unto itself, a kind of stand-alone musical universe, but when heard back to back, *It's About Time*, his first as a leader, works as a total musical statement. There are the solos, different rhythms, moods, all the usual props that make for a jazz event. What makes *It's About Time* stand out, though, is the way the rhythm section (which also includes guitarist Jim Hall, on four cuts here, and bassist/pianist Don Thompson) infiltrates and



animates the music around the successive visits of tenorists Joe Lovano (two songs) and Phil Dwyer (three), and altoist Greg Osby (two).

And while the horns give lots of color to these seven songs, the others more than get into the act with solos of their own.

Clarke's sprint on Lovano's "Feel Free" and the intro to McCoy Tyner's spirited, swinging "Passion Dance" are examples of composure mingling with fire, while Hall's inventive, fun exercises on his "Say Hello To Calypso" become a study in how to take simple fragments and build something that's both creative and very engaging (the audiences, across three different concerts stretching back to 2000, sound lively and engaged as well). Thompson, who mostly plays bass but surprises with some very fine piano down the stretch (the end of "Passion Dance" leading into a rueful rubato reading of his "Days Gone By"), plays with the rhythms (calypso-style on "Say Hello," swinging on Dwyer's "Flanders Road"), soloing here and

there to great affect.

Each horn player has his own style, of course, but from track to track each fits well with this band, whether it's in a more free style (Lovano on "Feel Free"), open-ended swing (Dwyer on "Flanders Road") or edgy/lyrical (Osby on "All The Things You Are" and sounding very tenorish on "In A Sentimental Mood"). With Dwyer and Osby, the band takes it out in an smooth way, starting with "Days Gone By" on through to the end, finishing the show on an unconventional, strictly cool note (Hall is otherworldly). It's as if the group were saying, "Come closer, now that we've met." It's an exquisite gesture.


It stands to reason that *It's About Time* should sound so good, considering that Clarke, Hall and Thompson "go way back," and that this album is simply an excellent example of, what Clarke intends in his own liner notes, "good no-holds-barred jazz with good people." It's jazz that happens to include three special horn players as well.

—John Ephland

***It's About Time:*** Feel Free; Say Hello To Calypso; Flanders Road; Passion Dance; Days Gone By; In A Sentimental Mood; All The Things You Are. (77:56)

**Personnel:** Terry Clarke, drums; Joe Lovano (1, 2), Phil Dwyer (3, 4, 5), tenor saxophone; Greg Osby (6, 7), alto saxophone; Jim Hall (1, 2, 6, 7), guitar; Don Thompson, bass, piano.

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










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## Myron Walden

### *Momentum*

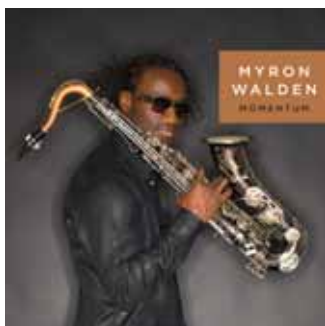
DEMI SOUND BSR0003

★★★★½

Another tribute to Miles Davis' 1960s quintet?

You would be excused if that were your first reaction to saxophonist Myron Walden's first recording in four years. One of three discs Walden will release before this spring, *Momentum* is the first to document his switch to tenor from alto—a move he says will allow him to play all the sounds he's hearing in his head.

The influence of Davis' quintet is unmistakable. "Pulse," "Miles" and "Longing" all adopt the familiar Fender Rhodes-dominated atmospherics of *Filles De Kilimanjaro* and *Miles In The Sky*, with drummer Kendrick Scott stirring up a storm with his best Tony Williams impression and Walden joining trumpeter Darren Barrett in playing oblique, unison lines. But Walden doesn't fall into the trap of cleaving too slavishly to the object of his devotion. Rather than trying to re-create the sound of the quintet, he uses the language for his own form of expression. "Of Three Worlds" takes off like a fast train, with Barrett showing that he's closer



in execution and tone to Freddie Hubbard than Davis. Likewise, "Carnage" and "What Goes Up Must Come Down" are more akin to hard bop, with Barrett and Walden carving crisp lines over the hustling tempo set by Scott and bassist Yasushi Nakamura. Rather than sounding like imitation, combining David Bryant's Rhodes and

the fleet leads creates an interesting cross-breed.

Walden's conversion to tenor has allowed him to explore broader sonic territory, and add texture. On the mid-tempo "The Road Ahead" he creates high contrast with Barrett's trumpet by employing an exceptionally grainy sound, while his sax stands broad shouldered in the midst of swirling atmospherics and shifting time on the intriguing "Like A Flower Seeking The Sun."

—James Hale

**Momentum:** Of Three Worlds; The Road Ahead; Pulse; Vision Of A Visionary; Miles; When Time Stood Still; What Goes Up Must Come Down; Longing; Like A Flower Seeking The Sun; Memories; Carnage; When Time Stood Still. (54:35)

**Personnel:** Myron Walden, tenor and soprano saxophones, bass clarinet; Jon Cowherd, piano; Mike Moreno, acoustic and electric guitars; Yasushi Nakamura, bass; Obed Calviare, drums.

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



## Terell Stafford/ Dick Oatts Quintet

### *Bridging The Gap*

PLANET ARTS 330974

★★★★½

*Bridging The Gap*, the title of the collaboration between veteran alto saxophonist Dick Oatts and trumpeter-flugelhornist Terell Stafford, sounds like a mission statement. Are the two well-traveled musicians, whose bright tones and dazzling technical skills handily complement each other, striving to cross the divide between heady, ambitious post-bop and audiences that, according to recording-industry stats, are increasingly immune to the pleasures of that sound? Or does the title refer to the co-leaders' connection with rising-star twentysomethings Gerald Clayton, Ben Williams and Rodney Green?

Whatever the case may be, the quintet turns in music that's deceptively breezy, beginning with the title track, its unison and harmony melody seeming to hint simultaneously at vintage West Coast cool and old-school hard bop. Oatts wrote that tune and five others here, including the pretty ballad "Salvador's Space," its melody first warmly embraced by Stafford's flugelhorn, with Oatts joining in the second time through. The saxophonist also penned "JCO Farewell," a spacious, fusion-tinged tribute to his late father, saxophonist and music educator Jack Oatts. Soul jazz is here, too, with Oatts' album-closing "The 6/20/09 Express." And Stafford nods to Woody Shaw on his quick, start-stopping "Time To Let Go," which closes with a mini-showcase for drummer Green.

Williams, winner of the 2009 Thelonious Monk International Bass Competition, shows serious chops and fertile improvisational ideas on his brief "Ben's Beginning." And dynamic pianist Clayton threatens to steal the show on several occasions, including his extended introduction to "Meant For You" and his rangy, perceptive solo on "Three For Five," followed by another bout of sophisticated trap-set wizardry from Green. Weak links? None here.

—Philip Booth

**Bridging The Gap:** Bridging The Gap; Time To Let Go; Meant For You; Three For Five; Salvador's Space; I Love You; JCO Farewell; Ben's Beginning; The 6/20/09 Express. (58:13)

**Personnel:** Terell Stafford, trumpet, flugelhorn; Dick Oatts, alto saxophone; Gerald Clayton, piano; Ben Williams, bass; Rodney Green, drums.

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

## Jacám Manricks

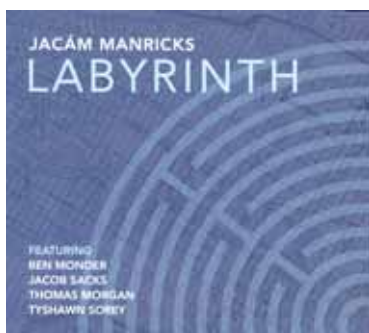
### *Labyrinth*

MANRICKS MUSIC RECORDS

★★★★

An impressive collection of pieces from New York-based Australian multi-instrumentalist/professor Jacám Manricks, *Labyrinth* creeps into your ears with a stealthy sketch, half written, half improvised. Ben Monder drop-shadows the leader's mellifluous alto as bassist Morgan tip-toes and Jacob Sacks scurries the breadth of the keys, with a floating touch reminiscent of Matthew Shipp.

The brevity of the opener indicates Manricks' level of intentionality. On "Micro-Gravity," gorgeously poised saxophone heralds the martial snare of Tyshawn Sorey, expanding to full chamber palette. The orchestral scope of Manricks' writing is revealed on this Schoenberg-influenced piece, so too hints of shape-shifting M-Base studies. Greg Osby or Steve Coleman's mercurial concepts and deployment of ostinatos underpinning challenging melody lines are hinted at during the title track. Respite from this beautifully contoured but inevitably enervating track (successions of fourths and seconds have their effect) is the lovely ballad "Move." Here Sacks' piano figure



is the fulcrum for the first section, later rhapsodising over mallets and cymbals in an undulating refrain before classy soprano investigations ensue over acoustic guitar.

On "Cloisters," Monder gets to crank and Manricks throws some grit into the alto's upper register before settling back into the ensemble on flute. More

martial beats underscore "March & Combat," an ambitious, sectioned piece inspired by Ravel and Gil Evans. Manricks' meditative, concentrated thought processes distill in "Rothko," a 12-tone experiment featuring Monder's cavernously reverberant guitar set against pointillistic piano, evocative of the somber intensity of the painter's work. The absence of hornplay here underlines the leader's seriousness as a composer beyond the confines of genre perception.

—Michael Jackson

**Labyrinth:** Portal; Micro-Gravity; Labyrinth; Move; Cloisters; Aeronautics; March & Combat; Rothko. (65:85)

**Personnel:** Jacám Manricks, alto, soprano saxophones, flute, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, shells; Jacob Sacks, piano; Ben Monder, electric and acoustic guitars; Thomas Morgan, acoustic bass; Tyshawn Sorey, drums. Chamber orchestra (tracks 2, 7): Laura Arpiainen, Ann Marie Bermont, Kiku Enomoto, Garry Ianco, Brooke Quiggins, violins; Marla Hansen, viola; Maria Jeffers, cello; Annie Margoles, French horn.

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

## Lone Star State of Mind

**Long John Hunter: *Looking For A Party* (Blues Express 0008; 44:59)**

★★★½ Approaching 80, Hunter may not sing with the plenary powers of younger days—*Ooh Wee Pretty Baby* collects his wild singles of the 1960s and *Ride With Me* was one of the best albums of the 1990s—but the Texan still retains much of the authority that's long characterized his guitar work: His articulation gives every note emotional weight. For the new album, label boss Dan Bacon was smart to go to the superior songwriting team of Dennis Walker and Alan Mirikitani, sign up Walker as producer and hire the premier sidemen on the West Coast: rhythm guitarist Mirikitani, bassist Richard Cousins, drummer Lee Spath and pianist-organist Jim Pugh. "Apple Of My Eye," a jump-blues with horns, is a real triumph of feeling and style, while a second highlight, "Me And Phil," chronicles Hunter's long-lasting friendship with guitarist Phillip Walker.

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

**Arthur Adams: *Stomp The Floor* (Delta Groove 135; 46:46) ★★★★★** Adams has been at the center of the Los Angeles blues hub since relocating from Dallas in the mid-'60s; he's written songs for the likes of B. B. King and Quincy Jones and played guitar for Nina Simone. This album, his seventh solo release since 1972, affirms the soulfulness and savoir-faire of a musician capable of integrating blues, r&b and jazz with complete ease. Adams' "kickin' back" guitar playing—imagine George Benson, Phil Upchurch and King wrapped together—and singing, reminiscent of Chicago bluesman Jimmy Johnson's, distinguish original tunes that generally have strong melodies and well-observed lyrics revealing his belief in human decency ("Callin' Heaven") and the triumph of love ("So Sweet").

