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PETER GANUSHKIN

Evan Parker

## 26 Miguel Zenón

*Pliability & Thrust* | By Jim Macnie

It seems like everywhere you go, Miguel Zenón is somehow involved with dance. But the Puerto-Rico born alto saxophonist and recent recipient of a MacArthur “genius” grant doesn’t play dance music per se. His horn is better known for its agility, flying at breakneck speed and stressing his fluency in the bebop tradition. The dance elements bubble up because Zenón controls the music’s temperament by gracefully thrusting himself into his rhythm section’s agitation, blending acute teamwork and killer chops while riding his band’s very intricate grooves.

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## Gateway To Elegance

Miguel Zenón didn't get to be Miguel Zenón—recipient of Guggenheim and MacArthur grants, six-year veteran of the acclaimed SFJAZZ Collective and one of the brightest rising-star alto saxophonists/composers to emerge in the past decade—by resting on his laurels and relying on his native talents alone. He got there by woodshedding, setting goals, taking risks, giving birth to dozens of original compositions ... and transcribing jazz solos from classic recordings.

The act of writing out somebody else's solo note-for-note is particularly hard work; it requires lots of time and keen attention to detail (plus a tape machine with playback speed control), not to mention sheer determination. But transcribing solos as part of a regular practice/study regimen has serious benefits for the development of any jazz artist. Just ask Zenón, who spent considerable time during his interview with DownBeat writer Jim Macnie talking enthusiastically about the educational experience of putting some of his favorite jazz solos down on paper. The week they got together, the saxophonist had been working on a Sonny Rollins spin from "52nd Street Theme" recorded with Don Cherry.

Recalling his own formative years, Zenón told Macnie that transcribing was his first step towards learning the jazz language. The first solo he ever scrutinized was Cannonball Adderly's flight on "Freddie Freeloader." He said that Charlie Parker was his main man, though: "Embraceable You" is one of his favorites; "Warming Up A Riff," too. "I'd transcribe one guy for an entire year, dig into someone," Zenón said. "Joe [Henderson], Rollins, Lee Konitz."

Zenón noted that when he got to Berklee at age 19, he met other students who studied their heroes' work by absorbing the trajectory of their solos. Jaleel Shaw, Jeremy Pelt and Avishai Cohen all enjoyed engaging in animated conversations about their forebears, from Johnny Hodges to Freddie Hubbard.

Shaw, who's now in New York and has worked with Roy Haynes among many others, recalled those school days. "We checked out different people and then shared what we learned," he told Macnie. "The fact that Miguel was transcribing didn't surprise me—I knew that's what you had to do. That's one of the reasons we got along. That, and talking about the things that were important: practicing, learning, developing your own sound. One of my earliest teachers in Philly had me transcribing Miles Davis solos. I've always felt it was something that would help me understand vocabulary—just like learning how to talk. When you hear people talk, you pick up new words, formulate sentences. It's important to check out the masters—Kenny Garrett was on the list for sure. Donald Harrison, too. My biggest hero growing up was Bobby Watson. I never transcribed him, but I could sing you lots of his solos. The more open you were to everyone, the more you knew."

Taking down transcriptions is a process of discovery, one that teaches discipline and develops the ear while revealing the thought-processes and creative genius of jazz's sagest improvisers. The more you do it, the more enlightened you will be, and the more eloquent your self-expression will ultimately become.

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Miguel Zenón:  
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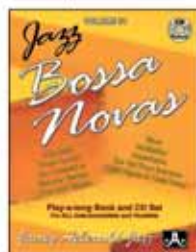
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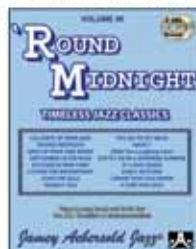
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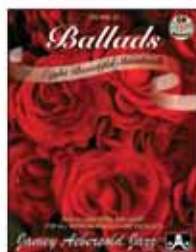
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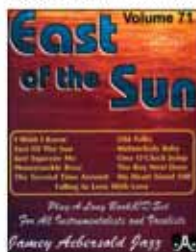


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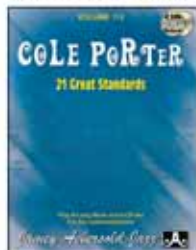
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## Chords & Discords

### Interventions

I've noticed that Manfred Eicher's interventions on his recordings can be too strong ("Jazz Producers: A New Reality," March). I know how some of the Italian musicians he has produced sound when they play live sets: Stefano Bollani or Enrico Rava, for example. On the recordings all of them have been deprived of their joyful and energetic features. I prefer Jordi Pujol's statement about how each musician has his background and way of thinking. Maybe the truth is in the middle. As a producer you need to be present and give suggestions when needed, but most of the time you don't need to say anything because musicians have clear ideas.

Marco Valente  
jazzengine@gmail.com

### Satchmo Not First

In his review of Terry Teachout's *Pops*, Eric Fine calls Armstrong "the first virtuoso to perform popular music rather than classical" ("Reviews," April). That simply is not correct. If any individual can lay claim to that distinction, it is Sidney Bechet, whose fluidity and power on the clarinet and soprano saxophone was established before Armstrong came on the scene. Teachout himself notes, on page 12 of his book: "It is not even right to call [Armstrong] the first great jazz soloist, as many critics and scholars have done. Sidney Bechet, the New Orleans clarinetist who was four years his senior, preceded him by a decade."

Michael Weston  
Evanston, Ill.

### Where's Akiyoshi?

I was disappointed with your "My Favorite Big Band Album" article (April). When 12 of your list of 25 essential big band albums are from the same three artists (Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Miles Davis), it makes having a list rather pointless. Also, I was shocked not to find any mention of Toshiko Akiyoshi. The Akiyoshi-Tabackin big band ruled the '70s and beyond, with Akiyoshi becoming the first woman and first Asian to win a DownBeat award. It's no coincidence that she was commissioned to compose and debut three new songs at the 1999 Monterey Jazz Festival, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Ellington's birth. Akiyoshi and Ellington were



### Jazz Producers: A New Reality

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arguably the two most original big band composers of all time.

Gordon Webb  
Santa Clara, Calif.

### Hodges' Last Jam

I loved the "My Favorite Big Band Album" article. All due respect to Roy Nathanson, but ...*And His Mother Called Him Bill* was not Johnny Hodges' last recording. Hodges played some nasty blues on his very last recording: April 27, 1970's "Blues For New Orleans." This incredible song, with Wild Bill Davis on organ, can be heard on Duke Ellington's *New Orleans Suite*. Sadly, Hodges died two weeks later, on May 11, 1970.

Mick Carlon  
Centerville, Mass.

### Longo Deserves Praise

Robert L. Doerschuk's review of Mike Longo's *Sting Like A Bee* ("Reviews," April) was off the mark. Even though he is a respected journalist, his remarks have all the earmarks of a frustrated musician with an axe to grind. I confess I may be a bit prejudiced, having met Mike at a concert and found him to be friendly and a wealth of jazz knowledge.

Henry Lloyd  
Lancaster, Pa.

### Corrections

- The story about Columbia College's blues camp ("Summer Camp Guide," March) misstated Fernando Jones' title. He is the college's blues ensemble director, and Gary Yerkins is the director of Columbia's Contemporary Urban and Pop Music degree program.
- Drummer Paul F. Murphy and pianist Larry Willis were misidentified in the review of their *Foundations* (April).  
DownBeat regrets the errors.

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



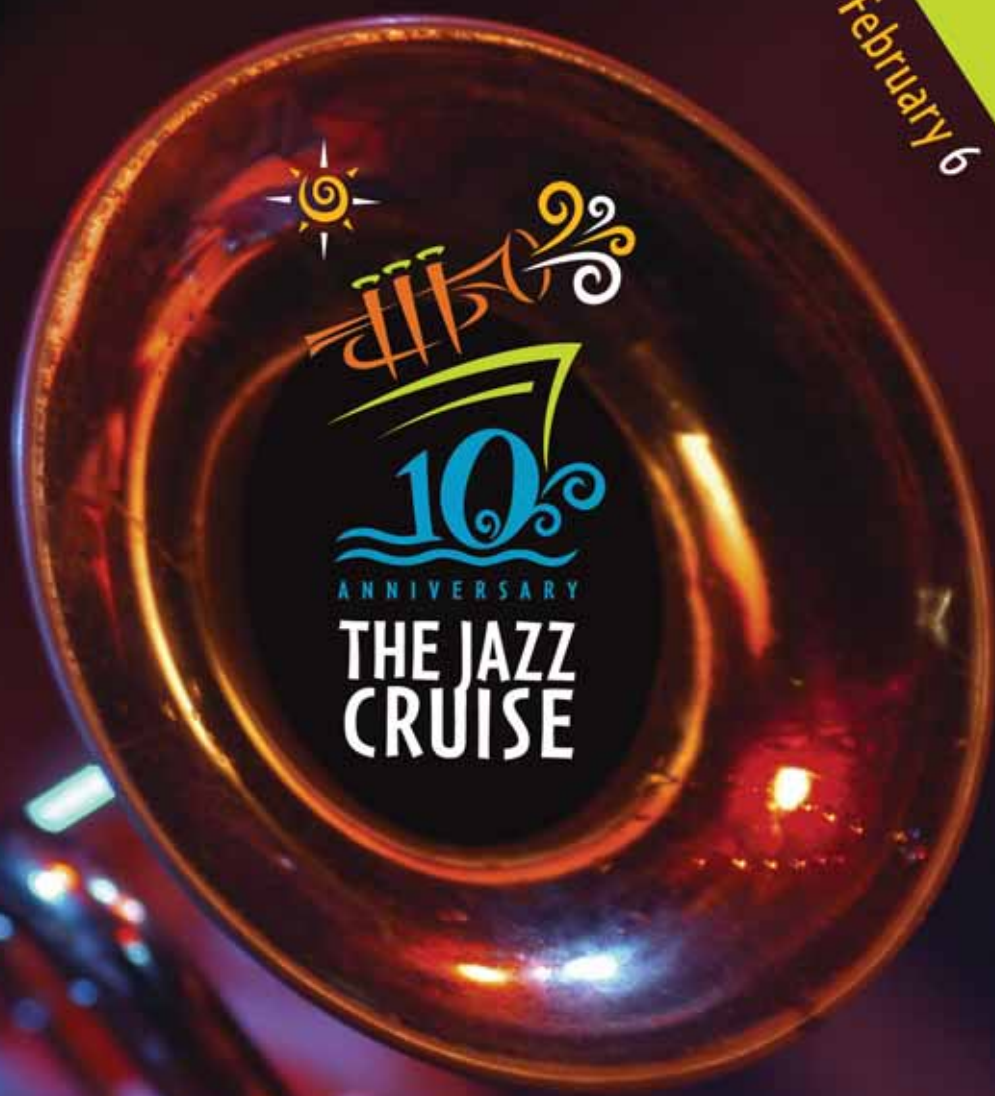
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## Monarch's Brushes

**Musicians valued Ed Thigpen's remarkable taste, class**

If ever a drummer could be likened to a ballet dancer, a king, a regal racehorse and a perfectionist artist all at once, it would be Ed Thigpen, who died on Jan. 13 at age 79 in Copenhagen, his home since 1972.

Best known as one of the driving forces behind Oscar Peterson's great 1960s trio (with Ray Brown), Thigpen was a drummer of extreme taste and timbral diversity, executing crystalline figures with relaxed but profound poise, control and rhythmic beauty. A brilliant brush player (heard to great delight on "Thag's Dance," from Peterson's *The Sound Of The Trio*), Thigpen gave each note equal importance, like an orchestral percussionist mapping out the perfect performance.

Thigpen popped straightforward rhythms behind everyone from John Coltrane, Dexter Gordon and Bud Powell to Billy Taylor, Lee Morgan and Charlie Rouse—and many more on over 600 albums. Where many jazz musicians of his era were dogged by various vices, Thigpen was a devout Christian, beloved family man, celebrated educator and lifelong student of the instrument. And as filmmaker Don McGlynn, who made the documentary *Ed Thigpen: Master Of Rhythm, Time and Taste*, said, "Ed wasn't stuck in doing a Jo Jones thing, or an Oscar Peterson thing, or a swing thing. He was always looking somewhere else."

Born in Chicago in 1930, Thigpen was raised in St. Louis. When his parents separated, he and his mother relocated to Los Angeles. He studied music and played drums at Thomas Jefferson High School, and worked his way to New York, playing with Cootie Williams and Buddy Collette until, in 1951, he was drafted into the army. Upon Thigpen's return to New York in 1954, he worked with Dinah Washington, Oscar Pettiford, Paul Quinichette, Johnny Hodges, Jutta Hipp, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Lennie Tristano and Ernie Wilkins. In 1959, he joined the Oscar Peterson Trio.

"What attracted me to Oscar Peterson's Trio was the way Ed Thigpen played the ensembles," drummer Kenny Washington said. "Ed really made those three guys sound as one. It's all in the way Ed played the arrangements. He understood playing long notes and short notes, he knew how to translate those values on the drum set."

Thigpen's drum set mastery was particularly evident in his glistening brushwork, which he eventually explained in one of his many instructional books, *The Sound Of The Brushes*, and in the video *The Essence Of The Brushes*.

"Ed was like a ballet dancer behind the set," Monty Alexander said of Thigpen, who played on his record *The River*. "He played the air sometimes: You could hear the brushes shimmering in the air. He harkened back to how the older cats played the drums when it was a show in itself. Like Jo Jones, Ed sat at the drum set like he was presiding over his kingdom."

"Ed was beautiful to watch," said Jeff Hamilton, who often traded brush information with Thigpen. "Sometimes in solos Ed used a gliding stroke where he would mash both brushes down, and both hands would move left, then right, in a unison direction from 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock and then return. That enabled him to get a long, legato sound. Ed explored what the brushes had to offer; he really delved into what he could create."



Playing time, Ed had a smooth sound with his left hand but he could create a very stinging sound with staccato notes playing straight over the head to get that precision you needed with Oscar and Ray."

After a six-and-a-half-year run (and nearly 50 albums) with Peterson, Thigpen joined Ella Fitzgerald from 1968 to 1972, then settled in Denmark, where he continued to perform and teach nearly until his death. Like Ben Webster, Duke Jordan and Kenny Drew, Thigpen was visiting jazz royalty in Copenhagen, holding court first at the famed Montmartre Club, then the Copenhagen Jazz House. Ed joined the Jazz House trio with pianists Horace Parlan or Kenny Drew and bassist Jesper Lundberg. The trio accompanied visiting artists including Benny Carter, Teddy Wilson, Harry "Sweets" Edison and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis.

"He really used dynamics," Lundberg said. "You could have these long quiet passages, then Ed would explode and play really loud for a brief amount of time then return to more normal volume."

Thigpen continued to freelance and record solo projects, such as his own *Young Men And Olds* (1990, Timeless), *Mr. Taste* (1992, Justin Time), *It's Entertainment* (1998, Stunt), *Three Impact* (2002, Crown) and 2002's *Element Of Swing* with Joe Lovano.

"The music that we played together was pretty expansive," Lovano said. "Ed was all about swinging and heavy groove, but he played very free and could execute ideas within any form. He was a very creative improviser and he had beautiful control and sound." —Ken Micallef

## Riffs



**Nina Memorial:** Singer Lisa Simone Kelly kisses the statue of her mother, Nina Simone, at its dedication ceremony in Tryon, N.C., on Feb. 21.

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

**Last Lights:** After 37 years, presenter Jack Kleinsinger will stage his final "Highlights In Jazz" event with a Billy Taylor Trio concert at New York's Tribeca Performing Arts Center on May 13. Details: [tribecapac.org](http://tribecapac.org)

**Blues Ambassador:** Blues guitarist Little Joe McLerran's quartet is touring the Middle East this spring to promote cultural exchange as part of the U.S. State Department and Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rhythm Road program. McLerran will also perform at the Grosvenor Auditorium in Washington, D.C., on June 3 and New York's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola on June 5. Details: [jalc.org](http://jalc.org)

**Marsalis' Honor:** Wynton Marsalis received the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Jazz Album for *He And She* (Blue Note) on Feb. 26.

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

**WBGO To Go:** Newark, N.J.-based jazz radio station WBGO/Jazz 88.3FM has launched an iPhone application to download broadcasts through the iTunes Music Store. The application will also include images from Francis Wolff's photographs of classic Blue Note artists. Details: [wbgo.org](http://wbgo.org)

**RIP, Johnny Alf:** Singer/pianist Johnny Alf died in Santo André, Brazil, on March 4 of prostate cancer. He was 80. Alf began combining Brazilian music with American jazz in the 1950s, and he helped spark the movement that would become internationally known as bossa nova. His 1990 disc *Olhos Negros* featured him in duets with Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil.

# THE INSIDER: ANDY BEY *Strengthening The Muse*

By Sachal Vasandani

One of the most exciting and enlightening moments for a jazz singer is when a master vocalist makes time to talk with a colleague. Over the course of my recent conversation with Andy Bey, I received in-depth answers to my questions about repertoire, harmony, performance and the voice itself.

When Andy and I discussed his voice, I asked him where in his wide range he enjoys singing today. After his time with Horace Silver, marked by regular use of a full, high voice, he wanted to showcase another side of his singing. "It's not just about singing the high note because you can sing high," he said.

This decision yielded *Ballads, Blues & Bey* in 1996 and has influenced the mood on other albums since. To this day, Bey can put his voice wherever he needs, and he still has complete ownership of the "chest mix" of head and chest voice, often a technical challenge for singers. The unique character of Andy's "chest mix" or pasagio is one of the things I love most about his voice.

Nowadays, Andy performs repertoire in keys that allows him to sing in the rich, lower register of his voice, particularly during the first chorus. He has made some drastic adjustments—a third or fourth down from stock male keys over the years. If I were performing with piano alone, I might consider such a move, but with a full trio I'm reluctant to focus the register too low, because the voice may compete with the band's volume. Andy consistently prefers the lower key, even with his trio. However, he plans specifically so that, he says, "On that second chorus, I can kind of stretch it. I used to do 'But Not For Me' in the key of E-flat. I do it in B-flat now, a fourth down, and I can still use enough gusto in the second chorus without screeching."

Along with the great jazz and r&b singers, Andy noted his connection to Schoenberg, Indian classical music and even the AACM. Even within the most standard of standards, Andy's performances seem to be defined by relentless harmonic exploration.

Andy generally plays piano for himself when he sings. When singing a dissonant note,



Andy Bey

JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

be it written or improvised, he often chooses not to voice the note on the piano. This always takes me by surprise. Many musicians, especially singers, intuitively expect a compelling instrument to catch dissonant melodic turns. Without the piano's support, the voice lacks a solid floor. There is a danger that it may slip away from its intended note. But it is also free.

"I wanna be that free to explore harmonically, in any way that I want to," he said. "I like the subtly polytonal. I'm not bringing that much attention to the voice in a sense. The vocal line is kind of dynamic ... but I'm singing it low enough. I always think of it as a dialogue. Voice and piano. Not like me playing for myself, but call and response."

Andy's exploration continues, and I am particularly inspired by his commitment to improvisation.

"If you got a muse in you, that's strong," he said. "It takes years—I'm 70 years old, I'm still looking for something, I'm still inspired by something. The most important thing is that you can keep your mind open, and you can still swing with the best of them and you can do whatever you wanna do, and you do it in a way that can reach. If it communicates, good. Some are gonna like it, some hate it, but you can't worry 'bout who's gonna like it." **DB**

Singer Sachal Vasandani's latest CD is *We Move* (Mack Avenue); he can be reached at his Web site, [svjazz.com](http://svjazz.com).



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## New York's Village Vanguard 75-Year Anniversary A Cause For Celebration

The Village Vanguard's 75th birthday celebration in New York on Feb. 22 was an understated, hip affair. An assortment of musicians (among them Jimmy Heath, Paul Motian, Joe Lovano, Cedar Walton, Ravi Coltrane, Bill Charlap, Renee Rosnes, Anat Cohen, Peter Washington), writers (a host of

prominent jazz critics as well as novelist Antonio Muñoz Molina), industry luminaries, employees past and present and friends of proprietor Lorraine Gordon, 86, munched on barbecue, rice-and-peas and slaw, drank from the open bar, gossiped, networked and reminisced. The Vanguard Orchestra, now in the



Lorraine Gordon (right) with daughter Deborah Gordon

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45th year of its continuous Monday residence in this acoustic miracle of a basement, had a rare night off.

On this evening, the only performer was Professor Irwin Corey, still billing himself as the World's Foremost Authority at 96. The planet's oldest standup comic (he first played the Vanguard in 1942) delivered an impromptu lecture as the staff activated the soundtrack for a brief film by Deborah Gordon about her father, Max, who—from the visual evidence in the documentary—threw much wilder parties than this during the Vanguard's early years. Using rare performance footage and testimony from such back-in-the-day Vanguard habitués as Corey, Lenny Bruce, Pete Seeger, Betty Comden, Adolph Green, the Duke of Iron, Eartha Kitt, Wally Cox and Max Gordon himself, Gordon imparted the flavor of the Vanguard's formative years when jazz was part of a broader tasting menu comprising blues, folk, comedy, Caribbean and poetry.

"Television took all the artists away that Max could employ," Lorraine Gordon said. "So Max switched to jazz in the early '50s."

Seeger's soundbyte in the film focused on the importance of privileging perseverance, the daily grind, over the fleeting inspiration of individual genius. Perhaps Gordon was thinking of this during her closing remarks, when she shed her crusty veneer and cried at the miracle of her club's "longevity," as Jimmy Heath punned it. She first set foot in the Vanguard around 1940 to hear Leadbelly, married Max Gordon in 1950 and throughout the two decades since his death has guided the Vanguard into 21st century cutting edge.

"I love to play at the Vanguard," Heath said. "The intimacy, the clientele. The sound people are knowledgeable—it's not a place where everything's blowing your head off, but you can hear everything. When I'm not playing, I like to go because of the atmosphere. I liked Max Gordon and the way he treated people. It's a different period, things have changed, but the feeling of the Vanguard is still about the same."

—Ted Panken



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Actor Steve Zahn (left), Kermit Ruffins and actor Wendell Pierce

## HBO Drama 'Tremé' Brings New Orleans Musicians To Prime Time

New Orleans trumpeter Kermit Ruffins is an enthusiastic improviser onstage, but he doesn't mind sticking to a tight script as he plays himself in the new HBO series "Tremé." The drama, which begins airing on April 11, takes place in his city during the months after Hurricane Katrina and focuses on neighborhood musical communities. Ruffins is one of many musicians who play themselves, alongside actors portraying their fictional counterparts.

"This is such a big plus for the city," Ruffins said. "And to get our music on TV is really big-time. I'm always asked, 'How can we get New Orleans music back in the mainstream?' I always say we have to be on MTV or BET, and now it's going to happen on HBO. It's crazy how much music they're using in this."

The series' creators, David Simon and Eric Overmyer, had previously worked on the network's hit crime drama "The Wire." They've drawn on talent from that series for "Tremé," including writer George Pelecanos and actor Wendell Pierce, who plays trombonist Antoine Batiste. Pelecanos says, "The whole message of the show is that this is a town worth saving and there's no place like it in the world. We can't afford to let it go away."

"People are still fighting to get things done, and we're still trying to keep people's interest up," Pelecanos said. "Shining a light on these people's lives and also showing their struggles is hopefully going to help them out. That's part of the deal, part of what we're trying to do."

Along with filming "Tremé" on location, the series' producers and writers' insistence on fully representing the city's musical depth is another mark of authenticity. Pelecanos, who also weaves telling musical references into his own crime novels, is well aware of New Orleans' musical strengths.

"We're trying to show the diversity in the music and where everything comes from," Pelecanos said. "That it's not just 'When The Saints Go Marching In.' I'm a big lover of soul music, so I've been trying to push Irma Thomas in the show, or Johnny Adams. Because New Orleans has this rich soul tradition."

Musician cast members have also been enlisted as advisors.

"When the show was about to happen, I went to the hotel room and sat down with the writers and just brainstormed while drinking Bloody Marys," Ruffins said. "They're encouraging me to call anytime, change the script, and giving us a lot of hands-on. They totally get it. We're living in this city our entire lives."

Now that Ruffins has proven himself onscreen, he adds that "Tremé" may just mark the beginning of a new career.

"I always wanted to have my own show and have New Orleans music once a week, just for an hour," Ruffins said. "Maybe we can make that happen now."

—Aaron Cohen



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## Portland Jazz Festival Connects With Knockout Norwegian Improvisers

Artistic director Bill Royston has distinguished the Portland Jazz Festival by regularly shaking up its focus. By changing its emphasis from year to year it thrives as one of the country's more unpredictable soirees. In 2007 artists affiliated with ECM Records were spotlighted, in 2008 free-jazz heavies like Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor were feted, and in 2009 the fest tipped its hat to the 70th anniversary of Blue Note Records.

Because of the shoddy economy (which almost cancelled the festival in 2009 until Alaska Airlines offered sponsorship), this year's edition, which ran Feb. 21–28, was considerably smaller than in previous years. Sturdy bookings like Luciana Souza, Pharoah Sanders and Dave Douglas Brass Ecstasy were among a slate of concerts representing what's good, if not always progressive, in mainstream jazz. But Royston still scored an artistic coup by programming a careful mini-fest of cutting-edge musicians from Norway. It says something about the reputation of the Portland Jazz Festival with the local population that seven of the eight headline concerts were sold out—there were dozens of other admission-free sets by local musicians around town—including all three shows by the Norwegians.

Reedist Trygve Seim and accordionist Frode Haltli played at the festival in 2007 in a different configuration, but they're hardly household names in Portland. Their stunning duets at Norse Hall—a quaint Norwegian community center about a mile from downtown—kept the audience rapt, with meditative compositions that borrowed musical language from Armenia. On a piece called "Yeraz" Trygve's gorgeous tenor tone meticulously borrowed the sorrowful timbre of the duduk, the trademark Armenian wooden flute. The crowd in the hall

was equally silent and attentive for the Christian Wallumrød Ensemble's knockout U.S. debut. The peculiarly configured sextet—with the leader on piano and harmonium, Eivind Lønning on trumpet, Gjermund Larsen on violin and Hardanger fiddle, Tanja Orning on cello, Giovanna Pessi on baroque harp, and Pål Hausken, on loan from the trio In the Country, on percussion—played music from its superb recent *Fabula Lugano Suite*, a striking mixture of baroque composition, Scandinavian folk melodies, and contemporary classical harmonies and dynamics. The group played with no amplification, allowing the gorgeous sonorities to wash over the audience with startling purity. In The Country's set revealed a different yet equally sumptuous thread in contemporary Norwegian music, greatly intensifying and stretching out the pieces from its latest album, *Whiteout*. Pianist Morten Qvenild appended his elegant, spacious post-Paul Bley piano playing with electronics, triggering melodic and harmonic shadows via computer, but the real joy of the performance came from watching the group—which also includes bassist Roger Arntzen and drummer Hausken—rip into the material, bringing an immediacy and visceral quality that's not always apparent in its studio work. Like so many Norwegian musicians, In The Country pays little heed to jazz purity, singing melodic lines that might've come from an indie rock band in another universe.

The crowd ate up the Dave Holland Quintet

and the Mingus Big Band at the 1,000-seat Newmark Theatre. Individual soloists in each group transcended somewhat predictable material. True, there's nothing predictable in Mingus' music, but the group's arrangements sometimes sap the raw power in the bassist's original recordings. Inspired improvising from saxophonist Seamus Blake, trumpeter Brandon Lee and drummer Justin Faulkner brought the house down a couple of times, although Faulkner's flash tended to overwhelm his impeccable timing and deep sense of swing. While Holland long ago carved out a warm, wonderful aesthetic with his durable quintet, his compositions too often follow a regular template. Luckily, his killer band can imbue them with more than enough fire and intellectual rigor to overcome a certain predictability.

—Peter Margasak



Christian Wallumrød

FRAN KAUFMAN

## Creative Sparks Light Up Umbria Jazz Winter in Orvieto

Belying Italy's deep recession and tumultuous politics, the 17th edition of Umbria Jazz Winter in Orvieto, which ran Dec. 30–Jan. 3, was a financial success—every concert was sold out. The festival proved to be an aesthetic triumph as well, as artistic director Carlo Pagnotta and aide de camp Enzo Capua booked a cohort of world-class musicians for a full week's residence and provided acoustically up-to-snuff venues, excellent sound systems and good instruments—a recipe for inspired musical production.



John Clayton (left) and John Patitucci

UMBRIA JAZZ



Kurt Elling kept it creative, took chances and never repeated himself. Neither did octogenarian guitarist Jim Hall, who played with unfailingly deep intelligence and wit, eliciting barely amplified four-way conversations with the personnel—Bill Frisell, Scott Colley and Joey Baron—on challenging repertoire from his 2009 release *Hemispheres* (Artist Share).

Amplification was raised only slightly on duo concerts by John Scofield and Larry Goldings, who eschewed groove and paid close attention to melodic imperatives. The Rosenberg Trio (Nonnie, Nous'che and Stochelo Rosenberg) swung through Django Reinhardt repertoire with staggering facility and joie de vivre. Brazilian guitar master Romero Lubambo provided intuitive countermelodies and elegant harmonic support for vocalist Leny Andrade, who has no peer at evoking saudade—her soulful timbre and just-so phrasing reduced several seasoned musicians in the audience to tears.

Bassist John Clayton played four telepathic duos with John Patitucci that addressed a long timeline of contrabass expression, and another four with his pianist son, Gerald, whose off-the-

hook chops and fresh approach to mainstream jazz piano vocabulary mark him as a singular voice in his generation.

Monty Alexander presented his refined concept of groove with the recent Harlem-Kingston Express project, blending a jazz trio (bassist Hassan Shakur and drummer George Fludas) and a steaming reggae unit, weaving back and forth between the idioms with orchestral finesse. Representing the northern border of Afro-Caribbean expression, New Orleans pianist Jonathan Batiste presented his informed roots-to-the-future concept on a series of after-hours sets.

Piano maestro Renato Sellani and an all-star "Trio Di Roma" represented Italy, along with pianist Danilo Rea, bassist Enzo Pietropaoli and drummer Roberto Gatto. But no single artist more palpably represented the festival's animating imperatives than singer-guitarist Allen Harris, who helmed a hard-swinging quintet that featured drummer Alvester Garnett. Harris put it on the line every set, conveying the songbook and the blues with intelligence and soul, triangulating elements from Billy Eckstine, Nat Cole, Joe Williams and Tony Bennett into his own argot.

—Ted Panken

## Intimate California Theater Ideal Setting For Creative Mehldau Solo Performance

For most of Brad Mehldau's nearly 15 years in the jazz spotlight, the pianist has been working out his creative energies through his celebrated trio. Meanwhile, though, one of the more peripheral and intriguing projects-in-progress in Mehldau's evolution is his solo setting.

Mehldau went solo, and beautifully so, in the ideal ambience of the Lobero Theatre in Santa Barbara, Calif., on Jan. 22. Although it generally only presents a handful of jazz concerts each year, the Lobero—a historic and intimate 19th century former opera house—might be considered one of America's best kept secrets as a jazz room: Charles Lloyd premiered and recorded *Sangam* with Zakir Hussain and Eric Harland here. Perched center stage before a Steinway grand, Mehldau's pristine, yet creatively wild, solo concert at the Lobero conjured up the impression of an inspired convergence of site, sound and artistic vision.

As is often the case with Mehldau, repertoire is a rubbery thing. It was both surprising and expected to hear him move seamlessly from a Nick Drake shoe-gaze anthem to the jazz standard patrol of a mad-minimalist-revisionist "I Cover The Waterfront" and "My Favorite Things" (played in a polygonal, sweeping and exploratory fashion very different from John Coltrane's take), and back to popular songs of more recent vintage. Mehldau worked up an especially compelling new version of Neil Young's "The Needle And The Damage Done," with Baroque-like contrapuntal lines surging in



the pianist's famously active left hand. Late in the show, Mehldau summoned up a dense, buzzing nest of notes, out of which the familiar strains of Nirvana's "Lithium" emerged, falling backwards into a more dissonant and vulnerable passage for the telling refrain "I love you/I'm not gonna' crack."

Little of Mehldau's musical approach during the concert tapped into garden variety showpiece soloing. His restraint was so notable that when the pianist finally did lay out a virtuosic right hand solo in an encore, it seemed a bit startling: The audience had been lured into his persuasive voice as a texture maker and variation spinner, often accenting intricate-while-ruffian pianistic thickets and thrumming sonic fabrics.

—Josef Woodard

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## Ali Jackson Jr. 🎵 Tapestry Mastering

No active jazz musician faces a more challenging job description than Ali Jackson Jr.

As the Jazz at Lincoln Center drummer since 2006, his mandate is to idiomatically articulate a lexicon of beats that span the entire timeline of jazz expression. And he has to do so with a fresh approach. These rhythms carry names: “rag two,” “a New Orleans two (stingy with the fourth beat),” “old church two,” “modern swing,” “chain gang stomp,” various iterations of “valse” meter and swing meter (“swinging 3/4,” “Elvin Jones 3/4,” “refined burn-out swing,” “modern 3/4 swing,” “4/4 swing”), the Latin tinge, “church 6/4,” “4 in 6,” “free,” “slow 3” and “rubato, colors and textures.” Jackson catches them all in inventive, subtle ways, orchestrating apropos melodic, motivic and timbral designs from the drumkit.

“Grooves and songs have meaning,” Jackson said, encapsulating the core aesthetic underpinning of his 2007 self-released CD, *Wheelz Keep Rollin’* (Bigwenzee), and his more recent show, “Beats Of New York City,” a self-described “tapestry of disciplines” that he had presented over four sets the previous weekend at Lincoln Center’s Allen Room. For the occasion, he convened guitarist Lionel Loueke, pianist Marc Cary, bassist Ben Williams, hand drummers Andrew Daniels and Adewole Love, gospel pianist Damien Snead, a sermonizing preacher, three female poets, two tap dancers, four dancers from the Alvin Ailey Co. and an African dancer.

With so many moving parts and potentially dissonant genres in play, the concert could have been a train wreck. Instead, Jackson drew on his rhythmic connoisseurship and a leitmotif of blues expression to connect the threads.

“Over time, we’ve lost the meaning of what the groove is,” Jackson said. “Then you start to lose your identity. In a subtle way, this show was about not losing that identity.”

Originally from Detroit, Jackson, 33, does not identify with the hip-hop culture that surrounded his formative years. “I’m informed by hip-hop, and respect it, but my objectives are different,” he said. “In jazz you have to deal with more variables to be successful.”

Jackson traces his immersion in the jazz timeline to grade school, when, in addition to studying classical piano and African drums, he began to gig on drumset with his namesake father, a bassist. He also played with such slightly older Detroit jazz musicians as Rodney Whitaker, James Carter and J.D. Allen. His father helped provide opportunities to see Philly Joe Jones, Tony Williams and Art Blakey. More hands-on information came from his uncle, veteran drum-



FRANK STEWART/JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

mer Oliver Jackson. Max Roach and Elvin Jones also befriended Ali Jackson when he moved to New York in 1994 to attend the New School.

“In Detroit, I was exposed to lots of different cultures,” Jackson said. “I was encouraged to play African drums, classical music and experimental music. I played r&b and top-40 gigs. I played in Catholic church, in Baptist church, in Pentecostal church. My father had a saying, ‘Don’t be set, you’re walking on eggshells.’ Always be aware of what’s happening in the moment: Your preparation will cause you to make good decisions.”

“The more pressure there is on a gig, the better Ali is,” Wynton Marsalis said. “In the studio, he is unbelievably firm. We recorded a piece by Chano Dominguez, with complex flamenco rhythms, 18 to 20 minutes long. He learned his entire part from memory.”

Marsalis met Jackson as a 12-year-old, tracked him during his teens and began hiring

him as a sub during his twenties, including an emergency call a few days after Sept. 11, 2001—directly after the band had recorded *All Rise*—to fly to Seattle for the first concert of a tour.

“We had no rehearsal, just got up on the bandstand and played the gig,” Jackson said. “I had most of the music in advance, and I studied hard. It was noticeable that I came prepared.