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

**Andrew "Jr. Boy" Jones: *Gettin' Real* (Electro-Fi 3415; 48:12) ★★★★★½** Gifted with facility on guitar and sporting a decent voice, Jones serves notice here that since leaving Charlie Musslewhite's band in 1996 he has developed into one of the leading proponents of modern blues. Exciting without any testosterone bluster, he poses an intense, self-searching confessional with

Long John Hunter: emotional authority



BLUES EXPRESS

"Hell In My House" and puts a smile on a listener's face for the quick-passing 4-minute instrumental version of Wilson Pickett's "Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You." On "Don't Get It Twisted," he keeps his impeccable cool despite his lady "smelling like another man's cologne."

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

**Hamilton Loomis: *Live In England* (Hamilton 106; 72:48) ★★½** Loomis and his Gulf Coast-based band entertain in Oxford and Liverpool clubs with agreeable original tunes that mix blues, r&b and rock. This singer-guitarist-harmonica player was a friend of Bo Diddley and delivers "Who Do You Love" in homage. But what's lacking throughout the album is inspiration; Stratton Doyle blasting away on sax in "What It Is" comes closest.

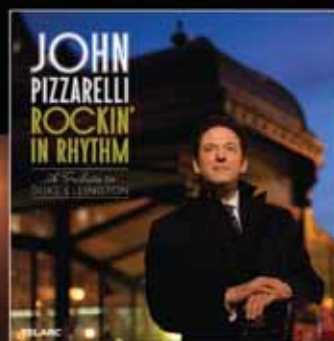
Ordering info: [hamiltonloomis.com](http://hamiltonloomis.com)

**Texas Slim: *Driving Blues* (Top Cat 4092; 51:13) ★★★** Robin "Texas Slim" Sullivan's guitar playing is trademarked by a passionate sound and a stylistic base of fellow Texans Stevie Ray Vaughan, Freddie King and Johnny Winter. Slim has a sure sense of pitch-bending and turns up the burners with measured control. He gets passing grades as a singer, though some gravel-mouthed affectation and overstraining can be heard. The Dallas native moves with professional agility from all-original blues to Chuck Berry-type rock to blues-rock. "Cool With The Flow," of the latter idiomatic style, entertains best.

DB

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

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## Randy Sandke

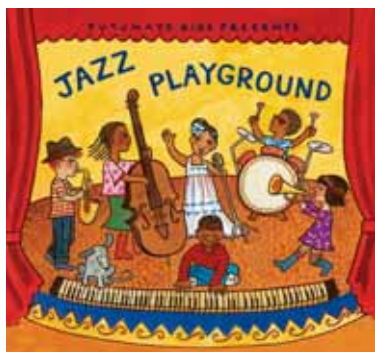
**Jazz For Juniors**  
ARBORS RECORDS 19385  
★★★★

## Various Artists

**Jazz Playground**  
PUTUMAYO KIDS 299  
★★★★

Solid jazz-for-kids albums—those that hold the attention of young folks for longer than one song and don't make parents want to cram Play-Doh into their ears—come along every so often. Trumpeter Randy Sandke organizes *Jazz For Juniors* around “a story told in words, pictures and songs about some lovable animals ... and their love of jazz!” The children's music division of the Putumayo World label serves up *Jazz Playground* with the claim of being “committed to introducing children to other cultures through music from around the world.”

Sandke wrote thoughtful words and swinging music that introduces jazz instruments to small fry in a fun way without condescension or silliness. Allan Harris sparkles as the friendly singer-narrator responsible for recounting how the animals/instruments go about forming a band. It's one fine jazz menagerie: songbird,



blues. Beyond the music, the narrative concerns human qualities like friendship and pride. In sum, this delightful album is ideal for playing at home and in classrooms.

The *Jazz Playground* compilers apparently hop-scotched around the planet to collect tracks; they've found serious proponents of children's music—Holland's Trapperdetrap and Japan's Modern Conya, among others) as well as committed jazz performers, like U.S. singer Barbara Morrison and Cuban-American vocalist Jose Conde, who are amenable to entertaining young folks as a sideline from their regular endeavors. Most of the music here is unobtrusively pleasant for listeners of all ages. More than that is Vermont band Lewis Franco & the Missing Cats' stirring acoustic string jazz update of the

vocalist Carolyn Leonhart; giraffe, guitarist Howard Alden; hippo, trombonist Wycliffe Gordon; and more. Sandke's fantasia happily culminates in “Jazz Variations on ‘This Little Light Of Mine,’” an extended survey of Latin jazz, Dixieland, big-band swing, spirituals, ragtime, bebop, hard bop, modal and free-jazz and the

1940s group called The Cats and a Fiddle; Franco's guitar solo on their old tune “Stomp, Stomp,” in fact, sounds like the resurrection of Tiny Grimes. Also special: eccentric Australian big band Kinderjazz's creative arrangement and execution of “Gazooba,” and South African singer-guitarist Selloane's striking blend of soulfulness and sweetness, on African-American folk song “Shortnin' Bread.”

Ah, if only *Playground*, a mere half-hour long, had included samplings from Phil Woods' recent *The Children's Suite* and Ezra Weiss' equally fine *Alice In Wonderland* jazz musical album.  
—Frank-John & Ayla Hadley

**Jazz For Juniors:** 30 tracks, from “Tiger Text” to “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” (49:04)

**Personnel:** Randy Sandke, trumpet; Wayne Escoffery, tenor sax; Wycliffe Gordon, trombone; Ted Rosenthal, piano; John Riley, drums; Allan Harris, Carolyn Leonhart, vocals; Jay Leonhart, bass; Ken Peplowski, clarinet; Howard Alden, guitar; Chuck Wilson, flute.

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

**Jazz Playground:** Stomp, Stomp; Spider-man; Cumbamba; Sur Le Pont D'Avignon; Little Lamb Jam; Gazooba; Sing A Song Of Sixpence Zuignapje; Shortnin' Bread; Agree And Disagree; Dois Meninos; Oyatsu No Jikan; This Little Light Of Mine. (31:29)

**Personnel:** Lewis Franco & the Missing Cats (1); Chris McKhool (2); Jose Conde (3); Triocephale (4); Oran Etkin & Charenee Wade (5); Kinderjazz (6); Barbara Morrison (7); Trapperdetrap (8); Selloane with Famoro Diobate (9); The Mighty Buzzniks (10); Gui Tavares (11); Modern Conya (12); Ingrid Lucia (13).

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



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### PABLO ASLAN Tango Grill

[JMR 201003]  
Recorded in Buenos Aires [by New York-based bassist and tango-jazz pioneer Pablo Aslan], *Tango Grill* reinvents eleven 20th century tango classics on the fly. The result is tradition with a razor's edge. With guests Nestor Marconi, bandoneon; Daniel Piazzolla, drums.

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### NILSON MATTÁ'S BRAZILIAN VOYAGE Copacabana

[JMR 201002]  
Bassist Nilson Matta presents his stellar new quintet featuring saxophonist Harry Allen and flutist Anne Drummond. In nine originals and Brazilian standards, Matta celebrates the breezy airs and pulsating Samba, Bossa Nova, and Baiao rhythms of his homeland with astonishing virtuosity and soul.



### PABLO MENENDEZ & MEZCIA I'll See You in Cuba

[JMR 201001]  
*I'll See You in Cuba* re-introduces one of the most significant Cuban fusion bands to North America! Guitarist Pablo Menendez, born in Oakland, but living in Cuba, is one of the most influential figures in contemporary Afro-Cuban jazz. Mezcia (“Mix”) has been a powerful presence in the Havana clubs scene for 25 years.



### CARLOS BARBOSA-LIMA Merengue

[JMR 200911]  
*Merengue* features virtuosic acoustic guitar solo and ensemble pieces by Villa-Lobos, Brouwer, Jobim, and Barrios in Latin jazz-inflected arrangements. Guests: harmonica ace Hendrik Meurkens, and percussionist Duduka Da Fonseca. “Barbosa-Lima is a Brazilian national treasure ... his playing ... is absolutely divine and full of subtle surprises.” —All About Jazz



### ARTURO O'FARRILL Risa Negra

[JMR 200911]  
With *Risa Negra* (“Black Laughter”), 2009 GRAMMY winner O'Farrill and his multi-cultural sextet from the Caribbean, Midwest, Latin America, Russia, and India define exciting, contemporary Latin Jazz for the 21st century. Guests: Badal Roy, tablas, and Arturo's sons Zach (17), drums, and Adam (14) trumpet.



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

[JMR 200908]  
*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!



## Surrender To Good News

**Various Artists, *Fire In My Bones* (Tompkins Square 2271; 79:45/78:52/77:53) ★★★★★½** The subtitle "Raw & Rare and Otherworldly African-American Gospel (1944-2007)" tells us that Mike McGonigal's compilation of 80 tracks dares to be different from other collections. Nearly all of these sacred steel guitarists, harmonica players, sermonizing ministers, fife and drum bands, vocal groups and soloists are complete unknowns who recorded their heart-driven, blues-connected offerings for regional labels, radio or folklorists. The quality of the supercharged music stays at a high level all the way. Rejoice to the sacred sounds of singer Little Axe (a woman posing as a man) and one-man-band Abner Jay and the Mosby Family Singers, all clamoring for the Maker's approval. These soldiers for the Lord have gone to their heavenly reward but thanks to this blockbuster set they are no longer forgotten here in the temporal world. Bless them.

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

**The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir: *Declare Your Name* (Integrity 47302; 65:12) ★★★★★**

Grand is the word to describe the worshipping of this 180-voice juggernaut-for-Jesus, active since the early 1980s, with 27 albums released to the tune of four million-plus sales. At their home church last June, the regulars welcomed four consecrated guest singers, including Israel Houghton, and a sleek r&b-pop band into the fold. Strings added later. The singers exalt to seventh heaven with original songs of praise like "I Surrender" until mid-concert, when the soaring slacks some and a pop sweetness takes hold of the material.

Ordering info: [brooklyntabernacle.org](http://brooklyntabernacle.org)

**Various Artists: *Shoutin' Down The Aisles* (Time Life/Sony 24917; 77:11/76:11) ★★★★★** Thirty modern-day gospel artists deliver delirious invocations while under the sway of their Lord. From the blues sass of Candi Staton and Dottie Peoples ("Shut Up And Start Praying") to the funk-inflected approach of Fred Hammond ("Jesus Be A Fence Around Me"), everyone comes by their conviction naturally. Nice surprise: H. E. Dixon and two other vocal group leaders give samples of the undervalued Low Country gospel style of the South Carolina coast. The devil's work? Contrived, garish

Smokie Norful:  
transcendent  
energy



CLAY PATRICK MCBRIDE

pop production swamps several tracks.

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

**Shirley Smith: *In Hymn I Trust* (The Sirens Records 5017; 40:28) ★★★★★**

Supported by an organist and a drummer, singer-pianist Smith shouts out new gospel and classic hymns with such resonant enthusiasm that there's no doubting the claim of the clever album title. Mel Gibson would relish the vivid imagery of "I Know It Was The Blood." In the studio, she harmonizes three vocal parts.

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

**Smokie Norful: *Live* (EMI 50999; 74:49) ★★★★★**

The singing preacher is a spectacular concert energizer with an understanding of emotive manipulation and how to deliver the messages of transcendent psalms like "Jesus Is Love" to faithful followers at the Cannon Center in Memphis, Tenn. Songs further burst their seams with testifying back-up singers and a contemporary r&b band. Seeing is believing; the accompanying DVD runs 90 minutes.

Ordering info: [smokienorfulministries.org](http://smokienorfulministries.org)

**Soweto Gospel Choir: *Grace* (Shanachie 66043; 69:33) ★★★★★½**

Singing in English, Zulu and Sotho, 26 of the most stirring church singers in Johannesburg's Soweto township celebrate their God and universalism on the best of their five albums. Solo singing and harmonies, laden with feeling, are as attractively colorful as the dashiki and long-sleeved boubou they wear. Aside from rusted-out "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" and stiff "Ave Maria," the lineup of African and American gospel songs is impressive. "Ingoma" makes glorious connections with Jim Pepper's Native American music. **DB**

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



### ABDULLAH IBRAHIM BOMBELLA

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ABDULLAH IBRAHIM



## Nellie McKay

### Normal As Blueberry Pie: A Tribute to Doris Day

VERVE B0013218

★★★★

Coming from a performer of such quirky charm and outspoken views, Nellie McKay's elegant understatement and control as a singer can catch you by surprise. Like Doris Day, whose artistry (and animal activism) the aggressively eclectic 27-year-old salutes on *Normal As Blueberry Pie*, she has an unerring ability to tread lightly on a lyric while enlivening it with personality.

But as impressive as McKay is as a vocalist, it's her offbeat, sometimes outlandish approach as a conceptualist and arranger that makes *Normal As Blueberry Pie* special. Rummaging through a musical toy chest for her first bona fide jazz album, she concocts a trio of French horn, ukelele and bells for a winsome reading of "Send Me No Flowers." She employs Native American-style flutes and hand drum on a culturally minded reading of "Black Hills Of Dakota," and bells and tambura on a daydreamy "The Very Thought Of You." And then there is her most audacious stroke: staging "I Remember You" as an eerie shipboard melodrama with synth foghorn, mellotron strings and steel drum effects.



No less lively when she's playing things straight, McKay swings with authority with pianist Bob Dorough on his jaunty arrangement of "Close Your Eyes" and warmly remakes Day's big band breakthrough, "Sentimental Journey," with Charles Pillow on tenor and oboe. With girlish delight, she shakes the nostalgia from "Crazy Rhythm" and "Do

Do Do," while pining for innocent times on her own alluring "If I Ever Had A Dream." Noticeably absent from the album, which McKay produced with her mother, Robin Pappas, is "Que Sera, Sera." Her decision to bypass Day's popular signature tune, covered by such artists as Sly Stone and Holly Cole, tell you that however kooky she gets, she plays by no one's rules but her own.

—Lloyd Sachs

**Normal As Blueberry Pie: A Tribute To Doris Day:** The Very Thought Of You; Do Do Do; Wonderful Guy; Meditation; Mean To Me; Crazy Rhythm; Sentimental Journey; If I Ever Had A Dream; Black Hills Of Dakota; Dig It; Send Me No Flowers; Close Your Eyes; I Remember You. (43:55)

**Personnel:** Nellie McKay, vocals, piano, organ, ukelele, synthesizer, mellotron, bells, tympani, tambura; Bob Dorough, piano; Jay Berliner, guitar; Jay Anderson, bass; Clarence Penn, drums; Charles Pillow, tenor saxophone, oboe; Glenn Drewes, trumpet; John Allred, trombone; Lawrence Feldman, clarinet, flute; David Weiss, flute; Sharon Moe, French horn; Cenovia Cummings, violin; Paolo Perre, Kevin Rennard, Lucas Steele, vocals.

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



## Gerald Wilson Orchestra

### Detroit

MACK AVENUE 1049

★★★½

High school years at Cass Tech in Detroit left a soft spot in Gerald Wilson's heart for that city. This is his valentine to Detroit, not a suite but a series of sketches. The titles and dedications may link to the Motor City, but the music is consistent with contemporary Gerald Wilson. He uses his Los Angeles band on all selections except "Aram," which is left to his New York auxiliary headed by Jon Faddis. The results are mixed, with solos far outweighing the writing.

Violinist Yvette Devereaux is a worthy addition to the Wilson brood. Her tangy contributions, like on "Belle Island Blues," bring to mind Ray Nance's soulful fiddling. Though a vigorous blues, "Belle Isle" is emblematic of so much of the album: long rhythm section vamps punctuated by orchestral turnarounds and shout choruses. Some of the best writing is the dense pastel scrim on "Detroit," but as a piece and a Kamasi Washington tenor feature, it's rather limp. The crisp waltz "Aram" (first heard on *Portraits*, 1963) is one of the standout numbers.

"Miss Gretchen" does what Wilson does best: orchestral swing. The horns riff throughout, and their voicings are thick and full of color. The tune's movements offset each other, and the harmonies draw on Billy Strayhorn. No Wilson program would be complete without a bullfight piece. "Before Motown" has a compelling progression, and Bobby Rodriguez installs himself into the Wilson pantheon of great *corrida* jazz trumpeters. Brian O'Rourke's solo, built of block chords and flourishes, is equally impressive.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Detroit:** Blues On Belle Isle; Cass Tech; Detroit; Miss Gretchen; Before Motown; The Detroit River; Everywhere; Aram. (61:17)

**Personnel:** Gerald Wilson, composer, arranger, orchestrator; Yvette Devereaux, violin; Ron Barrows, Jeff Kaye, Rick Baptist, Winston Byrd, Jon Faddis, Frank Greene, Sean Jones, Jimmy Owens, Terrell Stafford, trumpets; Eric Jorgensen, Les Benedict, Mike Wimberly, Shaunte Palmer, Dennis Wilson, Luis Bonilla, Jay Ashby, Douglas Purviance, trombones; Hubert Laws, flute; Jackie Kelso, soprano sax, alto sax; Steve Wilson, Antonio Hart, soprano sax, alto sax, flute; Randall Willis, alto sax, flute; Carl Randall, Kamasi Washington, Ron Blake, tenor sax; Louis Van Taylor, tenor sax, baritone sax; Terry Landry, Ronnie Cuber, baritone sax; Anthony Wilson, guitar; Brian O'Rourke, Renee Rosnes, piano; Trey Henry, Peter Washington, Todd Coolman, bass; Mel Lee, Lewis Nash, drums.

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

## Anouar Brahem

### The Astounding Eyes Of Rita

ECM 2075

★★★

Those who enjoyed Tunisian oudist Anouar Brahem's last album, *Le Voyage De Sahar*, should like *The Astounding Eyes Of Rita*, as it shares a similar chamber feel and approach. For his latest, Brahem assembled an international cast, including German bass clarinetist Klaus Gesing, Swedish electric bassist Bjorn Meyer and Lebanese percussionist Khaled Yassine, which seamlessly merges Western and Eastern traditions. The result is a solid and at times hauntingly beautiful album that defies easy classification.

The music gently sways and pulses, especially when Yassine plays. Brahem focuses on melody, and he continuously spins composed and improvised melodies from his oud. Gesing often doubles the tune's melody with Brahem and provides counter melodies and solo backgroups. His solos, such as on "Al Birwa," are logically constructed and grow naturally. Considering this group was put together for the album the interplay is astounding. On "Dance With Waves," Gesing interjects short sugges-



tions during Brahem's solo that Brahem takes and expands on. Meyer, who spars with Gesing on the title track and "Galilee Mon Amour," often punctuates the lead line with his playful (but sometimes nearly buried-in-the-mix) bass.

Some may find the narrow range of tempos

and the dominance of modes monotonous, but others may be entranced by the long, snaking melodies and rhythmic ostinatos. The music takes its time and unfolds on its own schedule, even embracing silence and stillness. As the album's playing is subtle, and its musical influence is Eastern, it can be easy to miss some of the many highlights, as those used to Western or jazz harmony, phrasing and form may feel disoriented at first, but go ahead and dig in. Those unfamiliar with Brahem would do well to start here.

—Chris Robinson

**The Astounding Eyes Of Rita:** The Lover of Beirut; Dance With Waves; Stopover at Djibouti; The Astounding Eyes Of Rita; Al Birwa; Galilee Mon Amour; Waking State; For No Apparent Reason. (53:29)

**Personnel:** Anouar Brahem, oud; Klaus Gesing, bass clarinet; Bjorn Meyer, bass; Khaled Yassine, darbouka, bendir.

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

## Coltrane For Hire

With the release of *Side Steps* (Prestige PRS-3145, 73:53/79:37/72:28/77:05/ ★★★½), Concord Records completes its concordance of John Coltrane's Prestige Records output, following issues that documented his work as a leader (*Fearless Leader*), co-leader (*Interplay*) and a key voice in the Miles Davis Quintet (*The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions*).

On the set's 43 tracks, recorded over a 19-month span, Coltrane serves as tenor saxophonist for hire with assembled-for-the-studio units led by pianists Elmo Hope, Tadd Dameron, Red Garland and Mal Waldron, shares the front line with neophyte tubist Ray Draper on a surrealistically dicey quintet session, and locks horns with Sonny Rollins on the riff blues "Tenor Madness," a performance that is legendary in the canon.

Place in the "classic" category Dameron's *Mating Call*, a November 1956 Philly Joe Jones-propelled tenor and rhythm date on which such Dameron ballads as "In A Misty Night" and "Soultrane" spur Coltrane to project every ounce of inflamed emotion, while swingers like "Super Jet" and the title track offer him meaty changes to work through his still-nascent harmonic concept (Coltrane was a year into his first tour with Miles Davis at the time). Ditto Hope's *Informal Jazz*, from May 1956, a crackling bebop blowing date on which Hope, Paul Chambers and Jones (an A+ rhythm section if ever there was one) elicit idea-rich, individualistic solos from Coltrane and Hank Mobley—their contrasting, Charlie Parker-influenced approaches make a stimulating matchup. Trumpeter Donald Byrd is also in fine form.

On a strong Mal Waldron sextet date from May 1957 (*Mal 2*), Coltrane plays the section function with altoist-baritonist Sahib Shihab and trumpeter Idris Suleiman. On a Waldron-arranged, Gene Ammons-led session in January 1958, he returns to his first instrument, the alto saxophone, uncorking idiomatic, counter-signifying solos.

Several months into his legendary tenure with Thelonious Monk at Manhattan's Five Spot in the late fall of 1957, Coltrane—sober after kicking a heroin habit that spring—is ablaze on two Red Garland Quintet sessions that resulted in the albums *All Morning Long*, *Soul Junction* and *High Pressure*. On the same wavelength with Garland by dint

John Coltrane:  
valuable sideman



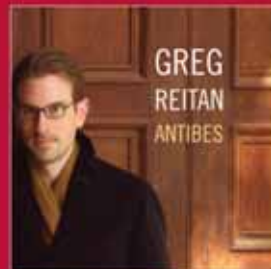
of their mutual 18-month employment with Davis, Coltrane uncorks solos on then-fresh bop lines like Dameron's "Our Delight," Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody'N You" and "Birks' Works" and Charlie Parker's "Billie's Bounce" that sound like logical extensions of Parker's language. On the assortment of medium-slow blues, ballads and standards that were Garland's meat, Coltrane calls on the experience he had garnered not so long before with r&b champion Bull Moose Jackson, and alto sax melody masters Earl Bostic and Johnny Hodges.

All in all, the proceedings are of varying quality and interest. But considered in its entirety, *Side Steps* demonstrates just how thorough Coltrane's apprenticeship was and how his deep bedrock in the fundamentals springboarded the efflorescent musical production of his final decade. It's also a reminder of how startling and fresh Coltrane's recordings appeared to next-generation up-and-comers of the time.