I have a family, and this is one of the most stable jobs in jazz,” he continued. “But it’s also an opportunity to play music you’d never play elsewhere and gain a clear understanding of jazz history. I can sound like Big Sid Catlett in one measure and like Jeff Watts in the next. If we play Duke Ellington, I might think of Sam Woodyard on the record, then how it would sound to play something like Buhaina, and then add something of my own. I’m not going to sound like any of these people; my diction might not be exactly the same, but I’ll be in the same vocabulary. All jazz is modern.” —Ted Panken





Dom Flemons (left), Rhiannon Giddens and Justin Robinson

## Carolina Chocolate Drops 🌟 Beyond Appalachia

The Carolina Chocolate Drops look modern: With their colorful hip clothes they could pass for a knock-off of the Black-Eyed Peas. And they know the contemporary scene well. On *Genuine Negro Jig* (Nonesuch), the trio's third disc, they remake Blu Cantrell's 2001 hit "Hit 'Em Up Style," a hip-hop-laced r&b song that helped define "the dirty South" sound. But their musical vision draws from an earlier time.

The group makes "Hit 'Em Up Style" even more Southern and dirtier—replacing the hi-tech pow of the original with fiddle, banjo, guitar, percussion and human beatbox. While Rhiannon Giddens' soprano keeps the hip-hop lingo intact, her voice seems more appropriate at the Grand Ole Opry than at BET's Hip-Hop Awards.

Each member of the group sings lead and individually plays such instruments as the banjo, jug, bones, guitar, fiddle and kazoo. They also have a serious mission, which is to unveil the oft-ignored black American roots of string-band music, more commonly known as Appalachian music, a misnomer that group member Justin Robinson wants to squash.

"We don't really play Appalachian music," Robinson said. "Some of the music comes from the Appalachian, but that is one of the big misconceptions: This music was all over the South, in the Midwest and in New England—basically anywhere Europeans and blacks met. Another reason why a lot of people don't realize that there were blacks playing this music is because it's not sexy. Most folklorists have an agenda, so that's where that notion started that this amazing stuff was only going on in Appalachia."

When Robinson mentioned the "sexy" factor, he's speaking on the issue of how the music industry has historically marketed music based on color lines.

"A lot of this string band music was out of the black community long enough where white people had an interest in it but black people didn't," said group member Dom Flemons.

Giddens adds that they've seen some Americans resist accepting the banjo as an African instrument.

"It goes back to the romanticization and the feeling of the white American majority that they don't have a culture," she said. "It's all wrapped into that idea that string band is something that 'we'—meaning white people—came up with, this is 'our' music, this is 'our' ethnicity."

She then tells of an Internet listserv dedicated to the banjo and how heated the discussion got at the mentioning of Africa. "If you even mentioned the idea of the banjo being African, you got flamed," she said. "This guy named Tony Thomas was having a hard time talking about the African roots of the banjo without getting flamed. So he started an alternate listserv called Black Banjo Then & Now."

The Black Banjo Gathering in Boone, N.C., in April 2005 stemmed from that listserv. That gathering was where the Carolina Chocolate Drops met, as they sought to learn from legendary musician Joe Thompson.

"We still have access to people who have these memories," Giddens said. "That's why it's so important to get this stuff out here now while we still have people like Joe Thompson."

At the group's Martin Luther King Jr. Day concert at Virginia's Birchmere, the audience was packed, yet speckled with notably few black faces in the crowd. While that turnout could indicate that attracting a sizable black audience continues to be a challenge, the fight isn't hopeless. Since the Carolina Chocolate Drops have received high-profile kudos from the likes of Oprah Winfrey and Denzel Washington, they might just turn more blacks to their favor.

"Those are names that make black people sit up and take notice," Giddens said. "These are established names that told people to be a part of what we are doing and let people know that we are not just these musical anomalies."

—John Murph

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## Players

### Brandon Seabrook 🎸 Banjo Punk

The banjo hasn't been a common instrument in jazz since the music's earliest days in the 1910s and '20s, and while bluegrass-oriented players like Béla Fleck and Tony Trischka have experimented with the five-string version of the instrument in fusion projects, the old four-string model has largely been left by the side of the road. It would be hard to hear the legacy of old masters like Eddie Peabody or Banjo Ikey Robinson in New Yorker Brandon Seabrook's playing, but he's been wholeheartedly reinventing the instrument. The music on the superb, eponymous debut album by his trio Seabrook Power Plant (Loyal Label)—named after a controversial nuclear facility in New Hampshire—has nothing to do with traditional jazz, but Seabrook has revitalized the forgotten predecessor of bluegrass's five-string.

"I didn't really listen to banjo music at all," Seabrook said. "Most of what I did was intuitive. I liked its percussive quality: It was kind of a drum set, and that's how I approached it at first."

Seabrook first picked up the instrument while he attended the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied jazz guitar. A professor asked him if he'd ever played the banjo, which led him to borrow one from the school's instrument library. He took a few casual lessons and toyed around with it in his spare time, and before long he was bringing it, along with his guitar, to gigs in Boston. The school's environment led Seabrook to all kinds of different music, even as he initially suppressed his original loves—hard rock and punk. Visits from bassist William Parker and experiences with the late George Russell especially encouraged him to open up, whether it involved playing Scottish folk music or klezmer.

He moved to New York in 2003, and after a couple of years of hustling for gigs he began to find a community. He played in trumpeter Peter Evans' quartet among lots of short-term projects, but as the banjo increasingly rivaled the guitar for his attention his desire to create a new context grew. He started Seabrook Power Plant in November 2007.

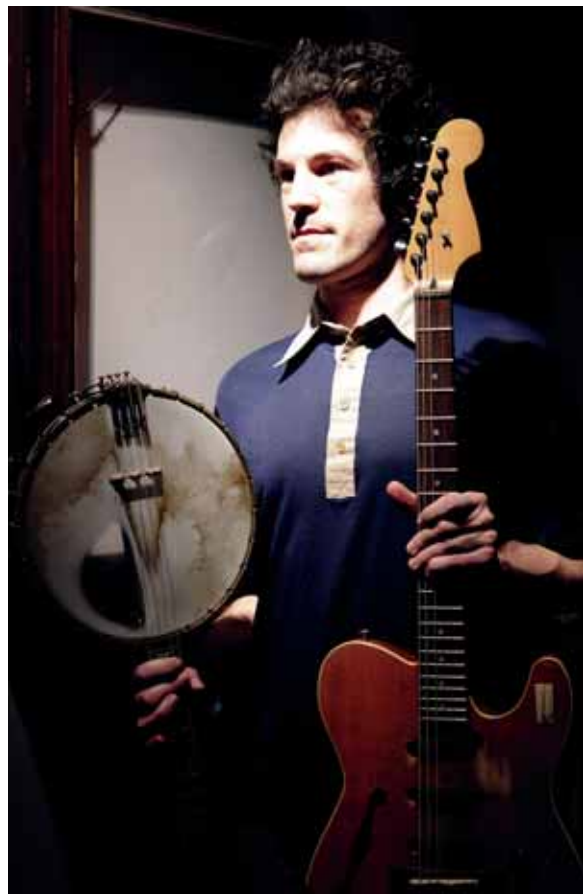
"I wanted to compose or write some riffs on [the banjo], but soon after I mixed guitar into it,"

he said. "I had the idea of putting together fragments that didn't necessarily relate to one another that much—this was coming from metal stuff that I was listening to—like this part happens and then it never happens again, and it doesn't really relate to the next part."

Indeed, there is an appealingly disjointed, herky-jerk quality to some of the music on the trio's disc with bassist Tom Blancarte and Seabrook's brother Jared on drums. On the vicious stop-start of "Peter Dennis Blanford Townshend" Seabrook uses manic tremolo to imitate sustain on an instrument notorious for having none, while his trio lurches, grinds and explodes in precise lockstep. "Waltz Of The Nuke Workers" delivers its crescendos more smoothly, veering from an almost pastoral calm to pure chaos. "Ho Chi Minh Trail," on the other hand, uses some five-string techniques like arpeggios (as well as bowing) to intimate Eastern scales and graceful melodic elucidation. He uses amplification, ambient mics and effects pedals to enhance the banjo's capabilities, but the pure sound of the instrument is never compromised.

"I'm not one of those prolific people who writes tons of stuff," he said. "It takes me a while to write these pieces, and I work on it all of the time. The band is becoming more structured, but within that it's pretty loose and we can come up with different ways of playing. We're improvising with material more than free improvising."

—Peter Margasak



MICHELLE AGRILLA



## Joey Pero 🌟 From Bach To Brown

By the time trumpeter Joey Pero entered the Juilliard School—in the days before it offered jazz studies—he appeared headed for the life of a classical musician. A decade and a few detours later, Pero continues to play his classical repertoire—his live set often begins with a straightforward reading of a Bach partita—but he also channels jazz players like Clifford Brown and Maynard Ferguson with such facility that a classical-only life now seems unthinkable.

“I went to Juilliard to learn to play the trumpet, not jazz trumpet or classical trumpet mutually exclusive,” Pero said. “I had thoughts of auditioning for orchestras, but I always had a different kind of solo career in the back of my mind.”

That ambition is now front and center. Pero has a new album, *Resonance* (Resonance Music Group), which has both jazz and classical offerings and is garnering praise from people like Wynton Marsalis, who said Pero “plays the hell out of the trumpet and has a unique conception.”

The clarity and range of Pero’s playing have stood out since he was a preteen member of Genesee Quest, a drum and bugle corps in his native Batavia, N.Y. “I was so enthralled with performing, got such a buzz from doing it,” Pero said. “It felt so natural that I knew this is what I’m supposed to do.”

As he grew up, his father filled the house with classical and jazz records, and taught him that they were of equal worth. “I was exposed to both at a young age and then kind of put them together,” he said.

But his desire to pursue jazz along with his classical studies did not go down well everywhere. At Juilliard in those days, he said, there was little enthusiasm for ventures outside the circumscribed curriculum. Occasionally, he admits, he rebelled, saying, “I was a black sheep at Juilliard in many ways.”

After two years, Pero left Juilliard for Boston and the New England Conservatory, where he was able to integrate jazz formally into his studies. He also played with the Berklee Tower of Power ensemble, which gave vent to his remarkable upper-register blowing. That, in turn, provided a kind of entrée to Ferguson’s Big Bop Nouveau band, with which he spent most of 2005.

When the Ferguson tour ended, Pero returned home to Batavia, eventually circling back to New York City, where he renewed relationships with artists like percussionist Simon Boyar, who studied and taught at Juilliard and now teaches at New York University.

Boyar played on and arranged two cuts on



Pero’s album. “I don’t think you’re going to hear a classical track he does and say, ‘Oh, he’s really more of a jazz guy,’” he said. “In that sense, I think you can compare him more to an artist like Wynton Marsalis.”

Marsalis, who had become something of a mentor after meeting Pero in high school, compares him to “charismatic” trumpeters like Rafael Mendez and Doc Severinsen. But Pero cites Marsalis as a model.

“He is someone with absolute devotion to expressing your voice, and having a voice to express,” he said. “Once you allow an instrument to be an extension of your voice, you can start speaking your mind. There are no technical barriers that stop you from doing that.”

—Phil Lutz

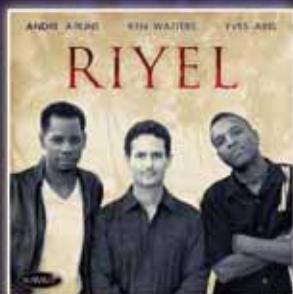
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# Miguel Zenón

## PLIABILITY & THRUST

By Jim Macnie // Photos by Jimmy Katz

Seems like everywhere you go, Miguel Zenón is somehow involved with dance. Last summer at the Newport Jazz Festival, the saxophonist was tearing up an outdoor stage with a storm of alto lines. Lots of audience members were swaying in their seats, but one particular fan at the edge of the tent was lifting his heels in a truly committed way—turns out Joe Lovano likes to get his bounce on. No one can blame him; Zenón's quartet can be a fierce little swing machine when it gets going, stretching a post-bop lingo to fit some wildly propulsive time signatures.

The Puerto Rico native has no problem moving his body to music that he's stimulated by, either. On stage he renders a clockwork bob 'n' weave motion while flashing out those horn flurries. He even rocks when he's part of an audience. On a January night at New York's Jazz Standard, Zenón was spotted doing some shoulder-shaking while sitting in the front row of a show by Fly—drummer Jeff Ballard's snare commanding everyone to have some kind of rhythmic reaction.

But it's the rotund guy in an aisle seat at a recent Zenón show who's top dog when it comes to shimmying. Sporting a ski parka in a warm New Jersey concert hall, he couldn't resist the thrust of the plena drummers the bandleader had by his side. With pianist Luis Perdomo adding extra depth to the percussive attack by swooping his right hand up and down the keys, there was plenty of tension in the air. Mr. Ski Parka was a dude who—quite correctly—saw little reason to stay still. Finally, during an exclamatory conclusion to “Despedida” from Zenón's *Esta Plena*, he had to let go, leaping forward and bellowing “Puerto Rico!” The

woman behind him didn't follow suit, but she looked like she wanted to.

“It happens,” says Zenón. “It's not our intent to make dance music, but yeah, some people really get excited. I can't ever remember seeing people actually dancing while we were playing—maybe at Newport—but if they were, I'm totally cool with it. If we can do what we do and still tap that feeling, fantastic.”

Nope, the 31-year-old saxophonist doesn't play dance music per se. *Esta Plena* is a reeds-piano-bass-drums jazz disc bolstered by a trio of hand drummers—*pleneros*. Its feisty tunes are the result of cultural pride, a curious mind and a Guggenheim grant. Zenón's horn is known for its agility; there are solos on the album that fly at breakneck speed, stressing his fluency in bop idioms that stretch from Charlie Parker's frenzy to Cannonball Adderley's sensuousness. The dance elements bubble up because he controls the music's temperament by gracefully thrusting himself into the rhythm section's agitation. The roller-coaster pas de deux he performs with Perdomo on the opening of “Residencial Llorens Torres” is a jaw-dropper, blending acute teamwork and killer chops while riding the band's very intricate groove. The Boston Globe deemed it a “kind of Latin accent we haven't heard before.” For Zenón, it's a present-tense approach to Afro-Caribbean cadences that lets listeners know he appreciates the traditions of his homeland but lives in a fully modern realm when it comes to musical design—even if the result does put a few butts in gear.

“I remember that day at Newport,” laughs Lovano, “it was beautiful. Miguel has a joyous way of playing, and his rhythmic sense is powerful; it captures you. He was really letting loose,

and hey, I've been known to dance a bit. When you let the situation you're in completely be a part of what you're creating, then you're working in the moment, spontaneously creating ideas from the feeling in the band. If you let *that* happen, you *will* dance, and people will dance around you.”

*Esta Plena* is Zenón's fifth album as a leader and second to investigate a Puerto Rican folkloric music; 2005's *Jibaro* applied itself to the comparatively rural style that comes from the island's central mountain region. Plena, built on a rhythm made by three distinct tub-less drums called panderos (think oversized tambourine), is a street beat prevalent in the barrios in the southern city of Ponce. Nurtured by non-professional musicians both black and poor, plena is often considered vulgar. These days it's everywhere, especially on the corners of San Juan, where lyrics about sex and politics are threaded through its cadences. Thanks to pliability and thrust it's become a bedrock rhythm for all sorts of party music.

You can catch its essence in Zenón's “Despedida,” a rocking piece of reportage about an annual New Year's Eve bash that he and his friends attend at *plenero* Hector “Tito” Matos' Puerto Rico home. The lyrics contain loving gibes at pals who want to quit their revelry early or get too tipsy too fast. “Whatever happens at the party is in that song,” says Zenón. “That's the spirit of the whole thing: working in the moment. A guy tries to leave? Sing about it. A guy falls down? Sing about it. You want someone to break out his instrument? Make up a song. It's all about improvising.”

Zenón's not bad on the drums himself.

Chatting in his Manhattan apartment, he breaks out his own set of hand-made panderos and quickly sets up a rhythm. He's spending a February afternoon explaining some of the insights he brought back from his 2008 trip through Puerto Rico; it was there, on the Guggenheim's dime, he learned the nuances of plena—its musical particulars and its cultural impact. The island is 100 miles wide and 35 miles deep; thick mountains are in the middle. The saxophonist went everywhere from the libraries of San Juan to the back alleys of Ponce to absorb plena first hand. Reactions to his detective work were varied.

"Some people said, 'Man, I'm so glad you're doing this, because plena needs more respect; it should be in the symphony.' Other guys were more wary. 'What do you want, why do you need to know this stuff?' I went through people who would call the real-deal guys on my behalf. I'd go hear them—just incredible players—but I was still an outsider. They knew I played jazz, but some were still tough to crack."

Spinning some ancient tracks from the band Los Reyes de Plena and new things from more modern outfits, Zenón becomes genuinely excited in his living room. "This music is filled with all kinds of stories. A lot of people who wrote it weren't true musicians, just street players, grooving and gossiping. There's this one famous plena song about a new priest that

comes to town—he's a really good-looking guy, and all the ladies like him. The lyrics are slick about describing how he's got two or three girlfriends on the side. That's risqué stuff in the 1920s or '30s."

"This next song is by another group," he says, scrolling his iPod. "It's about a guy betting on a cockfight. If the rooster doesn't win he says he's going to cook it and eat it."

Matos was a crucial source when it came to Zenón's edification. Onstage with him at the New Jersey college gig, the respected drummer is a sparkplug; the same energy he uses to lead his Viento De Agua group is evident in his percussion work. Between Zenón's quartet and the *plenero* team of Matos, Juan Gutiérrez-Rodriguez and Obanilú Allende, the band moves through several passages that raise the roof. Even during the ballad "Progreso" there's a simmering intensity.

"Miguel's fun to watch," says Branford Marsalis. "I just saw him play in North Carolina. He doesn't feel the need to call attention to himself. So when he finishes a solo, he walks off to the back, and gives everyone some room. Look at the turnover ratio in his band. He's had one personnel change in 10 years. That means the dudes that are working with him *like* to work with him. Important stuff. And no disrespect intended toward [previous drummer] Antonio Sanchez, but when Henry Cole

came in the band, it really clicked. Antonio is from Mexico City—he *learned* the music. Henry is from the island. With him it's internalized. And he basically doesn't call any attention to himself during the entire show; his shit is just grooving. This is a band's band. It has all the subtle things I want to hear."

The esteemed tenor player is the boss of Zenón's label, Marsalis Music. But he's not the only person who believes in the younger musician's ensemble (bassist Hans Glawischnig rounds out the quartet). *Esta Plena* was nominated for two Grammys this year: Best Latin Jazz Album, and Best Improvised Jazz Solo (for "Villa Palmeras"). Though neither won, both nods made sense. "While it's a full-blown jazz project, Zenón has managed to maintain the plena-like spontaneity, drive and street quality," said Descarga.com in its review of the disc. Miguel's former SFJAZZ Collective cohort Joshua Redman has been a fan for some time as well. He first heard Zenón playing in the bands of David Sanchez and Guillermo Klein. "Though it's complex, his music truly grooves," enthuses the saxophonist. "He may write something in 21/8 or whatever, but it's really lyrical. In jazz, the emotional content resides in rhythm and melody and the way they intersect. All the intricacy needs to serve a feeling. When I hear him play, I'm impressed technically, but more important, it moves me. You have to have that or you're lost. He definitely has it."

Marsalis has produced most of Zenón's records. "He made the mistake of sending me a demo tape of the first album, which I didn't listen to," he chuckles. "He said, 'What do you think about the music?' I said, 'I think it's great, man. I'll see you in the studio.' We get to the studio he says, 'You know that song such 'n' such?' And I said, 'No, how does it go?' He looked at me sideways and I said, 'I didn't listen to that stuff, man. You don't need me second-guessing you. To me, the musician playing has to have a style and a personality. If I've gotta invent it for 'em, I don't want no part of it. My job is to find a studio that makes me adequately recreate what they sound like in their live set. I'm not going to have an Alfred Lion formula—funky tune here, blues tune there. Just come in and do your shit. I don't believe in micro-managing artists—I'd rather hire people who know what they're doing and trust 'em. Matter of fact, *Esta Plena* I had nothing to do with. The guy did it all on his own."

The Guggenheim isn't the only foundation that sees value in Zenón's musical scholarship. In 2008 a representative from the mighty MacArthur machine dialed him up. The saxophonist was taking a nap, and when he awoke, though still a tad groggy, he hit the phone to check his messages. MacArthur was part of the parade. It was Sept. 16, the birthday of Zenón's wife, Elga. "My first reaction was that it was the Guggenheim guys—I'd already gotten that grant and I thought I might





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not have heard the message right and they were calling me to find out what I'd been doing on the project. But when I realized it was the MacArthur folks for sure, I thought maybe they wanted to ask me about a potential candidate. So I called him back and he says, 'Do you know about us, do you know about our grants?' I said, 'Yes, sort of.' He said, 'Are you sitting down?' That's when I started getting a 'wow' feeling. He said, 'You've won.'"

Half a million dollars and the term "genius" were now part of Zenón's life. The rep explained the mechanics of it, how there were no strings attached. When the saxophonist told his wife she began jumping and crying, but they couldn't let anyone else know until the MacArthur folks formally announced it—which was cool, because Zenón was definitely in shock for a few days. His family struggled financially when he was growing up in San Juan. They lived in the projects and were a large brood. He was without the funds to get to Berklee College of Music until a scholarship from the Puerto Rico Heineken Jazz Festival helped secure his tuition. The so-called "genius grant" is sweet for obvious reasons like the eradication of bills, but Zenón believes it's also a nice validation that presents an array of opportunities as well.

"If I want to teach, I teach," he explains. "Take a break? Go ahead. Write and practice? Sure. Plus, having that money buffer gives me confidence to try things. Maybe I'll write something and try it out. Pay the guys and not worry—I sure couldn't do that before. We went to Cuba last year, and the money wasn't right, but we wanted to go, so we did. And it was incredible, one of the greatest experiences of my life." Of course, Perdomo, Glawischnig and Cole tease him mercilessly. "I'll bring in a new tune to rehearse, and they'll say, 'Oh yeah, genius, this song structure is really intellectual.' But all kidding aside, I feel like I've



got a new responsibility. Like this has been put on my shoulder and I need to do it right."

Marsalis thinks the grant won't change Zenón at all. He compares his pal to a previous MacArthur recipient, Ken Vandermark. "All Ken wants to do is play music. Same with Miguel. It's like that old joke: The farmer wins the million-dollar lottery and they ask him, 'What are you going to do with all this money?' He says, 'I'm just going to keep feeding these cows until the money runs out.' That's what Miguel is going to do with his, that's what Ken did with his. He paid off his debts and started making records. I wouldn't be surprised that when our contract is up, Miguel just walks away and makes records on his own, because the business of music is occasionally frustrating to him. When he gets an idea, he wants to record it immediately. If he does split, I applaud that.

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He's in it for the long haul. For him it will be record after record, gig after gig, and some time, maybe when he's 40 or so, he's going to hit critical mass. Everyone will know."

The SFJAZZ Collective has begun its 2010 season, and Zenón has been part of the ever-changing team since its 2004 inception, spending a chunk of time each year in San Francisco. Members such as Brian Blade, Renee Rosnes and Dave Douglas have come and gone, the transitions speaking to the Collective's goals of fluidity and steady revitalization. Indeed, this year Zenón is the last of the original members to still be on board. The octet has conceived a formula that blends original compositions with arrangements of pieces by living masters such as Ornette Coleman and Wayne Shorter. This time 'round they're saluting the work of Horace Silver. And this time 'round there are several new faces surrounding Zenón. Edward Simon is the pianist. Mark Turner has been added on tenor saxophone. Avishai Cohen is in the trumpet chair. They join vets Stefon Harris, Eric Harland, Robin Eubanks and Matt Penman.

In the days before our interview, Zenón was checking his computer for mp3s and charts of tunes being composed and arranged by his mates. He likes to arrive in the Bay Area with good grip on what lies ahead. Joe Lovano, who spent three seasons working in the Collective, knows Zenón is up to the task of being the group elder.

"When I was there Miguel would lead us through his pieces, and they would turn out incredible because he had such a full scope of everyone's part. We all had different backgrounds as far as orchestration and composition goes. His organizational approach came to the forefront in a situation like that. I learned a lot. As a player, he's not just feeding off of one aspect of the piece. He's inside the piece, which is crucial for a leader. You've got to know everything around you. For a young cat, Miguel's a real natural at that."

Zenón is working up a spin on "Lonely Woman," a tune he knew he wanted to claim as soon as he learned that Silver was the master being celebrated. He credits Berklee for his arrangement skills, explaining that it took him a while to feel comfortable scoring charts, but the fact that the school demanded it definitely was a plus. "They made you write in Boston. You've got to develop that skill, because it helps you know the range of the instruments. For me, writing wasn't a priority early on; I just wanted to play well. Now it's definitely 50/50, it's really important."


Redman, who was the SFJC's initial artistic director, recalls just how rigorous Zenón's charts are. "If I had to pick one member of the Collective that I learned the most from, both as a player and composer, it would probably be Miguel. I don't know if I've met a musician more focused about his art. He's meticulous, methodical and conceptual, but he has the patience and skills to follow those concepts through to the most beautiful conclusions. Now he's the old vet on stage."

Turning chestnuts of the past into items with a personal perspective is the arranging job at hand, and Zenón's helped reassess the classic canon with luminous spins on Herbie Hancock's "Armageddon," McCoy Tyner's "Four By Five" and Thelonious Monk's "San Francisco Holiday." He enjoys reminding audiences about an iconic artist's stature. "You can never get enough of the stuff that came before you. When I get a chance to update a chart of a record that I love, it's like, 'Wow.' And if the audience knows the piece, there's certainly more of a reaction than there is to one of my originals."


But it takes more than great chops to account for the past while still keeping an eye toward the future ... and keeping those bodies shimmying in the seats. Seems like Zenón is a craftsman with a vision.

"We've got a lot of great trumpeters, saxophonists and drummers around right now," concludes Marsalis, "but very few musicians. You know a guy who can parlay all that technical know-how into actual musicianship? Shit, let him do whatever he wants—just as long as he keeps making those records. People react to Miguel because for all of that right-brain stuff he has, he's got this counterweight of the left side that a lot of the modern cats are without. That's what really hit me about him. Ultimately, that's why I said, 'Man, I love this guy.'" **DB**

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# THE NATURALS

Ramsey Lewis and Kirk Whalum on the  
Jazz-Pop Continuum and Why You  
Can't Contrive a Hit Record

By Frank Alkyer



It's a few days before Christmas in Chicago. The giant evergreen tree in Daley Center Plaza has been decked out and glowing—all 90 feet of it—for weeks. Shoppers bundle up and bustle down State Street in search of last-minute presents. And it's cold, Chicago-style cold.

It's also time for an annual rite of passage for music education: the Midwest Clinic. After 64 years, Midwest (as it's commonly known) has become one of the largest gatherings of music educators in the world, drawing some 18,000 teachers and their students into Chicago for several days to meet, greet, share, perform and learn. Last December, Midwest moved into new digs at McCormick Center West—a big, beautiful space that gives the clinic the opportunity to take on an expanded mission, one that includes a lot more jazz programming.

New for 2009 was the inaugural Midwest Jazz Interview, conducted by DownBeat publisher Frank Alkyer. The guests for the event were two artists known more for their connection to gold records than music education. But the legendary pianist and Ramsey Lewis and the soulful saxophonist Kirk Whalum came prepared to entertain, inform and inspire a roomful of teachers and students.

One of Chicago's favorite sons, Lewis recently released *Songs From The Heart: Ramsey Plays Ramsey* (Concord). It's the first time that Lewis, soon to be 75, has done a recording consisting entirely of his original music. He recently ended his long-time side project as a morning drive-time radio DJ after WNUA, Chicago's smooth jazz station, went off the air. But he has found plenty to keep him busy. Last summer, Ravinia Festival in Highland Park, Ill., presented the world premiere of Lewis' large-ensemble composition *Proclamation Of Hope: A Symphonic Poem*, commissioned by Ravinia in honor of the Abraham Lincoln bicentennial.

Following in the Midwestern soul tradition, Memphis-born Whalum is working on a recording dedicated to the music of the late singer Donny Hathaway, scheduled to come out later this year on Rendezvous Records. His last recording, *The Gospel According To Jazz, Chapter III* (Rendezvous), serves as a testament that Whalum knows the reason for this holiday season.

In fact, both he and Lewis got their musical starts in the church. Whalum's father was a minister, and Lewis', a choral director. Both have recorded and performed live on the gospel side of jazz.

**Alkyer:** *Let's start with your own musical educations.*

**Lewis:** I started studying the piano at four years old. I didn't know you were supposed to practice. I thought you just went once a week for 20 minutes and then come out and say, "I play piano." The practice part disillusioned me, but my dad said, "You started it, you finish it. Get in there and practice." So, I did. Then, at nine years old, he said, "Now, you'll start playing for our church." And I did that. It wasn't until I was 12, 13 years old that our neighborhood piano teacher, Ernestine Bruce, said, "I've taught him all I can. You'd better take him downtown."

They did.

They took me to Chicago Musical College, which is now part of Roosevelt University. And I met a lady named Dorothy Mendelsohn. She would say things like, "Make the piano sing." I'm 12 years old, how am I supposed to make the piano sing? [laughs] But it touched something, and she said, "Listen with your inner ear." Now, all these years of playing in our church, it was all about your inner self. But I hadn't connected with what that meant until Dorothy Mendelsohn said, "Listen from inside."

At that moment, something said, "That's your life. I'm going to play piano." I did not see Grammys. I did not see gold records. I did not see my name in lights. I did not see radio or television. I only saw 88 keys. And I figured, "Well, this is me." And, here I am.

**Alkyer:** *Kirk, how about you?*

**Whalum:** Definitely some parallels. I'll play this melody. It's the first melody I played in public. I'm going to play it like I probably played it then. [he plays a choppy, beginner-like version of "Amazing Grace"; the

*audience laughs and applauds]*

**Alkyer:** *And you got a hand for that!*

**Whalum:** It's funny that you should applaud, because that's exactly what happened. My dad was a pastor. So, the first place I was going to play any instrument was going to be in church. And the first song I was going to play was "Amazing Grace."

So, I did it, and it sounded great to me. Thinking back, it couldn't have sounded good, but what did happen was exactly what just happened here. Some really kind people applauded, and that interchange impacted me forever. I think there was part of the thing that you band directors have identified: that you have to latch onto something to inspire and encourage the student, the idea of giving the child something to go with—"Now take that and make it even better."

Well, that song, I was fortunate enough to play it many times since then. I've even heard Ramsey Lewis play it so beautifully. But I played it standing next to this lady who I worked for at the time, Whitney Houston. And I did not work with her; I worked for her, just to set the record straight. It was a great job.

I stood next to her in South Africa, in front of 70,000 people, in 1994, the year that apartheid fell. [It was an experience] to be there, as it happened, and to look out on a mixed audience in South Africa and to know that it was live on HBO with seven million or so other folks watching. And I played ... [at this point, Whalum plays a beautiful verse of "Amazing Grace," complete with fills and improvisation; the audience applauds]. That song is the story of how I got started.

**Alkyer:** *Playing in church. Did either of you play in your school music programs?*

**Whalum:** Absolutely. Going right for the junior high band, 12 years old, in the seventh grade. But when I got to high school, the band director said, "OK, I heard you were doing pretty good over there at Sherwood Junior High. How would you like to be in the jazz band?" And I said, "I don't really want to be in the jazz band." And he said, "Well, let me rephrase that. You're now in the jazz band." [laughs] You know, it's like sweet potatoes or something, where you say, "I don't like that." Next thing you know, you're loving you some sweet potatoes.

**Lewis:** Wells High School was an exceptional school, a public high school in the middle of the inner city. We had marching band, jazz band, concert band, orchestra, ballet, creative dancing, fine arts class, industrial arts. And all the instruments were provided. In every instance, they didn't need a piano. In orchestra, they didn't need a piano. So, I got to play tuba and trombone. And sousaphone.

About once a year, the students would produce their own extravaganza. The fine arts class would draw the scenery, the various bands would perform, the dancers would dance. It served its purpose, not only for those of us going to school there, but also for those guys that thought they wanted to drop out. I know of two or three guys who came back to school because they were musically inclined, and they wanted to be part of this.

**Alkyer:** *Both of you are talking about what you consider to be a bygone era. In those high schools today, what are the music programs like?*

**Lewis:** Well, I don't know if they even have one at Wells High School

right now.

**Alkyer:** *That's one of the great traditions of Chicago music and Chicago musicians. Think of how many [artists] came through those fantastic school music programs [such as the one led by Walter Dyett, the legendary band director from the 1930s to the 1960s at DuSable High School]. The job that these folks [music educators] do out here is the job that we need to fight to put back into our schools, correct?*

**Whalum:** Absolutely. Just thinking about Chicago and Memphis, there's this natural connection there. For instance, Ramsey Lewis played with a young musician—actually, he kind of trained a young musician—by the name of Maurice White, who went on to make this group called Earth, Wind & Fire. He was a young kid who got part of his musical shaping in Chicago and part in Memphis because he was there as a three-year-old with folks like David Porter and other great soul musicians. It's something that I don't think Maurice White [forgot] after hanging out here in Chicago with Ramsey and then studying the jazz masters, and then being right there on Beale Street in Memphis, McLemore Avenue, making soul music. He had a big enough vision to incorporate a lot of those things.

But it took those kind of mentoring relationships with Ramsey Lewis. It took those band directors struggling to get the resources and get the support in the community and with the school organizations and the board of education in order to provide the world with a Maurice White and an Earth, Wind & Fire.

**Lewis:** Maurice White, you know him as the soul-pop-jazz guy. But my advice to young people coming up today is to get a well-rounded education. Before Maurice played with me, he had played with Sonny Stitt, Gene Ammons and Johnny Griffin. Then, he played with Howlin' Wolf. He played with the blues guys at Chess [Records]. Muddy Waters.

Maurice was the house drummer for Chess. And before he came with me, he'd stop me in the hallway and say, "Ramsey, you've got a publishing company, right? What's that?" "Hey Ramsey, you've got a manager,

right?" He had all these questions. So finally, I said, "I need a drummer. Would you like to play with me?" Of course, he would. In the three or four years that he played with me, he was always asking, "So what is this? What is that?"

After three or four years, he said, "Ramsey, I'm going to be leaving in the next few months because I'm going to be forming my own group." Well, I knew he had been immersed in jazz, so I figured he was going to do a quintet or whatever. And he said, "No, we're going to do some jazz, but we're gonna do rock 'n' roll, blues, r&b. We're gonna dance. We're gonna do magic."

I told him, "Take a couple aspirin. Take a nap. And I'll talk to you tomorrow." [laughs] Well, as you know, the rest is history.

What I'm trying to say is that fundamentals come first. Thank God my parents bought me up in such a way that I was more involved in fundamentals than I was in a record contract.

**Alkyer:** *Each of you are very gifted instrumentalists, and you have something in common that most instrumentalists never see: hit records. Ramsey, let's start with you. A few years ago I sheepishly asked you a question about a little song you made in 1966 called "The In Crowd." Can you tell the audience about your feelings toward "The In Crowd"?*

**Lewis:** I'm very blessed in that I have had several hit records, gold records, platinum and all that stuff. You won't believe this, but none of them were planned. There was no time where we went into the studio and said, "This is going to be the single."

Eldee Young, Red Holt and I [the Ramsey Lewis Trio] were most interested in putting out a good, well-balanced album in those days. After doing some Duke Ellington, a couple of originals, some blues and a Charlie Parker tune, we had what we called a fun song, something easy. We recorded it only because it fit the rest of the programming, just like we programmed our show. You end with something happy and up.

We put the album out, and I think it came out in June. So, by August or

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September, we got a call from the Chess brothers saying, “We think you guys have a hit record.” To tell you where we were coming from, we said, “Which one?” Because “The In Crowd” was not put on there for that reason. And “Wade In The Water,” “Hang On Sloop” and “Sun Goddess” [weren’t either].

I can tell you a great story about “Sun Goddess.” By now, Maurice has formed a group called Earth, Wind & Fire. And I’ll never forget, he called me and said, “I’ve got a record that’s gonna be so *baaad*. Do you want me to stop in Chicago and show you what I’ve got?” And I said, “OK.”

He brought Verdine [White], Phillip Bailey and some of the guys with him. We worked three days on that song because he wanted it to be just so because it was going to be a million-seller.

We got through recording it and mixed it. And I said, “What’s the name of it?” And he said, “‘Hot Doggit.’” And that’s that. But as he was packing up, he said, “Oh, there’s this other melody. It’s just a 12-bar melody, and it’s got sort of an r&b, Brazilian beat to it. We don’t even have any words to it. We just kind of say, ‘Way-o, Waaay-o.’ You wanna do that?” I said, “Yeah, why not?” So it took about two or three hours, not two or three days, to put that song together. On his way out the door, I said, “What are you going to name it?” And he said, “I don’t know, call it ‘Sun Goddess.’ You’ve already got your hit.” Well, the rest is history.

**Alkyer:** *And that’s the way it goes. You never know.*

**Lewis:** I think that’s the worst thing that ever happened to music: when people thought you could plan a hit record. They started looking for the catchy songs before they looked for the meat and potatoes. And I think that it had to do with the downfall of pop music.

**Whalum:** It’s about you being who you really are ...

**Lewis:** Amen.

**Whalum:** ... not about trying to accomplish some type of marketing goal. In fact, I have a pet peeve about that. We’re in an age where we’re doing everything. We have this expectation that I’m not only going to be the artist, I’m going to produce the record, play all the instruments, program it, mix it, master it, market it. I’ll be out there networking.

But I like when somebody else comes around and listens and says, “Hey, what’s that song? Oh, ‘In Crowd’? That sounds like something everybody’s going to love.” Well, that’s a perspective that we don’t have. We don’t go into the studio with that perspective. We just go into the studio and be who we are. We say, “Yes, I can make that melody work. That’s something I can play and really feel good about.” And it’s a part of who I am, as opposed to saying, “Play this because it’s going to be a hit.” I like the idea of having marketing people do their thing, and let us do the music. That way, we can put our heart and soul into the music and stop trying to contrive something.

**Alkyer:** *I asked you both about pop music and having hits because I wanted to ask you this question: What is, or what should be, the role of pop music in jazz education today?*

**Whalum:** It’s really invaluable for us to approach exposing young and aspiring musicians to something that they’re going to be passionate about in the context of where they are already.

In fact, James Moody sat me down. I begged for a lesson when I was 19 with James Moody. And he taught me that day, in an hour, what I’ve been working on for the rest of my life. And that is, start where you are. Figure out a way to make that thing more difficult. And then accomplish that. In other words, you don’t run and jump up eight steps at a time. You normally take a step at a time. And I think the concept of meeting kids in their culture, especially musically, where they already are, takes a little homework. Because we can’t just come to them and say, “Well, this is the way I did it.” No, the more important thing is for them to be passionate about it. Those of us who are parents do this all the time. What you’ve got to do is find where they’re passionate and work your way backwards.

I remember when I told my uncle, Mickey Tucker, a great jazz pianist who moved to Australia, that I was playing the saxophone. The first thing he did when he came by from New York, he handed me a John Coltrane record. Now, I’m 12. [audience laughs] I wasn’t ready for John Coltrane. But I was ready for The Crusaders. Again, we’re talking about back in the early ’70s. I was ready for Ronnie Laws. I was ready for Grover



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Washington Jr. I was listening to The Jackson 5.

There was a representation in jazz that caught my eye of the overall place where the culture was, where the music and the pop radio was. That's got to be the case today. Some might say, "Well, I don't like rap." Well, guess what? You need to get your head around what that music is about. Not necessarily all of it, but try to find a way to make a connection where you can present this profound music called jazz. Because there is a connection with rap and every other kind of music.

**Lewis:** I've have some thoughts about hip hop and rap. And this goes back to 20 or 25 years ago, when music was taken away from the schools. Well, when we took the instruments away from the kids, they resorted to what was left. Rhythm, right? And the ability to make up prose or poetry.

**Whalum:** And sample Ramsey Lewis records! [laughs]

**Lewis:** They sampled all of us. You have to admire them for turning to their own resources, what's available to them, and coming up with this music. I dare say there's some genius in there somewhere.

If some of these kids had the opportunity to study the fundamentals of music, I don't know—Duke Ellington Jr., maybe? Gershwin Jr.? So, I'm still fighting the good fight in terms of getting instruments back in the school, getting music back in the school.

We have to come up with a way to allow these youngsters as they finish high school, as they go into college, and they leave college with their performance degrees, with their education degrees ... How do you get to Carnegie Hall? How do you get to Ravinia? The joke in the old days was, "Practice, man, practice." Well, that's still the truth, but there's one more thing that we didn't think about because it was so available to us when we were growing up: Practice in front of folk.

You've gotta learn to play in front of people. But they don't have the places like when I was coming up. That's one of the things that we need to approach. And I've started some conversations with coffee houses and other retail places throughout the country that might open such a place

where youngsters can go play. That's how you find yourself. You don't find yourself in your closet, your living room, in the practice room. You take that and you go in front of people.

You play wherever you can. You play at church, at fashion shows. The whole idea is to have two or more people in front of you to bounce your music off of. These are hard times. There are not the two or three dozen clubs around Chicago that there used to be. You have to make your way. If you're serious, you'll find some places.

**Whalum:** In Chicago, there are homeless shelters. There's old folks homes. I think the problem is that we want to be featured in such a way that we're at this "Razzle Dazzle Club" or something. There's plenty of places where you can bless people with what you have, and at the same time, something begins to happen.

**Lewis:** You've just piqued my imagination. Whatever schools you go to, why can't you approach the school and say, "Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 4 to 6, why can't a group of us get together and start a music thing?" Why not go to your minister and say, "What about Saturday afternoon, can we use the basement and start a music event?"

**Whalum:** Or the sanctuary.

**Lewis:** The whole idea at this point is to play for people, to see what you're really about. And these performing arts centers all around the country, they get money from the states and the federal government. If they have an educational community outreach program—hello? You've got to talk to them, too!

The discussion comes to a close after a few quick questions from the audience. Whalum stands, raises his soprano saxophone to his lips and plays a little "Wade On The Water," a parting tribute to Lewis, who listens and smiles. Cold outside? Yeah, but on this December day in the Windy City, two commercially successful jazz artists hardly take notice as they warm the passions of their audience. **DB**

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I come from a music-oriented Gypsy family in Germany. I grew up with the music of Django Reinhardt. At age 11, I started playing piano, and a few years later was playing Gypsy music with various bands. Several

years later I started playing mainstream jazz, and toured Europe, playing with other Gypsy musicians who played modern jazz, such as guitarists Bireli Lagrene and Martin Taylor, and sax player Tony Lakatos.

Around age 30, I decided to take up the Hammond organ, affording me a whole new creative direction for my musical expression. Since then I have played both piano and organ, with emphasis on the latter wherever possible.

In 2006 I cut my first Hammond organ album in Europe. In 2007 I played a gig with Swedish guitarist Andreas Öberg, who told me about George Klabin. Andreas told George about me, and soon after George called me to discuss signing to Resonance Records and creating a recording with some of the best American jazz musicians along with Andreas. I was thrilled and honored, knowing how rare it is for American jazz labels to record foreigners. The album is called *Gettin' Blazed* and I'm proud to add it to my jazz legacy.

My entire experience with the Resonance Records team was positive and uplifting. George selected most of the tunes, including several originals by myself and Paulo Morello, and his production ideas were stimulating for me. I want to thank him and Resonance for giving me this great opportunity to record with world class artists, and allowing me to exercise my passion.

### Tamir Hendelman: Israeli Piano Phenomenon



Why do some Israeli musicians pursue jazz? Perhaps the rhythmic melting pot of our culture naturally embraces the restless search for harmony and groove...

I still remember my music teacher introducing me to the Count Basie Orchestra. I was twelve and couldn't believe that groove! Then I heard Chick Corea and Bobby McFerrin in Tel Aviv and my imagination flew.

As a young adult I came to the US to explore my love of jazz and classical music at the Eastman School of Music. After college I was invited to join the Jeff Hamilton Trio and Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. It was like coming home. Both groups are true musical families, inspiring me to lead the kind of group that invites everyone to create together.

Jazz asks us to bring our own heritage and imagination to the music. In my next recording I wanted to reflect on the music of my Israeli childhood, my love of Brazilian and classical music and my Eastern European heritage.

We are fortunate as musicians to travel the world and share our musical ideas, while making new friends. With my musical friends, Lewis Nash and Marco Panascia, I am excited to present a truly international trio where we draw from our mutual loves: the blues, swing, bebop, Brazilian, Israeli or anything else!

Jazz is America's gift to the world and today it invites us to bring our gifts and create together. It's one of the hippest versions of the global village...



# Resonance Records: Looking at Jazz as an International Art Form



## Andreas Öberg Sweden's Guitar Virtuoso

My first exposure to jazz happened around 1990 in Sweden when my guitar instructor showed me Lee Ritenour's "Rio Funk". Before that point, I had been studying other styles of music such as rock, blues, and classical,

but after hearing Lee play, I began to discover many different jazz and fusion guitarists. Throughout my adolescence, I mostly listened to Mike Stern, Robben Ford, and Frank Gambale, and my research on this music led me my favorite artists: George Benson, John Coltrane, and Oscar Peterson.

To me, jazz is not a specific genre or style; it's more of an attitude or approach. It doesn't matter if you're playing funk, swing, or latin. As long as those important elements of improvisation are there, the artist has the ability to create something original in that moment. I'm constantly trying to find a new and younger audience even though I'm still inspired by many of the old heroes that came before me. I feel that it's important to know your history to be able to create something new.

Since my Resonance Records debut, *My Favorite Guitars*, I've been working hard on refining my own style and sound. That's why we have chosen to call my upcoming release *Six String Evolution*. The past few years have been quite a journey on both a personal and musical level and my guitar still continues to take me around the world.

Together with my producers, George Klabin and Joe Donofrio, I've picked a variety of tunes that really challenged me as an improviser and guitarist. With a great rhythm section consisting of John Patitucci, Lewis Nash and Dave Kikoski plus a number of guests, we created music that I'm very proud of and hope that you'll take time to listen to. Through my six string guitar, I speak a language that can be understood anywhere in the world. Enjoy *Six String Evolution*!

## Claudio Roditi Brazil's Trumpet Master

At age nine, while living in my native Brazil, I fell in love with the trumpet. It was a case of love at first sight — until I tried to play it! My father gave me my first trumpet, and I initially had trouble getting the notes out. I never gave it up, though.

My acquaintance with jazz developed because of close relatives who loved and played it: my uncle, Harold Taxman (drums); my cousin, Moises Sion (piano); and his son, Roberto Sion (saxophone). When I was thirteen, I heard Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Miles Davis, and Chet Baker. What I heard changed the course of my life.

Eventually I landed in Boston to study jazz at the Berklee College of Music in 1970, wearing a suit and tie at the height of the hippie era! I have been living in the United States ever since.

When I moved to New York in 1976 I met George Klabin through Brazilian composer Gaudencio Thiago de Mello, a close friend of mine. Many important projects for me — then and now — came out of that meeting. You could say that my recordings on Resonance Records are the fruits of that introduction.

*Simpatico* is different from everything else I have done in the past because all of the compositions are mine. Some are new pieces and some a little older, but most of them I have not recorded before.



## Marian Petrescu: Romania's Piano Genius



From the age of five, I was listening to classical music: Mozart, Beethoven and Bach. My father wanted me to follow in his footsteps of being a violinist, but the piano was more appealing to me.

A few years later, I heard Oscar Peterson on TV - his passion was incredible. At that point, I decided to study jazz. Other pianists like Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, and Michel Petrucciani inspired me, but Oscar was the most profound for me.

When I was thirteen, I left Romania to study classical music in Sweden. Following that, I studied jazz and classical music at the Sibelius Academy in Finland. In these young travels, I had the great honor of placing second in the Marial Solal World Competition in Paris, preceding a European tour.

In 2006, I met George Klabin following a performance and struck up an accord. Following the tragic death of Oscar Peterson in 2007, I was asked by George to record with the Resonance Big Band in their tribute to O.P.

I was very satisfied with how this homage to my idol turned out and was most surprised when I found out that the Resonance Big Band *Plays Tribute to Oscar Peterson* had won a Grammy!

To me, jazz is a very emotional music, full of beauty and power. It is the language in which I can most honestly express myself.





EVAN PARKER

# Extraordinary Encounters

By Ted Panken

Forty-five years into his career as a professional improviser, saxophonist Evan Shaw Parker remains a road warrior, pursuing a lifestyle—on the move at least six months a year, long rides in cars or trains or airplanes from one destination to another, irregular sleep and meals, less than stellar accommodations—that could wear down most artists half his age. Yet Parker, who turns 66 this year, embraces the sacrifice of itinerancy with the enthusiastic attitude of a circuit-riding preacher or union organizer of days gone by whose imperative it was to deliver the message in person.

Parker travels neither to praise the Lord nor organize the masses, but to present his sui generis conception of the saxophone in as many contexts as possible. He has refined his language with micronic precision, developing his ability to articulate and develop two or three simultaneous lines in a sort of *musique concrete* counterpoint.

Even by his standards, Parker took on, as he put it, “an exceptional schedule” over the last three months of 2009, bringing his tenor and soprano saxophones to an extraordinary array of encounters. There was an October duo in Barcelona with Catalan pianist Agusti Fernandez and workshops and concerts with Barry Guy and Paul Lytton in Cannes and Paris. A two-week tour with the Schlippenbach-Lovens trio included engagements in Berlin, Ulrichsberg, Prague and Bratislava, where Parker also found time to play a recital with Alvin Lucier, a concert with the Globe Unity Orchestra and a gig with the electronic unit Groovetronic. He guested with the out-trio Marteau Rouge in Tours, Paris and Brussels; navigated composer-cellist-electronicist Walter Prati’s processed structures with a medium-sized ensemble in Milan; triologued with regular

mates John Edwards and Tony Marsh at London’s Vortex, where he has a monthly hit, and with keyboardist Stephen Gruen and drummer Philip Marks in Liverpool.

Prior to all of these events, Parker presided over an audacious two-week residence at the Stone, John Zorn’s Lower East Side venue, during early October. Hunkered down three blocks away in a small flat on Avenue D, he took on all comers, two shows a night of one-shots with partners representing vastly different predispositions and ways of thinking about music. After a long drive from Montreal, where the night before he had concluded a 3,000-mile, seven-gig/seven-night driving tour with extended-techniques sax master Ned Rothenberg, he launched the proceedings with a solo recital, executed with characteristic derring-do. After an hour’s interlude, Parker entered an avuncular duo with synthesist Richard Teitelbaum; playing soprano saxophone, he created instantaneous acoustic responses to Teitelbaum’s assorted burbles, bird-calls, critter onomatopoeia, virtual percussion, swoopy waves, Bachian cello, celestial harmonics and prepared piano pings—they ended spontaneously on the same pitch.

Such energy and acuity belied whatever exhaustion Parker may have felt, and he delineated the harmonics with such precision that only the most educated ear could discern that he was playing with a stock mouthpiece, having recently left his three painstakingly customized ones on a train. But to wallow in self-pity was not an option, and Parker would carry on.

In the opening stages of a meeting with Fred Frith, Parker projected droll tenor responses to Frith’s Dadaesque antics on lap guitar, then suddenly unleashed a jaw-dropping a capella interlude on soprano that led to a duo section marked by vertiginous intervals and audacious unisons.

Earlier in the run, Parker and Milford Graves,

performing together for the first time before a house so jammed that the fire marshals cleared it before they were done, played a five-part suite marked by incessant rhythmic modulation and tension-and-release. Later, with George Lewis on trombone, laptop and interactive electronics with which to modify and manipulate the pitch qualities of Parker’s soprano saxophone lines, Parker—his face beet-red, his embouchure visible as a dimple-line running 45 degrees from nose to jaw—went with the flow, circular-breathing to create a feedback loop of chirps, crackles and waves.

To honor Thelonious Monk’s birthday a few nights later, Parker, pianist Matthew Shipp and bassist William Parker played an informed 55-minute abstraction of “Shuffle Boil,” interpolated with other Monk fragments. “If they’d jumped on the tune at the very outset, well, it would have gone another way—but they played ambiguously in relation to it,” Parker said two days later over lunch on Avenue C. Salt-bearded and bespectacled, he carried a copy of Robin Kelley’s new Monk biography.

“The point is to do it so it’s there if you want to hear it, and not there if you don’t,” he continued. “It’s raw material. It’s a free choice. To play freely also means freedom to play things that you absolutely know and things that are rather predictable.”

Parker mentioned that for his 60th birthday, outcat pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach (an ongoing colleague since the latter ’60s) presented him with a handwritten folio of Monk tunes, transposed for saxophone.

“I’ve since got the official book, which Steve Lacy told me was accurate, and I’ve been trying to memorize them all as an homage to Steve,” Parker said. “Monk had a rigorous approach to constructing a line, which Steve distilled in his own work—systematic combi-

natorics of limited interval types in order to bring out their inherent characters. The material goes beyond scales and arpeggios—the idea is to get it to fall under your fingers so you’re not simply playing from the riff book. You have to hear your way through, know what is the underlying cliché and how to disguise it. I make the analogy with the armature in a sculpture. A sculptor uses a steel frame underneath to hold the clay in certain positions which otherwise it wouldn’t hold. But it’s not the armature that’s interesting. It’s the form of the clay. Without those things it’s just ... lacking in structural integrity.”

**T**he weekend after Parker left town, the Abrons Arts Center, a few blocks south of the Stone, hosted a two-day festival dedicated to the legacy of Incus Records, the label that Parker, Bailey and Tony Oxley co-founded in 1970. After Oxley departed a few years later, Parker and Bailey—who died in 2005—functioned as co-directors, producing some of the seminal documents of European free improvisation. They split on acrimonious terms in 1985, with Parker keeping possession of his own copyrights and master tapes. Since 2001, he has been bringing them back into print—along with new material by himself and various associates—on Psi, his imprint, which now boasts a catalog of more than 60 items.

Parker discerned crucial differences in the ways in which his and Bailey’s respective personalities influenced their musical production. “I’m interested in a more adaptive language, a more flexible sense of musical persona,” he said. “The material with which I represent myself, the music masks that I use to play behind, or through, vary with the context much more than Derek’s did. ‘Mask’ is a more complicated idea than simply a disguise, something to hide behind. The mask is a particular chosen projection of identity.”

Unlike Bailey and most of his contemporaries from the first generation of European experimental improvisers, Parker has embraced American jazz as a lineal, if often hidden, influence. “It’s where I come from,” he said. “It doesn’t mean I don’t know about Boulez and Stockhausen and Xenakis. But in shaping the idea of personal direction, the point that Coltrane got to, especially in *Interstellar Space*, is a defined place. Even the idea of a multi-linear approach to soprano is derived from thinking about certain things Coltrane was doing on the longer solos on “My Favorite Things,” where he’s hinting at keeping two lines going. Thinking you can do anything past that involves an enormous lack of modesty, and you have to be aware of this. But through practice and effort and concentration on what makes your direction your direction, there are some corners left to work in.”

Told that Rothenberg had remarked on his “whirling” time feel, “with a pulse that tends to breathe in an ebb-and-flow,” Parker described it

as his default mode, citing “the constellation” of the New York Art Quartet with John Tchicai and Milford Graves, Graves’ duos with Don Pullen, the Coltrane-Rashied Ali duos, and the Jimmy Giuffrè Trio. “These were the very last bits of concerted influence, where you feel, ‘These are the materials that I must learn to deal with,’” he said. “After that, it became essential to deal with what John Stevens (the British drummer with whom partnered frequently in the ’60s and ’70s) was doing, what Derek, Paul Rutherford, Paul Lytton, Barry Guy, and all the people associated with that first generation of London-based free improvisers were doing.”

Parker’s simpatico for the New York context stems from the summers of 1962 and 1963, when, by dint of a free flight enabled by his father’s position with BOAC (predecessor of British Airlines), he was able to see his heroes—the aforementioned encounter with Lacy, Eric Dolphy with Herbie Hancock at Birdland, Cecil Taylor with Jimmy Lyons and Sunny Murray on Bleecker Street, Carla Bley in duo with Gary Peacock—on their home turf.

“Coltrane was always out of town, though I’d heard him in England in 1961,” Parker said. “But I’m not going to forget those things. From that point, New York was the center of the world as far as the music I was interested in.”

**I**m ready for a break,” Parker said at the beginning of February from his home in Kent, reviewing his recent travels. Over a month or so of down time, he would work on “thinking about how to practice, practicing, organizing for the label and for events coming up.” Most important among the latter were a series of spring concerts with his Electro-Acoustic Ensemble, a project that he has documented since 1997 on five ECM CDs, increasing the participants from six to 14 on the most recent iteration, *The Moment’s Energy*, a six-part suite that incorporates an orchestra’s worth of real-time electronic processing instruments. In distinction to the prior dates, Parker deployed the studio as another instrument, remixing and realigning the materials of the real-time version to construct a final document. It’s the latest development in Parker’s ongoing investigation of digital media as a tool to transcend the limits of what he can do with the saxophone.

“What works for a concert doesn’t necessarily work for a record,” Parker said. “It’s partly to do with dynamic range, partly with what Manfred Eicher calls *dramaturgie*. You don’t quite know the circumstances under which the record will be played. So the idea of modifying something in response to that is no longer a heresy for me. It’s just part of the work, and if people want to discuss it and take positions for or against, well, that’s fine.”

Parker is no stranger to being on the receiving end of slings and arrows—for all the audaciousness and fire that he projects through his horn, his incendiary chops have sparked the wrath of some members of the “avant-garde

police,” who critique him as an overly technical, non-interactive Johnny-one-note more concerned with attaining individual transcendence than dialogic interplay.

George Lewis addressed this issue in a more nuanced way. “Derek liked to smash genres together, people from different traditions and practices,” he said. “Evan was starting to do this as well, but then he broke away from it. Now it’s reached a new level where he is more content to be at the center of his own world than ever before; he’s found ways to make music that bears his stamp, through the medium of improvisation. It’s not being an improviser that’s important. It’s what Evan’s music is.”

For Parker, an Anarcho-Socialist during university days, philosophical materialism coexists in pragmatic equipoise with his investigations into the mysteries of shamanism, as he denotes with his label’s name.

“I juggle those things every day,” he said. “I’m encouraged by developments that relate to finding consensus on solving specific problems, rather than building an overarching ideology that purports to solve all problems at a stroke. Shamanism is one way that you can solve some of those small problems. It’s metaphysics, but it’s also practical. Spiritual is material, too. If you define materialism as to recognize the way things work, then we have to include psi phenomena, the things physicists can’t explain.”

Parker himself found it difficult to explain concretely the criteria he uses to decide what constitutes a successful performance, what to release or not release. He had not yet found time to evaluate his massive output at the Stone, which was professionally recorded and line-mixed. “It would be crazy not to release some of it, but I want to make sure I do it properly.

“Sometimes it’s a good idea to wait a year or more before you listen, otherwise you reinforce the memories of the struggle that was involved, which may affect your objectivity and have no importance in the bigger picture,” he said. “It’s easier to be positive about some solo thing that came out well. Everything else is complicated about expectations about what other people may or may not do. If I think that the thing is a failure, I have no problem leaving it on the shelf.”

Parker observed that *Time Lapse*, his 2006 release for Zorn’s Tzadik imprint, took a decade to whip into shape. He noted that he took similar pains toward conceptualizing 2009’s *House Full Of Floors*.

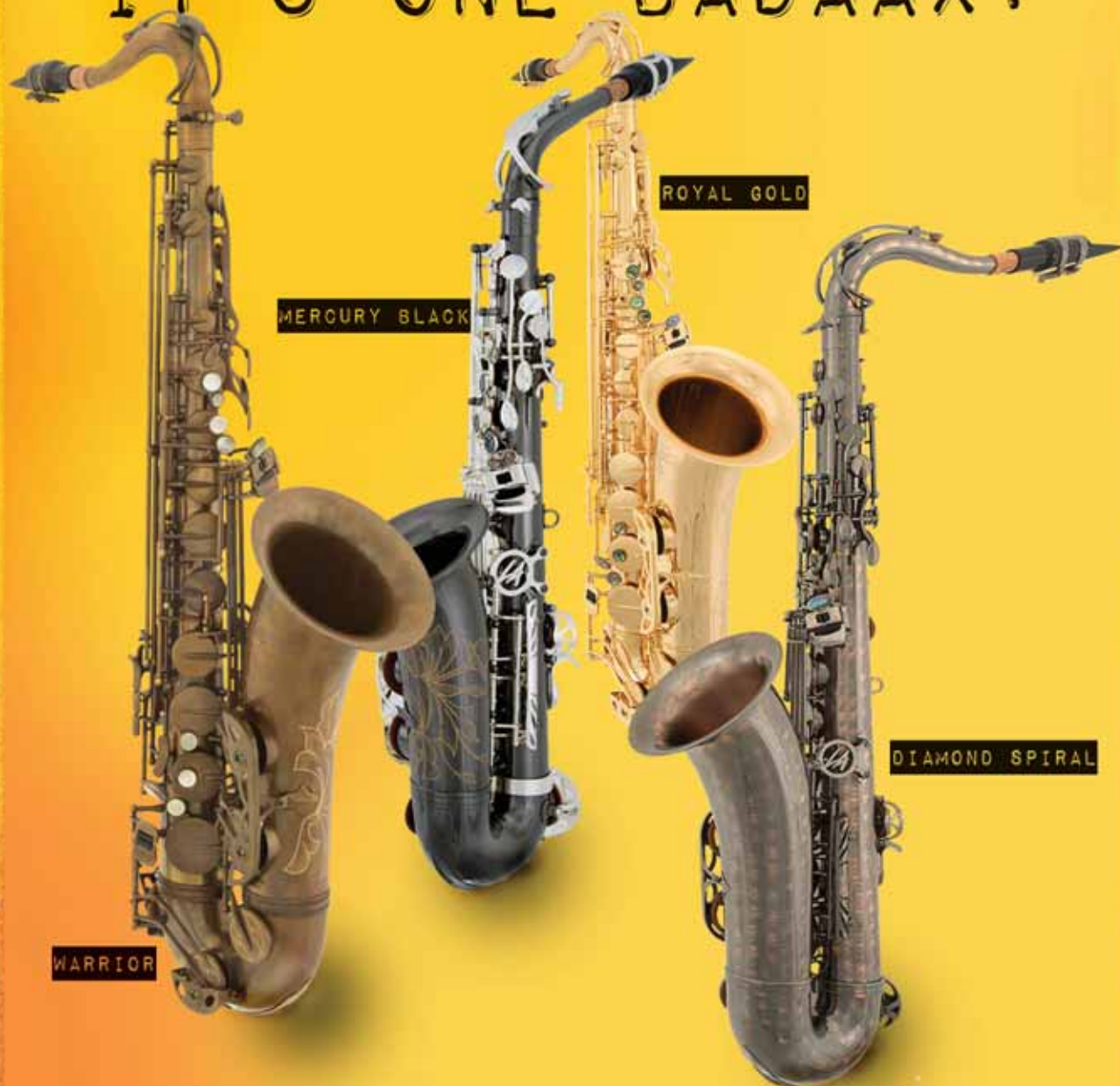
Parker was looking forward to the next stage of his New York investigations, which would transpire this spring. “Every time I come back, I get a feeling unlike anywhere else in the world,” he said. “There’s an incredible community of players to draw on. John [Zorn]’s support for this venture allowed me to be among friends. The Stone is absolutely my kind of space, like a non-denominational chapel of music. There’s no frills. It’s a room where you can play some music and some people can come and listen.”

DB



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A photograph of Manfred Eicher, an older man with long, wavy grey hair and a thin mustache. He is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. He is standing against a light-colored, textured wall, with his right hand resting on the wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

# CREATIVE

DOWNBEAT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: **MANFRED EICHER**

# COMMITMENT

By Dan Ouellette



Over the last four decades, jazz labels have buzzed with a flurry of inventive activity and then seemingly overnight have fizzled in vitality and importance—silenced either by bankruptcy in the case of independent endeavors or imprints being phased out of the new-release schedules of major recording companies that crave fluff-like commercial “hits” and despise spiritually attuned artistic “misses.” During this woefully sober upheaval in the jazz marketplace—no longer an anomaly but a given—there has been one constant of creative music commitment: the Germany-based ECM label founded and piloted by producer Manfred Eicher. Its credo is summed up quite succinctly in the label’s 2009–’10 catalogue: “ECM has maintained the most old-fashioned of business practices while staying in tune with what is newest and most alive in music.”

Launched in November 1969 with Mal Waldron’s album *Free At Last*, ECM boasts more than 1,200 titles in its genre-resistant catalog, with a steady flow of 30 to 40 new releases each year, featuring border-crossing jazz, improvisational music, transcultural collaborations and classical (specifically in his ECM New Series, begun in 1984 to record the music of Arvo Pärt). With a track record of scoring million-selling hits such as Keith Jarrett’s *Köln Concert* and Jan Garbarek and the Hilliard Ensemble’s *Officium*, ECM continues to forge ahead as the prime purveyor of the luminous art of jazz. For this pursuit of excellence, Eicher this year is honored with the DownBeat Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes his momentous—and unorthodox—contribution to the history of jazz.

Eicher wrote in his “The Periphery and the Centre” essay in the book *Horizons Touched: The Music Of ECM*, edited by Steve Lake and Paul Griffiths (Granta Books, London, 2007), that music—his passionate vocation—forms his life’s “essential core.” He noted: “The atmosphere produced at a recording session should be inimitable and awaken the desire to make changes or, when necessary, to improve and perfect ...[to create] an atmosphere that sincerely expresses what one wishes to convey of oneself and one’s emotions. Music is the art that speaks directly to the soul.”

With ECM, which celebrates its 40th anniversary throughout 2010, this soul-stirring music is expressed in the image of Eicher, who is fully immersed in all aspects of the albums on his label, from the recording and mixing to the careful attention to the artwork that adorns the covers.

In New York last November at the conclusion of recording Meredith Monk’s latest album, *Songs Of Ascension*, Eicher settles into ECM’s Manhattan offices for a conversation on his philosophy of music and the evolution of the label. He’s a serious man, soft spoken and articulate, yet you sense that he feels much more at home in the studio than behind a desk fielding questions about his successes. Still, he possesses an agreeable demeanor, proud of the art he has created and still fully engaged in discovering music that intrigues him. His empathy has not waned, he insists.

“Music is my driving force,” he says. “Music has no location and no nationality. In the early days of ECM, we recorded mostly American artists. Then for many years, I concentrated on Europeans in the North and then to the East. Today I go to Greece and Spain. I go anywhere I have to find music that interests me.”

This exploration started early thanks to his mother’s passion for classical music. She sang chamber music and treated Eicher—born in Lindau, Germany, in 1943—to a steady diet of Schubert, Schumann and Beethoven. While he wanted to learn the piano, he was forced to take violin lessons at the age of 6 because the house he grew up in wasn’t big enough for even an upright. However, when he turned 14, he switched to bass after he heard *Birth Of The Cool* and followed Miles Davis’ thread to when Paul Chambers held the bass chair. (A contrabass wouldn’t fit in the Eicher family home, either, so he frequently practiced on one at the Quartier du Jazz in Lindau.) Even though he gravitated to jazz, Eicher studied classical at the Academy of Music in Berlin. He commented in his

## DOWNBEAT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

1981	John Hammond	1991	Bill Cosby	2001	Milt Gabler
1982	George Wein	1992	Rich Matteson	2002	Emilio Lyons
1983	Leonard Feather	1993	Gunther Schuller	2003	Joe Segal
1984	Dr. Billy Taylor	1994	Marian McPartland	2004	Herman Leonard
1985	Dr. Lawrence Berk	1995	Willis Conover	2005	Creed Taylor
1986	Orrin Keepnews	1996	Chuck Suber	2006	Claude Nobs
1987	David Baker	1997	Bill Gottlieb	2007	Dan Morgenstern
1988	John Conyers Jr.	1998	Bruce Lundvall	2010	Manfred Eicher
1989	Norman Granz	1999	Sheldon Meyer		
1990	Rudy Van Gelder	2000	George Avakian		

*Horizons Touched* essay that he was dedicated to mastering the bass and that “it even looked as if I would spend my life in the back row of a symphony orchestra.”

But that wasn’t meant to be. He stopped playing in the Berlin Philharmonic and moved to Munich. There he continued performing but also became fascinated with the sonic possibilities of music production while working as a program assistant for Deutsche Grammophon and other labels. It was during this time, as *Horizons Touched* co-author Lake recounted in his introduction, that Eicher realized that “more care was invested in the recording of classical music than in ... jazz. This was one ‘injustice’ he could set about correcting, with an attention to detail that Keith Jarrett would approvingly call ‘fanatical.’”

Meanwhile, Eicher was buying records at a shop that also had a mail-order service. He became friendly with the clerk, who suggested that he produce his own music that he liked. Eicher took a gamble, plunked down DM 16,000 (the equivalent of \$4,000) and contacted Waldron to record an album that the pianist later commented on as representing his “meeting with free-jazz.” ECM was born. “This wasn’t some idea that I had for a long time. I didn’t have a plan,” Eicher says, with a laugh. “It was a spontaneous gesture. It took off. Overnight I needed to come up with a name for my label, so I called it Edition of Contemporary Music. I had no experience. I was a musician and had been involved in music my whole life. I had some contacts with musicians in New York, so I reached out to them to make albums for me.”

Important early U.S. musicians included Jarrett (he’s recorded exclusively on ECM since 1971), Chick Corea (beginning in 1971 and including *Return To Forever*), Gary Burton (beginning with his 1972 Corea duo album, *Crystal Silence*) and Dave Holland (beginning in 1971). Eicher’s signing of Norwegian saxophonist Garbarek opened the door to ECM’s explorations with several Scandinavian musicians (ushering in the so-called Nordic sound that Eicher today scoffs at: “I’m so tired of this term. It’s so clichéd. It’s nonsense.”). The breadth of the ECM catalog broadened with musicians from England (Evan Parker), Italy (Enrico Rava) and Poland (Tomasz Stanko). Burton has noted that ECM expanded his jazz vision because of the label’s documentation of important European improvisers largely unknown to American musicians and listeners.

“But American music of the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s was imprinted on our musical lives. That’s where our roots are.”

Pat Metheny proved to be a significant signing. After hearing him play in Burton's band, Eicher offered the 21-year-old guitarist the opportunity to join the ECM roster. From 1975 to 1984, Metheny recorded 11 albums (arguably some of his best recordings, including such highlights as *American Garage*, *80/81*, *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls* and *Offramp*) and became a star. Metheny left the fold to sign with Geffen. Bill Frisell also got his start at ECM before leaving for Nonesuch. "Of course, it's a disappointment when musicians decide to record for another label," says Eicher, who

doesn't ink artists to long-term deals. "It's a bit tough, but you learn to accept it. Pat told me he had another offer that would allow him to get his music better distributed around the world. I understood. Working with Bill was wonderful, but he had so many ideas that I wasn't able to grant him more recordings."

But, Eicher hastens to note, the percentage of artists who leave ECM is relatively small. Most stay on, which pleases him. "It's wonderful to see artists like Keith, Jan and Ralph Towner continue to record for ECM," he says. "They've written their musical biographies with us. We

still discuss the music like we did in the old days. We all still have the commitment to the quality of the music and to good production."