The program booklet imparts enough added value to make *Side Steps* a compelling buy—although more for Coltrane completists than the generalist fan. Coltrane biographer Ashley Kahn contributes a pithy liner note and an illuminating interview with Prestige boss Bob Weinstock. There are penetrating in-session photographs of the various participants; reproductions of original album artwork and original liner notes by Nat Hentoff, Ira Gitler and Joe Goldberg; and a chronological sessionography. Vivid 24-bit remasterings capture the surge of the rhythm sections and the power of Coltrane's sound.

DB

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com



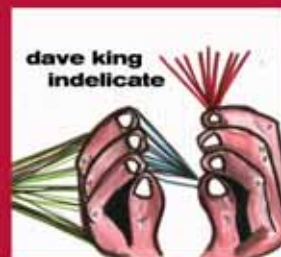
### GREG REITAN ANTIBES

In Stores January 12, 2010  
Sunnyside SSC 1238

Joined again by his long-time cohorts, bassist Jack Dario and drummer Dean Koba, Reitan's vivid and virtuosic command of the keyboard, which, according to John Regen of *Keyboard Magazine*, displayed "a lyrical sense of articulation and a penchant for leaving space across his phrases..." imbues *Antibes* with a perfect combination of syncopated soul and science, partially inspired by that picturesque town in southern France.

"I have been paying attention to Greg Reitan for several years now."

—ORRIN KEEPNEWS



### DAVE KING INDELICATE

In Stores February 2, 2010  
Sunnyside SSC 1229

With his wide range of styles, experiences and tastes, it's no wonder that Dave King's *Indelicate* compels as it confounds.

"For King," as Megan Wiley writes in the MPLS/St. Paul Magazine, "there's no bourgeois or high-brow music, no elite school of rock, no exclusive church of jazz. King is about sound and making good music, not about making good jazz, good rock, or good electronica, though he makes all three."



www.sunnysiderecords.com

GREG REITAN

DAVE KING



## Tyshawn Sorey

**Koan**  
482 MUSIC  
★★★★

Following his double CD debut, *That/Not*, drummer Tyshawn Sorey's *Koan* is a minimalistic, stripped-down affair on multiple fronts. Sorey's trio of guitar, bass and drums observes a classic "space between the notes" approach, often preferring silence over sound, a single note surrounded by transparent rests to even a rustle of activity. This can be both challenging and unsettling. Just when you expect this ethereal, free-oriented trio to find an expected rhythm, they retreat from the surface, creating fresh, unexpected results at every turn.

In "Correct the Truth," Sorey and guitarist Thomas Morgan create a darkly gorgeous, semi-free improvisation that recalls a pair of black crows dancing around a frozen park. Sorey is a master of metric modulations, shifting dynamics and lightning fast glances—he's wonderfully responsive and reactive.

Similarly, *Koan* constantly juggles shadows and light, silence and eruption. Often, Sorey disappears entirely as bass and guitar pluck quietly. Other times, Sorey's cymbals swell and his drums dribble nervously as the guitar and bass simply release echoes into the air. "Two Guitars" for example, is just that, two acoustic guitars playing a distracted, Sergio Leone worthy duet for nine minutes and 20 seconds. Closer "Embed" recalls a 1970s ECM recording.

—Ken Micallef

**Koan:** Awakening; Only One Sky; Correct Truth; Nocturnal; Two Guitars; Embed. (60:20)

**Personnel:** Tyshawn Sorey, drums; Thomas Morgan, guitar, bass; Todd Neufeld, bass.

» Ordering info: 482music.com



## The Nice Guy Trio

**Here Comes The Nice Guy Trio**  
PORTO FRANCO RECORDS 003  
★★★★½

Anyone for a petit soupçon of Left Bank sidewalk buskers? This rag-tag band of street poets would sound at home under a Montmartre streetlamp. Daniel Fabricant's susurrant bass, Rob Reich's apache dancer squeeze-box and Darren Johnston's half-valve circus trumpet saunter through cobbled rambling see-saw ditties, mascara-ed and striking poses for a post-Godard film.

Mais, un moment! Charles Mingus' "Fables Of Faustus" sidles in on pedal steel, the horn growls, the bass talks baguette-fresh (as if to Dolphy's alto). Ornette Coleman's "Folk Tale" (cartoonish but sinister by way of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*) waltzes in on harsh dissonance. A Balkan gypsy dance (cocek, not in 9/8 but 4/4) tips its cocked hat to klezmer, and a closing calypso goes island-hopping. Zut alors, what covers!

Other bagatelles in the Nice Guys' kit-bag lure in fellow pied pipers like Ben Goldberg (slinky clarinet on "See Ya") and Sameer Gupta (popping tablas on "Off The Grid") to form a Punch and Judy pit band. Half a star for chutzpah. Chacun à son goo-goo.

—Fred Bouchard

**Here Comes The Nice Guy Trio:** The Balancing Act; Apples; Simple Life; Fables Of Faustus; Woeful; See Ya; Folk Tale; Unicycle Cocek; Amy's Day; Off The Grid; Ducci Calypso. (50:47)

**Personnel:** Darren Johnston, trumpet; Rob Reich, accordion; Daniel Fabricant, bass; Sameer Gupta, tablas (2, 10); Ben Goldberg, clarinet (3, 5); Alex Kelly, cello (3); Dina Maccabee, violin; Aaron Kierbel, dumbek, drums (8); David Phillips, pedal steel guitar (4, 9).

» Ordering info: portofrancorecords.com



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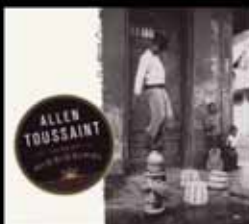
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## Early Blues Writer Handy's Aspirations, Courage Rose Above Obstacles

It's been well-established that W.C. Handy was not the creator of the blues. But this new biography lauds Handy for being among the first to transcribe this oral music tradition. In this respect, author David Robertson explains, Handy served as a trailblazer and also a transitional figure. "The genius of Handy over the years between 1914 and 1920 was his realizing the commercial potential of the Mississippi Delta blues music to reach beyond a regional and racial folk song and become part of mainstream American music," Robertson writes in *W.C. Handy: The Life And Times Of The Man Who Made The Blues* (Knopf).

Robertson portrays Handy as an aspiring composer in the late 19th century, a time when few black musicians pursued such a course. Handy's ambitions also ran counter to the expectations of his father, a clergyman. Without his father's knowledge, Handy learned to play the cornet and performed in brass bands. After leaving home, Handy embarked on an odyssey spanning much of the United States, first as a hobo and later as a musician traveling by train on sometimes-harrowing minstrel tours. The performers on this circuit frequently faced down armed residents and even lynch mobs.

Handy discovered blues after becoming a band director in the early 1900s in Clarksdale, Miss. Up until then, Handy's repertoire typified the conventions of the time: marches, waltzes and ragtime. He initially heard blues performed by an untrained singer at a train depot. "His song ... struck me instantly," Robertson quotes Handy from his autobiography, *Father Of The Blues* (1941). "Goin' where the Southern cross' the Dog. The singer repeated the line three times, accompanying himself on the [slide] guitar with the weirdest music I had ever heard."

Handy admits lifting his source material from such musicians, whom he describes as destitute "blind singers and footloose bards that were forever coming and going." Handy adapted their "country" or "folk" blues for bands that included brass and

reed instruments. He also published the music. After Handy moved to Memphis in 1905, this formula yielded enduring songs such as "The Memphis Blues," "St. Louis Blues" and "Beale Street Blues." The music not only anticipated jazz, but also nearly every other popular music style developed in the 20th century.

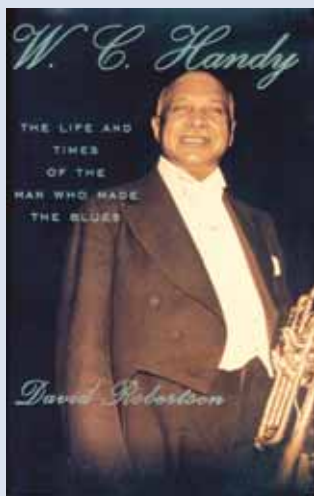
Robertson, who has written three previous biographies, attaches the book's narrative to a mostly rural, post-Civil War landscape of racism, oppression and violence. Rather than challenge the widely held beliefs about Handy's legacy, Robertson highlights its importance. Handy, Robertson explains, functioned as much as an arranger (and perhaps plagiarist). But he also served as a catalyst and activist.

The sheet music bearing his name provided international exposure for a region that has remained one of the most isolated and impoverished in the United States. In addition Handy covertly circulated black newspapers such as the Freeman in Clarksdale; his first song of note, "The Memphis Blues," poked fun at Edward "Boss" Crump, an influential but corrupt Memphis mayor and Tennessee congressman. When it came to bookings, though, Handy suppressed his social conscience. He catered to white employers, but only because they paid more.

Handy's contributions to 20th century popular music fail to place him in the front ranks of his peers. Unlike the bluesmen who inspired much of his music, Handy could play only from scores or charts. He lacked a sufficient knowledge of harmony to master the nuances of jazz improvisation. But Robertson focuses on Handy's determination and vision, in addition to the obstacles he courageously overcame. While Handy hardly deserves a moniker like "father of the blues," Robertson seemingly argues that Handy's achievements mark him as the chief apostle of a timeless American art.

DB

Ordering info: aaknopf.com



### MARIA NECKAM DEEPER

In Stores February 16, 2010  
Sunnyside SSC 1246

Maria Neckam is a singer and songwriter from New York, who was born in Austria and has also lived in the Netherlands. When Maria moved to New York in 2005, she hit the music scene like lightning. Since then she has been working as one of the most innovative musicians on the scene. Her compositions are as diverse as life's surprises, combining elements of Rock, Drum 'n' Bass and Modern Jazz as well as Indian and Western Classical music. Maria often tours the United States and Europe from her home base in Brooklyn.

MARIA NECKAM

SCOTT DuBOIS



### SCOTT DuBOIS BLACK HAWK DANCE

In Stores March 9, 2010  
Sunnyside SSC 1252

The vocabulary of modern jazz guitar continues to expand and listeners have begun to lean towards practitioners that can handle performance in varied styles and settings. From the ethereal to intricate picking to completely free rocking, Scott DuBois can handle all with aplomb. On his latest recording *Black Hawk Dance*, DuBois gives equal emphasis to all these elements but with his own unique signature which focuses on overall composition while avoiding histrionics.



www.sunnysiderecords.com



## Paul Wertico's Mid-East/Mid-West Alliance

*Impressions Of A City*

CHICAGO SESSIONS 01V10

★★★★½

## John Moulder

*Bifröst*

ORIGIN 82546

★★★★½

While drummer Paul Wertico appears on both of these albums, the two

could not be more different and still be considered inside the jazz tent. Consider that guitarist John Moulder and electric bassist Brian Peters round the “rhythm section” on *Impressions Of A City* and *Bifröst* and the contrast becomes even more striking.

Moulder’s “Bifrost” features the drummer in a more conventional role, while *Impressions Of A City* might be considered an album that includes drums but in a more experimental way. Indeed, *Impressions* is altogether another animal, but first consider the relative calm of *Bifröst*, fellow Chicagoan Moulder’s followup to his *Trinity* (2006). The first thing one may notice is Moulder’s penchant for going back and forth between his acoustic and electric guitars. That he plays his six- and 12-string acoustics in a manner that at times might recall Ralph Towner’s music with Jan Garbarek (thanks to the full-bodied tenor saxophone sounds of Bendik Hofseth) is not surprising. *Bifröst* sports Hofseth with fellow Norwegian bassist Arild Andersen, both whom help give the project a kind of ECM flavor. But with Peters on board to



haunting song cycle “Cold Sea Triptych” and the intros to “Watch Your Step” and “Magical Space” sidled up against the more rock-ish outlays of “Watch Your Step,” both worlds made manifest on the title track and the closing 15-minute “Time Being.”

But for every rock and otherwise edgy gesture found with *Bifröst*, Moulder’s 10 compositions can’t hold a candle to Wertico’s hour-plus-long journeys through what one might assume is a sonic, sometimes lyrical, sometimes ambient and/or noise, portrait of Chicago. Completely improvised (much of which doesn’t really sound “improvised”), *Impressions* takes *Bifröst*’s more cohesive group mindset and turns it inside-out, seemingly challenging everyone, including Peters (on electric bass as well as piano, violin and various programs) along with the equally eclectic reed player Danny Markovitch and guitarist Dani Rabin playing in tandem with and opposite Moulder. With titles like “What Should I Wear Today,” “The Boss Needs To See You” and “A Chance To Breathe,” it becomes apparent that *Impressions* includes lots of backward

help with programming and Wertico’s selective drumming played with an ongoing sense of threat (hear his expansive side on “Time Being”), *Bifröst* hints at a kind of two-in-one, alternating musical experience: the more contemplative forays heard on the

glancing, the titles served up in a kind of chronological “day in the life of the city” that suggests for Wertico’s new Mid-East/Mid-West Alliance band that urban life, at least life in the City of Big Shoulders, can be sweet but is mostly full of clamor and seeming chaos (an alternate title could very well be “Expressions Of A City”). Both impressionistic (“Beauty Wherever You Can Find It”) and (especially) expressionistic (“Bumper To Bumper,” “The Inside Track”), what makes the music work is not only that Wertico is not content to just “play it straight” as a drummer but that his skills as a conceptualist/leader may be even greater, helping to create a compelling, and not altogether scattershot series of musical surprises. A heads-up for all budding drummers (check out Wertico’s inventive pause of a solo on “My Side Of The Story”) who would like to hear and create music that goes beyond just keeping time. —John Ephland

**Impressions Of A City:** A Light Too Soon; What Should I Wear Today; Bumper To Bumper; Late Again; Beauty Wherever You Can Find It; The Boss Needs To See You; 15 Minutes For Lunch; I Probably Shouldn’t Have Done That; The Inside Track; A Chance To Breathe; Lake Fish Flowers; My Side Of The Story; Word Salad; Closing The Deal; Drive At Five; Reflections On The Day; I Think I’m Hungry; Good Night And Good Luck. (62:50)

**Personnel:** Paul Wertico, drums; John Moulder, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, fretless guitar; Brian Peters, electric bass, duduk, shvi, soundscapes, synthesizer, violin, piano; Dani Rabin, electric guitar, looping, prepared guitar, slides; Danny Markovitch, electric soprano/tenor saxophones.

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

**Bifröst:** Bifröst; Watch Your Step (Introduction); Watch Your Step; Magical Space; Echoes Of Home; Cold Sea Triptych: Part, Part 2, Part 3; Time Being. (58:09)

**Personnel:** John Moulder, electric guitars, 12-string and six-string acoustic guitars; Bendik Hofseth, tenor saxophone; Arild Andersen, acoustic bass; Paul Wertico, drums, percussion; Brian Peters, electric fretless bass, programming.

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

## Steve Hobbs

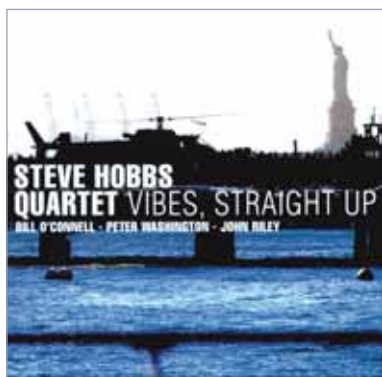
*Vibes, Straight Up*

CHALLENGE 3285

★★★

If you like your jazz straight down the middle, with the standards approach top of mind, vibist Steve Hobbs and his *Vibes, Straight Up* fit the bill. Straight down the middle, in this case, means swinging, and also in this case, moving more often than not.

For starters, the band kicks it into high gear with the standard fast-paced attack on “Cherokee.” Hobbs and pianist Bill O’Connell share the solo spotlight in tandem, Hobbs getting more bars to the beat over McConnell (leader’s prerogative), “Cherokee” highlighting both instrumentalists but especially Hobbs’ symmetrical mallet technique, both players deft



at playing against the beat. But while “Cherokee” is a great album starter in most cases, it’s the one song here that suggests a slower tempo might have been a better call, the band a bit off in the department of balancing swing with a faster tempo.

“Hey Good Lookin’” is more successful and points to what is probably the optimum tempo for all concerned, the medium groove making it clear these guys can swing and take a hackneyed tune and make it work as a “jazz standard.” As for the ballads here, again, this is territory that seems marked out for them, “Stars Fell On Alabama” given a typically slow reading, bassist Peter Washington and drummer John Riley playing the rhythm with a steady but relaxed pulse as they back up the principal soloists, both of whom turn in typically lyrical

solos (McConnell’s is clipped more than usual here). The slightly re-harmonized backbeat-driven “St. James Infirmary” offers some rhythmic contrast at a now-familiar medium tempo, Hobbs double-tempo-ing his lines along the way to keep things interesting.

The balance of the program continues apace, with another unusual pick in “The Woody The Woodpecker Song,” more ballads (another nice reharmonization on “What A Difference A Day Makes”), some Latin, a few deft time-signature moves on another unconventional tune, “Wade In The Water.” All in all, it’s well-played jazz that won’t necessarily grab your attention; but with those odd song selections, this middle-of-the-road take on jazz just might have humming in the shower. —John Ephland

**Vibes, Straight Up:** Cherokee; Hey Good Lookin’; Stars Fell On Alabama; St. James Infirmary; The Woody The Woodpecker Song; Shenandoah; The Old Rugged Cross; What A Difference A Day Makes; Wade In The Water. (53:59)

**Personnel:** Steve Hobbs, vibraphone; Bill O’Connell, piano; Peter Washington, bass; John Riley, drums.

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

**Howard Levy**  
**Alone And Together**  
 BALKAN SAMBA RECORDS 003  
 ★★★★★

**Howard Levy**  
**Tonight And Tomorrow**  
 CHICAGO SESSIONS S01V09  
 ★★★★★



Protean is the word for Howard Levy's adaptability and ravenous musical curiosity. A solo record from Levy comes as no surprise, given his resources as a pianist and innovative harmonica virtuosity. Self-produced at home in Evanston, Ill., *Alone And Together* declares inspiration from John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Ella Fitzgerald and ... Gladys Knight.

"Ruminations" and "Ornette In The A.M." are simultaneously improvised duets. Though Levy's piano chops are virile, on the auto-duets he is forced to play more sparsely with his left hand only, resulting in the lovely soliloquy of "Ruminations." On "Ornette In The A.M.," a walking bassline on the keys underpins quicksilver runs on the harp. It is an ambitious double, though at least both instruments are horizontal in approach, even if one deals essentially with breath and tongue control while the other demands digital dexterity.

Equating Levy's Byzantine phraseology on the tin sandwich with Coleman, however, is a stretch. Levy is versed in Latin, bluegrass and Balkan music yet refuses to neglect the harmonica's reputation as the Mississippi saxophone, treating us to country blues, accompanied by foot and hand percussion, and on "Birdhead Blues," a little stride piano. "Funky Harps" is an all-too-brief hoedown featuring at least three overdubbed harp tracks. Blowing harp into a coffee cup provides concert hall reverb for "Every Time We Say Goodbye," one of a clutch of standards exposing Levy's druthers as a mainstream jazzman. On "One For Dmitri," an improvisation styled after Shostakovich, Levy dabbles convincingly with classical articulations on overdubbed pianos.

In hatching his Chicago Sessions label, producer/engineer Nick Eipers knew early on he wanted to feature the spontaneous genius of Levy. *Tonight And Tomorrow* weighs in with a stellar trio of drummer Ernie Adams and bassist Larry Gray. The original music mandate of Chicago Sessions pushed Levy to reconstitute vintage compositions, such as the title piece (which had its genesis when he was a teenager), and alternates meditative sequences with upbeat

musings. This track features a typically forthright bass solo from Gray leading into vamp sequences laced with Latin structures, ethnic scales and hints of Levy's enthusiasm for McCoy Tyner, which is further suggested by the intense noteplay and chordal architecture on the opening blues.

"Song For Susan" is a dancing waltz with undulating harmony; "Aha" an Afro-Cuban romp kicked along nicely by Adams; "Slanted Samba" an offhanded title for a penetrating multi-hued foray. Given the intricacy of some of the forms, which vary from playful to serious, two improvisations, "Flunky Jazz" and "Triosity," demonstrate the trio's tinder-like interpersonal response and offer respite from prescribed ideas.

—Michael Jackson

**Alone And Together:** Aguas Quietas; Taking a Chance On Love; Ruminations; Blues Dirge And Shuffle; One For Dmitri; The Nearness Of You; Funkyharp; Birdhead's Blues; Ornette In The A.M.; Every Time We Say Goodbye; Prelude To A Kiss; There Is No Greater Love. (42:53)

**Personnel:** Howard Levy, harmonica, piano, percussion.

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

**Tonight And Tomorrow:** Howard's F# blues; Song For Susan; Chorinho; Floating; Flunky Jazz; Sandi; Aha; Slanted Samba; Triosity; Tonight And Tomorrow. (60:28)

**Personnel:** Howard Levy, piano, harmonica; Larry Gray, double bass; Ernie Adams, drums.

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

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## Gender Barriers? Observations Of A Working Pianist And Bandleader

I started to play piano when I was three years old. Listening to my mother play Chopin, I got up on the piano bench and tried to pick out the piece myself. It was Chopin's "Waltz In A-flat." It seems to me that I have been playing piano ever since then, picking up all sorts of music by ear from the radio or from the music played in school, which I would immediately learn and play for the other kids. So the jazz I heard on the BBC was absorbed into my mind.

I once heard jazz being described as a "male language." To me, that's crazy! I never thought about playing jazz in those terms. It so happened that most of my heroes were black men, but some were women, like Mary Lou Williams, Lil Armstrong, Cleo Brown and an English pianist named Rae DaCosta.

In 1946, when I came to America with my husband, Jimmy McPartland, I just wanted to meet all the people I had listened to, like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and all the others I've mentioned. At that time, my only intention was to play with Jimmy in his group. So we went to Chicago, his hometown, and I *did* play in his group. I learned a great deal during those gigs, not only some of the jazz repertoire but how to play behind a horn player.

When Jimmy and I went to New York, I don't remember thinking about any barriers that might exist for women jazz players. I was one of the lucky ones. Jimmy knew everybody and, in fact, helped me to get started with my own trio. He was always so proud of me and so helpful in wanting me to have my own group. I started at the Embers, one of the top clubs in New York, with Don Lamond on drums and Eddie Safranski on bass—two of the best musicians in New York. I was able to employ fine players, because I was the one doing the hiring. I have heard stories from many women musicians about how hard it was to get started, but I think people with determination, and a desire to succeed, just went ahead, ignoring all barriers.