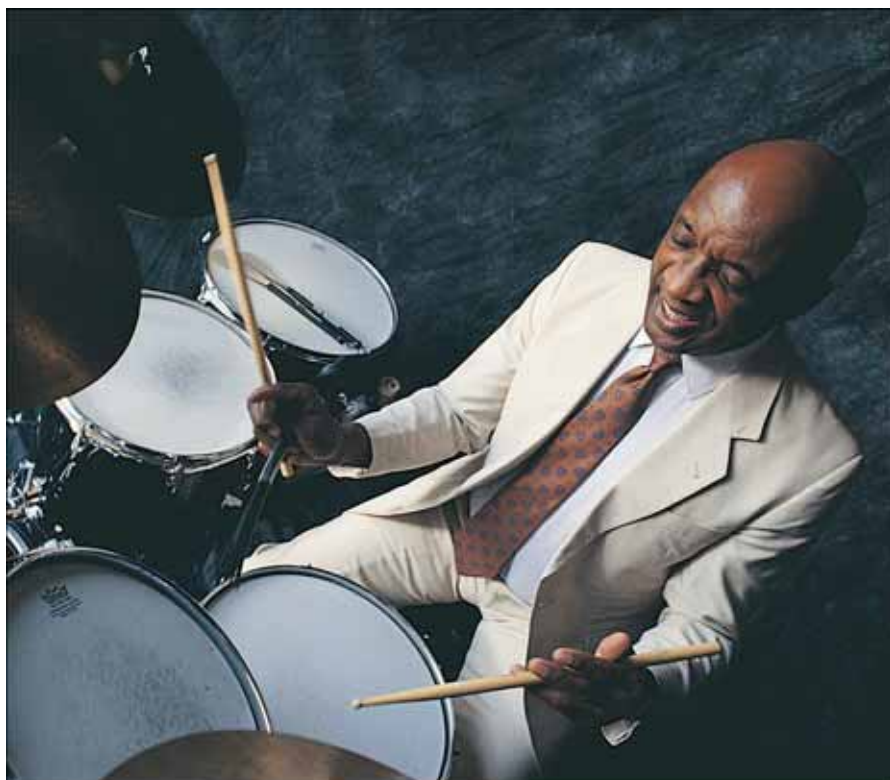
Plus, Eicher often uses his stable of artists to spark collaborative projects. Cases in point: his suggestion to Jarrett to work with Garbarek, which resulted in one of ECM's most artistically celebrated albums (*Belonging*, 1974); and the ensemble he encouraged Garbarek to form with Charlie Haden and Egberto Gismonti (*Folk Songs*, 1979). Recently, Eicher facilitated a magical West-East musical balance when he proposed to Tunisian oud player Anouar Brahem to record with German bass clarinetist Klaus Gesing, a superb sonic experiment that resulted in *The Astounding Eyes Of Rita*, one of ECM's best CDs of the past year.

As owner and producer, Eicher is in full charge of all aspects of ECM. Although he credits his staff, Eicher runs the show—and sets the tone, both professionally and sonically. "Since I hear the way I hear, our records sound the way they sound," he says. "Of course, you have the preconceived idea of the project that depends on the type of music an artist will record. But ECM's albums have a lot of very poetic, lyrical music. The tempo is often slow. There are more ballads than presto. There's a certain kind of affinity for the music that we define with my idea of the sound."

So, does Eicher's personality serve as the umbrella for the music he records? "I would say so," he replies, "because I make the decision on who records for the label. I'm looking for very personal, original music that reflects my musical taste, and that's the way it is."

Many ECM artists often factor in Eicher as a musician in their band. With the producer in the studio behind the glass, a trio becomes a quartet; a quartet morphs into a quintet. "Actually, I am a musician," he says. "The idea of a record producer is very undefined. I'm a musician in the sense that I once worked as such and have the capacity to communicate in that way with people. I'm a bit like the director of a film. You have to be able to understand the sensitivity and the psychological aspects of creating something together. You have to inspire the musician as well as to correct him, to say no to something, to understand when it's important to stop the music or to go on. You can't train someone to learn this. You have to have an artistic instinct for it."

Eicher's role as a producer involves making choices as to where to record (a studio or music hall, for example) as well as how to capture the music in the best possible way. "I'm a partner on the other side of the microphone," he says. "I may make a gesture or have a discussion. I may give metaphoric advice or ask a metaphorical question. It all depends on the artist. But overall, you just make the musicians feel that you're with them, that you are alert to all the nuances and details, that you're willing to talk about dynamics, phrasing, dialogues, colors." As for the mixing process, Eicher chooses to describe it with a metaphor: "Once we capture the music, the mix-



## Ed Thigpen

1930 - 2010

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ing is all about making a sculpture of sound.”

Eicher largely determines the sequencing of all of ECM’s music. “When I’m recording and mixing, I get the sequencing ideas,” he says. “It’s an important aspect of making a record in how you introduce the music dramatically to the listener for the first time. I’m thinking about how the music speaks to me, to see if there is a compositional context. It’s a compositional approach so that the music travels from the beginning to the end, just like a movie or a novel. You see the first frames, you read the first page or chapter and it draws you in.”

Norwegian pianist Christian Wallumrød’s excellent new album *Fabula Suite Lugano* originally had an entirely different opening. Eicher changed it. “I had a fixed order that had worked well in rehearsal and concert,” Wallumrød said. “But the whole opening sequence was put together by Manfred during the mix—to quite astounding results. We never would have thought of starting the record with ‘Solemn Mosquitoes,’ but this piece proved to be the ideal opener.”

Wallumrød represents how Eicher, instead of resting on the laurels of past successes, is striving forward, showcasing new and promising artists. “Christian’s album is one of my favorites,” Eicher says. “It has the quality of vivid, energetic chamber music that I haven’t heard before. There’s lyrical beauty and intense melancholy that speaks of life to me. It’s like the momentum of waves. At the right moments, you emerge from the [tumultuous] waves and arrive on an island.” He pauses again, then continues: “Actually the best way to describe Christian’s album is that it’s a record of episodes.”

Given Eicher’s high aspiration for choosing art over commercial success, does he worry about the bottom line? After all, releasing up to 50 albums a year must take a toll. “I’m not following the struggles at other record labels,” he says. “That doesn’t concern me too much, although I am encouraged by new, small labels that are doing something different. They’re presenting some interesting ideas. But I’m focused on ECM. There’s a lot still to do to fulfill the plan we have to record improvised music that is art, especially today with bringing together different cultures, which fits with the influences of our time. I continue to make records out of musical instinct and drive even though you can never foresee how many copies a record will sell. So, as far as reaching the bottom line, we have never reached a panic yet. We go on as long as we can. Even though it’s more difficult to sell music today because there are fewer outlets (other than Amazon), I feel there’s an enormous interest in music. There is a need to record music. I’ve been inspired this year by how much good music we have recorded. My instinct tells me to continue to do what I’ve been doing and do more.”

But with living such a rich musical life, does Eicher sometimes tire of the aural stimulation? He admits that after working on a recording (on average, he records two days, mixes the third)

he needs down time to “sharpen my ears and regain my hunger for music.” He also rarely if ever checks out the hundreds of demos that arrive on his desk. “I cannot listen to them anymore,” he says. “Maybe I’ll miss something that could be recorded on ECM, but I already have too much to listen to just with the programs we’re working on.”

On a typical day, Eicher rises at 5 a.m. and listens to the edits he has to make from the recording sessions of the previous night. That is the focus. As for casual listening, he avoids the soundtrack of the all-music-all-the-time every-

day life. He has no CD player in his car. When he makes his semifrequent cross-Atlantic jaunts, he doesn’t plug into an airplane’s playlist. He has no music in his hotel room. “I don’t listen to any music when I’m traveling,” he says. “When I listen to music, I want to do so with full concentration and with silence around me. To do justice to music you have to be attentive. It’s like reading a book, which requires full concentration to get into the text and have an experience of contemplation. The most important thing to do with music is to take your time and discover.”

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# Gerry Mulligan: Before & After

By Leonard Feather

The following DownBeat classic interview is an abridged version of a two-part feature article published 50 years ago in our May 26 and June 9, 1960, issues.

It was St. Patrick's Day. A jazz fan who happened to stop in at a bar near Yankee Stadium glanced idly at the jukebox. This was a typical Irish bar—nothing on the piccolo but songs of old Erin, plenty of Bing Crosby's Irish efforts and, of course, the customary quota of Carmel Quinn. But the box was not 100 percent square: Nestled like a jewel in one slot was a card announcing a side by Gerry Mulligan.

That Mulligan today is at a zenith of esteem, among both Irish and non-Irish from Hollywood to Helsinki, is a source of astonishment to many of those who observed his arrival in Los Angeles in the summer of 1951, when his fortunes were at their nadir. Mulligan had spent most of his 24 years escaping—from social and religious problems, from conformity, from reality, and finally from the musical maelstrom of Manhattan in which he had found no firm path to tread.

Mulligan's first Hollywood job of any consequence was an assignment to write some arrangements for Stan Kenton. Though the music he wrote (10 charts in all) was not quite startlingly colorful enough to elicit the unbounded enthusiasm of Kenton himself, many musicians both in and out of the band felt that the Mulligan contributions were among the swingiest pieces ever inserted in the Kenton books. Some of them were used only as throw-aways on dance dates. But Kenton did record two of Mulligan's originals, "Swing House" and "Young Blood," and continued to play the latter frequently long after Mulligan stopped writing for the band.

During the Kenton period, Mulligan became friendly with a young man named Richard Bock, then a student at Los Angeles City College with a side job doing publicity and organizing Monday night sessions at the Haig. One day, at the Laurel Canyon home of his friend Phil Turetsky, Bock produced some tapes with Mulligan, and without a piano. It had not been scheduled as a pianoless session. "Jimmy Rowles was supposed to be there," Bock related, "but couldn't make it at the last moment. So

we did it with just Gerry, Red Mitchell and Chico Hamilton." This was in July of 1952, and the records were never released.

Soon afterwards, Bock began to use Mulligan on the Monday nights at the Haig. Only a couple of these gigs had taken place when, said Bock, "One afternoon in September we went up to Phil's home again—he had some fine sound equipment—and made 'Bernie's Tune' and 'Lullabye Of The Leaves,' with Gerry and Chet [Baker] and Chico and Bob Whitlock. This started the Pacific Jazz label, with a single 78 disc. Later, we went into the Gold Star studios on Santa Monica Boulevard and did the other tunes for the first 10-incher, LP-1. This was how the company got started."

By year's end, the LP had been released, lines were forming all around the block at the Haig and the Gerry Mulligan Quartet was put to work on a full-week basis. Before long, Gerry had reached what is usually the vital point in any artist's career: People needed him more than he needed them.

During the first half of 1953, Mulligan and Baker had a partnership that seemed as historic, in its way, as Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang in the 1920s, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey in the '30s, and Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker in the '40s. "Gerry's musical communion with Chet was a fantastic and beautiful thing," said a girl who knew them well. "But as a person, Gerry wanted Chet to be so much more sensitive than he was capable of being."

"The group really came off until Gerry and Chet started hating each other," Hamilton said. "They'd come on the stand and Gerry would face one way and Chet another. A couple of times I had to pull them apart."

The breakup that resulted was inevitable. But, though it seemed to augur disaster, Mulligan turned it to advantage: During Christmas week of 1953 he organized a new quartet featuring the valve trombone of Bob Brookmeyer instead of trumpet.

This group represented the second of six major phases in Mulligan's career as a leading jazz figure. The third was a sextet he led in 1955-'56, with Zoot Sims, Brookmeyer and Jon Eardley or Don Ferrara; the fourth was the 1958-'59 quartet with Art Farmer; the fifth was a period of movie-making, during most of 1959,

when he had no organized group; and the sixth began a few weeks ago when he formed a 13-piece band in New York.

"Each of my groups has had an entirely different sound, and a different effect on me," Mulligan said. "It's misleading to talk about 'the quartet' as if there'd been only one. And the septet was completely different again—there we had the first leanings toward a big band sound, a more concerted thing, getting away from the strictly spontaneous counterpoint."

Along with Mulligan's musical growth, there has been a striking development in his personality. Musicians who once saw in him an air of belligerent intolerance, a garrulity, a lack of direction, now observe that the intolerance is directed against stupidity, racial prejudice and narrowmindedness. And the talkativeness—based on sensitivity, a keen concern for music, the theater, politics and a broad range of general interests—is leavened with humor and a refusal to accept pompousness on any level.

Mulligan is very much wrapped up in his new band, which played its first date in April at Basin Street East. So far, the reaction among musicians both in and out of the orchestra, and among critics and the more attentive listeners at Basin Street, has been uniformly enthusiastic. During several visits I found enough excitement, both in the writing and in the spirit that formed the interpretation, to produce some of the most genuine and unpretentious swinging big-band jazz this town has heard in years.

Just before he opened at the club I interviewed Mulligan in an hour-long session over WNCN-FM, New York.

**Feather:** Let's talk about the new band, your personnel and your plans.

**Mulligan:** Well, first and foremost, let's say we have Bob Brookmeyer and Bob Brookmeyer ... playing valve trombone and writing; Wayne Andre on trombone and Allan Raph on bass trombone; on trumpets Phil Sunkel, Danny Styles, and most of the solos are taken by Don Ferrara. The reeds are Eddie Wasserman on clarinet; Bill Holman on tenor—he came east to do a lot of writing for us. We also have arrangements by Al Cohn, and some by Johnny Mandel of themes from his *I*





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*Want To Live* score. The alto is Dick Meldonian, the baritone is Gene Allen, bass is Bill Takas, and on drums another old face from quartet-sextet days, Dave Bailey.

The instrumentation problem was, I think, one of the things that kept me from getting a band together. I started one a couple of years ago, and I was thinking in terms of four trumpets, three trombones and five saxes, and I wrote arrangements and even started on an album. But after I got halfway through, I decided it was bottom-heavy, too full, and didn't allow the kind of freedom I'd come to enjoy with the small bands. Also it didn't have that kind of clarity of sound that I liked, with the interplay of lines, in the small groups.

Now the present band gives us most of the possibilities that we had with the other one, but it also allows for a great deal more clarity. And of course a practical consideration is, if you've got people sitting on the bandstand, you've got to have them playing. If they don't play enough it's bad for their lips and their horns get cold; they tire of not playing, they lose interest, and contribute nothing.

**Feather:** *Are you using the clarinet a lot in the reed voicing?*

**Mulligan:** We've used it not so much as a reed section sound, but rather as a sound that contributes to the ensemble as a whole. We've been trying to avoid the clarinet lead effect.

**Feather:** *Are you aiming this band purely at listening audiences, or do you think it might be adaptable to dance dates if you're interested in playing any?*

**Mulligan:** What I'm really building is a concert band. It's a jazz band for listening, and there are only a handful of clubs in the country that can handle a band like that. I don't want to think about dance dates yet, until we've established ourselves and are working the way we want to. But it's fun to play dances occasionally, fun to play a prom. When we get to feeling like the old folks sitting up on the stand watching the kids have a good time, we play differently. You get very sentimental and all that sort of thing.

**Feather:** *The reason I asked is that John Hammond said recently he feels jazz is essentially a functional music and is coming back to that.*

**Mulligan:** I'm really not too concerned about where jazz is going, what it's doing. I'm concerned about the entity that I've tried to put together, which is really quite separate from the entire field of jazz. My answer to John is, there are jazz musicians who have never gotten away from that. Now if you're talking about jazz in terms of what the avant garde has been doing, or what's the most influential thing with the younger musicians now, that's not what I'm basing my ideas on.

But anyhow, by taking the band out on dances now, I would dissipate the band's power as a jazz band, a listening band, as a show band. The bands in the '30s and '40s did it the other way around. They were basically dance bands; then the theater shows came along, and the

bands that could put on a good show were successful. But at this point there would seem to be a good field for a real out-and-out jazz band, which is what I want. Most bands that have been put together lately have been trying to reach a happy medium, and this doesn't exist; they spoil the possibilities in both directions.

**Feather:** *Do you find it easier to get sidemen than it was years ago? That the level of musicianship has advanced a lot?*

**Mulligan:** Well, they cost more! But there have always been good players around. In fact, several in this band are guys I played in bands with in years past. There were always plenty of guys who had technical proficiency, but it took someone like Lester Young to come along and turn everybody around and show them a new way to use their technique; and then the same with Charlie Parker. So the kind of technical facility that these people brought into jazz has come to be an accepted thing—you either play that way or you can't play.

**Feather:** *How about your soloists?*

**Mulligan:** Well, I've approached this band on a very strict premise, which possibly doesn't always meet with the complete happiness of all the fellows in the band. In the sextet there were four soloists. To simplify our own problem and that of the audience, in this band, too, we have four basic solo chairs: I'm one, Brookmeyer is another, the trumpet and tenor are the others. To a great extent we restrict solos to these four chairs; as time goes on we'll find things that will provide a solo outlet for others. But first we want to establish some sort of basic approach to the band.

I've seen a lot of bands fall into a trap of spreading the solos around so everybody can play. Now these are known as musicians' bands, and one of the reasons they can never establish themselves with an audience is that the audience takes time to be able to understand the playing of each man, and so many players go by that they never really have a chance to hear anybody, so nothing really sticks in their minds.

**Feather:** *Did you want to have Art Farmer on the band?*

**Mulligan:** Well, all I can say is, I hope Art's band is a big failure so he has to come back with my band! No, actually, of course, Art's band was just wonderful when I heard it.

**Feather:** *About your movies. Do you think I Want To Live got the recognition it deserved for its musical achievements?*

**Mulligan:** Listen, the fact that they not only didn't give Johnny Mandel an Oscar, but didn't even nominate him, just convinces me of the closed doors, the private little club that the movie composers have. And they say this is the first movie music Johnny wrote. Actually it's just the first he ever got credit for—a good part of the good jazz music that was heard in segments of other pictures was written by Johnny. They call that ghosting.

**Feather:** *You did a little ghosting yourself, didn't you, I mean ghost playing?*



**Mulligan:** Yes, in *The Rat Race*, they told me I was to play a bandleader on a cruise ship, but it turned out they were just throwing me a bone. It was a very small acting role and they really wanted me to play baritone for Tony Curtis—a ghost baritone voice. Well, I like Tony and I didn't want to be a bad guy, so I wound up doing it anyway.

In *The Bells Are Ringing*, my scene with Judy [Holliday] comes right at the beginning of the picture and the whole thing is slapstick. She told me she'd had no experience with this kind of thing, and I'd had less than none, so it's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves! Hitting each other in the head and breaking glasses and catching on fire. ... But this opening is supposed to be building to a love story, and it should be a gentle buildup to her first love song, which she sings beautifully. But coming right after this comedy sequence really kills it for her, so I asked, "Well, it's nice and everything, but please cut it out of the picture." So they cut out one of her songs and they cut this scene and that scene. But our own scene, the one that was the root of the trouble, they left in!

**Feather:** Gerry, let's project a little into the future. What would you like to be doing when you're, say, 50 years old?

**Mulligan:** When I'm 50? Well, I'd like to be doing some of the same things as now—but I'd like to double on other horns, and play a lot more piano than I'm playing now. And I'd like to be a producer in various other fields besides jazz. I'd love to do some television production, with jazz used on a popular level.

As far as the immediate future is concerned, I'm glad to be getting into the position where I feel I'm able to call my own shots. I want to take this band out on the same level of prestige as my small bands. I'd like to package my *own* show built around the band; I'm sick of being booked on these miscellaneous package shows, and I feel my name has drawing power enough to fill a hall.

The powerful sound-wave on the crest of which Gerald Joseph Mulligan is currently riding seems unlikely to diminish in intensity in the foreseeable future. After a long siege of hard times, he has found the artistic and economic security that for so many years seemed hopelessly out of reach.

Perhaps the best summation of Mulligan's story, during the weeks I spent talking about him to friends and associates, was offered by Chubby Jackson, who knew Jeru (as Miles Davis nicknamed him) back in the hungry '40s.

"Some people," said Jackson, "would say Gerry was stupid in his attitude, but in so many ways it was the most commendable thing he could do. Gerry wouldn't conform, would never give up his musical principles, even when it meant starvation. He played true to life the defiance that every musician of a creative nature feels. And he's finally made it. And I say, more power to him."

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# Reviews

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

56 Jazz  
58 Blues  
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66 Books

## Pat Metheny

### *Orchestrion*

NONESUCH 516668

★★★

The most recognizable jazz guitarist in the world has joked that either “vacuum cleaners or garage-door openers” helped drive his latest project’s retro-futurism, which finds him not only wielding six strings, but a Rube Goldberg array of orchestral instruments that are triggered by a solenoid here or a toggle switch there. Guess Pat Metheny, responsible for some of the music’s most heartfelt moments, loves himself some robots. But what can they do for his music?

The answer coming from *Orchestrion* is, “Not as much as one might hope.” The process of connecting the marimbas, bells, vibes and other instruments to a metaphoric motherboard of old-school mechanics fits snugly into Metheny’s progressive persona—the guy’s always had an itch to move the conceptual needle forward, and creating five very elaborate new tunes controlled by a blend of real-time and pre-programmed maneuvers is an interesting approach. But it doesn’t take long for the procedural rigmarole of his postmodern music box to drift into the background, and as *Orchestrion*’s program unfolds, it becomes unimportant whether a gaggle of pneumatics or a hard-driving rhythm section is at the rudder: We’re heading for familiar territory.

The dewy guitar notes that spell out the melody of “Entry Point,” the galloping beats that bolster the liftoff of “Expansion,” the capital-P poignancy that’s at the center of “Soul Search”—Metheny may surround himself with the whiz and whirr of experimental bells and whistles, but there’s a good deal of business as usual in the air. That doesn’t rob the music of singularity, however. The pulse that enlivens “Spirit In The Air” is effective and refreshing, almost brokering a gamelan vibe. The unique orchestral attitude that he introduced around the time of *Still Life (Talking)* remains in play (one critic has deemed *Orchestrion* “several classic Pat Metheny Group albums rolled into one”); rather than a human voice swooping around to approximate a string section, a series of cross-hatched strummings help decorate things quite nicely. My favorite part is when a passage that echoes the Beach Boys’ “Let’s Go Away For Awhile” bubbles up in “Entry Point.” There may be something slightly stiff about the disc’s clatter, but this effervescent music has plenty of high-flying moments.

In a YouTube explanation as to why he conceived the project, Metheny paraphrases Ray Kurzweil, saying that there’s a “basic human desire to extend our reach through tools.” Who knows, after the insight picked up on his current *Orchestrion* tour, this one-man band might be a mere vacuum cleaner away from the next “Body And Soul.”

—Jim Macnie

**Orchestrion:** *Orchestrion*; *Entry Point*; *Expansion*; *Soul Search*; *Spirit Of The Air*. (52:06)

**Personnel:** Pat Metheny, guitar and orchestrionics (pianos, marimba, vibraphone, orchestra bells, percussion, cymbals, blown bottles, custom-fabricated acoustic mechanical instruments, keyboard).

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JIMMY KATZ

## Ramona Borthwick

*One Of Us*

LETIMOTIF 002

★★★½

I begin on a petty note of impatience before proceeding to the higher substantive ground of this generally fine CD. It is this: Must all music be *about* something? Must every CD, especially when instrumental, become a concept album? It seems almost obligatory today that an album must attach itself to some higher, more noble mission in order to justify what, in fact, needs no programmatic pretext at all. To wit, the skillfully sculpted, abstract contours that Ramona Borthwick has crafted here are offered, by rather arbitrary fiat, as a paean to the larger and fashionable concerns of ecology—to pay “homage to our wonderful planet, recognizing ... that we bear the responsibility to be protectors of Earth’s bounties.” Fine. Except there is really nothing in this music that would otherwise lead us to infer in it a homily to the earth’s wonders.

What it does offer is 10 original titles that combine the well-tempered fundamentals of



contemporary hard bop with splashes of New Age spiritualism, all framed within carefully assembled structures. The bop feel is provided by the clean and cool precision of Ingrid Jensen, whose trumpet and flugelhorn seem a logical descendent from the

’50s lyricism of Miles Davis and especially Art Farmer. She navigates her solo courses with her typical poise and aplomb and proves herself a superb partner in the often refined ensemble balances.

Borthwick, who authored all the pieces in this self-produced and self-released CD, walks both sides of the street, playing excellent, if not quite distinctive, straightahead piano throughout, while adding her shimmering, wordless soprano lines to selected ensembles along the way. She does this sparingly, sometimes subtly, and frequently hauntingly, never scatting or soloing but instead embedding and camouflaging herself deep into meticulously orchestrated unison lines in which her voice seems to float on piano, guitar (“Listening To Love”) and horn

(“Gaia”). Sometimes the blends make her sound overdubbed on herself. You can’t always be sure. The craft is impressive in any case.

The first track, “Who’s Your Mama,” will make any listener of NPR’s “All Things Considered” feel right at home. The program’s little eight-note signature scale forms the piece’s main theme. (Film buffs may also note that it figured prominently in the 1944 Fred MacMurray comedy *Murder, He Says*.) It also introduces the other main solos voices, especially guitarist Noel Borthwick, who swings hard with the best of them and shows us where he’s coming from with a fleeting quote from “Salt Peanuts.” He and the leader fit one another hand-in-glove throughout.

For a work intended to be personal and perhaps introspective, the music is unusually alive, frisky and free from brooding pensiveness. On the other hand, the all-original program requires time to absorb and make friends with. The title track, strictly piano and rhythm, is the most self-consciously romantic piece, and perhaps a touch florid.

—John McDonough

**One Of Us:** Who’s Your Mama; Chinese Whispers; Listening To Love; One Of Us; Resident Alien; Gaia; Eight Winds; Garden Of The Gods; Retro Speak; Rio Alegre. (70:12)

**Personnel:** Ramona Borthwick, piano, voice; Ingrid Jensen, trumpet, flugelhorn; Noel Borthwick, guitar; Johannes Weidenmuller, bass; Adam, Cruz, drums.

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

## Don Braden/Mark Rapp

*The Strayhorn Project*

PREMIUM MUSIC SOLUTIONS 1400

★★★½

Tenor saxophone veteran Don Braden and trumpet up-and-comer Mark Rapp take a creative, freewheeling approach to Billy Strayhorn’s enchanting compositions here, with the accent on lively group interplay, rich textures, spiky rhythms and some funky strutting. The inclusion of three vocals by Sachal Vasandani suggests the relaxed feeling of a live club set, which some listeners may find distracting, though I enjoyed hearing Strayhorn’s sophisticated lyrics as part of the package. I’m not crazy about some of the musical turns the band takes, but there’s no arguing this album transcends run of the mill “tribute projects” by a wide margin.

The band steps out first with a crisp, double-clutching, New Orleans-tinged version of “Rain Check” that puts one in the mind of Blood, Sweat and Tears. When the band chops “Johnny Come Lately” into pieces then tosses them back together with gleeful elan, Braden’s allusion to Monk’s “Nuttty” in his solo fits the mood perfectly. The deconstruction of the ballad “Isfahan” is less attractive—gratuitous, even—as that slinky and mysterious melody tumbles out so fast it loses its charm. Modern big band



writing comes to mind again, but of the pyrotechnical sort that, in its desire to do something flashy, loses sight of the beauty of the material.

The hoary lounge classic “Satin Doll” gets a celebratory makeover, with cool new chords, and Braden sounds easy with the material, swinging and soulful. Young pianist Gerald Clayton provides a churning backdrop under Braden and offers one of his best solos, shapely at the same time it is explosive and eruptive. His playing is very strong throughout, and his give-and-take interludes with the horns keep the format charged. Rapp’s scoops to high notes and soldierly, intentional focus show the influence of

Wynton Marsalis.

On ballads, Braden shimmers coolly on alto flute as the rhythm section pushes a Herbie Hancock-like pulse under a lushly woven arrangement of “A Flower Is A Lovable Thing.” Of the ballads sung by Vasandani, whose plain but pathos-packed style works well on this material, “Something To Live For” is especially effective, drawing attention to Strayhorn’s deft use of internal rhymes. “Daydream” delivers the listener directly into the musing spirit of the song; the tender waltz “Pretty Girl (Star Crossed Lovers)” renews the rhythmic vitality characteristic of the album as a whole. But Clayton’s “Chelsea Bridge” feels parenthetical, at best, and the seldom-played “Lament For Javanette,” a Barney Bigard clarinet feature from the old Ellington book, wasn’t very interesting to start with. It comes off as generic Iberianism.

I have a feeling a lot of cuts from this thoughtfully crafted disc are going to turn up on radio, and they should. But as an album, it doesn’t completely cohere.

—Paul de Barros

**The Strayhorn Project:** Rain Check; Isfahan; A Flower Is A Lovable Thing; Something To Live For; Satin Doll; Daydream; Johnny Come Lately; Lament For Javanette; Chelsea Bridge; Pretty Girl/Star Crossed Lovers. (51:03)

**Personnel:** Don Braden, tenor saxophone, flute, alto flute; Mark Rapp, trumpet; Sachal Vasandani, vocal (4, 6, 10); Gerald Clayton, piano; Rene Hart, bass; Greg Gonzalez, drums.

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



# The HOT Box



**Scott DuBois**  
**Black Hawk Dance**  
 SUNNYSIDE 1252  
 ★★½

With guitarists, it is tempting—often all too easy—to play the name game. Sounds like so-and-so; uses the same pedals as him or her. But if the player is worth their salt, then it should be possible to assess their music without such references. Scott DuBois is not without points of comparison, but on *Black Hawk Dance* he's put together a disc well worth listening to without thoughts of lurking precursors.

DuBois prefers a sound with rolled off treble, a tad muted, and occasionally excessive echo, otherwise quite straightforward and unprocessed, which is in itself somewhat unusual these days. He moves fluidly from sprightly chords, almost soul jazz in punch (if not in context), and expertly unsprung intervals to knotted threads of slurred notes, and he's comfortable rumbling a drone or creating gradually shifting webs of harmony, using the volume knob or pedal to soften the attack. All quite familiar stuff, but beautifully handled in service to the greater musical good.

The material DuBois writes has a slight Americana touch, as in the slow-motion build of "Isolate," but never turns too wagon-train or hoo-down. On the loosely harvested themes, which don't dominate the pieces but give them character, the guitarist plays in tandem (or, on "Souls," in hocket) with versatile German multiple reed player Gebhard Ullmann, long familiar on the New York scene for his quite special bass clarinet sound. Thomas Morgan is a bassist I've been hearing more lately, and his interactive skills are extremely impressive, likewise drummer Kresten Osgood, who plays a bit understatedly, which in this case means just right. Nobody's grandstanding here, just playing closely, carefully, collaboratively. —John Corbett

**Black Hawk Dance:** Black Hawk Dance; Illinois Procession Rain; Dust Celebration; Isolate; River Life; Souls; Louis Frederic. (53:39)  
**Personnel:** Scott DuBois, guitar; Gebhard Ullmann, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; bass clarinet; Thomas Morgan, bass; Kresten Osgood, drums.

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

CDs »	CRITICS »	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Pat Metheny</b> <i>Orchestrion</i>		★★½	★★★★½	★★★	★★★
<b>Ramona Borthwick</b> <i>One of Us</i>		★★★½	★★	★★½	★★★
<b>Don Braden/Mark Rapp</b> <i>The Strayhorn Project</i>		★★★	★★★	★★½	★★★★½
<b>Scott DuBois</b> <i>Black Hawk Dance</i>		★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★★

## Critics' Comments

### Pat Metheny, *Orchestrion*

Metheny's account of the concept—a modern-day electro-acoustic "player piano" orchestra—is more interesting than the result, though the percolating, gamelan-ish percussion tickles me and Metheny shows admirable restraint with his new toys. Ironically, the most engaging interludes feature Metheny just plain playing, especially on the kind of subdued and mysterious ballad he patented long ago ("Entry Point") or caressing the piano on "Soul Search."  
 —Paul de Barros

Preference for acoustic robotics over the synthesizer, desire to completely control instruments (using solenoids and physical manipulation) rather than simulate or dismiss them. Esthetic proof is in the pudding, of course, and Metheny's futuristic one-man band, past the gimmick, is dreamy and dramatic but has the palpability of real resonating objects, even if it lacks the social dynamics of group interplay.  
 —John Corbett

*Orchestrion* is like a hot dog. You might like it better if you *didn't* know how it was made. Metheny surely loves challenges, even when he has to find his own. Still, this is Metheny, after all. But when he's not front and center, the music seems lost in its method. Result, smooth jazz.  
 —John McDonough

### Ramona Borthwick, *One of Us*

On one side, the straightforward mainstream piano-led jazz, not without cliché but not without juice; on the other, wordless vocal themes with compositional ambitions. In the balance, the latter, sappy and numbing, outweighs the former.  
 —John Corbett

I like the warm, spiritual vibe, especially pianist Borthwick's wordless vocals, a la Flora Purim. But as a soloist the leader here is overshadowed by her husband, guitarist Noel Borthwick, and the sublime Ingrid Jensen.  
 —Paul de Barros

Perfect example of a disc that rambles on and on and on. Lithe grooves, lilting solos, light textures. Competent stuff, but after three spins I couldn't tell what was supposed to be grabbing my ears. Perhaps novel because it seems to be an acoustic version of fusion.  
 —Jim Macnie

### Don Braden/Mark Rapp, *The Strayhorn Project*

By and large, a welcome measure of mainstream freshness for a classic book. Braden and Rapp make a full-figured front line and enjoy a nice interlocking rapport on "Isfahan." Nothing strikingly unexpected, but handsomely done.  
 —John McDonough

Perfect example of a simply adequate disc. I dig Braden's invention, but find Rapp to be a tad perfunctory and the program to be wagging its tail a bit too much. And when you come down to it, the singer doesn't generate sparks or drama.  
 —Jim Macnie

Strayhorn's elegant, indelible lines poke their heads out here and there in a program with a slick, contemporary r&b infused sound. Sometimes ("Satin Doll") those sensibilities clash, sometimes they're happily wed.  
 —John Corbett

### Scott DuBois, *Black Hawk Dance*

Perfect example of an evocative listening experience. Like the Eric Dolphy allusions, like the lush mood of "Illinois Procession Train," like the rhythm section's buoyancy, but most of all I like way the songs flow into each other. Not groundbreaking, but definitely compelling.  
 —Jim Macnie

By the time you exorcize the more misbehaved spirits from this seance, you're left with about half an album. The music ranges from near catatonic ("Isolate") to livid, especially when Ullmann is in the feral grip of a "spiritual ascension." In between lies a measure of welcome warmth, though ("Illinois"), and DuBois seems to keep his head at all times.  
 —John McDonough

Wonderful, evocative album with guitarist DuBois and reed wizard Gebhard Ullman digging deep into a Plains Indian vibe, from spirit quest to ghost dance. DuBois' lickety-split picking suggests the obsessive trances of John McLaughlin, while Ullmann references Albert Ayler-like ecstasy without falling off the edge into pure sound. The folk simplicity of "Illinois Procession Rain" put me in the mind of the best of Don Cherry's old group, Codona. But every track on this album is a profound delight.  
 —Paul de Barros

## Chicago Underground Duo

**Boca Negra**  
THRILL JOCKEY 228  
★★★★½

Although the Chicago Underground Duo has covered a lot of musical territory since their first recording in 1997, they seem particularly restless on *Boca Negra*. Some tracks express this condition quite literally by beginning in one style and ending in another.

"Green Ants," the album's first track, begins with an homage to the prototypical world music/free-jazz hybrid of the similarly configured duo of Don Cherry and Ed Blackwell and ends with a dialogue for echoing brass and agitated percussion that distills Rob Mazurek's recent work with Bill Dixon. "Conffliction" opens with an implacable progression of stark digital piano chords; this switches to sprightly synth theme that wouldn't sound wrong on a Tortoise album. And while they are faithful to the melody of Ornette Coleman's "Broken Shadows," it's played on a



vibraphone and subjected to a relentless pure-sound barrage.

Mazurek's cornet playing never sounds better than when he's extrapolating from a sturdy melody, and he does so to great effect on the loping "Spy On The Floor." And the duo are nearly as lyrical wielding glassy synth and mallet tones on "Vengeance." But *Boca Negra*'s

most absorbing moments come when the two men abandon tunes in favor of electronic manipulation of metallic sounds. Mbira and cornet tones flake and corrode as though they were iron rusting in salt air on "Laughing With The Sun," and "Left Hand Of Darkness" has the rough tactile qualities of '60s-vintage musique concrete. The record may not stay in one place long, but everywhere it goes seems worth the visit.

—Bill Meyer

**Boca Negra:** Green Ants; Left Hand Of Darkness; Broken Shadows; Quantum Eye; Conffliction; Hermeto; Spy On The Floor; Laughing With The Sun; Roots And Shooting Stars; Vengeance. (55:51)

**Personnel:** Rob Mazurek, cornet, electronics; Chad Taylor, drums, vibraphone, mbira, computer, electronics.

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

## Tomasz Stanko Quintet

**Dark Eyes**  
ECM 2115  
★★★★½

Tomasz Stanko is a generous man. Whether it's a recording or a live performance, this notable trumpeter must realize that his strengths are magnified by the company he keeps. This is this reviewer's first visit with the new Stanko group post his marvelous trio of pianist Marcin Wasilewski, bassist Sławomir Kurkiewicz and drummer Michał Miskiewicz. Indeed, for those familiar with Stanko's intricacies—his love of melody and harmony, his occasional outbursts, all the unconventional ways he structures his tunes—*Dark Eyes* is yet another chapter, and one that should satisfy if not inspire.

With a new band of yet more young recruits, the moodiness and heightened lyricism emerge on another level. Not necessarily better, but the writing is still so damn good and fresh, Stanko seems to have carved out a style that is uniquely his own. Going from a quartet to a quintet, Stanko adds luster with a pianist in Alexi Tuomari, and a guitarist in Jakob Bro. The richness is felt early on with "Terminal 7," a medium-tempo modal piece that finds both chordal artists dreamily amplifying Stanko's purring melody lines. And with electric bassist Anders Christensen and drummer Olavi



Louhivuori, the band finds two rhythmists extremely capable of sensitive, eloquent support, of being both serene and surprising.

This is Stanko's music, save for two written by his former boss Krzysztof Komeda and rearranged by Stanko (he revisits his "Last Song" as a creative reinterpretation). And Manfred Eicher's production

brings everything so close, you can almost hear Christensen's fingers caress his metal strings as they meander through the graceful, softly urgent swing of "The Dark Eyes Of Martha Hirsch."

Stanko likes to draw his inspirations from various artistic corners. And that is good to know. But one can just listen to this storyteller and imagine his or her own fantasy, draw from this music what one would like that relates to their own life or lives. It is a continuing marvel to realize how this veteran of the European jazz scene keeps coming up with new (and usually younger) players to help him realize his evocative and truly different musical visions, visions that combine the freewheeling jazz aesthetic with his more compositely, mysterious elements of composition.

—John Ephland

**Dark Eyes:** So Nice; Terminal 7; The Dark Eyes Of Martha Hirsch; Grand Central; Amsterdam Avenue; Samba Nova; Dirge For Europe; May Sun; Last Song; Etiuda Baletowa No. 3. (61:44)

**Personnel:** Tomasz Stanko, trumpet; Alexi Tuomari, piano; Jakob Bro, guitar; Anders Christensen, bass; Olavi Louhivuori drums.

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



## Mostly Other People Do The Killing

**Forty Fort**  
HOT CUP 091  
★★★★½

Over the last couple of years I don't think there's been a "jazz" band as divisive and button-pushing as the New York quartet Mostly Other People Do The Killing, and I doubt that the group's fourth album will change that situation.

Sandwiched between retro-leaning tunes is some of the most exciting improvisation happening today, but detractors accuse the band of being an irritating novelty or refusing to take itself seriously. Both are kind of true, but when leveled as charges, they miss the point. The cover art is a spot-on send-up of the Roy Haynes classic *Out Of The Afternoon*, but the liner notes by "Leonard Featherweight" only discuss the fashion choices of the musicians in the sleeve art. Leader, bassist and composer Moppa Elliott has claimed that MOPDTK perpetually question the validity of jazz—a rather silly pursuit if you ask me—but its music definitely refuses to treat any style or approach as sacred.

While Elliott's appealing tunes tap strongly into various '60s post-bop flavors—from the blues to boogaloo to bossa nova to soul jazz—the pieces ricochet wildly between disparate episodes, and while the new record is typical in its arch referentiality, the inherent humor and absurdity no longer overwhelm the fierce, downright spellbinding musical power. Trumpeter Peter Evans and saxophonist Jon Irabagon form a fearsome frontline and they've never sounded so locked in, leaping nonchalantly from funky charts to fiery cacophony as naturally as drawing breath.

Drummer Kevin Shea remains the group's musical prankster—the troublemaker, a la Han Bennink, on steroids—but he's expanded his arsenal, from ridiculous electronic beats and tabla machine rhythms to precise cymbal splatter and knotty displacements.

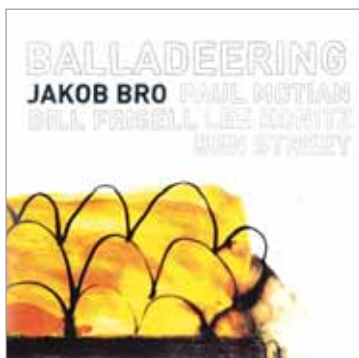
—Peter Margasak

**Forty Fort:** Pen Argyl; Rough And Ready; Blue Ball; Nanticoke Coke; Little Hope; Forty Fort; Round Bottom, Square Top; St. Mary's Proctor; Cute. (60:25)

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

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





**Jakob Bro**  
*Balladeering*

LOVELAND 011  
★★★½

Not so long ago I heard a musician opine that CDs are like business cards, handy to pass out at gigs but bereft of significance. And has there ever been a format better suited to reduce ephemerality than the digital download? Danish guitarist swims against the stream with his new release, *Balladeering*, available not only as a CD but as a deluxe set with CD and LP versions of the music, a making-of documentary on DVD, and a 12-inch square book that presents photos from the session and liner notes by Jørgen Leth, a former jazz critic lured out of retirement just for this occasion.

Such monument-building attests to the significance this project holds for Bro. Just 30 years old when the album was recorded in 2008, he recruited a band including his former teacher Ben Street, erstwhile employer Paul Motian, and all-time heroes Bill Frisell and Lee Konitz.

But it must be said that the record's heft seems at odds with the airiness of the material. Bro's tunes are extremely simple, his tone bright, his touch feather-light. Frisell's contributions are quite empathetic to Bro's approach; it's often hard to tell who is playing what. Motian and Street's playing confirm the adage that ballads are the true proof of a seasoned player; they strike an easy balance between motion and stasis, never rushing or overwhelming the music, but never letting it stall, either. Even so, without Konitz, Bro's music could float away like blown bubbles on a summer breeze.

Konitz's note placement is supremely elegant, but it's the sentiment he projects that gives the music backbone. His melodic elaborations are tinged with melancholy and tenderness that is quite at odds with his salty demeanor on the DVD. And despite his 81 years, he plays with a clarity and certitude that wipes out any notions that you're hearing a lion in winter. No, he's just a musician at the top of his game. —Bill Meyer

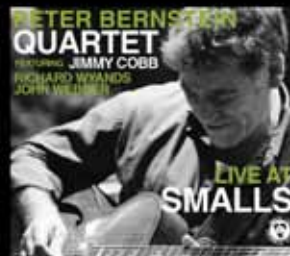
**Balladeering:** Weightless; Evening Song; Vraa; Starting Point/Acoustic Version; Greenland; Terrace Place; Sort; Starting Point/Electric Version. (44:14)

**Personnel:** Jakob Bro, guitar; Bill Frisell, guitar; Lee Konitz, alto saxophone; Paul Motian, drums; Ben Street, bass.

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



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## Big Smalls Launch

Run by pianist Spike Wilner, *smallsLIVE*, which launched in January with six releases, is not to be confused with Smalls Records, Luke Kaven's estimable, highly curated label dedicated to documenting consequential musicians, famous and obscure, associated with the two iterations of the Greenwich Village club that opened in 1994. Instead, Wilner, who also books the room (Smalls presents as many as three bands a night, seven nights a week, video-streaming each set and archiving all content on its Web site), is concerned with showcasing Smalls in the here-and-now. He writes, "Jazz is best heard in a live context, with minimal editing, captured in the full spontaneous moment in which it was created," adding that artists choose all takes and face no "constraints in terms of material, length of cuts, or personnel." Each disc also carries the *Live At Smalls* subtitle.

Wilner's admirable imperative plays out with mixed results. Although all members are in fine form on *The Ryan Kisor Quartet* (SL0001; 55:44 ★★★), featuring the trumpet virtuoso in erudite dialogue with strong post-bop pianist Peter Zak and Jazz at Lincoln Center colleagues Sherman Irby on alto saxophone, Carlos Henriquez on bass and Ali Jackson on drums, the proceedings never elevate to the exalted heights that Kisor has attained on his studio recordings for Criss Cross. Similarly, on *The David Kikoski Trio* (SL0003; 59:26 ★★★), the master pianist, joined by young A-listers Hans Glawischnig and Obed Calvaire, seems uncomfortable with the mildly detuned piano and out of sync with his partners—his playing here, though intense and certainly high-level, lacks the dynamic nuance and overall flow of his eight excellent Criss Cross trio and quartet studio dates.

On the other hand, on *The Kevin Hays Trio* (SL00270:09 ★★★), the pianist—spurred by bassist Doug Weiss and drummer Bill Stewart—displays consistently high intensity, harmonic imagination and contrapuntal derring-do not evident on his

Steve Davis: Hip swagger



STEVE DAVIS

recent recordings, revealing a tonal personality informed by the Bud Powell tributary that flows through Paul Bley, Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea.

Similarly intense energies define *The Steve Davis Quintet Featuring Larry Willis* (SL0005; 66:34 ★★★★★), which documents a well-constructed set. The trombonist and pianist, each a Jackie McLean alum, and former McLean student Mike DiRubbo on alto saxophone (hear him channel late John Coltrane on Davis' "Spirit Waltz") swing relentlessly. Bassist Gerald Cannon and drummer Willie Jones also channel hip swagger and street-inflected tenderness on four long numbers that go by in a heartbeat.

New Orleans-born tenor saxophonist *Ian Hendrickson-Smith* (SL0006; 48:38 ★★★), a sideman in recent years with soul-stirrers like Amy Winehouse, Sharon Jones and Al Green, offers an extroverted, blues-suffused set with a hardbop attitude, drawing on pop performance strategies while deploying vocabulary from the lexicon of top-shelf soul jazz (Charles Mingus and Ahmad Jamal). Some of the on-stage excitement comes through, but pianist Rick Germanson is the only soloist to transcend cliché.

Sophisticated blues connotations permeate *The Peter Bernstein Quartet* (SL0004; 74:25 ★★★★★), on which the guitar master uncorks a series of high-content, don't-let-them-see-you-sweat solos on smooth-as-silk swing beats from pianist Richard Wyands, bassist John Webber and drum-master Jimmy Cobb.

DB

Ordering info: [smallslive.com/inner.cfm](http://smallslive.com/inner.cfm)



## Dave King

### *Indelicate*

SUNNYSIDE 1229

★★★½

A bold release from Sunnyside, this is the The Bad Plus drummer recorded solo in his home town of Minneapolis. Dave King's affinity for piano is surprising, notwithstanding the instrument's percussive essence. Don't expect drum solos: King is into obtuse grooves and broader concepts; this is a microcosm of an inquiring artist balancing rough with less-than-rough.

"Highly Varnished Academic Realism" suggests the old chafe of art college vs. conservatory, but often elements of each institution cleave to the other. On "Arts High Boogie" King acts like a piano tuner nagging a tapping phrase, all the while balancing an array of overlapped piano lines, then breaks free with Thelonious Monk-like investigations of the piano's dynamic response before fuzzing out with backbeats. This distortion he also uses on the jaunty "Homage: Young People," and it makes you fear a blown speaker or negligent with mastering.

It's King's ploy to downplay expectations of grandeur, though just as graph paper underlies the hamfisted, late Picasso/Philip Guston-style drawings on the sleeve, King's reliable time lends the most fractured and quizzical explorations solid shoes. "Bees" is a feature for deadened drum sounds and spasmodic pad triggers, King curating his sound. The brief ballad "The Shell" is welcome after this epileptic drum-gym workout, with King switching to brushes and bass drum, knowing just what accompaniment he wants from his alter ego. The classical equilibrium and restraint of "I See You, You See Me" is King peering glass-eyed at his reflection in the wellspring.

The title track states the brazen ethos that earned The Bad Plus' reputation as loudest acoustic piano trio. But as the somber, reverberant minimalism of "The Black Dial Tone Of Night" suggests, King has more natural facets than we may have realized. —Michael Jackson

**Indelicate:** The Werewolf And The Silver Bullet; Homage: Young People; Bees; The Shell; Arts High Boogie; Herman Ze German Cassette Redux; Highly Varnished Academic Realism; I See You, You See Me; Indelicate; The Great Hammer; The Black Dial Tone Of Night; I Want To Feel Good. (37:31)

**Personnel:** Dave King, drums, piano.

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



## Elephant9

### Walk The Nile

RUNE GRAMMOFON 2095

★★★★

## Espen Eriksen Trio

### You Had Me At Goodbye

RUNE GRAMMOFON 2096

★★½

Perhaps no record label better represents the sprawling eclecticism and range of Norwegian contemporary creative music than Rune Grammofon, an imprint with decidedly catholic sensibilities. That aesthetic is clearly mirrored in its two latest releases by very different keyboard-led trios.

Elephant9 is an explosive organ trio fronted by Ståle Storløkken, who's best known as a member of the idiom-smashing Supersilent. On the group's powerful second album, its jazz-rock attack has gotten tighter and more ferocious, smashing together an unlikely mix of Deep Purple-style hard rock with the jazz-inflected sounds of Tony Williams' Lifetime and early '70s Miles Davis. Drummer Torstein Lofthus (of the jazz-turned-metal combo Shining) drives



the music with hard-hitting polyrhythms that fracture like glass and spread out like lava, while electric bassist Nikolai Hængsle Eilertsen maintains thick grooves to give the band its sturdy foundation.

That blend of freneticism and solidity proves perfect for Storløkken's rangy improvisations, which create distorted shapes and angular lines on Hammond organ and Fender Rhodes to explode riff-oriented rock melody and elaborate single-note flurries into dramatic supernovas. Despite the group's sonic antecedents, Elephant9 avoids prog-rock bombast; its sound is huge, but there are no

empty displays of technical virtuosity. On longer pieces like the title track and "Habanera Rocket," the trio reveals a keen dynamism, making effective use of space and lighter synthesizer textures to let some air into its monolithic, grinding vehicles.

The debut album by the trio led by pianist Espen Eriksen couldn't be more different than Elephant9. The all-acoustic music on *You Had Me At Goodbye* favors ECM-style introspection

grafted onto gently melodic compositions that draw from rock and classical shapes more than jazz; the concision of the performances gives the improvisations, both by the pianist and the nimble bassist Lars Tormond Jensen, a pop-like focus. Veteran Scandinavian piano trios like E.S.T. and the one led by Tord Gustavsen are clear predecessors for what Eriksen is tackling here, but his sound is more streamlined than the former and less heady than the latter. Some of the ballads are a bit florid and sentimental despite their sparseness, but on a piece like "Not Even In Brazil," which seems to draw more than a touch of inspiration from the music of Radiohead, the trio finds a simpatico balance of melodic moodiness and harmonic richness, as their flexible drummer Andreas Bye unleashes ever-shifting accents with strong results. If they could ditch some of their politeness they could make a real splash.

—Peter Margasak

**Walk The Nile:** Fugl Fonix; Aviation; Walk The Nile; Hardcore Orientale; Habanera Rocket; John Tinnick. (44:56)

**Personnel:** Ståle Storløkken, Fender Rhodes, Hammond organ, synthesizer; Nikolai Hængsle Eilertsen, electric bass; Torstein Lofthus, drums.

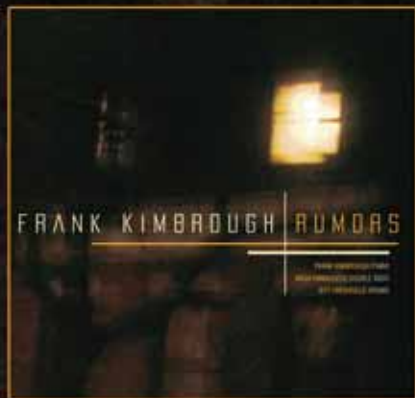
**You Had Me At Goodbye:** Anthem; Grinde; In The Woods; Masaka Tsara; Not Even In Brazil; Intermezzo; On The Jar; To Whom It May Concern. (37:33)

**Personnel:** Espen Eriksen, piano; Lars Tormod Jensen, bass; Andreas Bye, drums.

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

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**Tas Cru: *Grizzle n' Bone* (Crustee Tees 0901; 58:52)**

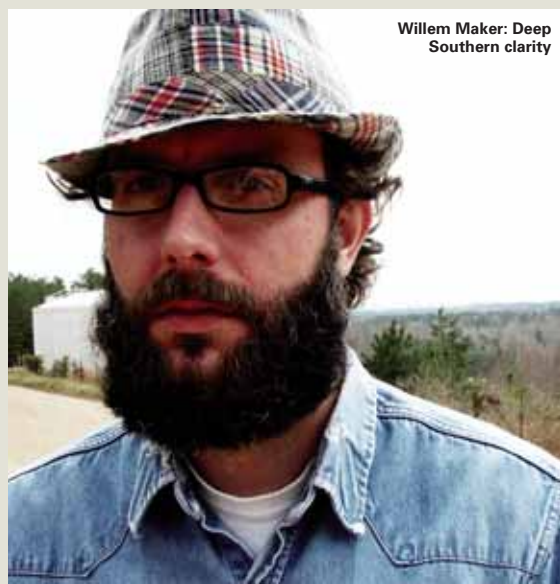
★★★★ Cru, in upstate New York, makes his third album memorable, using the rich tone of his voice and the sharp edge of his slide guitar to give his melodic blues-rock songs a robust fix on the tangle of emotions present. He has the soul of a poet crafting the slow, sad/happy rumination "Let's Pretend" and a stark solo blues fittingly called "Make My Woman Cry." His crackle-jack arrangement of Jackie Wilson's "Higher And Higher" takes him into a slide guitar-induced state of joy only Derek Trucks a few others reach these days. Beyond blues, "The Prophet Of Lynchburg" is his perfectly acceptable digression into Appalachian folk music. Like Leonard Cohen, Cru seems to have cultivated a personal musical vision growing up along the grand Saint Lawrence River in Quebec, his Mississippi. Keyboard player Chip Lamson and the Slow Happy Boys rhythm section have presence without drawing attention away from the bandleader. But no thanks for his chirpy female backup singers.

Ordering info: tascru.com

**T-Model Ford: *The Ladies Man* (Alive Naturalsound 0103; 57:30) ★★★** The 88-year-old whiskey-swilling hero to the alternative/punk blues mob sounds more coherent and competent singing and twiddling guitar here in 2008 than he did during his rabid, unruly Fat Possum days. Ford's still obsessed with chicken heads, hip-shaking women and "kick[ing] yer asses." And he's no more original than he ever was, reprocessing material swiped from Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, anyone.

Ordering info: aliveenergy.com

**Willem Maker: *New Moon Hand* (Big Legal Mess 0212; 50:38) ★★★★★** Singer-guitarist Maker forges a muddy sort of electric-blues that carries in its bones the raw emotionalism of a deep-thinking Deep South musician who suffered 10 years with toxic metal poisoning (hear his breathtaking "Lead & Mercury"). He's plenty self-conscious and all the better for it, singing lyrics of rare imagery with an inimitable voice that suggests a small mass of acrid phlegm is lodged in the back of his throat. This



Willem Maker: Deep Southern clarity

WILLEM MAKER

Alabaman, in his 30s, benefits from the ferocious musical clarity of his free-spirited friends, among them Mississippi hill country drummer Cedric Burnside and strings specialist Alvin Youngblood.

Ordering info: biglegalmessrecords.com

**Mark Nomad: *Soul Proprietor* (Blue Star 71509; 66:20) ★★★** Each of the 10 songs this talented vocalist and guitarist offers on his first concert album—three originals, Chicago blues standards, classics from Smiley Lewis, B. B. King and James Brown—holds a kind of suspense that offsets the predictability of familiar melodies and rhythms. Tenorman Doug Jones has a fresh voice, more influenced by Grover Washington Jr. and David Sanborn than the honkers and bar-walkers of yesteryear. With Ronnie Earl's Broadcasters seldom active anymore, Nomad leads as entertaining a blues band as you'll find in southern New England.

Ordering info: marknomad.com

**Billy Lavender: *Memphis Livin'* (I55 Productions 0200; 57:38) ★★★** Lavender, a lefty playing a right-handed guitar upside down, brings the unlearned expressive quality known as Memphis soul to a mix of blues, rock and funk on a session with other local stars like guitarist Brad Webb, drummer Tony Adams and singers Ken Dinkins and Reba Russell (she's worked with U2). This is a good album, despite hot, flamboyant production that incinerates a few tunes; even an exceptional one for the five minutes of Lavender and Webb's slow-sizzling "Tonight," where Dinkins and Lavender make mesmerizing pleas for the rightness of sweet romance.

DB

Ordering info: memphislivin.com



## Fred Ho And The Green Monster Big Band

### Celestial Green Monster

MUTABLE/BIG RED MEDIA

001

★★★½



The cover to this album says it all. Or most of it, anyway. One might be given a pass for mistaking the title of this album for the man himself, who graces its front: Fred Ho is one musical monster who just happens to be green. Green from head to toe but not green in the sense of being wet behind the ears. Rather, the man's resume with big band music is quite impressive, and *Celestial Green Monster* is just another chapter in what's been a success-filled run since the 1980s when he formed the Afro Asian Music Ensemble.

The baritonist leader of the 18-member Green Monster Big Band uses his band as an instrument expressing his personal and professional vigor. It's an outsized personality, at least when it comes to playing a music that evokes the bold colors of a Stan Kenton band with occasional Ellingtonian subtle nuances. Indeed, this is music written and performed as large forms,

weighted heavily by the 16-minute "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" and the sprawling "The Struggle For A New World Suite," which clocks in at over 38 minutes. Featuring altoists Bobby Zankel and Jim Hobbs, along with tenorists Hafez Modirzadeh and Salim Washington, the band also includes an assortment of trombonists and trumpeters, all ably supported by a

rhythm section of keyboardist Art Hirahara, bassist Wes Brown and drummer Royal Hartigan.

While the inclusion of pop fodder "Spiderman Theme" and "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" are novel touches, ultimately they detract from the more significant "Liberation Genesis" (from 1975), "Blues To The Freedom Fighters" (1974) and the "New World Suite," all of which were written by Ho. The contrasts between the playful covers and Ho's music point, in part, to his more significant political and philosophical drives, e.g., the theme undergirding the "New World Suite" entailing the message: "The modern world worships the gods of speed and quantity, and of the quick and easy profit, and out of this idolatry monstrous evils have arisen."

Needless to say, the music is at times dense, multi-layered, most often intense, driven by

alternating rock and swing rhythms, with many solos and many moods (dig Brown's funky electric playing amidst the slithering horns on "New World Suite"). And, apart from the titles, it could mean anything. "Liberation Suite," for example, begins with an a capella saxophonic discussion that combines both lyricism and the occasional atonal shriek only to be followed by smooth-talking choruses of horns that set the stage for some very fine medium-tempo swing, punctuated by solos (e.g., Ho's beefy baritone playing is both fleet and full of feeling) and more choruses. Like an augmented, more polished Sun Ra Arkestra, "Freedom Fighters" weaves in and out of, well, being "in" and "out," stylistically. It's a trait that suggests The Green Monster Big Band is not only a conversant band, but a band that seems to creep, crawl and cavort as an 18-legged one.

—John Ephland

**Celestial Green Monster:** Spiderman Theme; In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida (In The Garden Of Eden); Liberation Genesis; Blues To The Freedom Fighters; Struggle For A New World Suite. (73:26)

**Personnel:** Fred Ho: baritone saxophone; Bobby Zankel, Jim Hobbs, alto saxophone; Hafez Modirzadeh, Salim Washington, tenor saxophone; Stanton Davis, Brian Kilpatrick, Samir El-Amin, trumpet; Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; Robert Pilkington, Marty Wehner, Richard Harper, trombone; Earl MacIntyre, David Harris, contrabass trombone; Art Hirahara, piano, keyboard; Wes Brown, electric, acoustic bass; Royal Hartigan, drums; Abraham Gomez-Delgado, Haleh Abghari, vocals (2); Mary Halverson, electric guitar (2).

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

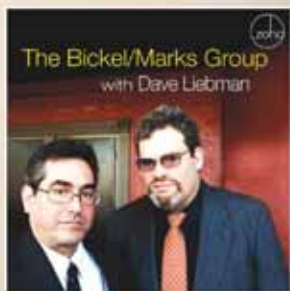


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### THE BICKEL / MARKS GROUP with Dave Liebman

[ZMR 201005]

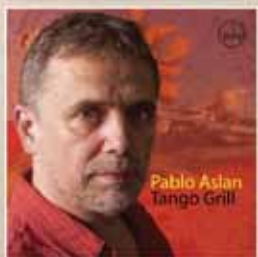
"Matt Vashlishan and Dave Liebman sound great individually and collectively. Virtuosity and taste are abounding with these guys. Dennis Marks, Doug Bickel, and swingin' drummer Marco Marcinko make for a strong and pliable rhythm section. The music is full of lyricism, unexpected twists and turns, and positive energy." —Rob Mintzer



### JON GOLD Brazil Confidential

[ZMR 201004]

A stunningly rich, diverse Brazilian jazz masterpiece of 12 original Gold compositions – with Anat Cohen, Harvie S, Mauricio Zottarelli and top Brazilian talent. Pianist Jon Gold seamlessly combines memorable songwriting, jazz improvisations and earthy Brazilian folk music into a fascinating listening experience.



### PABLO ASLAN Tango Grill

[ZMR 201011]

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



### NILSON MATTA'S BRAZILIAN VOYAGE Copacabana

[ZMR 201002]

"Nilson Matta's *Brazilian Voyage: Copacabana* is just that, a voyage across the beautiful landscape that is Brazilian jazz ... an invitation to hear Brazil, ... the beauty of its landscape and the heart and soul of its people. I encourage you to embrace this music, this country and this CD." —Jazzreview.com



### CARLOS BARBOSA-LIMA Merengue

[JAZZ 200910]

"Few guitarists have the chops to rise to the level of artistry that Barbosa-Lima achieves on *Merengue*, a wonderfully evocative Ibero-American travelogue... What impresses most, are the arrangements. Vibrantly syncopated and subtly accented, they bring a distinct flavor ... to each performance." —JazzTimes



### ARTURO O'FARRILL Risa Negra

[ZMR 200910]

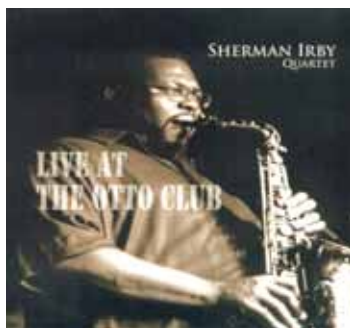
"Strapping on your seatbelt is a mere formality when you ride with this music. Every hairpin turn in mood, rhythm and tempo is navigated with luxuriant precision ... O'Farrill refuses to fence himself into a Latin groove ... welcoming aboard Badal Roy aboard for a two-part 'Tabla Rasa' that traverses from Cuba to India." —JazzTimes

## Sherman Irby Quartet

**Live At The Otto Club**  
BLACK WARRIOR 1004  
★★★★

Altoman Sherman Irby and his quartet recorded this set in Naples, Italy, during the group's 2008 European tour. *Live At The Otto Club* swings, burns and smolders from start to finish. Irby, who plays with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, is joined on this date by pianist Nico Menci, bassist Marco Marzola and drummer Darrell Green. Irby swings from the first notes of Oscar Pettiford's "Bohemia After Dark," which opens the disc. His playing is highly melodic, inventive, bluesy, soulful and is straight out of Cannonball Adderley. He leaves enough space between phrases to let the listener consider what he's saying without being bludgeoned senseless by a relentless onslaught of notes.

What's particularly striking is the set list, which includes four jazz standards, Roy Hargrove's "Depth" and the lovely bossa



"Laura's Love Song," which Irby wrote for his wife. I would have never thought that Miles Davis' "Four" would work as a ballad; it lends itself well to the bittersweet treatment Irby and company give it. Irby doesn't fly quite as fleetly on "Countdown" as John Coltrane did on the original, as Irby's tone has more heft to it, but he is killing despite the tempo and Green is right with

him. Thelonious Monk's under-recorded "In Walked Bud" closes the album with bounce, energy and excellent solos from all four players.

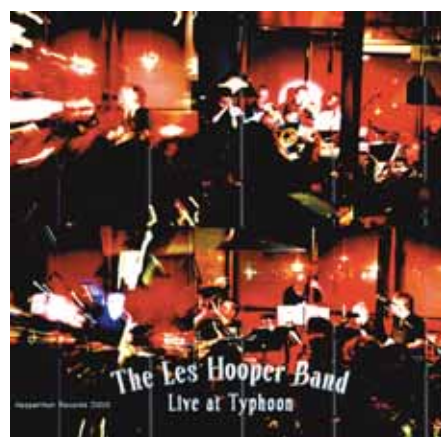
Being a live recording, there are a few sound issues: Irby is sometimes too far back in the mix, the piano is slightly out of tune, and it's a bit too prominent, especially when Menci comps. *Live At The Otto Club* isn't essential listening, but those who are searching for great players deserving of more recognition should check it out.

—Chris Robinson

**Live At The Otto Club:** Bohemia After Dark; Depth; Laura's Love Song; Countdown; Four; In Walked Bud. (61:53)

**Personnel:** Sherman Irby, alto saxophone; Nico Menci, piano; Marco Marzola, bass; Darrell Green, drums.

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



## The Les Hooper Band

**Live At Typhoon**  
HOOPERMAN RECORDS 1010  
★★★★½

Alternately slick and hard swinging, the Los Angeles-based Les Hooper Band is led by a pianist with extensive credits as a composer and arranger for film and television, and packed with top-notch Southern California players. In concert, the 17-piece big band, fueled by Hooper's smart and sometimes surprising charts of originals and standards, packs a wallop, as demonstrated by this live disc, capturing the group in full flight at a restaurant in the Santa Monica Airport.

The band strolls through a sweet and breezy "Freddie Freeloader," and creatively inserts a nod to Miles Davis' "So What" into the start of "Summertime," a showcase for bassist Kenny Wild. Simmering funk defines the Average White Band's "Pick Up The Pieces," and "Rocky & Bullwinkle" is a gear-shifting wild ride through a manic rethink of the theme from the animated television series.

But the most intriguing pieces are Hooper's originals: The zippy lines and well-lubricated swing of "Barnburner," which offers ample solo space to alto saxophonist Jeff Driskill and trombonist Jacques Voyemant, among others, is reminiscent of prime Count Basie. "Too Much Coffee" thrives on caffeinated, cross-cutting unison and harmony figures, while the aptly titled "Intersecting Lines" is a moody ballad that opens up for extended solos by Voyemant, tenor saxophonist Kevin Garren and drummer Sinclair Lott. Latin jazz is in the mix, too, courtesy of the bright and shiny "Ricky's Hot Salsa," featuring stratosphere-scraping trumpeter Rick Baptist.

—Philip Booth

**Live At Typhoon:** Freddie Freeloader; Pick Up The Pieces; Cupcake; Summertime; Barnburner; Guy Noir's Brother; Hip & Cool; Too Much Coffee; Falling; Intersecting Lines; Ricky's Hot Salsa; Rocky & Bullwinkle. (64:50)

**Personnel:** Rick Baptist, Robbie Schaer, Ron King, Dave Pittel, trumpets; Bruce Otto, Dave Ryan, Jacques Voyemant, Mike Millar, trombones; Jeff Driskill, Mark Hollingsworth, Kevin Garren, Mark Visher, John Mitchell, saxophones; Les Hooper, piano; Nick Brown, guitar; Kenny Wild, bass; Sinclair Lott, drums.

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

## Brian Lynch Afro Cuban Jazz Orchestra

**Bolero Nights For Billie Holiday**  
VENUS 1029  
★★★★

So easy to recommend almost all of the 15 albums Brian Lynch has made under his own

name since turning heads with the release of his strong hard-bop launch, *Peer Pressure*, in 1986. (Exceptions: 1989's *Back Room Blues* and 2007's fusion fluke *Fuschia/Red*.) His newest release, *Bolero Nights For Billie Holiday*, comes filled with perhaps his most expressive trumpet and flugelhorn playing to date.

This time out, recording for a Japanese label in late 2008, he shares the New York studio with special guest Phil Woods and eight other colleagues, all of whom confidently mix Afro-Cuban rhythms and African-American jazz. Confused by the album title? Don't be. Lynch is a fan of Lady Day, and he delights in bringing Latin musical components to a few of the songs she sang at the controversial finish of her recording career in 1958. Also here are songs recorded by other jazz worthies of that era plus his own "Afinque" and Raphael Lopez Gonzalez's "La Sitiera."

It is a privilege to listen to Lynch for his rich tone and exquisite time, his command of instruments, his imagination and his conviction.



Folding together heartache and rapture, he plumbs the emotions at the core of "You've Changed" and "I'm A Fool To Want You," both famously or infamously part of Holiday's *Lady In Satin* record. Like Holiday, Lynch is no stranger to musical intimacy. The New Yorker imparts an easy-rippling urgency to "Fire Waltz" and there's a special life-affirming quality to his playing throughout

"La Sitiera."

Every bit the esteemed elder statesman, Woods brings his clear and personal aesthetic to the *Lady In Satin* material and Charles Mingus' "Celia." Ivan Renta provides evidence in solos here and there why Lynch's collaborator-friend Eddie Palmieri has dubbed the young Puerto Rican alto player "the new Caribbean phenom." Still, Lynch rules the roost. Benefiting from a calmly intelligent, soulful Latin rhythm section, and never predisposed to mawkishness or flamboyance, he's the one whose work invites return listens. Art and the pursuit of mastery are the twin engines of what he does here. Lynch inspires superlatives.

—Frank-John Hadley

**Bolero Nights For Billie Holiday:** Afinque; La Sitiera; Celia; Fire Waltz; Delilah; I'm A Fool To Want You; You've Changed. (54:16)

**Personnel:** Brian Lynch, trumpet, flugelhorn; Phil Woods (3, 6, 7), Ivan Renta, alto saxophone; Alan Hoffman, tenor saxophone; Ron Blake, baritone saxophone; Marshall Gilkes, trombone; Zaccari Curtis, piano; Boris Kozlov, string bass; Marvin Diz, timbales, drums; Little Johnny Rivero, conga, bongo, percussion.

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



## Spontaneous Abstractions

On *Decentred* (Another Timbre 18; 68:57) ★★★½ Tom Chant (reeds), Angharad Davies (violins, objects), Benedict Drew (electronics, objects) and John Edwards (bass) deal with compositions that demand improvisational acumen. Three works by Michael Pisaro, aural interpretations of specific poems, are duets serving up hovering long tones of varying density, while "Four 6"—one of John Cage's late "number" pieces—directs the musicians to use 12 pre-determined sounds of their own choosing within time-brackets Cage had determined randomly with a computer program. Needless to say, these works, as well as two superb group improvisations, rely heavily on the spontaneous invention of the performers.

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

The French duo of reedist Marc Baron and bassist Loïc Blairon—performing under the name Narthex—subject their abstract improvisations to some rigorous processing, both editorial and electronic on their *Formnction* (Potlatch 209; 60:00) ★★½. Baron and Blairon recorded six 30-minute improvisations and selected five-minute excerpts from each. These snippets were combined to form a new 30-minute piece, where background noise holds together terse saxophone blurts and cries, thorny bass sounds and bits of high frequency feedback. The duo created a digital interpretation of the piece, where all saxophone and bass sounds were replaced, respectively, with 1,000 and 500 Hz frequencies, with background noise edited out. The ideas are interesting, but it doesn't necessarily make for pleasurable listening.

Ordering info: [potlatch.fr](http://potlatch.fr)

*Triptych* (Important 260; 61:38) ★★★★★ is one of two recently unearthed works by the brilliant French electronic music composer Eliane Radigue. The first of this three-part opus was commissioned for a dance piece in 1978, but all of the sections work gorgeously together, a dreamy, austere meditation on nature's four basic elements created on an ARP 2500 synthesizer. As with most of her work, the development of warm, quietly enveloping drones is lavishly unhurried, with gently undulating sound waves throbbing at the edge of audibility and, indeed, suggesting an electronic translation of sounds of the outdoors. Floating over the sumptuous low-end are upper register flurries that give the music an uncanny 3-D feel.