Many of the women I talked to were very highly motivated, and I think this is what helped us all. I know Gloria Steinem was a great inspiration to many women, but somehow all this "consciousness raising" went right past me. I was working and not thinking about anything like that. The same is true of Mary Lou Williams, Barbara Carroll, Toshiko Akiyoshi and many other women that I could name. I think women must develop the qualities of self-confidence, persistence, motivation and a strong desire to perpetuate their talent in



Marian McPartland leads her Hickory House trio (with drummer Joe Morello and bassist Bill Crow) in the 1950s.

order to succeed.

Jimmy helped me immeasurably, but when I started working at the Hickory House, I felt that I was making it on my own. I learned by doing, by hearing a great deal of music live, by listening to hundreds of records, by playing every night and by getting great moral support from people like Ellington and Billy Strayhorn.

I don't necessarily think that women married to musicians have more chance of success. I can only say that it might sometimes be true. For instance, Cleo Laine and John Dankworth are a wonderful team, and so are Carla Bley and Steve Swallow.

I never thought about my gender working for me or against me. I think there was, and still is, the knowledge that a woman has to certainly play as well as or better than a male musician. I remember in the 1950s bassist Milt Hinton saying, "I don't mind playing with women musicians as long as they can *play*."

I don't think I've developed any toughness; in fact, a lot of the time I feel rather wimpy. However, I think people find a kind of inner strength to get through all the good and bad things that happen in any business. You have to be responsible and businesslike and never forget that you will always have to be paying dues.

Being a leader, I feel the need to be diplomatic with sidemen when trying to make a point, but Mary Lou Williams was very tough and forthright and could be downright mean! In fact, when she rehearsed a band, a lot of the men were afraid of her. She was *really tough*! I'm

sure everybody *respected* Mary Lou, but not all of them felt comfortable working with her. However, she was much admired, and her music lives on.

If women seem to be in the minority in any field, my answer is still the same—you have to have talent and motivation, be dogged and persistent, believe in yourself and not be deterred by anything or anyone.

It's funny how people use the word "masculine." I remember getting a writeup years ago in which a critic said my playing was "masculine." What he really meant was that it had strength, but in the early days, if you had strength and depth in your playing they would say you were "aggressive" or else sounded "just like a man." However, think of players like Bill Evans and George Shearing—they had a certain delicacy in their playing, but no critic would ever say they sounded like women. Luckily these kinds of stereotypes are not used anymore. Women are written about with the same enthusiasm as the men are.

I don't know if there was a single success factor for me. I can thank God for my talent and being able to further it, and I think that's what everyone has to do. Don't sit back and say, "Now I've done it all," because you never have.

I think I set more goals for myself now than I did years ago. I'm always trying to compose something or do something different on "Piano Jazz." Sometimes I have a dream about something and then I try to put it into practice, to realize the dream.

DB

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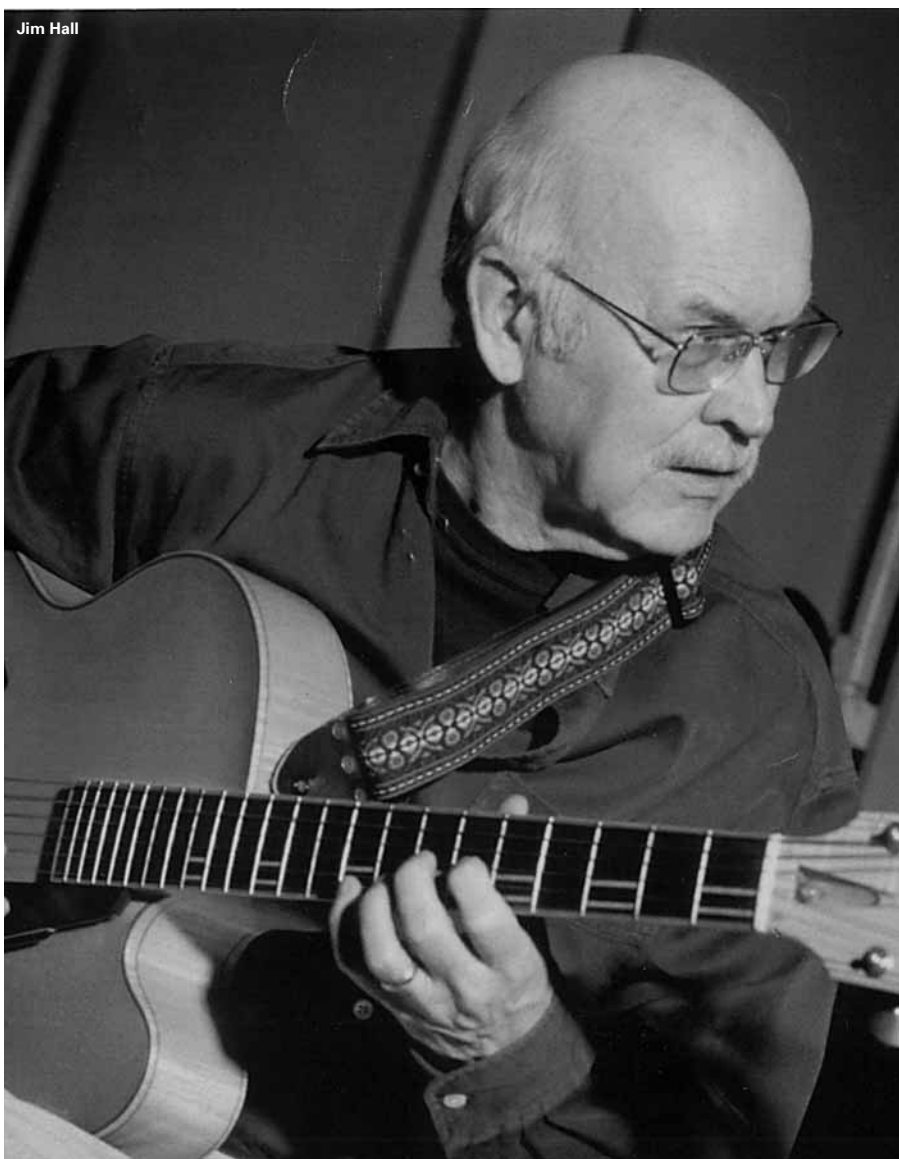
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## Woodshed

**SOLO**  
by Jimi Durso

Jim Hall



### Jim Hall's Guitar Solo on 'All Across The City'

Jim Hall's composition "All Across The City" (from *Hemispheres*, his 2008 duo CD with Bill Frisell) has an unusual form and an unusual arrangement. The form is 34 bars, instead of the standard 32, with an A-A' form, the second A having an extended turnaround to bring the tonality back to Dm from D♭. However, after Hall's solo, instead of recapitulating the melody as most jazz tunes would do, it skips the turnaround and proceeds to a coda section in 6/8. It's wonderful how Hall ends his solo by setting up the 6/8 with a sextuplet figure that he plays over the bar line into the coda, the sextuplet becoming straight 16ths in the new time signature. This camouflages the change in time signature, making the transition seamless.

The opening of his solo is also beautifully

executed: Hall starts with an ascending scalar motif, starting a beat before the downbeat and ending on the second beat. His next phrase develops this idea, starting a half-beat earlier and ending a half-beat later (and a chord tone higher). After a couple of contrasting phrases, Hall brings back this idea in measures 5–7, developing it further. This figure reappears in various forms later, in measures 17 and 26, where he places it in the middle of the measure, rather than over the bar line, and again in measures 27–28, where it mirrors the second phrase, except starting with the fourth interval (spanning fifth to root) that began the line in measure 26. The repetition of this idea helps create a sense of continuity and connectedness to his solo.

Another aspect of Hall's playing worth

appreciating is how for certain chord changes he will emphasize tones not common to both chord scales to make the harmonic motion more evident. The first instance of this is in the middle of measure 5, when he leans on the G# on beat three. This is the third of the E7+ chord, but this tone does not exist in the scale he played against the F7 chord in the first half of the measure. This note alone makes it clear that the harmony has changed. Hall must have liked this sound, since when this chord change happens again in the second A (measure 21) he plays the same G# on the same beat.

Other occurrences of this technique can be seen in measure 11, where the F and G in the previous measure (on the Fmaj7) give way to F# and G# (for F#m). In the very next measure he takes the root note of the B7 and drops it down to Bb on the Bb7(b9). In measure 14 we see the Gb (F#) on the Ab7 become F natural for the Dm7(b9) in the middle of the measure. Across the bar line from measure 16 to 17 is the same half-step down idea, with the seventh

of the Bbm (Ab) dropping to the seventh of A7 (G). In measure 31 it's the same parallel idea, only a whole step between the thirds of Fm (Ab) and Ebm (Gb).

Even when not using this technique, Hall still tends to lean on chord tones. He emphasizes roots in measures 9, 11, 12, 13, 25 and 29, thirds in 2, 5, 10, 14, 16, 21, 23, 26, 31 and 32, fifths in 3, 6, 12, 19, 20 and 22, and sevenths in 4, 14, 16 and 17. This contributes to the highly melodic texture of Hall's solo.

He also creates variation with his phrasing. Though most of his lines are 16th-note based, played with a straight feel, he intersperses triplets throughout. Because these are eighth-note triplets, they sound lazy and laid back. Since Hall already plays his 16ths with such a relaxed feel, the combination creates quite a chill vibe.

DB

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

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## Spectrasonics Suite: A Virtual Instrument Overview

Spectrasonics started out in 1994 as a purveyor of high-quality sample libraries. Bass Legends was their first offering—it immediately became a standard tool in many house libraries—and they never looked back. One of their hallmarks was innovation in the way that their sample libraries work: They included not only raw sounds, but useful chromatically sampled phrases, and later their Groove Control system. Recently, the company has shifted focus away from sample libraries and started developing virtual instruments—and again have become key innovators in the field.

In 2002, Spectrasonics released Stylus, a virtual groove instrument that quickly caught on with producers. Following that there was Atmosphere, a great sounding, but limited, virtual synthesizer, and Trilogy, their first Bass Instrument. All three of these gained rapid acceptance in studios. Since then, the entire suite has been redesigned: Stylus has been updated to Stylus RMX, Atmosphere has been replaced by the flagship Omnisphere, and most recently, Trilogy has given way to the new Trilian Bass Instrument.

### Trilian

Trilian is designed to be the most complete and realistic bass experience available. It offers a huge 34+ gigabyte library, and an incredible number of articulations on every instrument offered. Trilian was built on Spectrasonics' STEAM technology, which is their proprietary realtime synthesis engine, the foundation for Omnisphere and all future polyphonic synthesis instruments from Spectrasonics. This allows Omnisphere owners direct access to the Trilian library sound as soundsources for new patches.

Trilian's library is extensive, with more than 60 different electric basses and over 300 synth basses. All of the standards are here, but there are also a lot of surprises, like the Chapman Stick reproduction. A highlight of the instrument is the finely detailed Acoustic Bass, which includes more than 21,000 samples itself. This bass is so realistic it has to be tried to be believed. All of the basses have multiple playing styles and articulations, and they can be handled by traditional key switching, but where Trilian really shines is its playability using velocity to determine which samples are used. Add to this a new round-robin system

for retriggering, and you get one of the most satisfying keyboard bass experiences ever.

The interface is clean, and the custom control system makes sure the most useful parameters are always available on a per-patch basis. Trilian includes an arpeggiator with their Groove Lock technology—this means that if you want to match the feel of a Stylus RMX groove, or any other MIDI file, you simply drag it into the arpeggiator and it instantly locks to that groove.