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



Katherine Young:  
Polyphonic  
navigator

PORTER RECORDS

Katherine Young, a member of the chamber group Till By Turning and Anthony Braxton's Falling River Quartet, makes seriously bold leaps for the bassoon on *Further Secret Origins* (Porter 4039; 46:22) ★★½. Although a few tracks employ minor overdubs and some vinyl surface noise, Young produced most of the sounds live, using multiple mics to capture different facets of her notoriously difficult double reed. She makes the most of its unwieldy low-end, using quavering long tones, extreme polyphonics, percussive breath manipulation, and wonderfully striated, sour phrases to construct a music of surprising diversity and richness.

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

The compositions of Austrian guitarist Burkhard Stangl, a former member of Polwechsel, and German clarinetist Kai Fagaschinski arrive at a stunning nexus of pretty lyricism and pure abstraction on *Musik: Ein Porträt In Sehnsucht* (Erstwhile 57; 46:57) ★★★★★. They complement their main instruments with piano, vibraphone and evocative environmental recordings, but even at its most minimal and gesture-based the duo manage to spin melody from long tones, variegated drones, various extended techniques and gorgeously abstruse harmony.

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

On *Backchats* (Creative Sources 149; 53:46) ★★★★★ the European quartet Speak Easy uses the quicksilver analog synthesizer squiggles and stabs of Thomas Lehn and the scrabbling percussion of Martin Blume to sandwich the otherworldly vocal acrobatics of Phil Minton and Ute Wassermann. Here the singers produce sounds just as abstract and unidentifiable as any instrumentalist, interacting and prodding not just one another, but their other two cohorts, in a dazzling rise-and-fall blowout.

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

DB

STAN GETZ-KENNY BARRON  
PEOPLE TIME  
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS  
SSC 3084  
Box Set of 7 discs, 51 tracks

"In March 1991, Stan Getz and Kenny Barron played four nights of duets at Café Montmartre in Copenhagen. The performances were miraculous...

Let that suffice as a cue to emphasize the obvious: Stan Getz is the emotional pivot of this music, but *People Time*\* and—to a far greater extent—*People Time-The Complete Recordings* are true duet performances. Kenny Barron's work here signifies not only a highpoint in his career but an insuperable, probably unique achievement in the annals of jazz piano."

(excerpt from Gary Giddins's liner notes)

\* 14 of the 51 tracks were initially released in 1992 as *People Time* a 2 CD album



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

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## HISTORICAL

by Bill Meyer

### Masters' Return

Two decades ago filmmaker Toby Byron produced a series of jazz and blues documentaries. Although they were released on videotape in the mid-'90s, that format's eclipse left them mostly in the domain of arts-oriented cable channels until their recent reissue on DVD from Medici Arts.

**The Story Of Jazz (2057158, 98:00) ★★★½** delivers many of

the same pleasures as Ken Burns' *Jazz*, and stumbles into some of the same pitfalls. Since it runs just over an hour-and-a-half, one can forgive its ruthless simplifications: It's supposed to be a primer. And it's easy to enjoy classic tunes by Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker playing along with footage of vintage cars, fashions and performance clips. Voice-over narration stitches together sound bites by a panoply of musicians, from Jay McShann to Tony Bennett to Lester Bowie, who discuss jazz's African roots, episodes of nation-wide popularity and essential qualities of swing and spontaneity. But the film's great-figure timeline goes awry when it tries to address the music's post-bop development and querulous when discussing fusion and the avant-garde.

**Bluesland (95410 85:00) ★★★★★** makes up for a lack of original interview material with the complementary perspectives of two historians: the genial, appreciative Albert Murray and more analytical, sometimes contentious Robert Palmer. This lends a dialectical quality to the discussion of the blues' mundane and transcendental impulses and the music's evolution from a variety of regional dialects into a national language with global impact. It has even less time for post-'60s developments than *The Story Of Jazz*, essentially capping the timeline with an all-star jam led by Muddy Waters. But like its companion, it'll rope an audience into its missions of education and appreciation with a killer soundtrack.

The segments that focus on individual artists mirror the spirits of their subjects. Thus just as it's impossible to feel too blue when you're listening to the Count Basie band, you'll likely come away from **Count Basie: Swing The Blues (95397 59:00) ★★★★★** with its story of artistic innovation, commercial success and long-term survival feeling uplifted and believing that it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. There's not much live footage of the band



in their 1930s pomp, but a gathering of survivors Jimmy Lewis, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Buddy Tate and Earl Warren adds a warm glow of reminiscence to the band's hot sounds. **Celebrating Bird: The Triumph Of Charlie Parker (2057078 59:00) ★★★★★** and **Lady Day: The Many Faces Of Billie Holiday (2057098 59:00) ★★★★★** are somewhat over-laden with superlatives, but they effectively explain each musician's artistic merits. Both put the best possible face on their subjects' disastrous personal problems by acknowledging them, considering the contributions of racism and cultural condescension to each one's decline, and then moving on. But it's still painful to see the contrast between the beauty of the well-fed younger Holiday captured in '30s-era photographs and the wasted wraith filmed a couple years before her death. The Parker set leaves one with an equally great sense of frustration over pointlessly lost potential. **Sarah Vaughan: The Divine One (95328 59:00) ★★★** shows what a fine singer she was, but never really makes a case for her as a paradigm-shifter on the level of the other profiled individuals.

The excellent **Thelonious Monk: American Composer (2057118 59:00) ★★★★★½** demonstrates the pianist's merits more through music than hyperbole. There's a fair amount of live material from the '60s that shows Monk still in fine form, and the pairing of '50s studio recordings with still images ensures that his best material gets heard. Randy Weston deserves his own award for his commentary, which balances an acolyte's worship with a master's utter security with his own wisdom. While **World According To John Coltrane (95393 59:00) ★★★★★½** has incisive commentary from Rashied Ali, Jimmy Heath and La Monte Young, the generous helping of TV footage featuring his incendiary chemistry with drummer Elvin Jones shows how utterly thrilling his music was.

DB

Ordering info: [medici.tv](http://medici.tv)



**Paul Motian/  
Chris Potter/  
Jason Moran**

*Lost In A Dream*

ECM 2128

★★★½

The most thrilling moments of this live disc (recorded at the Village Vanguard in February 2009) essentially arrive in two tracks: "Drum Music" and its immediate follower, "Abacus." Now the idea of "best," "better," or "most thrilling" may seem a childish rating system to some, but every live performance has its peak.

*Lost In A Dream* explores the composite



cerebral nature of this trio, which, by its very lineup, leads in an analytical, if freewheeling, direction. "Drum Music" and "Abacus," conversely (or is that perversely?) throw off the meditative brow for a simple, good-hearted bash. And that bash is largely due to the master himself, Paul Motian.

As is often the case, the younger players on this date seek to fill themselves up with Motian's world (and he did compose all the material here, save one track). But when Motian decides to kick in the jams, the sparks fly in less than equal proportions. "Drum Music" is all plonk, punch and pow, Motian

channeling Zutty Singleton, Chick Webb and perhaps Baby Dodds as Potter and Moran race to keep up. It's New Orleans, Kansas City and a drunken child's playpen rolled into one. Motian sends tom toms reeling: kerplunk! Cymbals smash, drum rolls dart and dive-bomb in a fanatical street parade. The pure drum solo vehicle "Abacus" follows suite, Motian juggling ideas like planets colliding and crashing, then soaring into deep space—fresh orbits created at every turn.

—Ken Micallef

**Lost In A Dream:** Mode VI, Casino, Lost In A Dream, Blue Midnight, Be Careful It's My Heart, Birdsong, Ten, Drum Music, Abacus, Cathedral Song. (57:20)

**Personnel:** Paul Motian, drums; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Jason Moran, piano.

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

**Amir ElSaffar/  
Hafiz Modirzadeh**

*Radif Suite*

PI RECORDINGS 32

★★★★

The relationships that Amir ElSaffar and Hafez Modirzadeh have with Middle Eastern traditions are simultaneously more complex and more natural than, say, Duke Ellington or John Coltrane's. ElSaffar, who is in his early 30s, is Iraqi-American, while Modirzadeh, who is more than a decade older, has roots in Iran. Both men have mixed Western academic training with traditional apprenticeship, and each has found ways to adapt his horn to the demands of a musical system whose scales and pitches are outside its intended range.



With *Radif Suite*, ElSaffar and Modirzadeh have each composed an extended piece for quartet that permits Eastern and Western tunings to coexist. They stand on common ground that was originally cleared by Ornette Coleman; their bent pitches and elastic rhythms are close

enough to his that this quartet could occasionally be mistaken for the late Coleman repertory ensemble Old & New Dreams. But while that outfit looked to Africa to spice up Coleman's melodies, this combo's composers prefer to shuttle between Eastern and Western modalities, giving each its due in turn.

ElSaffar's *Copper Suite* flows easily from a fleet bop workout to a time-stopping passage of

Arabic singing. On Modirzadeh's *Radif-E Kayhan*, an Ornette Coleman-ish unison melts into a solemn tenor statement essayed over Alex Cline's radiant gongs. Cline's capacity to shift between swinging grooves and out-of-time washes of pure sound is essential to the music's success. Mark Dresser only occasionally asserts his virtuosity, preferring to play exactly what the material requires. The result is a sound that is inclusive and compelling.

—Bill Meyer

**Radif Suite:** *Radif-E Kayhan*—Facet One; Facet Two; Facets Three/Four; Facets Five/Six; Facets Seven/Eight; Facet Nine; Facet Ten; Facets Eleven/Twelve. *Copper Suite*—Introduction: Copper Refraction; Post-Idiomat Blues/Cells A; Doves Over Zion (Dream Of The Beloved)/Duet Interlude; Uganda/Trio Interlude; Bird Of Prey; Awj/Ancstral Memory; 7 Quintuplets/Triptych/Bass Solo; All Said And Done/Sirens/Reverence. (69:08)

**Personnel:** Hafez Modirzadeh, tenor saxophone; Amir ElSaffar, trumpet, vocal; Alex Cline, drums, gongs; Mark Dresser, bass.

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## Buddy DeFranco/ Martin Taylor

*Buddy DeFranco  
Meets Martin Taylor*

HEP JAZZ 2030

★★★★½

Last summer at the Chicago Jazz Festival, Buddy DeFranco showed a few thousand listeners that everything he once had that made him the music's leading clarinetist he still has. I mention that because when this all-too-brief session was made in London 25 years ago, DeFranco was already, at 60, a fabled veteran of considerable legend who seemed to have touched all bases from Tommy Dorsey to Charlie Parker and Miles Davis.

As one of the great transitional figures in jazz, he reminds in the first and final tracks on this modest but welcome reissue that the space between swing and modernity was more a hop than a leap. That seems to be among DeFranco's messages as Paul Whiteman's 1920 hit, "Whispering," suddenly transforms without so much as a hiccup into "Grooving High"; and his subtly out-of-tempo "I Got Rhythm" assumes its modern identity as "Anthropology" with DeFranco and co-star Martin Taylor riding the bebop line in tight unison.

Taylor, who was 29 when this was made, was and is a renowned U.K. player, conspicuous



"Manhattan Tea Party" and the more conventional 32-bar "Angles Camp." The balance of the nine tunes, including the lovely "Dark Island," which sounds like an old Scottish folk melody, are attractive ballads in which the leader shows proper deference to the composer.

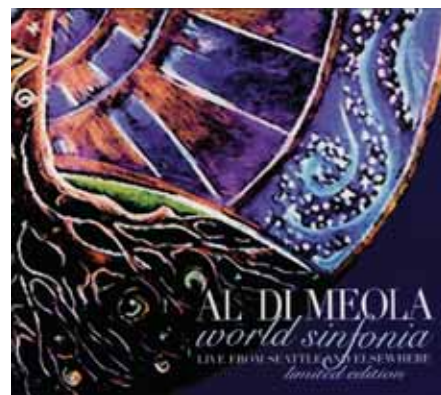
For a CD, the playing time is relatively modest, which makes one wonder why producer Alastair Robertson didn't combine this reissue with another DeFranco-Taylor effort for Hep recorded on tour in 1983. The presence of the second "Just Friends" would have been no burden where these two remarkable players are concerned.

—John McDonough

**Buddy DeFranco Meets Martin Taylor:** Whispering (Groovin' High); I Got A Right To Sing The Blues; Manhattan Tea Party; Goodbye; Just Friends; Angels Camp; Dark Island; Prelude To A Kiss; I Got Rhythm (Anthropology). (46:53)

**Personnel:** Buddy DeFranco, clarinet; Martin Taylor, guitar; Alex Shaw, piano; Ronnie Rae, bass; Clark Tracey, drums.

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



## Al Di Meola World Sinfonia

*Live From Seattle And Elsewhere*

VALIANA MUSIC AND MEDIA

★★★★½

As inspired and inspiring as Al Di Meola's performances with reunited fusion superstars Return to Forever were—count me among those who found the concerts surprisingly engaging—the guitarist, hero to several generations of six-stringers, has said he views his latter-day RTF activity as "a nostalgic thing." Meanwhile, his primary passion seems to be a continuing exploration of multiple world-music styles, as viewed through the lens of a remarkably agile player whose musical sensibilities were largely shaped by jazz and rock.

Di Meola's long-running collaboration with Afro-Cuban cajon player and percussionist Gumbi Ortiz and a recently stabilized group of other simpatico players makes an amenable home for the leader's melding of his distinctive, lightning-fast acoustic and electric riffs with rhythms and textures from South America, the Caribbean and the Middle East. The guitarist's limited-edition new CD, intended to be the first in a new series of live recordings, captures his well-travelled band, now known as New World Sinfonia, amping up the rhythmic interplay and speedy lines during bracing 2009 shows in Seattle, San Francisco and Istanbul.

Di Meola blends his single-note runs, quick strums and flickering patterns with second guitarist Peo Alfonsi and Fausto Beccalossi's accordion playing, which often serves as the warm glue holding these pieces together. The interplay among those three musicians is particularly appealing on two originals—color-shifting opening track "Misterio" and the slow-chugging "Fireflies." Ortiz, appropriately enough, gets the spotlight during the stripped-down midsection of "Gumbiero," a Di Meola composition that demonstrates the high-energy intensity that this group achieves on stage.

—Philip Booth

**Live From Seattle And Elsewhere:** Misterio; Siberiana; Paramour's Lullaby; Gumbiero; Fireflies; Umbras; No Potho Repose. (55:17)

**Personnel:** Al Di Meola, Peo Alfonsi, guitars; Fausto Beccalossi, accordion; Gumbi Ortiz, percussion; Peter Kaszas, drums and percussion; Victor Miranda, bass.

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

## Hailey Niswanger

*Confeddie*

(SELF-RELEASE)

★★★

At just 20, Texas-born, Oregon-raised saxophonist Niswanger is already off the blocks and barely looking back, save for nods to Herbie Hancock, Joe Henderson, Benny Golson et al. She opens this CD with a brave take on one of the hardest Thelonious Monk heads, "Four In One," which, together with her enthusiasm for Eddie Harris' quartal constructions (the eponymous track is an unlikely pun on this influence, quite brilliantly performed, if with entirely different thrust to Harris), indicates she likes a challenge.

Although Niswanger also plays clarinet, flute and soprano, she sticks to alto sax throughout *Confeddie* and has lots of fluency allied to a warm mid-to-low range. A hip ballad selection, "La Mesha," reveals that yes, this gal has chops and sensitivity, as she flutters buttery-toned through Kenny Dorham's theme while agile pianist Michael Palma sprinkles angel dust in back.

Guitarist Mark Whitfield's son (as his name



suggests) shows taste and reserve on drums, and young bassist Greg Chaplin belies his age with great feel. Palma dallies with the time on the waltzing "Sometime Ago," holding back, then surging forward, the mark of a superior player. Niswanger rips in aggressively before reprisal of the head, dusting out the schmaltz and adding a little

John Coltrane-ish turnaround at the end for good measure. Her choice of Henderson's nugget "Serenity," which she articulates alongside Chaplin, indicates interest in inward-looking material, though the rhythmic edge in Henderson's approach is a life study.

The jam session staple "Stablemates" is less of a surprise, but reminds Niswanger of time spent with composer Golson when he visited Berklee. Chaplin strides mightily here, and the sustained vamp at the end shows that Niswanger can hang in support of her sidemen, rather than hog the glory.

—Michael Jackson

**Confeddie:** Four In One; Olloliqui Valley; Confeddie; La Mesha; Sometime Ago; Serenity; Stablemates; Yes Or No. (48:75)

**Personnel:** Hailey Niswanger, alto saxophone; Michael Palma, piano; Greg Chaplin, bass; Mark Whitfield Jr., drums.

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



## Bedrock

### Plastic Temptation

WINTER & WINTER 910 161

★★★★

## Gabriel Johnson

### Fra\_ctured

ELECTROFONE MUSIC

★★½

Remember the extended scene in Joe Dante's *Explorers* in which the smart-alecky alien regales the do-it-yourself preteen space travelers with playback of the *Mr. Ed* theme, the Veg-o-matic commercial and other blasts from the pop cult past? With its antic, form-shifting, style-gobbling attack, Bedrock—keyboardist Uri Caine and the brilliant drum 'n' bass team of Zach Danziger and Tim Lefebvre—might have been inspired by the 1985 film. On their third album, *Plastic Temptation*, tinkly lounge music, prog rock and classic soul are but a few of the styles they toss back at us, dressed up in finely calibrated funk, electronica and up-to-the-minute jazz.

Delivering 18 tracks in just over an hour, *Plastic Temptation* is both the most expansive and most streamlined effort by Bedrock. The theme for this endeavor could be the organ-fueled "Roll With It," one of several tunes featuring the full-throated, no-holds-barred soul



singer (and lyricist) Barbara Walker, a Caine regular. Carried by the plummy, deep-pocketed, ricocheting grooves of Danziger and Lefebvre, the album maintains its momentum even when slowing down to engage in spooky voicings.

Alternating between acoustic and electric piano and organ, Caine references Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles and Emerson, Lake and Palmer as well as Return to Forever, Headhunters and Les McCann and Eddie Harris. It's easy to view Bedrock as a side project for Caine, who is justly celebrated for his genre-crossing Mahler and Mozart extravaganzas. But as playful as *Plastic Temptation* gets, there's nothing minor about its consistently high level of invention and group improvisation. In explor-

ing inner space, Bedrock makes digging in as exciting as blasting off.

*Fra\_ctured*, the debut album by conservatory-trained trumpeter Gabriel Johnson, is one of those one-man productions that seems to emanate from some inner sanctum bereft of light and air. As befits an artist who works in the Hollywood studio system, there's plenty of atmosphere here. The tender, Miles Davis-esque "U.F.T.O." could be from a space opera. With its distant, muted horn, "You Get What You Deserve" is the stuff of daydreams. But the stuttering effects, burping synth lines and smooth-jazzish melodies are standard issue. And for a musician with his chops, Johnson gives his trumpet surprisingly short shrift. —Lloyd Sachs

**Plastic Temptation:** Overture; Prelude For Sheldon; Noid; Roll With It; Duke Countdown; Count Duke; Riled Up; Till You Come Back To Me; Plastic Temptation; Seven Year Glitch; Work It Out; Mayor Goldie; Victrola; Lemonana Vasconcelos; Ink Bladder; Lunchmeat Concerto in E; Minor; Garcia; Organ Thunder. (61:15)

**Personnel:** Uri Caine, keyboards; Tim Lefebvre, bass, guitar; Zach Danziger, drums; Barbara Walker, vocals; Elizabeth Pupo-Walker, percussion.

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

**Fra\_ctured:** No Words; Be Serious; And Then It Was Over; Charisma Machine; You Get What You Deserve; Confusion; V.F.T.O.; Lullabye. (33:02)

**Personnel:** Gabriel Johnson, trumpet and electronics.

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

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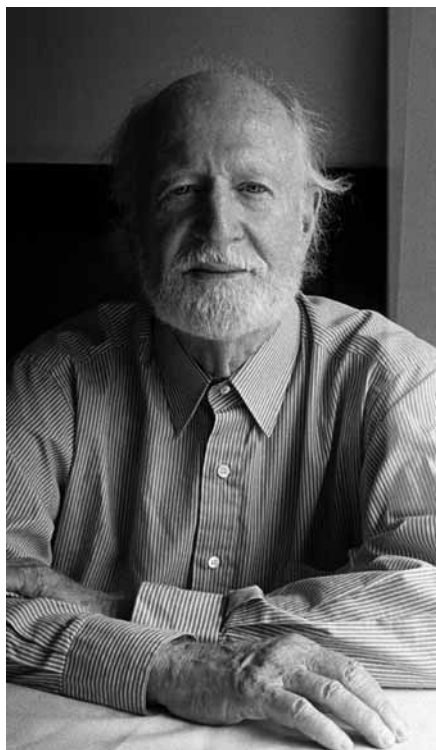
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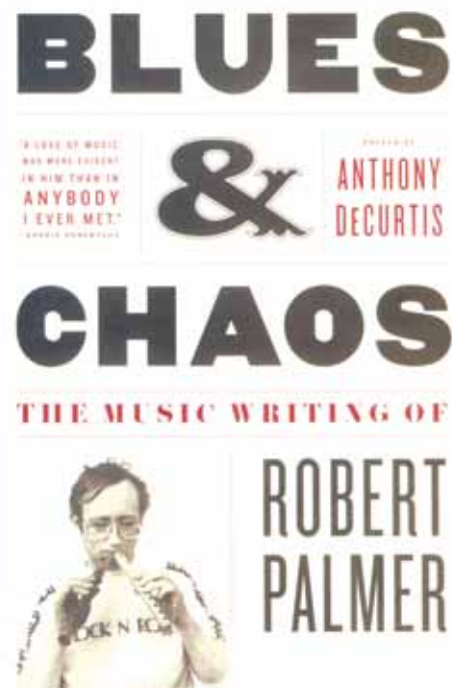
by Frank-John Hadley

### Palmer's Authority, Passion Set Journalistic Standard

Robert Palmer was one of the best music critics active in the last third of the 20th century, along with Bob Blumenthal, Robert Christgau, Gary Giddins, Peter Guralnick, Stephen Holden, Jon Pareles, John S. Wilson and a few more. This Midwesterner who'd played clarinet in the fey rock band Insect Trust possessed a field of knowledge vaster than most of his colleagues; he wrote with authority and passion about blues, jazz, soul, r&b, avant garde, world music and rock 'n' roll. An eclectic in the best sense of the word, Palmer wrote regularly for the New York Times and contributed to Rolling Stone, DownBeat and other publications until his death at age 52 in 1997. Thirty years since its first printing, his book *Deep Blues* is regarded by many as the bible of the blues.

A music journalist as alert to the musical culture of his time as Palmer deserves to have his writings collected, and finally it's come to pass. For *Blues & Chaos* (Scribner), Ivy League teacher-music writer Anthony DeCurtis sectionalizes 60 essays, profiles, interviews and liner notes according to musical type. Throughout 436 pages, Palmer shows the gift of writing in a clear way full of information and critical insight. Seven articles on the blues and six on early rock 'n' roll should be required reading for anyone beginning an investigation of American roots music. Just as impressively, Palmer sizes up Count Basie, Charles Mingus, Dexter Gordon, Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman and, in a strange meeting, Sun Ra. Yet there are only 40 pages of Palmer's writings on jazz, with four times as many pages going to rock, and John Lennon and Yoko Ono getting their own part of the book. The rock star-smitten introduction and blurbs from Ono, Bono and others on the dust jacket, as well as a cover photo of Palmer in a "rock n roll" shirt, are tip-offs about the editor's musical orientation and sense of direction.

With Palmer, the reader could always count on connections being made between musical cultures; note, especially, his enlightening Times article, "The



Resounding Impact of Third-World Music." Though dated a bit, his 1975 DownBeat piece "What Is American Music?" tackles the big question fascinatingly, with smart evaluations of Charles Ives and James Brown. Elsewhere, Palmer makes some sort of sense out of madman Jerry Lee Lewis, takes stock of the undervalued guitarist Sonny Sharrock and, in three entries, tells of his pilgrimage to Morocco for the Master Musicians of Jajouka, where a near-fatal snake bite gets mentioned in passing, his love of music paramount.

DeCurtis skips almost all of Palmer's many, many valuable concert, record and book reviews. His memorable appraisal of John Storm Robert's book *The Latin Tinge* is missing. So are his still-delightful-to-read Rolling Stone assessments of the divine Bird/*The Savoy Recordings (Master Takes)*, and Carla Bley and Paul Haines' *Escalator Over The Hill*. His illustrious overview of "field recordings" in the *Sounds Of The South* boxed set, his surveys of Indian classical music, his Village Voice "Essential 10 [Jazz] LPs" list, his striking evaluations of the music played by Son Seals, Charles Brown, Andrew Hill, Weather Report, Hugh Masekela, James Blood (Ulmer), Isaac Hayes, Betty Davis, on and on.

Be thankful for the publication of *Blues & Chaos*, but hope the happier day comes when another editor assembles a second volume of Palmer's rich life work.

DB

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





## Tony Wilson Sextet

### *The People Look Like Flowers At Last*

DRIP AUDIO 482

★★★★

Vancouver guitarist Tony Wilson got some disparate inspirations for the latest album by his long-running sextet, bookending the album with a loose adaptation of Benjamin Britten's introspective "Lachrymae," a cello showcase that itself was derived in part from a John Dowland composition, and a variation on Bill Monroe's take on the gospel standard "Working On A Building." Ultimately, what incorporating those two stylistic opposites illustrates is how imaginative Wilson is as an arranger, hearing in both material well-suited for improvisation and reinvention. "Lachrymae" is particular simpatico for the task at hand because the original piece employed multiple approaches to the melodic strains; Wilson exploits timbre, tempo and density with his flexible band, bringing even greater variation and depth to the already rich score.

His excellent band deserves plenty of credit, seamlessly drifting from Third Stream ideas, raucous improv, rock-driven energy and distended swing flurries. Drummer Dylan van der Schyff, bassist Paul Blaney and cellist Peggy Lee not only provide a tensile rhythmic foundation for the nominal frontline—Wilson, trumpeter Kevin Elashchuk and reedist Dave Say—but the arrangements keep the points of focus shifting so regularly that such foreground-background responsibilities become irrelevant, anyway. Four original pieces fit in perfectly, even the abstraction of the guitar-drums duet on "Let The Monkeys Dance," while the Monroe-derived closer delivers the most explicit melodic blast, as Say delivers a deeply soulful scorcher within an arrangement that could've almost landed on a late-'50s Lee Morgan album.

—Peter Margasak

**The People Look Like Flowers At Last:** Lachrymae Prelude; Lachrymae Movement #1; Lachrymae Movement #2; Lachrymae Movement #4; Lachrymae Movement #4 Variation; Lachrymae Movement #7; Lachrymae Movement #7 Variation; Lachrymae Movement #10; Lachrymae Movement #11; Arpeggio; The People Look Like Flowers At Last; Let The Monkeys Dance; Variation On A Theme. (48:53)

**Personnel:** Tony Wilson, guitar, harmonica; Kevin Elashchuk, flugelhorn, trumpet; Dave Say, tenor and soprano saxophone, flute; Peggy Lee, cello; Paul Blaney, bass; Dylan van der Schyff, drums.

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# East Coast

## Cape May Jazz Festival

Cape May, New Jersey

April 16–18

Often overlooked because of its close proximity to New York, this two-day event nevertheless consistently attracts noteworthy talent.

**Lineup:** Chuchito Valdes, Tim Warfield, Amy Shook, Spyro Gyra and Shemekia Copeland.

**More info:** [capemayjazz.org](http://capemayjazz.org)

## Kennedy Center's Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

May 20–21

This year marks the 15th anniversary of this wonderful three-day festival, which puts the spotlight on female jazz musicians. Dee Dee Bridgewater and Teri Lynne Carrington have gathered an all-star ensemble to celebrate the fest's namesake.

**Lineup:** Geri Allen, Grace Kelly, Esperanza Spalding, Carmen Lundy, more.

**More info:** [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org)

## DC Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

June 1–13

Still undergoing changes, the event once named the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival is now called the DC Jazz Festival. Last year, it paid tribute to New Orleans; this year, it tips its hat toward the Windy City.

**Lineup:** Ramsey Lewis, James Moody, Herbie Hancock, Kurt Elling, Dee Alexander, more.

**More info:** [dcjazzfest.org](http://dcjazzfest.org)

## Western Maryland Blues Fest

Hagerstown, Maryland

June 3–6

From modest beginnings in 1996, the downtown park "Family Blues Picnic" has become a major event featuring an array of leading blues and roots performers.

**Lineup:** Tommy Castro, Bernard Allison, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Phil Wiggins & Corey Harris, Michael Burks, Eric Lindel, Kenny Neal, Joanne Shaw Taylor, Hamilton Loomis, more.

**More info:** [blues-fest.org](http://blues-fest.org)

## Burlington Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington, Vermont

June 4–13

One of the standout New England spring jazz events, the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival celebrates its 27th year.

**Lineup:** Sonny Rollins, Arturo Sandoval

Marsalis Brothers at DC Jazz Festival (formerly Duke Ellington Jazz Festival)



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**More info:** [discoverjazz.com](http://discoverjazz.com)

## Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Festival

Oceanport, New Jersey

June 5–6

The former Red Bank festival moves nearby to the Monmouth Park Racetrack, an upscale venue bearing no resemblance to the gaming halls celebrated in Damon Runyon's fiction. The festival is no longer free; the new digs require a modest \$3 ticket each day. Folks can look forward to a weekend of music coupled with Jersey Shore standbys such as funnel cake and sausage and pepper sandwiches.

**Lineup:** John Pizzarelli, Smokin' Joe Kubek featuring Bnois King, more.

**More info:** [jsjbf.org](http://jsjbf.org)

## Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz Festival

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

June 10–12

Taking place in the state capital, the festival's 30th anniversary celebrates the rising profile of women in jazz. Reed player Anat Cohen and the Diva Jazz Orchestra number among the headliners, and many of the events have been booked at the Harrisburg Hilton. In addition to concerts, the highlights include a Riverboat Jazz Cruise, films and clinics.

**Lineup:** Anat Cohen and the Hot Club of Detroit, Tia Fuller, Helen Sung,

Patti Austin, Diva Jazz Orchestra

**More info:** [pajazz.org](http://pajazz.org)

## Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival

Rochester, New York

June 11–19

Held in the East End District in downtown Rochester, the festival will run for nine days and feature 1,000 musicians in over 200 shows at 14 different venues, all of which are within walking distance of one another. The festival offers free and ticketed events, as well as a club pass system to surf a wide variety of paid events.

**Lineup:** Gladys Knight, Jeff Beck, Herbie Hancock, John Pizzarelli & The Woody Herman Orchestra directed by Frank Tiberi and Bernie Williams, Booker T & The MGs, Los Lonely Boys, Jane Monheit, Mose Allison, Catherine Russell, Stanley Jordan, Joe Locke, Russell Malone, Steve Turre, Scott Hamilton Scandinavian Hot 5.

**More info:** [rochesterjazz.com](http://rochesterjazz.com)

## DuPont Clifford Brown Jazz Festival

Wilmington, Delaware

June 14–20

The Clifford Brown festival features a free week of jazz at Rodney Square, a park in the heart of the city's downtown neighborhood. A variety of vendors set up shop, and folks are encouraged to bring lawn chairs. The bookings include national headliners and usually a presentation of Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts at a nearby church.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [cliffordbrownjazzfest.com](http://cliffordbrownjazzfest.com)





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## George Wein's CareFusion Jazz Festival New York

New York, New York

June 17-26

New York's recuscitated summer fest averages \$15 a ticket, with shows everywhere from Harlem to Brooklyn to Queens, and music styles that run the gamut from Latin to avant garde to rock or hip-hop-influenced. Thanks in large part to help from indie promoters like Revive da Live's Meghan Stabile, Winterfest's Brice Rosenbloom and The Jazz Gallery's Rio Sakairi, expect to see creative lineup combinations and jams that last late into the night.

**Lineup:** Herbie Hancock (with Terence Blanchard, Wayne Shorter, Bill Cosby and Joe Lovano); McCoy Tyner Quartet featuring Ravi Coltrane, Esperanza Spalding, Stanley Clarke Band, Queens Jazz Orchestra, more.

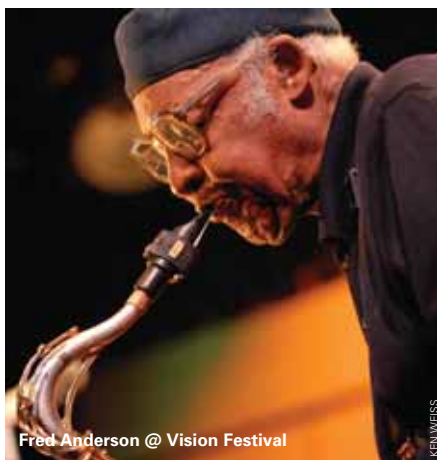
**More info:** [nycjazzfestival.com](http://nycjazzfestival.com)

## West Oak Lane Jazz and Arts Festival

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 18-20

This free outdoor event takes place on Ogontz Avenue in northwest Philadelphia. A New Orleans tribute is the theme for this year. Local visual artists also take part in the festival.



Fred Anderson @ Vision Festival

**Lineup:** Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Dianne Reeves, George Duke, David Sanborn, more.

**More info:** [westoaklanefestival.com](http://westoaklanefestival.com)

## Syracuse Jazz Festival

Syracuse, New York

June 25-27

The 28th anniversary of this free music festival mixes the straightahead with smooth jazz and fusion. Concerts are held on the Onodaga Community College campus. The Jazz Fest

education program offers free master classes, clinics, workshops, mentoring sessions, meet the artist sessions and daily jam sessions.

**Lineup:** Jeff Lorber, Natalie Cole, more.

**More info:** [syracusejazzfest.com](http://syracusejazzfest.com)

## Vision Festival

New York, New York

June 23-29

The Vision Festival celebrates New York's historically progressive downtown scene. The majority of the festival will take place at the Abrons Art Center on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

**Lineup:** David S. Ware, Billy Bang, Ned Rothenberg, Hamid Drake, Dave Burrell, Marilyn Crispell, Mat Maneri, Charles Gayle.

**More info:** [visionfestival.org](http://visionfestival.org)

## Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival

Saratoga Springs, New York

June 26-27

This festival, held at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, features a wide range of acts playing throughout its two days and nights.

**Lineup:** Al Jarreau & George Duke, Taj Mahal, Al DiMeola-World Sinfonia, Ramsey Lewis, Afro Cuban All-Stars, Linda Oh and J.D. Allen Trio.

**More info:** [spac.org](http://spac.org)

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# CareFusion Newport Jazz Festival\*

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**Darcy James Argue's Secret Society** with special guest **Bob Brookmeyer**

**Berklee Global Jazz Institute Septet**

**David Binney Band** featuring **Brian Blade • Craig Taborn • Eivind Opsvik**

**Chris Botti • Anat Cohen • Jamie Cullum • Jon Faddis • Amina Figarova**

**Fly: Jeff Ballard • Larry Grenadier • Mark Turner**

**Freedom Band: Chick Corea • Kenny Garrett • Christian McBride • Roy Haynes**

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**Ken Vandermark's Powerhouse Sound • Matt Wilson Quartet**

**TICKETS  
& INFO**

[www.newportjazzfest.net](http://www.newportjazzfest.net)

\*Newport Jazz Festival is a registered service mark of Festival Productions, Inc.  
Artists subject to change

## North Atlantic Blues Festival

Rockland, Maine

**July 10–11**

The 17th annual harbor park party takes place along Maine's scenic Mid-coast on Penobscot Bay, right by the lobster traps and dock.

**Lineup:** Shemekia Copeland, Johnny Rawls, Michael Burks, James Cotton, Keb' Mo', Moreland & Arbuckle, Biscuit Miller, Shakura S'Aida.

**More info:** [northatlanticbluesfestival.com](http://northatlanticbluesfestival.com)

## Jazz In July

New York, New York

**July 20–29**

Once again, Bill Charlap serves as artistic director of this festival at the 92nd Street Y in upper Manhattan in an indoor series that focuses on accomplished veterans.

**Lineup:** Jimmy Heath, Carol Sloane, Bucky Pizzarelli, Warren Vache, Joe Lovano, Frank Wess, Houston Person, Renee Rosnes, Phil Woods and Freddy Cole.

**More info:** [92y.org/jazz](http://92y.org/jazz)

## Pocono Blues Festival

Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania

**July 23–25**

On three stages at Big Boulder Ski Area, Michael Cloeren's annual blockbuster showcases 20 national acts, some making their first appearance at a world-class festival. Chicago blues heroes are a special part of the action this year in the mountains.

**Lineup:** Mavis Staples, Johnny Rawls, Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin, Big Eyes Smith, Bob Stroger, Bob Margolin, Campbell Brothers, Johnnie Bassett, Lady Bianca, C.J. Chenier, Chick Wills, Roy Roberts, AJ Diggs, Wanda Johnson, more.

**More info:** [jfb.com](http://jfb.com)

## KoSA International Percussion Workshop

Castleton, Vermont

**July 27–August 1**

This event includes intensive hands-on percussionists at Castleton State College. Performances are part of the experience.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [kosamusic.com](http://kosamusic.com)

## Belleayre Music Festival

Highmount, New York

**July 30–31 & August 6–7**

Each summer, the Belleayre Mountain ski resort transforms into a vibrant outdoor music festival in the heart of the Catskill Forest Preserve, just two-and-a-half hours from New York City.

**Lineup:** Javon Jackson Quintet, John Scofield/Joe Lovano Quartet, Patti Austin in a Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, Patti LuPone, more.

**More info:** [belleayremusic.org](http://belleayremusic.org)

## Caramoor Jazz Festival

Katonah, New York

**August 6–8**

As a part of the 65th annual Caramoor International Music Festival, Caramoor's Jazz Festival closes the event this year with a diverse and varied lineup. The festival is held at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts 90-acre garden estate.

**Lineup:** Chick Corea's Freedom Band featuring Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride and Roy Haynes, Bobby Hutcherson, Stefon Harris and Blackout, Elio Villafranca Quintet, Mulgrew Miller Trio, Roswell Rudd's Trombone Tribe.

**More info:** [caramoor.org](http://caramoor.org)

## George Wein's CareFusion Newport Jazz Festival

Newport, Rhode Island

**August 6–8**

Wein continues along the new blood path at Newport this year, bringing together a combina-

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tion of the most revered names in jazz, along with younger groups like the J.D. Allen Trio. This Rhode Island town isn't known for affordability, but if you're a Berklee student or can grab your tickets in advance, a few days at the fest will cost less than it did a few years back.

**Lineup:** Herbie Hancock, Wynton Marsalis, Chris Botti, Jon Faddis, Jamie Cullum, more.

**More info:** [newportjazzfest.net](http://newportjazzfest.net)

### Litchfield Jazz Festival

Kent, Connecticut

**August 6-8**

Held in the Springs Center and on the grounds of Kent School, the Litchfield Jazz Festival celebrates its 15th anniversary and Dave Brubeck's 90th year. The entire month leading up to the Litchfield Jazz Festival will be a jazz celebration with 30 free concerts presented by Litchfield Jazz Camp faculty and students. Master classes by festival stars, after-parties and open jams on Friday and Saturday nights will be open to all ticket holders.

**Lineup:** Dave Brubeck Quartet, Béla Fleck, Arturo O'Farrill Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, Dave Samuels Caribbean Jazz Project, Mario Pavone Orange Double Tenor Sextet, Cannonball Adderley Tribute with Wess

Anderson, Terrell Stafford, Benny Green, Matt Wilson and Joanna Pascale, Anat Cohen Trio, Avery Sharpe Trio, Jane Bunnett & the Spirits of Havana, Gerald Clayton Trio, Aaron Weinstein Trio, Gabriel Alegria Afro-Peruvian Sextet, Denise Thimes and The Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet.

**More info:** [litchfieldjazzfest.com](http://litchfieldjazzfest.com)

### Scranton Jazz Festival

Scranton, Pennsylvania

**August 6-8**

Held at the historic Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, this sixth annual festival has drawn audiences from the entire Mid-Atlantic region.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [scrantonjazzfestival.org](http://scrantonjazzfestival.org)

### Vermont Blues Festival

West Dover, Vermont

**August 27-29**

For the second annual bash at the Mount Snow ski resort in the Green Mountain National Forest, producer Michael Cloreon brings in



Chuchito Valdes @ Caramoor Jazz Festival

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well-known and underappreciated acts from all over North America.

**Lineup:** Joe Louis Walker, Marcia Ball, Harrison Kennedy, Ruthie Foster, Andrew Jr. Boy Jones, more.

**More info:** [mountsnow.com](http://mountsnow.com)

### The Many Colors of a WOMAN

Hartford, Connecticut

**September 4**

This free event highlights women in contemporary jazz, but reaches out to musicians from across the spectrum.

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**Lineup:** Nicki Mathis, Antoinette Montague, Dotti Anita Taylor, more.

**More info:** [themanycolors@aol.com](mailto:themanycolors@aol.com)

### **Tanglewood Jazz Festival**

*Lenox, Massachusetts*

**September 4-5**

Held over Labor Day weekend in the Berkshire Hills summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, this festival features a solid jazz lineup.

**Lineup:** Kurt Elling, Laurence Hobgood Trio, "Radio Deluxe" with John Pizzarelli and Jessica Molaskey, The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra, Eddie Daniels and Bob James in "Broadway Boogie" and the Julian Lage Group.

**More info:** [tanglewood.org](http://tanglewood.org)

### **COTA Jazz Festival**

*Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania*

**September 10-12**

Now in its 32nd year, the COTA Festival is a three-day event that includes a juried music motif art show and opening night of theater, classical music and dance, which is then followed up by two full days of jazz headliners on the main stage. Located 90 minutes from New York City, this event features crafts, artisan booths, food concessions and a children's area.

**Lineup:** TBA. Past headliners have included Phil Woods, Bob Dorough, Dave Liebman, Nellie McKay, Urbie Green, The Diva Orchestra, Brian Lynch and Bill Goodwin.

**More info:** [cotajazz.org](http://cotajazz.org)

### **Berklee BeanTown Jazz Festival**

*Boston, Massachusetts*

**September 15-25**

It's the 10th anniversary of this Berklee College of Music outdoor event. This year's lineup will include local and national musicians on three free stages. "Celebrate New Orleans and Jazz" is the title of this year's festival.

**Lineup:** Ernie Andrews, Jimmy Cobb, Kurt Elling, more.

**More info:** [beantownjazz.org](http://beantownjazz.org)

### **Pittsfield City Jazz Festival**

*Pittsfield, Massachusetts*

**October 8-21**

The free festival attracts 3,000 to 5,000 people to the historic town in the Berkshire Hills in western Massachusetts. More than a dozen mostly regional acts will perform, and some will be paired with student groups. The town features a variety of bed-and-breakfast inns; the diversions include a wine bar, museums, galleries, scenic drives and hiking.

**Lineup:** Claire Daly and American Jazz Repertory Orchestra, Joe Baione, more.

**More info:** [berkshiresjazz.org](http://berkshiresjazz.org)

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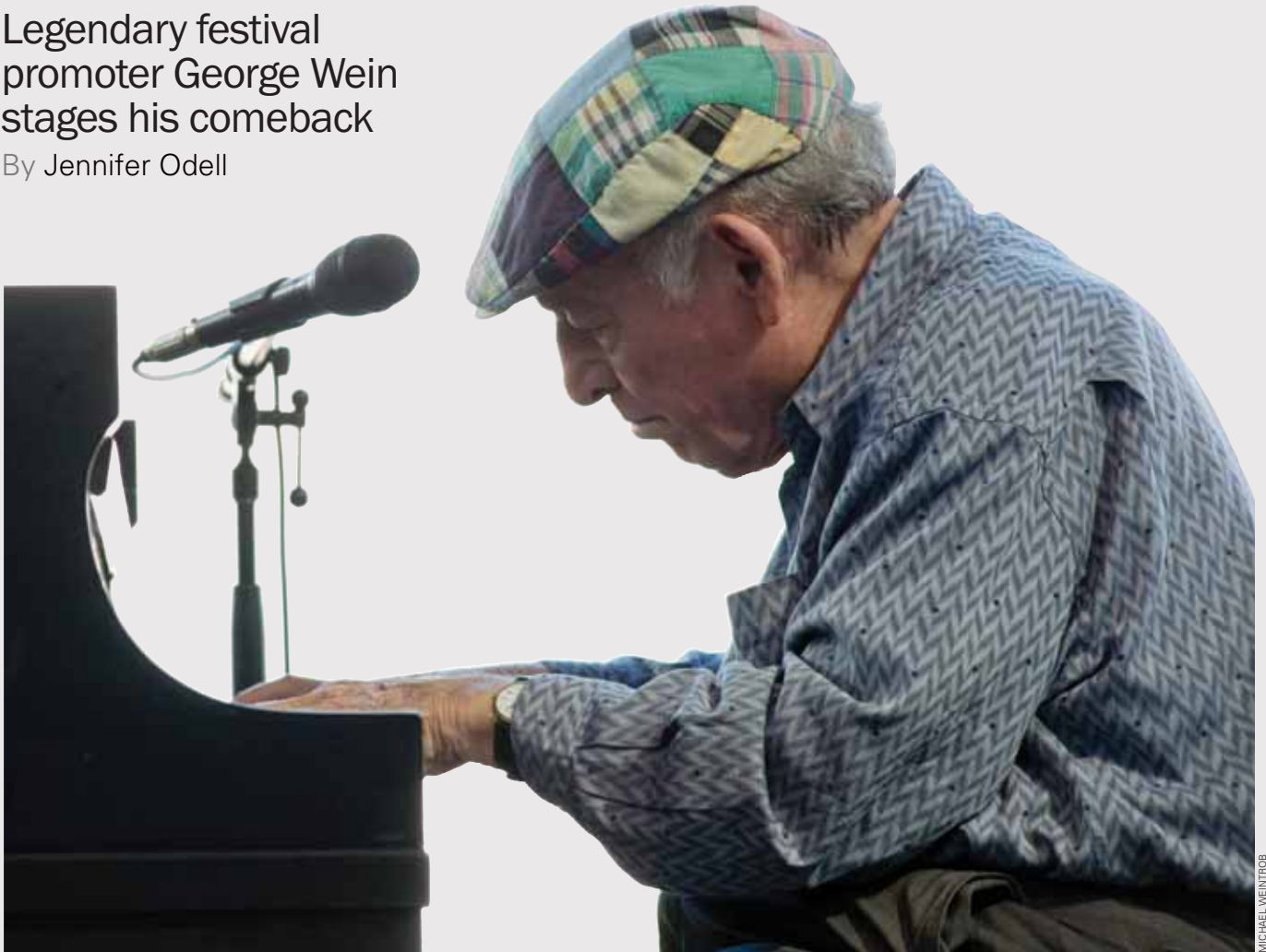


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# Back In Action

Legendary festival promoter George Wein stages his comeback

By Jennifer Odell



MICHAEL WEINTROB

A year ago, the ill-fated Festival Network, belly-up in debt, failed to come through with any of its proposed summer jazz festivals, and New York City went without a major jazz festival for the first time in 37 years. Things looked bleak—until the man who started it all at Newport in 1954 returned from an abridged retirement to make things right.

This summer, George Wein is back on both the Newport and New York fronts, with a major sponsorship and a lot of new ideas. George Wein's CareFusion Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island takes place Aug. 6–8 ("last year was good, but we can do better," he promised) and the new CareFusion Jazz Festival New York runs from June 17–26.

In both cases, these are more than just rescue missions. Wein is focused on the goal of broadening the reach of his fests, both in terms of audiences and artists. And if the originator of the American music festival can bring a younger crowd and a more accessible reputation to these key events, the jazz industry stands to reap the benefits.

"I used to think that young artists might not be ready for the fests, but now I just hope the fests are ready for the young artists," said a chipper Wein, summing up the basic difference between his approach

before and since he sold Festival Productions in 2007. "There's such a wealth of talent coming out now, and they have exciting ideas, they have good educations, these are talented people."

This year, Wein's festivals are being booked by a pared-down version of the team he's worked with in the past, including Jason Olaine, Darlene Chan and Dan Melnick. The group, New Festival Productions, has about half a million dollars in support from the medical supply company CareFusion, which is about the same amount they had when JVC was their title sponsor, according to the New York Times.

But some important elements have changed. For one, Wein is doing more of the booking himself.

"I'm going out all the time to hear young artists," he said. "I'm into Darcy James Argue, I like what Hiromi and Esperanza Spalding are doing, I like what Ken Vandermark is doing. There are so many."

Like any hungry promoter half his age, Wein, 85, is also spending plenty of time in Brooklyn clubs and honing his indie rock palette.

"I just went to Zebulon the other night to hear Mostly Other People Do the Killing," he said, before cracking a joke about the new complication of having to remember the names of bands he wants to book



(MOPDTK has since landed a spot on the New York festival's opening night).

Another new development is that Wein has invited some of the city's top promoters to curate their own series, which will then be subsumed under the city's CareFusion Festival. By tapping promoters whose work reflects a diversified audience, Wein's jazz festival is set up more like the CMJ Music Marathon than the old JVC Jazz, which tended to rely on big-ticket shows featuring legendary names and a predilection for octogenarian headliners.

Moved in large part by the young audience he encountered at Brice Rosenbloom's NYC Winterfest Jazz Festival, Wein chose to mix the usual jazz fest suspects—Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, Stanley Clarke—with some less obvious lineups.

"I recently performed at the NYC Winter Jazzfest, and I remember I saw this older gentleman and I was saying to myself, 'Wow this guys's really hanging out,' and I didn't know it was George Wein 'til he turned around," said saxophonist J.D. Allen, who will perform at Wein's 2010 Newport festival. "I was impressed that he was there checking out acts. He seems to have a hands-on approach. There's definitely a shift in jazz going on right now and he's in it, which is inspiring."

Working with co-producer Simon Rentner, Rosenbloom and Wein settled on three main shows for the New York event, including a repeat of the hit Winterfest bill featuring Aetherial Bace and prog-rockers Tortoise, and a "Revive Da Live" big band show featuring Nicholas Payton and hip-hop MC Talib Kweli.

"He's really reaching out to the jazz community and offering audiences something they're already being inspired by," said Rosenbloom. "The wonderful thing about New York is there are a lot of independent producers that are doing their own thing, nurturing audiences in the jazz community."

Wein's community-oriented approach to booking has also won favor among artists.

"The way he's doing it is smart," says saxophonist John Ellis, who will perform a narrative work called "The Ice Siren" at the Jazz Gallery in June as part of the New York fest. "I'm excited about any kind of new and creative booking. We need that."

The festivals will also get varying degrees of financial facelifts, to the tune of lower ticket prices, big-name free shows and student discounts.

The New York fest offers a free Central Park show featuring a double bill of Tyner with Spalding, Ravi Coltrane and Francisco Mela, and Clarke with Hiromi on June 23. Citywide, Wein promises that most shows will average \$15 per ticket, with relaxed drink minimums.

At Newport, the best deals will be for Berklee students. "At Berklee, we have tickets available for \$15, and anyone who comes to a box office in Newport's convention center can get tickets for a discounted admission, which gets people to Newport," Wein said.

These developments stand to bring positive change to the industry as a whole. Cheaper prices combined with the flexible booking approach means there's more room for creative surprises, new audiences and a better distribution of the wealth that summer can bring to jazz.

As he looks ahead, Wein hesitates to pinpoint the direction he might take with next year's festivals, seeming content to focus on the goals he's carved out for 2010.

"I've fulfilled all my dreams," Wein said. "At this point in my life, I'm just thinkin' about tomorrow."

DB

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**Dianne Reeves**

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**Spencer Day**

**18** **The Neville Brothers**  
**Preservation Hall Jazz Band**  
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**Dirty Dozen Brass Band**

**25** **Gershwin Across America**  
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**SEP 1** **Herbie Hancock: Seven Decades -**  
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**Wayne Shorter, Derek Trucks**  
and **Susan Tedeschi,** special guests  
Additional special guests to be announced

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# Midwest

## Tri-C JazzFest

Cleveland, Ohio

April 15–25

This festival, which combines a strong educational component with marquee jazz talent, will be celebrating the 86th birthday of hometown hero Henry Mancini this year.

**Lineup:** Ramsey Lewis, Patti Austin, The Roots, Charlie Haden, more.

**More info:** [triczazzfest.com](http://triczazzfest.com)

## Grand Marais Jazz Festival

Grand Marais, Minnesota

May 28–30

Grand Marais is a small arts-oriented community that sits on the western shore of Lake Superior. The event is small and intimate, and spotlights regional artists performing in galleries, coffeehouses, even a spa.

**Lineup:** Paul Wertico, Debbie Duncan, Tim Seisser.

**More info:** [grandmaraisjazzfest.com](http://grandmaraisjazzfest.com)

## Glenn Miller Festival

Clarinda, Iowa

June 10–13

This festival takes place in Glenn Miller's birthplace and goes all out in paying homage to the bandleader. In addition to concerts, there are special events such as tours of his home and panel discussions.

**Lineup:** Larry O'Brien and the World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra, Ballyhoo Foxtrot Orchestra, United States Air Force Noteables, more.

**More info:** [glennmiller.org](http://glennmiller.org)

## Chicago Blues Festival

Chicago, Illinois

June 11–13

The Mayor's Office of Special Events hosts the 27th year of the largest free-admission blues festival in the world. Grant Park welcomed about 640,000 revelers last year. Special salute: Howlin' Wolf's centennial.

**Lineup:** Zora Young, Corky Siegel and the revived Wolf Pack: Eddie Shaw, Hubert Sumlin, Jody Williams, Abb Locke. "Classic Chicago blues of the modern era" represented by Billy Branch, Lurrie Bell, John Primer, East of Edens Soul Express, more.

**More info:** [chicagobluesfestival.us](http://chicagobluesfestival.us)

## Ravinia Festival

Highland Park, Illinois

June 17–August 19

This summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the city's northern suburbs has expanded its jazz series to events throughout the summer and has commissioned

Danilo Pérez (left) and Wayne Shorter @ Detroit International Jazz Festival



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**Lineup:** The Dave Brubeck Quartet, Nancy Wilson and the Ramsey Lewis Trio, Orquestra Buena Vista Social Club featuring Omara Portuondo, Bobby McFerrin, Kelli O'Hara, George Benson, Lee Ritenour & Dave Grusin.

**More info:** [ravinia.org](http://ravinia.org)

## Twin Cities Jazz Festival

Saint Paul, Minnesota

June 17–19

One of the largest civic events held in the upper Midwest, the events of the festival take place in the downtown area of St. Paul, including Mears Park located in the heart of the historic Lowertown neighborhood.

**Lineup:** Joe Lovano and Us 5, John Scofield with the Piety Street Band, John Ellis and Double-Wide, Sean Jones, more.

**More info:** [twincitiesjazzfestival.com](http://twincitiesjazzfestival.com)

## Elkhart Jazz Festival

Elkhart, Indiana

June 25–27

The streets of downtown Elkhart will be a hot center for jazz, swing and a touch of blues as an international lineup of 90 musicians and vocalists perform on six stages.

**Lineup:** Hailey Niswanger Quartet, Bed, Bill Boris Band, Bucky Pizzarelli Quartet, Conjunto, Danny Barber's Jazzcats, Dave Bennett Quartet, Jazzberry Jam, Kevin Q and the Night Crew with Venitia Sekema, Midcoast Swing Orchestra, Notre Dame Jazz Trio, Organissimo, Rob Parton Big Band, more.

**More info:** [elkhartjazzfestival.com](http://elkhartjazzfestival.com)

## Toyota-Scion Iowa City Jazz Festival

Iowa City, Iowa

July 2–4

This festival near the University of Iowa campus has first-rate jazz performances mixed with

a strong educational component.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [icjazzfest.org](http://icjazzfest.org)

## Sioux Falls Jazz Festival

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

July 15–17

The Sioux Falls Jazz Festival is a free summer favorite held in Yankton Trail Park that features three days of live music on two stages.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jazzfestsiouxfalls.com](http://jazzfestsiouxfalls.com)

## Columbus Jazz and Rib Fest

Columbus, Ohio

July 23–25

Held in the the downtown riverfront area of Columbus, the Jazz and Rib Fest is one of the most anticipated summer musical events in Ohio. While there, enjoy and cast your vote for your favorite ribs by filling out one of the readily available People's Choice ballots.

**Lineup:** TBA. Previous years have included Stefon Harris & Blackout, Donald Harrison, The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Wess Anderson.

**More info:** [hottribscooljazz.org](http://hottribscooljazz.org)

## Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival

Davenport, Iowa

July 23–26

Founded in 1972, the Beiderbecke Festival is one of the most widely attended gatherings for early traditional jazz musicians and fans.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [bixsociety.org](http://bixsociety.org)

## Lansing JazzFest

Lansing, Michigan

August 6–7

This year's festival features expanded educational programming including instrument clinics on jazz techniques led by the performers.

**Lineup:** Derrick Gardner and the Jazz Prophets, Etienne Charles





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# Celebrate 2010!



**Austria**  
**Jazz Fest Wien**  
May 30 – July 9  
[www.viennajazz.org](http://www.viennajazz.org)



**Finland**  
**Pori Jazz Festival**  
July 17 – July 25  
[www.porijazz.fi](http://www.porijazz.fi)



**France**  
**Jazz à Vienne**  
June 25 – July 9  
[www.jazzavienne.com](http://www.jazzavienne.com)



**France**  
**International Jazz Festival in Juan-les-Pins**  
July 14 – 25  
[www.antibesjuanlespins.com](http://www.antibesjuanlespins.com)  
[www.jazzajuan.com](http://www.jazzajuan.com)



**Italy**  
**Umbria Jazz**  
July 9 – July 18  
[www.umbriajazz.com](http://www.umbriajazz.com)



**Norway**  
**Molde International Jazz Festival**  
July 19 – July 24  
[www.moldejazz.no](http://www.moldejazz.no)



**Spain**  
**Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz**  
July 10 – July 17  
[www.jazzvitoria.com](http://www.jazzvitoria.com)



**Holland**  
**North Sea Jazz Festival**  
July 9 – July 11  
[www.northseajazz.com](http://www.northseajazz.com)



**Turkey**  
**International Istanbul Jazz Festival**  
July 1 – July 20  
[www.iksv.org](http://www.iksv.org)



**Canada**  
**Festival International de Jazz de Montreal**  
June 25 – July 6  
[www.montrealjazzfest.com](http://www.montrealjazzfest.com)



**Canada**  
**Vancouver International Jazz Festival**  
June 25 – July 4  
[www.coastaljazz.ca](http://www.coastaljazz.ca)



**Switzerland**  
**Montreux Jazz Festival**  
July 2 – July 17  
[www.montreuxjazz.com](http://www.montreuxjazz.com)



**Monterey Jazz Festival**

**USA**  
**Monterey Jazz Festival**  
September 17 – 19  
[www.montereyjazzfestival.org](http://www.montereyjazzfestival.org)



**USA**  
**Ravinia Festival**  
June 17 – June 20  
[www.ravinia.org](http://www.ravinia.org)



**UK**  
**London Jazz Festival**  
November 12 – November 21  
[www.serious.org.uk](http://www.serious.org.uk)

**IJFO.ORG**



and Folklore, Ron Newman Trio featuring Joe Baione, more.

More info: [jazzlansing.com](http://jazzlansing.com)

## Detroit International Jazz Festival

Detroit, Michigan

September 3–6

The 31st annual event centers around the theme “Flame Keepers—carrying the torch for modern jazz.” Still a free festival, featuring workshops and small and large stages, “Flame Keepers” will pay homage to legends Art Blakey, Ray Brown, Miles Davis, Horace Silver, Betty Carter, Lester Bowie and Gil Evans.

**Lineup:** Mulgrew Miller, Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Maria Schneider, Roy Haynes, more.

More info: [detroitjazzfest.com](http://detroitjazzfest.com)

## Chicago Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 4–5

The Chicago Jazz Festival is the city’s longest running lakefront music festival and a Labor Day Weekend tradition. The festival is free and features four stages of jazz performances. Other jazz events are planned for the nearby Millennium Park and Chicago Cultural Center during the weekend, as well as after-fest sets at local clubs.

**Lineup:** Nicole Mitchell, Henry Threadgill, Brad Mehldau, Brian Blade, Rene Marie, more.

More info: [chicagojazzfestival.us](http://chicagojazzfestival.us)

## Blues at the Crossroads

Terre Haute, Indiana

September 10–11

Celebrating its 10th year, this festival takes place at 7th and Wabash, where the town throws a great party with blues and some “beyond” headliners.

**Lineup:** TBA.

More info: [bluesatthecrossroads.com](http://bluesatthecrossroads.com)

## World Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 24–30

Artists from across the planet converge on venues throughout Chicago, and many have made their U.S. debuts at this event. Jazz musicians often collaborate with artists from Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

**Lineup:** La Excelencia, Minyeshu, Wang Li, Sway Machinery, more.

More info: [worldmusicfestivalchicago.org](http://worldmusicfestivalchicago.org)

## Hyde Park Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 25

For 12 hours (2 p.m.–2 a.m.), this historic neighborhood hosts a free jazz festival that brings 150 musicians to 13 venues in and around the University of Chicago. Expect a mix of the city’s veterans and new talent, as well as national stars playing on the scenic Midway.

**Lineup:** Reginald Robinson, Jeff Lindberg’s Chicago Jazz Orchestra, more.

More info: [hydeparkjazzfestival.org](http://hydeparkjazzfestival.org)

## Edgefest

Ann Arbor, Michigan

September 29–October 2

Their 14th annual, Edgefest remains Michigan’s perennial alternative hottest spot for jazz and the avant garde. Picking an instrument each year for its centerpiece, this year’s theme is “Edged in Brass,” highlighting a variety of brass players of all stripes, playing in different groups.

**Lineup:** Chris Speed, John Hollenbeck, Curtis Hesselbrink’s New Mellow Edwards, Joe McPhee’s Trio X, Dave Douglas’ Brass Ecstasy, more.

More info: [kerrytownconcerthouse.com](http://kerrytownconcerthouse.com)



The poster for the 92Y Jazz in July Summer Festival features a large, stylized 'JAZZ' in the background, with 'in JULY' written below it. A photo of a jazz band performing on stage is shown. The text 'Bill Charlap, artistic director' is written vertically on the right side of the photo. Below the photo, the festival title '92nd Street Y Jazz in July Summer Festival' and dates 'July 20-29, 2010' are displayed. The poster lists various events, including 'TURNING UP THE HEAT FOR 25 YEARS', 'HOOYAY FOR HOLLYWOOD: STARRING SONGS FROM CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD MOVIES', 'PICTURE OF HEATH: A TRIBUTE TO LIVING LEGEND JIMMY HEATH', 'PREZ & LADY DAY: THE LEGENDARY PARTNERSHIP OF LESTER YOUNG AND BILLIE HOLIDAY', 'JAZZ PIANO MASTER CLASS', 'THE SONG IS YOU: JEROME KERN, THE FIRST STANDARD-BEARER', 'POSTCARD FROM BRAZIL', and 'BALLADS & BLUES: AN EVENING OF ROMANCE AND SOUL'. Each event lists the date, time, and featured artists. At the bottom, there is a call to action to 'Catch Every Note! Subscriptions and single tickets on sale now!' and information on how to order tickets online or by phone. The 92Y logo is prominently displayed at the bottom right.

**TURNING UP THE HEAT FOR 25 YEARS**  
with one-of-a-kind performances featuring the brightest stars in jazz.

**MON, JUL 26, 8 PM**  
**JAZZ PIANO MASTER CLASS**  
Bill Charlap, piano / Ted Rosenthal, piano  
Sean Smith, bass / Kenny Washington, drums  
Participants to be announced.

**TUE, JUL 20, 8 PM**  
**HOOYAY FOR HOLLYWOOD: STARRING SONGS FROM CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD MOVIES**  
Carol Sloane, vocals / Ken Peplowski, clarinet & tenor sax / Byron Stripling, trumpet  
John Allred, trombone / Bill Charlap, piano  
Ted Rosenthal, piano / Sean Smith, bass  
Lewis Nash, drums

**TUE, JUL 27, 8 PM**  
**THE SONG IS YOU: JEROME KERN, THE FIRST STANDARD-BEARER**  
Sandy Stewart, vocals / Joe Lovano, tenor sax  
Jon Faddis, trumpet / Jon Gordon, alto sax  
Bill Charlap, piano / Renee Rosnes, piano / Peter Washington, bass / Kenny Washington, drums

**WED, JUL 21, 8 PM**  
**PICTURE OF HEATH: A TRIBUTE TO LIVING LEGEND JIMMY HEATH**  
Jimmy Heath, tenor sax / Jeremy Pelt, trumpet / Steve Wilson, alto sax / Steve Davis, trombone / Bill Charlap, piano  
Jeb Patton, piano / David Wong, bass  
Lewis Nash, drums

**WED, JUL 28, 8 PM**  
**POSTCARD FROM BRAZIL**  
Maucha Adnet, vocals / Phil Woods, alto sax  
Erik Friedlander, cello / Bill Charlap, piano  
Renee Rosnes, piano / Reg Schwager, guitar  
David Finck, bass / Duduka Da Fonseca, drums

**THU, JUL 22, 8 PM**  
**PREZ & LADY DAY: THE LEGENDARY PARTNERSHIP OF LESTER YOUNG AND BILLIE HOLIDAY**  
Mary Stallings, vocals / Frank Wess, tenor sax  
Harry Allen, tenor sax / Warren Vaché, trumpet / Bucky Pizzarelli, guitar / Bill Charlap, piano / Peter Washington, bass  
Dennis Mackrel, drums

**THU, JUL 29, 8 PM**  
**BALLADS & BLUES: AN EVENING OF ROMANCE AND SOUL**  
Freddie Cole, vocals / Houston Person, tenor sax / Jeremy Pelt, trumpet / Bill Charlap, piano / Mike LeDonne, organ & piano / Paul Bollenback, guitar / Peter Washington, bass  
Kenny Washington, drums

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# Sunshine Screening

Standout jazz festival performances caught on film

By John McDonough

For the first 30 years of sound movies, jazz was limited to short subjects or specialty slots in studio musicals. The first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954 began to change that. The music found a fresh context beyond the cloistered limbo of the club and the concert hall. But filming was expensive, and thus rare in the United States, where television remained indifferent. In Europe, though, many touring American groups were taped for television, and these concerts (issued by Jazz Icons, Eagle Rock and other companies) are expanding the catalog of jazz on DVD.

## **Jazz On A Summer's Day (1959; New Yorker Video)**

Bert Stern and Arim Avakian (brother of producer George Avakian) directed this innovative documentary of the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival that became the matrix for such later classics as *Monterey Pop* (1968) and *Woodstock* (1969). Aside from early newsreel clips, it is believed to be the first extended festival documentary ever filmed. Great performances by Louis Armstrong, Anita O'Day and Thelonious Monk.

Ordering info: amazon.com

## **Newport Jazz Festival 1962 (Quantum Leap)**

Shot for NBC by Buddy Bregman (arranger/conductor on Ella Fitzgerald's Cole Porter and Rodgers & Hart songbooks), the imagery and sound are often poor. Originally intended to capture the triumphant return of George Wein and his Festival to Newport after the 1960 riots, its interest lies more in its scarcity and historical value than its musical values. But it does catch complete performances by Oscar Peterson, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Rahsaan Roland Kirk and others in their prime.

Ordering info: cduniverse.com



## **Norman Granz Presents Duke Ellington at the Cote d'Azur with Ella Fitzgerald and Joan Miro (1966; Eagle Rock Entertainment)**

Granz used the Festival at Juan-les-Pins in France as a platform for this TV program and caught Ellington and Fitzgerald at the height of their later glory in a prolific concert that produced an LP in 1967 and an eight-CD compilation in 1998. The Cote d'Azur video is coupled with a second disc of Ellington (shortly before his death) in the studio with Joe Pass, Ray Brown and Louie Bellson.

Ordering info: eaglerockent.com

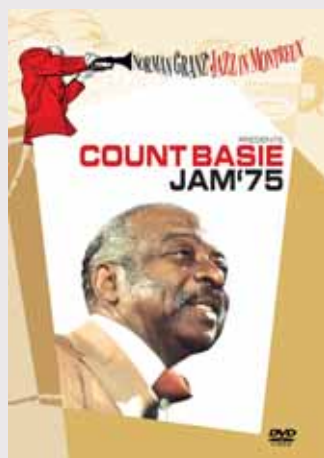
## **Miles Davis Live In Sweden (1967; Sony/Legacy)**

Brief portions of this superbly shot concert appear on Sony's *The Miles Davis Story*, but the entire 35-minute, four-song set was distributed in more limited quantities as a promotional piece. With Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams all in peak form, this is only the second extended performance by a Davis group on film.

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

## **Play Misty For Me (1971; Warner Bros. Video)**

In the late '50s the Monterey Jazz Festival became the Pacific Coast's answer to Newport. In his



1971 debut as director, Clint Eastwood caught the laid-back local color of the event and wove it into this tense thriller as a kind of five-minute documentary insert. On screen: Cannonball and Nat Adderley, a young Joe Zawinul and Johnny Otis.

Ordering info: amazon.com

## **Basie Jam: Montreux '75; Jazz At The Philharmonic 1975 (Eagle Rock Entertainment)**

Montreux has traditionally been a plaything of record companies eager to record their artists in a festival setting. When Granz took over the festival in the '70s, he not only recorded but videotaped, yielding a series of 17 superb DVDs. Special mention goes to Basie, Milt Jackson, Johnny Griffin, Roy Eldridge and Louie Bellson on *Basie Jam*; and the front line of Benny Carter, Eldridge, Zoot Sims and Clark Terry on the JATP recreation.

Ordering info: eaglerockent.com

## **Weather Report: Live at Montreux 1976 (Eagle Rock Entertainment)**

A historic early look at the gathering storm of fusion, here is the band as it stood about 12 weeks after Jaco Pastorius began touring with it and a year before its breakthrough *Heavy Weather* LP.

Ordering info: eaglerockent.com



## **Horace Silver Quintet: Live At The Umbria Jazz Festival, 1976 (Arthaus Musik)**

One of the most picturesque festival sights in Europe is Perugia, Italy, home of Umbria Jazz. With Silver in this concert from the festival's early history is a young Tom Harrell.

Ordering info: naxos.com

## **Buddy Rich: Live at 1982 Montreal Jazz Festival (Hudson Music)**

Buddy Rich left behind an abundance of film, but few known festival performances. Fortunately, many Montreal Fest concerts were taped for television, including this outing by the band on eight charts, including a revival of Artie Shaw's "Carioca."

Ordering info: hudsonmusic.com

## **Flip Phillips 80th Birthday Party (1995; Arbors)**

This Arbors festival built around the still dangerous Phillips may be awkwardly taped but brings together Buddy DeFranco, Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Herb Ellis, Bob Wilber, Kenny Davern, Scott Hamilton, Randy Sandke, Dick Hyman and many others for two hours of on-stage jams.

Ordering info: arborsrecords.com



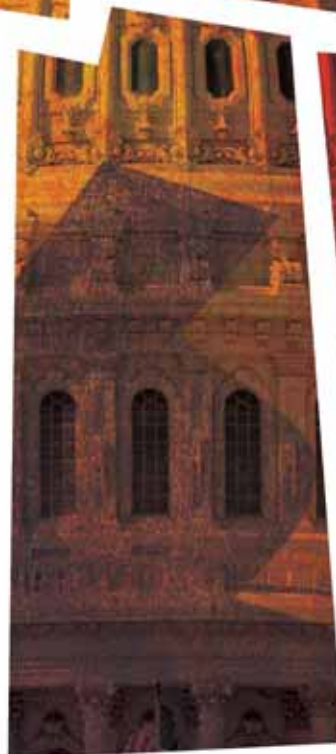
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# South

## French Quarter Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 9–11

New Orleans' historic neighborhood gets even livelier during these three days of music, which will also include parades, guided tours of historic homes and an eating contest.

**Lineup:** Soul Rebels, Trombone Shorty, Cedric Watson, Kermit Ruffins, Rebirth Brass Band, more.

**More info:** [frenchquarterfest.com](http://frenchquarterfest.com)

## Festival International De Louisiane

Lafayette, Louisiana

April 21–25

This free festival celebrates music, art and food from around the Francophone world. Along with an array of vendors, cooking demonstrations and cultural workshops.