### Stylus RMX

When Stylus was first introduced, it seemed like everyone and their brother was using the grooves that came with it without much manipulation. Then Spectrasonics upgraded to Stylus RMX (based on the Spectrasonics Advanced Groove Engine), which offered so many new loops and so much control that it quickly became the standard against which all other groove instruments are judged.

Stylus RMX has a 7+ gigabyte library, allows importing of REX files and Groove Control libraries directly, and Spectrasonics also offers a number of "Xpanders" to build the base library of sounds. It is easy to create user-defined kits and patches, and the Groove Menu system lets you lay loops across a keyboard for easy triggering on the fly. There are also some very powerful filters, LFOs, envelopes and effects that make sound sculpting simple.

Two features set Stylus RMX apart. Chaos Designer allows you to drastically alter any of the included loops by tweaking an array of sliders that introduce random variations in a variety of parameters. Once these variations are made, you can save this new loop separately, as well as drag out the MIDI file. Time Designer allows you impose the Groove Feel of any MIDI info onto *any* Stylus loop, in any time signature! This expands the usefulness of Stylus RMX into the world music and jazz genres.

### Omnisphere

Omnisphere is the monster in the Spectrasonics box. This synth starts out with a 40+ gigabyte sound library and incorporates a multitude of hybrid synthesis techniques to create one of the deepest synths available today. It's designed so a beginner can get in and have access to a wide array of synth textures with basic edits easily discernible, but it runs incredibly deep. There is a huge modulation matrix that is as simple as clicking on a parameter in the edit window and choosing any mod source from a popup menu. There are detailed and good-sounding filters that can be used in series or parallel. Even the envelope shapes are user-definable. In short, you can edit for days on this thing. Add to this eight(!) independent arpeggiators, including the Groove Lock capability, and you'll never run out of ways to create new sounds. Spectrasonics won't rule out the possibility of importing sound sources in the future, either.

Omnisphere has a depth and solidity that is usually reserved for hardware synths only. You can get analog patches that truly sound analog, or you can pile layers and layers of motion and shimmer until you're lost in a seemingly unending soundscape—and it performs either function equally well. If you only have one virtual synth in your arsenal, this one has to be a front-runner.

### Solid Suite

The entire Spectrasonics line is solid across the board. They continually update all three, and usually at no charge to current users. Videos on the company Web site make the learning curve a little less steep and provide good tech support. There are a few shortcomings in these instruments—they take a long time to install, and they require a lot of computer power—but these are small concerns compared to what they offer. —Chris Neville

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



## Shure, Audio-Technica Ribbon Mics: Silky Smooth with Technological Edge

Digital recording is the standard in today's world, and with all its advantages, the results can often feel sterile and thin, lacking the warmth of analog tape. This has driven the need for products such as ribbon microphones that produce smooth, lush tones that complement the hard-edged digital process. Addressing a growing trend, both Shure and Audio-Technica each have released two new ribbon microphone models that combine these highly desirable sonic characteristics with that latest technology.

Shure has been producing microphones for more than 80 years, and they have become a standard in the live sound and broadcast fields. With the offering of their KSM condenser models, Shure introduced an affordable yet quality line of mics suitable for both stage and studio. Expanding the KSM series with ribbon offerings was a logical step for the company. According to product manager Chad Wiggins, "The digital recording trend has led to the need for microphones that add warmth and color to the process." Shure has actually had ribbon designs on their drawing board for years but were highly impressed with the el Diablo and Naked Eye microphones from Crowley and Tripp that had been gaining popularity among recording engineers. Shure acquired the products and released them as the KSM353 and KSM313.

With the exception of the logo, Shure did



A-T 4080 and 4081



Shure KSM353 and KSM313

not alter the design of the mics at all. These are beautiful microphones, both sonically and structurally, and come packaged in classy mahogany boxes. The KSM353 has a MSRP of \$3,320 and is a bi-directional ribbon, producing the same sound from the front or back of the mic. The KSM313, with an MSRP of \$1,619, is the dual voice design and produces two very different results from either the front or back, actually like having two mics in one. Shure's Roswelite technology provides a distinct advantage over traditional ribbons in that the KSMs are extremely durable and produce a much higher output, eliminating the need for special preamps and making them suitable for live applications.

Audio-Technica has also noticed the emerging ribbon microphone market and has answered the call with the company's first-ever ribbon models, the 4080 and 4081. Like Shure, Audio-Technica uses a proprietary imprinting process, allowing for a thinner ribbon while maintaining strength and minimizing distortion. The added durability also

makes the Audio-Technica mics suitable for live situations.

These are gorgeous mics. Although the 4080 and 4081 use similar core ribbons and are both bi-directional, they have radically different body styles. The 4080's design is similar to a standard large condenser mic and has an MSRP of \$1,245, while the 4081 utilizes a small "pencil" design with an MSRP of \$895. Both models require 48 volts phantom power, which is unusual for a ribbon but offers the advantage of higher output levels.

I tested all four microphones on a variety of sources including vocals and several fretted instruments. Although each had its own unique character, all delivered the rich, smooth silky sound that ribbons are known for, but also produced a clear top end. I found that placement and proximity had radical effects on the tone and allowed me to achieve a range of desirable colors. —Keith Baumann

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

» Ordering info: [audio-technica.com](http://audio-technica.com)

## Evans EC2 SST Drumheads: Controlled Resonance

Evans has introduced the EC2 SST (Sound Shaping Technology) series of drumheads, which deliver a clear attack coupled with a warm, dense and focused sound. A good tuning range and controlled resonance are also great features.

The EC2 SST drumheads feature two-ply construction with an overtone-reducing "Edge Control" ring painted underneath. The rings are designed to pinpoint overtone and ringing tendencies for specific sizes of drums. The width and thickness of the ring slightly changes depending on the drum's size, as opposed to one specific ring design for all sizes of heads. The Edge Control rings are not meant to dampen overtones completely, but rather reduce overtones to give the drums a more natural, open sound.

The heads that I was sent for review went on a kit that has a standard eight-ply maple/45

degree bearing edge shell design. The EC2s tuned up very quickly, and I was pleasantly surprised at how they immediately fattened up the sound of the drums, no doubt because of the two-ply construction. The tone of the drums was much more present without sacrificing the clarity of the attack. Evans claims these heads to have a fairly wide tuning range, but they really shine at low to medium tunings. You're not going to be able to crank them up high because they have a tendency to choke.

The EC2s are in their element with no muffling at all. Just for fun, I did a comparison of the heads with and without external muffling. The character and performance of the heads didn't suffer one bit with some external muffling. They still had a nice full sound with plenty of attack.

Evans has done a great job creating a head



that balances a full, warm tone with good attack and a fairly wide tuning range. The SSTs do a good job of pinpointing and eliminating some of the overtones on toms without sacrificing tone quality. If you prefer lots of dampening, don't expect the Edge Control rings to be a magic fix. If you prefer your toms more open with minimal to medium dampening, these are the heads for you.

—Ryan Bennett

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



## Freddy's Jazz Jam

Alfred's Jazz Play-Along Series gives instrumentalists a platform to jam on two full volumes of great jazz tunes at the medium to medium-advanced levels. The book/CD packages (for C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef instruments) provide written-out sample solos to study and improv tips for each tune. The included CDs offer a demo track, play-along track and split track functionality. Titles include *Strayhorn & More* (Vol. 1) and *Swingin' Now* (Vol. 2).

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

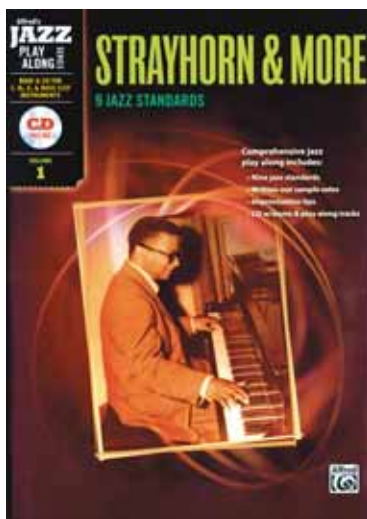
## In The Loop

The new DVD *Creating And Performing Drum Loops* (Carl Fischer), featuring clinician and educator Donny Gruendler, walks viewers through the entire process of track programming, equipment wiring and performance to prepare for any commercial gig. Through step-by-step explanations (including performance lessons, demo software and companion session files), Gruendler presents four songs, each featuring different looping methods and gear.

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

## Eddie's Jazz Jam

Jamey Aebersold Jazz has introduced the *Eddie Harris: Listen Here* (Vol. 127) play-along package. Transposed for C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef instruments, the book/CD includes many of Harris' heppiest tunes, including "Boogie Woogie Bossa Nova," "Chicago Serenade," "Listen Here," "Freedom Jazz Dance," "The

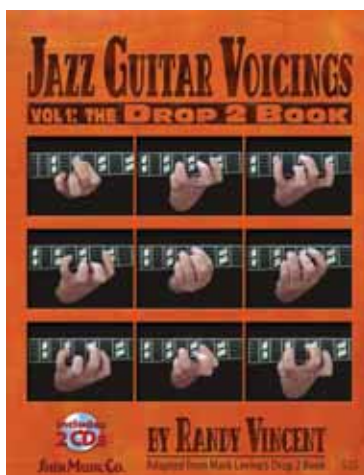
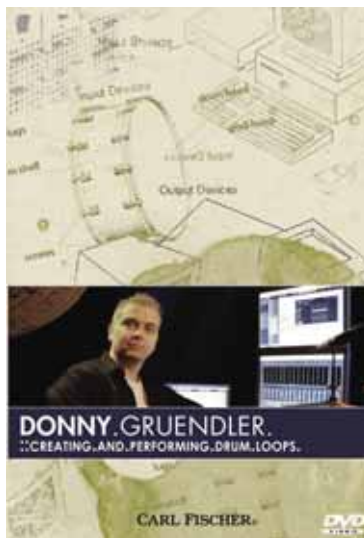


Things You Do" and "1974 Blues." The rhythm section on the included CD features bassist Rufus Reid, pianist Steve Allee and drummer Jonathan Higgins.

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

## Lenny's Jazz Jams

Hal Leonard's Jazz Play-Along series has surpassed 100 volumes with a book of 10 classic songs made famous by Louis Armstrong, including "Dream Of Me," "Basin Street Blues" and "Mack The Knife." The book/CD packs (for all C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef instruments) in the series are intended for polishing up solo technique, with backing tracks that ebb and flow along with the player. The play-alongs are recorded under the leadership of arranger/producer Mark Taylor

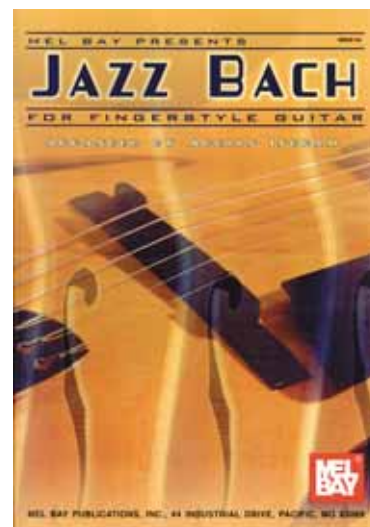
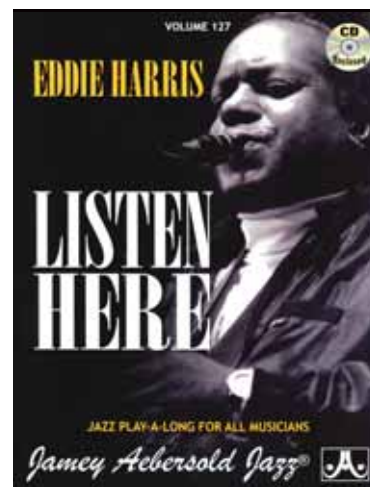


by members of the Army Blues, the jazz ensemble of the U.S. Army: pianist Tony Nalker, bassist Tim Roberts, trumpeter Graham Breedlove, saxophonist John Desalme and a rotation of drummers including Steve Fidyk, Chuck Redd and Todd Harrison.

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

## Find Your Voicings

*Jazz Guitar Voicings: The Drop 2 Book* (Sher Music) by guitarist Randy Vincent includes a thorough discussion of basic drop two principles, including passing tones and extension tones. It features practical methods for creating modern sounds by tweaking the basic drop two voicings. The book comes with an organized practice routine, including fingerboard diagrams and standard



notations. Two CDs of the author demonstrating each exercise are included.

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

## Picking On Bach

*Jazz Bach For Fingerstyle Guitar* (Mel Bay), by jazz guitarist and educator Adrian Ingram, arranges some of J.S. Bach's most popular pieces with a modern jazz sensibility. Ingram adds modern colors to Bach classics through the use of jazz phrasing, lush harmonies, walking basses and syncopation. The book's left-hand chordal techniques will provide a challenge for the classically trained player, while the right-hand techniques are useful practice for jazz guitarists. The pieces sound equally effective on steel- and nylon-string guitars.

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



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## Jazz On Campus



### Savannah's Swing Central Presents New Student Jazz Competition Model

Fall means football to musicians at Hoover High School in Alabama. Students spend months marching at games, cutting through the crowd's frenzied roar with rhythmic, go-fight-win tunes. But when the Friday night rituals in this pigskin-crazy school end, band students stay hard at work.

Hoover's First Edition Jazz group, directed by Sallie Vines White, begins dissecting pieces for the April Swing Central competition at the Savannah Music Festival in Georgia well before football season is over, but preparations reach a new level in January. For the past three years, the band has made the trip to the state along with 11 other finalists, winning a spot based on recordings of a few arrangements pre-selected by Swing Central officials. This year, only one in four groups made the cut; each ensemble works up an additional tune—for 2010, groups will perform Jelly Roll Morton's "Black Bottom Stomp"—and plays all three pieces at the festival. Winners are rewarded with a spotlight showcase and a top prize of \$5,000.

"What's so exciting about the Savannah Music Festival is just the clinicians and the other bands they get to hear: It's an incredible learning experience," White said. "That's how I pick a festival, by how much I think they'll learn, how much they'll take with them after high school from that festival and how it will impact them as young musicians."

To help get the competition pieces into shape, clinicians journey to each participating high school in February. These musicians help students achieve the appropriate styles of each arrangement and offer structural tips to soloists. Traveling to schools is one reason pianist Marcus Roberts, the festival's associate artistic director of jazz education, loves the Swing Central model.

"Jazz is a mentor-based music; it always has been, going back to King Oliver mentoring Louis Armstrong or James P. Johnson

mentoring Fats Waller," Roberts said. "Most of the clinicians were students just like these who wanted somebody to come and work with them."

For Roberts, competition is a means to an end and is secondary to the experience and knowledge imparted to the high schoolers. Swing Central will be able to impact even more musicians with swingcentraljazz.org, an interactive Web site made possible by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's Jazz.NEXT initiative. The site, which goes live in February, will eventually include performance footage, instructional videos and educational interviews with festival artists. In conjunction with the initiative, festival organizers will premiere a 26-minute documentary about Swing Central, which will follow high school bands from the classroom to the Savannah stage. "It allows us to make our festival global in scope," Roberts said.

Christopher Dorsey enrolled his group in 2008's event to expose his students to the performance and skills of other bands around the country. His group from Dillard Center for the Arts in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., placed second that year and was also awarded second place in 2009. He's seen a dramatic change in the musicianship of his students since his students started competing.

"It's taken my program to another level," Dorsey said. "The competition is a bonus. Any time the kids can compete, it makes them work that much harder, but there are so many pluses at the festival aside from the competition."

Although his students are entering this year's event with a little self-imposed pressure to repeat a winning performance, placing well in the contest isn't the ultimate goal. "As long as my kids can say that they're learning, they're swinging, they're enjoying themselves and they're doing the best they possibly can," Dorsey said, "that's all I ask of them."

—Jon Ross

## School Notes



Mark Levine

**Jazzschool Records:** Pianist Mark Levine, a faculty member at Jazzschool in Berkeley, Calif., has released the Bay Area Jazz Archives CD project on Jazzschool Records. The releases focus on material from artists affiliated with the school and the discs will be available in its bookstore. Also, Jamey Aebersold has established a scholarship at the school.

Details: jazzschool.com

**Frahm Meets Blake:** The University of North Carolina, Greensboro's jazz ensemble has released its 10th CD, *The UNCG Jazz Ensemble With Special Guest Joel Frahm*. UNCG students orchestrated this disc, which features Frahm and Seamus Blake's music.

Details: uncg.edu

**DJ Donation:** Chicago radio disc jockey Richard E. Stamz has donated his personal archives to the Center for Black Music Research at the city's Columbia College. Stamz and Patrick Roberts' book *Give 'Em Soul Richard! Race, Radio and Rhythm and Blues in Chicago* has just been published (University of Illinois Press).

Details: colum.edu/cbmr

**Berklee Courses:** Berklee College of Music's African Studies and Roots Music Departments are taking their students to Clarksdale, Miss., for classes, presentations and jams with local students on April 17. During the trip, the college is planning a presentation at the state's Robert Johnson Blues Foundation. Berklee is also now featuring a new program, Topspin, to teach its marketing and management courses.

**JALC Middle School:** Applications are now being accepted for Jazz at Lincoln Center's Middle School Jazz Academy's 2010-11 class. Middle school instrumentalists from the New York area are eligible to apply and audition for the tuition-free intensive jazz instruction program held throughout the school year. Applications are due by March 12. Details: jalc.org

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On Nov. 6, 2009, at the 41st Voll-Damm Festival Internacional Jazz Barcelona, pianist Chano Domínguez took his first Blindfold Test in front of 75 people in the rehearsal space of Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya. Two days later, Domínguez and his Flamenco Quintet debuted their flamenco-styled interpretation of *Kind Of Blue*.

## Thelonious Monk Quartet

"Epistrophy" (from *Thelonious Monk Quartet With John Coltrane At Carnegie Hall*, Blue Note, 2005, rec'd 1957) Monk, piano; Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Ahmed Abdul-Malik, bass; Shadow Wilson, drums.

To start with, this is among the best jazz there is. You can tell they're all having a great time performing. Thelonious Monk is on piano and John Coltrane is the tenor saxophonist. It sounds like this is from the '50s when the two played together in their incredible collaboration. Is that Art Blakey on the drums? The drums sound so fresh. I love this music so much. And they are the greatest jazz musicians who have so much energy when they play together. I listened to Monk a lot, and he sounds like flamenco musicians. Monk plays as if he doesn't know what's going to happen next. It's like he's waiting for the last moment to say what he wants to say.

## Miles Davis

"Will O' The Wisp" (from *Sketches Of Spain*, Columbia/Legacy, 2009, rec'd 1960) Davis, trumpet; Gil Evans, conductor; Paul Chambers, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums; Elvin Jones, percussion.

I like this a lot. It sounds like the music of a Catalan, but the musician is Miles and the arranger is Gil Evans. What record is it on? Is this *Sketches Of Spain*? I haven't listened to that album in a long time, and I don't remember this tune on it. Truly, it's a unique arrangement of a piece by one of the greatest Andalusian pianists, Manuel De Falla. It's from his ballet *El Amor Brujo*. It's "Canción Del Fuego Fatuo." I recorded this same song on one of my last CDs. Everyone is relaxed. Miles knows how to play relaxed like nobody else.

## Gonzalo Rubalcaba

"Infantil" (from *Avatar*, Blue Note, 2007) Rubalcaba, piano; Yosvany Terry, saxophones; Mike Rodriguez, trumpet; Matt Brewer, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums.

This is the first time I've ever heard this. I don't know the record, but I know who the pianist is. He's one of my favorites. It's Gonzalo Rubalcaba. You have to give me that CD. The controlled, universal rhythms that he creates are amazing. He's one of today's most singular pianists. His rhythms and harmonies come from his classical training that allows him to play this way. And this is Marcus Gilmore on drums. And the Cuban saxophonist Yosvany Terry? I'm going to buy this record.

## Bebo & Cigala

"Carazón Loco" (from *Lágrimas Negras*, Calle 54, 2003) Bebo Valdés, piano; Dieguito "El Cigala," vocals; El Niño Josele, guitar; Javier Colina, bass; Israel Suárez Porrina "Piraña," cajón.

This is not difficult to recognize. It's El Cigala with Bebo Valdés. I like both of them, but this record doesn't appeal to me. I feel that it's a studio recording where they're each doing what they want to do. There's no real interaction among the musicians. I like them on their own, but the union doesn't work.

## Marc Ribot Y Los Cubanitos Postizos

"Como Se Goza En El Barrio" (from *Marc Ribot Y Los Cubanitos Postizos*, Atlantic, 1998) Ribot, guitar; Anthony Coleman, organ; Brad Jones, bass; Robert Rodriguez, drums, percussion; E.J. Rodriguez, percussion.

I have no idea who this is. The rhythm section sounds like Cuban musicians who were playing between the '70s and '80s because of the



rhythms and the type of recording. I haven't heard a guitarist play Cuban music with distortion like that. It's new to me. The sound of the guitar is a little too heavy for this kind of phrasing. I'd like to hear the Cuban tres, so that the music is softer. But this guitarist played great. It's Marc Ribot? I've never heard him before.

## Arturo O'Farrill and Claudia Acuña

"In These Shoes" (from *In These Shoes*, Zoho, 2008) O'Farrill, piano; Acuña, vocals; Adam Rogers, guitar; Michael Mossman, trumpet; Reynaldo Jorge, trombone; Yosvany Terry, saxophones; Rubén Rodríguez, bass; Dafnis Prieto, drums; Pedrito Martinez, percussion.

Music is for laughing or crying or dancing. This is definitely for dancing. I don't know who this is, but it's a modern recording. I like it. The vocalist has a good voice, a pretty voice. It's like a commercial record. It has a hook, and it makes you move. It's Arturo? He's continuing the work of his father Chico O'Farrill, and he has inherited all the great ways of interpreting different styles of music. This is Claudia? She's a good composer and singer. You can listen to it as well as dance to it.

## Paquito D'Rivera and The United Nations Orchestra

"Andalucía Medley" (from *Live At Manchester Craftsmen's Guild*, Jazz MCG, 1997) D'Rivera, clarinet; Oscar Stagnaro, bass.

This is a great musician. It's Paquito D'Rivera. I believe the bassist is Oscar Stagnaro. A few months ago Paquito and I did a tour together, and he played this tune with Oscar every night. I can't remember the name of the song. But this is a magnificent number, and it's a magnificent interpretation.

## Buika Y Chucho

"Soledad" (from *El Último Trago: Con La Colaboración De Chucho Valdés*, Warner Music Spain, 2009) Chucho Valdés, piano; Concha Buika, vocals; Javier Limón, guitar.

This is the first time I've heard this. I like it. I'm pretty sure this is Concha Buika singing and Chucho Valdés on piano. She has a recognizable voice, and while Chucho is a pianist who can play hard, he's also a sensitive musician who knows how to accompany a singer and play to her strengths. He revolutionized Cuban music with Irakere. He turned the music on its head. It was fantastic.

DB

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