**Lineup:** Bassekou Kouyate, Sonny Landreth, Lunasa, King Sunny Ade, more.

**More info:** [festivalinternational.com](http://festivalinternational.com)

## Denton Arts & Jazz Festival

Denton, Texas

April 23–25

This free three-day festival in the city's Quakertown Park has seven stages with professional and student talent. The festival also has a children's art tent.

**Lineup:** Chick Corea, Jimmie Vaughan, Brave Combo, more.

**More info:** [dentonjazzfest.com](http://dentonjazzfest.com)

## New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 23–May 2

This always-explosive event will have a dozen stages presenting everybody from the biggest names in rock to many of the Crescent City's enduring local jazz heroes. The sprawling event boasts international jazz stars in the jazz tent, but the music can be heard throughout the grounds and at nightly outerfest shows that last until sunrise.

**Lineup:** Aretha Franklin, the Neville Brothers, Irma Thomas' Tribute To Mahalia Jackson, Dr. John, Kirk Whalum, Ledisi, Gerald Albright, more.

**More info:** [nojazzfest.com](http://nojazzfest.com)

## Jacksonville Jazz Festival

Jacksonville, Florida

May 27–30

Along with the headliner concerts, this downtown festival features a piano competition, local art gallery events and a wine tasting



Brian Bromberg @ Clearwater Jazz Holiday

party. This year's event will also include a young talent competition.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jaxjazzfest.com](http://jaxjazzfest.com)

## Wachovia Jazz Series at the Spoleto Festival

Charleston, South Carolina

May 28–June 13

With artistic offerings that embrace jazz, opera, ballet and musical theater, this festival has dozens of performances. The jazz series will present established artists along with up-and-comers, as well as international musicians making U.S. debuts.

**Lineup:** Lizz Wright, Norma Winstone, Fabiana Cozza, more.

**More info:** [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org)

## Atlanta Jazz Festival

Atlanta, Georgia

May 29–30

Held in Piedmont Park over Memorial Day weekend, the Atlanta Jazz Festival celebrates its 33rd anniversary this summer.

**Lineup:** Stanley Clarke featuring Hiromi, Trombone Shorty & New Orleans Avenue, Swing Streets to Swing Beats with special guest Esperanza Spalding and Raydar Ellis.

**More info:** [atlantafestivals.com](http://atlantafestivals.com)

## Eureka Blues Weekend

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

June 3–6

A Fundraiser for the Blues Foundation's HART Fund and Turpentine Creek Wildlife Center in the Ozarks, this "Victorian vacationland" runs four days. Blues shows take place in the Eureka Springs Auditorium, Basin Park Hotel's Barefoot Ballroom, Basin Park and several other spots around town.

**Lineup:** Charlie Musslewhite, John Hammond, more.

**More info:** [eurekaspringsblues.com](http://eurekaspringsblues.com)

## Virginia Blues & Jazz Festival

Warm Springs, Virginia

June 11–13

Friday night jazz with Chris Potter in a converted horse barn, followed by Saturday's full-day lawn concert, all at the Garth Newel Music Center in the Allegheny Mountains. Get back inside Sunday for Chef Randy's New Orleans Jazz Brunch.

**Lineup:** Chris Potter, Marcia Ball, the Holmes Brothers, Ruthie Foster, more.

**More info:** [garthnewel.org](http://garthnewel.org)

## Satchmo SummerFest

New Orleans, Louisiana

August 5–8

This annual tribute to Louis Armstrong and his legacy takes place in his hometown in the French Quarter. Along with concerts, the event features a children's stage and speakers presenting their expertise in the jazz legend.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [fqfi.org](http://fqfi.org)

## Les DeMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Fernandina Beach, Florida

October 3–10

This festival includes both ticketed and free concerts featuring mainstream, bebop, blues, big band and Latin jazz.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's performers included David Sanborn, Christian Tamburr.

**More info:** [ameliaislandjazzfestival.com](http://ameliaislandjazzfestival.com)

## Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Clearwater, Florida

October 14–17

White sandy beaches of Coachman Park in downtown Clearwater become home to this event. Mainstream jazz is usually featured along with a healthy dose of Latin music.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More Info:** [clearwaterjazz.com](http://clearwaterjazz.com)





Harry Connick, Jr., Chick Corea,  
Dianne Reeves, Ahmad Jamal,  
Angelique Kidjo, Roy Hargrove,  
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# Monterey Jazz Festival

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# Rocky Mountains

## Jazz Aspen Snowmass

Aspen and Snowmass, Colorado

June 25–July 3, September 3–5

The 10-day JAS June festival will include four nights of headline concerts from world-class musicians at the Benedict Music Tent (June 25–27 and July 3) and a closing weekend of small venue shows around the Colorado resort town of Aspen. The Labor Day festival, which leans more toward pop and r&b, takes place in Snowmass Village.

**Lineup:** June—Harry Connick Jr., Christian McBride, Patti Austin, Dianne Reeves, Fred Wesley, Natalie Cole, and more. Labor Day—Wilco, more.

**More info:** [jazzaspen.com](http://jazzaspen.com)

## Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival

Salt Lake City, Utah

July 9–11

Downtown Salt Lake City's Washington Square is ground zero for this festival, which includes clinics at the University of Utah.

**Lineup:** Chuck Findley, Ira Nepus, more.

**More info:** [slcjazzfestival.org](http://slcjazzfestival.org)

## New Mexico Jazz Festival

Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico

July 13–25

The festival takes place at The Outpost Performance Space, Old and Nob Hill in Albuquerque and The Lensic and Santa Fe Plaza in Santa Fe. This festival features international artists as well as local musicians.

**Lineup:** Toshiko Akiyoshi with Lew Tabackin and the Albuquerque Jazz Orchestra, Miguel Zenón, more.

**More info:** [newmexicोजazzfestival.org](http://newmexicोजazzfestival.org)

## Telluride Jazz Festival

Telluride, Colorado

August 6–8

Combining the finest of nature and art, the Telluride Jazz Festival is held in the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado.

**Lineup:** Stanley Clarke Band featuring Hiromi, Dianne Reeves, Greyboy Allstars, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Jackie Ryan, Chuchito Valdes Afro-Cuban Jazz Ensemble, more.

**More info:** [telluridejazz.org](http://telluridejazz.org)

## Mile High Blues Festival

Henderson, Colorado

August 7–8

Not far from downtown Denver, the Mile High

Marketplace holds its second annual shindig. Louisiana r&b shares the program with Texas, Nashville and West Coast blues.

**Lineup:** Tab Benoit, Rick Estrin & the Nightcats, Jimmy Hall, Ruthie Foster, Mike Zito, more.

**More info:** [milehighblues.com](http://milehighblues.com)

## Park City Jazz Festival

Park City, Utah

August 20–22

This festival takes place at the Deer Valley Resort's outdoor amphitheater. There's a beer garden and attendees can bring food for picnicking.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [parkcityjazz.org](http://parkcityjazz.org)

## Vail Jazz Party

Vail, Colorado

September 2–6

Throughout the year, the Vail Jazz Foundation provides plenty of swinging music to this Rocky Mountain ski town. But when Labor Day rolls around, the foundation's main event emerges with a weekend party.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [vailjazz.org](http://vailjazz.org)

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# Bohemia Jazzfest @ 5

## Small Festival, Big Heart

By Ed Enright

When the Bohemia Jazzfest lights up Prague's Old Town Square this July, the Czech Republic will once again become a hipper place to live and visit. Celebrating its fifth anniversary this year, the ever-expanding festival has grown from a tiny, three-city affair into a seven-city, nine-day extravaganza that resonates with residents and tourists across this former Eastern Bloc country, located right in the heart of Central Europe.

Rudy Linka, the Prague-born jazz guitarist who has gained international acclaim since defecting to Sweden at age 19 and later moving to the United States, conceived the festival when he found himself to be a tourist back in his own country, years after its liberation from the controlling forces of the former Soviet Union.

"I am so proud of my country—it has an amazing musical history for such a little place," said Linka, who currently lives most of the year in New York City. "After some 50 years of isolation, somehow I felt it would be great to present something contemporary. I think jazz is the most modern form of music, and wouldn't it be great for the local people to see it and hear it so they can be brave enough to ask, 'Do I like it, or not like it?' just to taste it and form their own opinion."

All festival events are free to the public and are held outdoors in beautiful, historic town squares across Bohemia, a culturally rich and frequently romanticized region of the Czech Republic. Still young, the festival has featured a slate of internationally known jazz artists such as John Scofield, Dave Holland and Joshua Redman as well as lesser-known European acts from various nearby countries, like Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Italy, Sweden and Denmark.

This year will mark the return of Yellowjackets, who played at the inaugural Bohemia Jazzfest in 2006. Dr. Lonnie Smith also makes his second appearance at the fest this summer, as does German saxophonist Johannes Enders. Other 2010 headliners will include Stanley Clarke's group, Béla Fleck with Edgar Maier and Zakir Hussain and Tomasz Stanko's Europe-based ensemble. Linka, as usual, will perform, this time with a trio featuring his regular bassist, Dan Fabricatore, and Kenny Wollesen on drums.

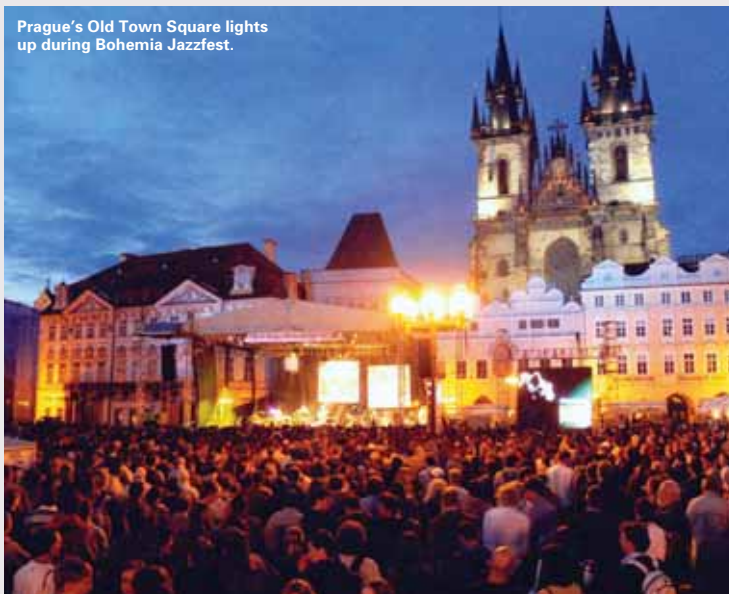
As a musician who gigs frequently in Europe as well as North America, Linka not only knows what it's like to perform at multi-concert outdoor festivals; he also personally knows all the musicians themselves, as friends and collaborators.

"I know how small things can make a big difference in how musicians feel and perform," said Linka, noting the importance of having good sound engineer and feeding performers a decent meal. "You immediately feel like it's a family-run business—no one is there just to do the job, get the money and go home."

Linka operates the fest on a shockingly small budget, cobbling together contributions (both financial and service-based) from various small sponsorships and making the most of the grass-roots support he receives from the Czech cities the festival visits. He also has made some important political connections, having formed relationships with Vaclav Klaus (the jazz-loving president of the Czech Republic), ambassadors from the United States and Sweden, and the mayors of Prague and other Bohemian towns who continue to come onboard as the festival extends its reach. Linka received significant backing this year from Czech Tourism, part of the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"We are not in a situation where we can pay the fees of other festivals,

Prague's Old Town Square lights up during Bohemia Jazzfest.



Rudy Linka

so I am always grateful for artists who accept the invitation to come play," he said. "We try to work out some kind of arrangement that will be good for everybody. And after that will come all of these small things, like a massage in the local spa. These towns we visit are so happy to provide the little extras. We have so much support from so many people that we can still somehow pull it off in the end. Up to the last minute, I try to see how I can work it so they will be available. Do I go and pick them up somewhere in Munich by car? Yes, I do. Nothing is too small to make them come to us.

"That's what Bohemia Jazzfest is all about," Linka concluded. "It's so small, but because of that it's so big and has such a big heart."

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# West Coast

## Ballard Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

April 21–25

This year's festival includes a guitar summit and Brotherhood of the Drum, a night of drummer-led groups at the Sunset Tavern. Along with a Jazz Walk on Seattle's Ballard Avenue by Puget Sound, the festival also includes a Swedish pancake jazz brunch.

**Lineup:** Claudio Roditi, John Moulder, Corey Christiansen, Dan Phelps, more.

**More info:** [ballardjazzfestival.com](http://ballardjazzfestival.com)

## Paradise Valley Jazz Party

Phoenix, Arizona

May 1–2

Guitarist Bruce Foreman is the 2010 Guest Of Honor, and the Lewis Nash Trio with Renee Rosnes and Peter Washington will play all three sets. A host of artists will mix and match groups throughout the weekend in time-honored jazz party fashion.

**Lineup:** Akira Tana, John Clayton, Wycliffe Gordon, Byron Stripling, Gerald Clayton, Shelly Berg, Dmitri Matheny, Bill Watrous, more.

**More info:** [paradisvalleyjazz.com](http://paradisvalleyjazz.com)

## Sonoma Jazz+

Sonoma, California

May 21–23

One of the biggest challenges for out-of-town patrons of past Sonoma Jazz+ festivals was finding housing during the already-busy Memorial Day weekend in northern California's wine country. This year's festival eliminates this issue by being held a weekend earlier.

**Lineup:** Earth Wind & Fire, Lizz Wright, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Kristen Strom Quartet, Joshi Marshall Quartet, Terrence Brewer, George Cole & Viva Le Jazz, more.

**More info:** [sonomajazz.org](http://sonomajazz.org)

## Juneau Jazz and Classics

Juneau, Alaska

May 21–30

With jazz, blues and classical artists, this fest combines workshops with wine tasting in the state capital. Musicians will perform on multiple stages, including a cruise ship and the University of Alaska Southeast campus.

**Lineup:** Robert Dick, Ingrid Jensen, Jeff Antoniuk, Royal Crown Revue, more.

**More info:** [jazzandclassics.org](http://jazzandclassics.org)

## Sacramento Jazz Festival & Jubilee

Sacramento, California

May 28–31

The Sacramento Jazz Festival continues to offer a mix of Dixieland and other musical styles



Dianne Reeves @ Jazz At The Bowl

ANDRZEJ LUGUZ

over Memorial Day weekend. Clarinetist Bob Draga is the 2010 Festival Emperor, while actress Molly Ringwald brings her quartet, performing the Great American Songbook and adding Hollywood glamour to the festivities.

**Lineup:** Louis Ford/New Orleans Jazz Flairs, Ray Obiedo & Mambo Caribe, more.

**More info:** [sacjazz.com](http://sacjazz.com)

## Bellevue Jazz Festival

Bellevue, Washington

June 3–6

National artists, local musicians and high school all-stars are all a part of this three-day festival. Venues range from the Meydenbauer Theatre to tableside sets in local bars and hotels.

**Lineup:** Terence Blanchard Quintet, The Bad Plus, Pat Martino, Bill Charlap & Renee Rosnes, Sachal Vasandani, The Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra, The Bellevue Jazz Festival Rising Stars, plus more than 25 free jazz concerts throughout downtown Bellevue.

**More info:** [bellevuejazz.com](http://bellevuejazz.com)

## Healdsburg Jazz Festival

Healdsburg, California

June 4–13

The Healdsburg Jazz Festival continues to present longtime friends as well as exciting new talent, including Charlie Haden, Esperanza Spalding, Geri Allen, Ravi Coltrane and Oscar Castro-Neves.

**Lineup:** Jason Moran, Anat Cohen, Dafnis Prieto, Leny Andrade, Romero Lubambo, Peter Apfelbaum, Claudia Villela, Bennet Friedman, more.

**More info:** [healdsburgjazzfestival.org](http://healdsburgjazzfestival.org)

## Playboy Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

June 12–13

Hosted at the Hollywood Bowl, this event attracts 35,000 people, who bask in the sun by

day and picnic by candlelight during twilight as they groove to top-flight jazz musicians. Because the bandshell stage is built to revolve, there is little down time as the next acts are always ready to go. Bill Cosby traditionally serves as master of ceremonies.

**Lineup:** Esperanza Spalding, Chick Corea, Bobby Hutcherson and Cedar Walton Quartet, George Benson, Salif Keita, more.

**More info:** [playboyjazzfestival.com](http://playboyjazzfestival.com)

## Monterey Bay Blues Festival

Monterey, California

June 25–27

Celebrating its 25th year, this major West Coast roots music celebration takes place under the oak trees at the Monterey Fairgrounds. In addition to the Main Stage, there are two secondary stages: Presidents and Garden. Big names from B. B. King to James Brown have performed in the past.

**Lineup:** Tommy Castro, Candye Kane, Ruthie Foster, Kenny Neal, Sista Monica & Gospel Choir, Mel Waiters, Lenny Williams, Latimore, Con Funk Shun, Mike Hammer & the Nails, more.

**More info:** [montereyblues.com](http://montereyblues.com)

## Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival

Portland, Oregon

July 2–5

More than 100 musicians perform on the banks of the Willamette River at the largest blues festival on the West Coast. A fund-raiser for the non-profit relief organization Oregon Food Bank, the gala has three stages, cruises and fireworks on the Fourth. Featured shows are on Delta blues and Louisiana swampland r&b.

**Lineup:** Booker T., Bobby Rush, Super Chikan, Lightnin' & Malcolm, Little Feat, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Lucky Peterson, more.

**More info:** [waterfrontbluesfest.com](http://waterfrontbluesfest.com)



### **Jazz At The Bowl**

*Los Angeles, California*

**July 7–September 1**

The Los Angeles Philharmonic's Creative Chair for Jazz, Herbie Hancock, presents his first jazz series at the Hollywood Bowl with eight concerts featuring legends and rising stars of the genre. Two series of four concerts take place on Wednesday nights throughout the summer season.

**Lineup:** Lizz Wright, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Derek Trucks, Susan Tedeschi, B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Femi Kuti & The Positive Force, Terence Blanchard with Lula Washington Dance Theatre Richard Bona, Lee Ritenour & Dave Grusin, Count Basie Orchestra, Dave Holland Big Band, Patrice Rushen & Friends, MTL Express, Spencer Day, Preservation Hall & Trey McIntyre Project, Neville Brothers, Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

**More info:** [hollywoodbowl.com](http://hollywoodbowl.com)

### **Temecula Valley International Jazz Festival**

*Temecula, California*

**July 9–11**

Offering both ticketed and free concerts in

glorious southern California wine country, this year's Temecula Valley International Jazz Festival will present Brian Auger's Oblivion Express and his son Karma's collective trio with Julian Coryell and Nicklas Sample, two other second generation instrumentalists. Area hero Poncho Sanchez and His Latin Band will perform a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald with "Bronze Buckaroo" Herb Jeffries.

**Lineup:** Arthur Rand and the Legendary Ink Spots, Freda Payne and Ray Brown, Jr. with Dirk Berk, Keith Droste & Rene Worst, Patricia Talem, Gil Alcanter Band, more.

**More info:** [temeculajazzfest.com](http://temeculajazzfest.com)

### **Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival**

*Fairbanks, Alaska*

**July 18–August 1**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, which takes place at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

**Lineup:** Jovino Quintetto–Jovino Santos Neto, Tim Carey, Harvey Wainapel, Jeff Busch, Mark Ivester, Barney McClure.

**More info:** [fsaf.org](http://fsaf.org)

### **Jazz Port Townsend**

*Port Townsend, Washington*

**July 25–August 1**

Port Townsend's historic downtown and uptown districts come alive with jazz, from McCurdy Pavilion to the clubs, as the festival celebrates its 34th year.

**Lineup:** John Clayton, Chuck Deardorf, George Cables, Randy Halberstadt, Wycliffe Gordon, Dawn Clement, Ingrid Jensen, Terrell Stafford, Graham Dechter, Jimmy Heath, Adam Schroeder, Dan Balmer, more.

**More info:** [centrum.org/jazz](http://centrum.org/jazz)

### **Mt. Hood Jazz Festival**

*Gresham, Oregon*

**July 30–31**

With concerts at the Mt. Hood Community College Theater, this event prides itself on its mainstream jazz collaborations with both professional and student musicians in small group and big band settings.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year included Terrell Stafford, Art Abrams Swing Machine with Bobby Shew, Stan Kenton Tribute Band.

**More info:** [mthoodjazz.org](http://mthoodjazz.org)

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## Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival

Port Townsend, Washington

August 1-8

Centrum at Fort Worden State Park—"a gathering place for artists"—sponsors a week of country blues with up-and-coming musicians paired with masters for instruction in playing guitar, harmonica, piano and other instruments. Mountain ranges and the Strait of Juan de Fuca provide the scenic backdrop for the grand finale concert. Corey Harris serves as artistic director.

**Lineup:** Phil Wiggins, Rev. Robert B. Jones, Del Ray, Bruce Barnes, the Ebony Hillbillies, Steve James, more.

**More info:** [centrum.org/blues](http://centrum.org/blues)

## AT&T San Jose Jazz Festival

San Jose, California

August 13-15

Boasting eight different stages, the San Jose Jazz Festival continues to serve up a diverse offering of musical styles. One of its secret weapons is its two indoor venues, which will

get upsized this year as the IMAX Dome Theatre stage will be moved to the San Jose Repertory Theatre, while artists previously booked there will now perform at the larger California Theatre.

**Lineup:** The Cookers (with Eddie Henderson, Billy Harper, David Weiss, David Hazeltine, Cecil McBee & Billy Hart), Maceo Parker, Marcus Miller's "Tutu Revisited—The Music of Miles Davis," Vijay Iyer, Sylvia Cuenca, Jeff Hamilton Trio, more.

**More info:** [sanjosejazz.org](http://sanjosejazz.org)

## Sonora Blues Festival

Sonora, California

August 14

At the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in the old Central Sierra Mountains gold rush town, performers appear on an outdoor main stage and in the Sierra Building.

**Lineup:** Tommy Castro, Roy Rogers, Wild T & Spirit, more.

**More info:** [fireonthemountain.com](http://fireonthemountain.com)

## West Coast Jazz Party & Brunch Cruise

Irvine, California

September 3-6

The Four Freshmen are featured in two Grand Opening Night settings for this Labor Day weekend event—by themselves and with the Four Trombones. Debby Boone plays homage to her late mother-in-law with her "Reflections of Rosemary Clooney" tribute.

**Lineup:** Terry Gibbs Quintet with Ken Peplowski, Ernie Andrews-Houston Person Quintet, Sounds of George Shearing with Charlie Shoemaker, Mimi Fox, Mundell Lowe, more.

**More info:** [westcoastjazzparty.com](http://westcoastjazzparty.com)

## Jazz 88 Ocean Beach Jazz Festival

Ocean Beach, California

September 11

Held along Newport Avenue by the Ocean Beach Pier, this one-day jazz fest features music from noon until 7 p.m.

**Lineup:** The Bad Plus, Brasilia, The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, The Jazz 88-All Stars, Kevin Mahogany's Kansas City Review.

**More info:** [objazz.org](http://objazz.org)

## San Francisco Jazz Festival

San Francisco, California

September 11-December 12

Programmed by the thriving SFJAZZ organization, this festival continues to bring high-profile jazz artists and talented local musicians to venues throughout the city. Genre-crossing international heroes are also included.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [sfjazz.org](http://sfjazz.org)

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## Monterey Jazz Festival Presented by Verizon

Monterey, California

September 17-19

The world's longest continually running jazz festival presents another packed weekend of music in this Pacific Coast town. Big ticketed events take place in the arena, while the fairgrounds feature indoor and outdoor stages that often host the main stage performers after their arena sets. Dianne Reeves is artist-in-residence this year.

**Lineup:** Harry Connick Jr., Ahmad Jamal, Chick Corea, Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride, Roy Haynes, Septeto Nacional de Cuba, Les Nubians, Roy Hargrove Big Band, Delbert McClinton Band; Trombone Shorty, Nellie McKay, Marcus Roberts Trio, more.

More info: [montereyjazzfestival.org](http://montereyjazzfestival.org)

## Angel City Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

September 30-October 3

The Angel City Jazz Festival features established jazz artists and young emerging talent, with a focus on West Coast jazz. This year's fest will be held at different venues culminating in a day-long festival event at the historic John Anson Ford Amphitheatre.

**Lineup:** Ravi Coltrane, Wadada Leo Smith, Nels Cline, Henry Grimes, Kneebody, Todd Sickafoose, Vinny Golia, L.A. Jazz Quartet, more.

More info: [angelcityjazz.com](http://angelcityjazz.com)

## Jazz at Newport

Newport, Oregon

October 1-3

Held along Oregon's scenic coast, most of the music takes place at the Newport Performing Arts Center, which includes a small theater for open conversations and workshops.

**Lineup:** Bill Cunliffe, Houston Person, more.

More info: [jazzatnewport.org](http://jazzatnewport.org)

## Earshot Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

October 15-November 7

The yearly rite of fall in the Pacific Northwest has a twofold mission: to present artists whose music frequently falls outside the mainstream, and also to provide a showcase for Seattle's multi-generational jazz scene. The schedule includes more than 50 events and 250 artists. Erik Friedlander, one of the foremost jazz cellists, typifies the festival's agenda.

**Lineup:** Erik Friedlander, Kenny Barron, Steve Lehman, Gretchen Parlato, Henry Threadgill, David Sanchez, Jean-Michel Pilc.

More info: [earshot.org](http://earshot.org)

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## Canada

### Festival de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville

Victoriaville, Quebec

May 20–23

After a year's absence, FIMAV returns with its usual eclectic lineup of jazz, electronic music and sonic experimentation. The imaginative programming make this small Quebec city a destination for adventurous music fans from around the world.

**Lineup:** Bill Dixon's Tapestries for Small Orchestras, René Lussier, Kim Myhr & Trondheim Jazz Orkester, Perlonex & Charlemagne Palestine, more.

**More info:** [fimav.qc.ca](http://fimav.qc.ca)

### Calgary Jazz Festival

Calgary, Alberta

June 21–27

The festival features more than 60 acts in concert halls and on the Olympic Plaza's unique floating stage.

**Lineup:** Chick Corea, Joshua Redman Quartet, more.

**More info:** [calgaryjazz.com](http://calgaryjazz.com)

### TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival

Ottawa, Ontario

June 24–July 4

Marking its 30th anniversary, the festival combines concerts in the city's picturesque Confederation Park and indoor venues.

**Lineup:** Joe Lovano, Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove Big Band, Joshua Redman Quartet, Dave Brubeck and the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Bill Frisell, Fred Hersch, more.

**More info:** [ottawajazzfestival.com](http://ottawajazzfestival.com)

### Edmonton International Jazz Festival

Edmonton, Alberta

June 25–July 4

One of Canada's original jazz festivals, the Edmonton event has maintained this northern city's reputation as a great jazz town. Venues include the legendary Yardbird Suite—Canada's oldest jazz club—and the soft-seat Winspear Centre.

**Lineup:** Chick Corea, Bill Frisell Trio, Joshua Redman Quartet, more.

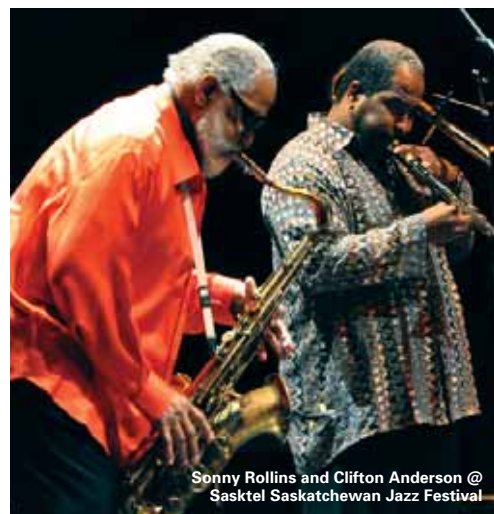
**More info:** [edmontonjazz.com](http://edmontonjazz.com)

### TD Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival

Toronto, Ontario

June 25–July 4

Featuring more than 350 concerts, the festival



SASKTEL SASKATCHEWAN JAZZ FESTIVAL

spreads across 40 venues in Toronto's core. The programming runs from noon to 4 a.m. daily, and covers a broad range of genres.

**Lineup:** David Sanborn and the Joey DeFrancesco Trio, Keith Jarrett Standards Trio, Roy Hargrove Big Band, Dave Brubeck Quartet, more.

**More info:** [tojazz.com](http://tojazz.com)

### TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival

Winnipeg, Manitoba

June 25–July 4

Festivities in this culturally rich prairie city culminate with a weekend-long series of outdoor concerts at Old Market Square in the heart of the historic Exchange District.

**Lineup:** Sonny Rollins, Roy Hargrove, Robert Glasper, Renee Rosnes & Bill Charlap, Terence Blanchard with the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra, Martha Wainwright, more.

**More info:** [jazzwinnipeg.com](http://jazzwinnipeg.com)

### TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia

June 25–July 4

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, the festival that made its name by creating one-time collaborations between European and North American artists continues to spotlight a broad range of mainstream and improvised music.

**Lineup:** Barry Guy, Bill Frisell Trio, Renee Rosnes & Bill Charlap, Chick Corea, John Scofield Piety Street Band, Tomasz Stanko Quintet, George Benson, Mostly Other People Do The Killing, more.

**More info:** [coastaljazz.ca](http://coastaljazz.ca)

### TD Victoria International JazzFest

Victoria, British Columbia

June 25–July 4

The festival features more than 90 perfor-



mances in Canada's westernmost city. Venues include outdoor stages and four hotels.

**Lineup:** George Benson, Joshua Redman Quartet, Renee Rosnes & Bill Charlap, John Scofield, Bill Frisell, more.

**More info:** [jazzvictoria.ca](http://jazzvictoria.ca)

## SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

June 25–July 4

The festival celebrates its 24th year on two riverfront stages and a number of indoor venues around this lushly treed northern prairie city. This year's musical menu features a mix of jazz and urban music.

**Lineup:** Chick Corea, Roy Hargrove Quintet, Los Lobos, Joshua Redman Quartet, Renee Rosnes & Bill Charlap, more.

**More info:** [saskjazz.com](http://saskjazz.com)

## Festival International de Jazz de Montreal

Montreal, Quebec

June 25–July 6

From the intimate confines of Salle de G  su to the free outdoor extravaganzas, which regularly draw tens of thousands of revelers to rue Ste. Catherine, North America's largest celebration of jazz, blues and beyond remains the summer's best opportunity to immerse yourself in music.

**Lineup:** David Sanborn and the Joey DeFrancesco Trio, Taj Mahal, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, George Benson, Laurie Anderson/Lou Reed/John Zorn, John Scofield Piety Street Band, more.

**More info:** [montrealjazzfest.com](http://montrealjazzfest.com)

## TD Halifax Jazz Festival

Halifax, Nova Scotia

July 9–17

Known for its casual, intimate atmosphere and late-night hangs on the city's waterfront, the festival features 450 artists and dovetails with the annual Creative Music Workshop, which brings together players from all musical traditions to work together and study with drummer Jerry Granelli, saxophonist David Mott and other clinicians.

**Lineup:** Andy Milne's Dapp Theory, Richard Underhill Quintet, Kellylee Evans, Darren Sigsmond Quartet, NOMO, Owen Howard's Drum Lore, Sandro Dominelli Trio, more.

**More info:** [jazzeast.com](http://jazzeast.com)

## Vancouver Island MusicFest

Courtenay, British Columbia

July 9–11

Started 15 years ago by the Comox Valley Folk Society, this roots and world music party along the farmlands on the east coast of the province

has several dozen acts.

**Lineup:** The Holmes Brothers, Adrian Belew, Amos Garrett, more.

**More info:** [islandmusicfest.com](http://islandmusicfest.com)

## Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia

July 16–18

At Jericho Beach Park, seven daytime stages and three evening main stages share green space with an arts market. In its 33rd year, VFMF presents about 60 headliners offering blues, folk, gospel and world music.

**Lineup:** Alvin Youngblood Hart, Jim Byrnes, Steve Dawson, Naomi Shelton & the Gospel Queens, more.

**More info:** [thefestival.bc.ca](http://thefestival.bc.ca)

## Art Of Jazz Presents the Algonquin Arts & Music Festival

Bancroft, Ontario

July 30–August 1

Organized by the same team that led Toronto's Art Of Jazz Festival—headed by saxophonist Jane Bunnett and trumpeter Larry Cramer—this new festival will bring international artists to a rural setting in the heart of Canada's largest summer tourist region.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [artofjazz.org](http://artofjazz.org)

## FestiJazz International Rimouski

Rimouski, Quebec

September 2–5

Situated on the rocky southern shore of the St. Lawrence River, Rimouski is a remote town that embraces its jazz festival as a community celebration each summer.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [festijazzrimouski.com](http://festijazzrimouski.com)

## Guelph Jazz Festival

Guelph, Ontario

September 8–12

Located in a university town an hour outside Toronto, the festival is set apart by the inclusion of an academic jazz colloquium and numerous workshops featuring musicians in intimate settings. The festival has a history of putting together memorable double bills and booking artists who are rarely featured on the North American festival circuit.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [guelphjazzfestival.com](http://guelphjazzfestival.com)

## Pender Harbour Jazz Festival

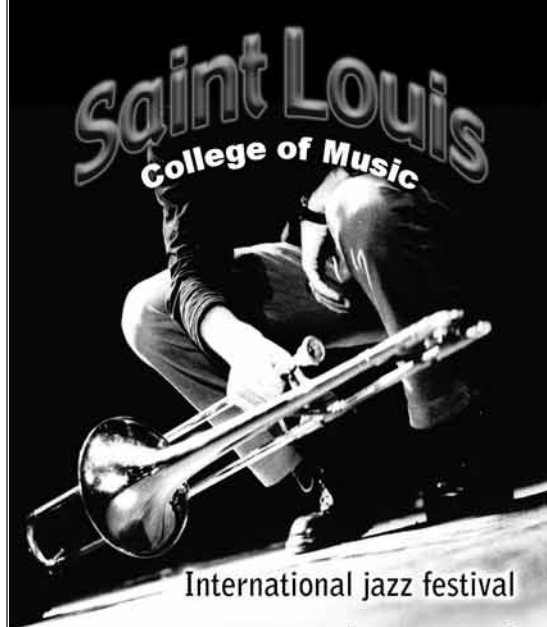
Pender Harbour, British Columbia

September 17–19

Set in a picturesque fishing town north of Vancouver, the festival uses a variety of waterfront venues, including a floating one.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [penderharbourmusic.ca](http://penderharbourmusic.ca)



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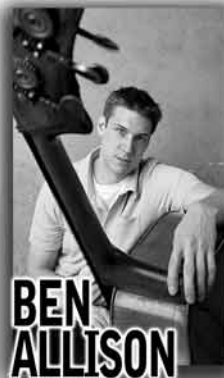
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[www.slmc.it](http://www.slmc.it)



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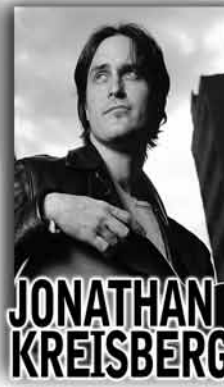
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# Northwest Expansion

The TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival celebrates turning 25

By James Hale

The TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival may have built its reputation by booking the cream of Europe's avant improvisers, but as the event celebrates its 25th anniversary its founders credit two American trumpeters with putting it on the map.

That incident—which saw Miles Davis halt his performance when Wynton Marsalis appeared uninvited at his side, trumpet in hand—became news around the world. In his autobiography, Davis cited it as a sign that Marsalis “didn’t have no respect for his elders ... I was so mad at him for doing that shit like that, I just said, ‘Man, get the fuck off the stage.’”

“I was across town at another venue when Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis had their legendary onstage confrontation,” recalled artistic director Ken Pickering, “but I’ve heard about it so often that I feel like I was there.”

While the animus between the aging legend and the young upstart made headlines, Pickering and his lifelong friend John Orysik—a former jazz radio host—said that their debut festival also presented a broad cross-section of artists that included Bill Frisell, Tony Williams, Steve Lacy, Ran Blake, Jan Garbarek, Roscoe Mitchell and Bobby McFerrin.

“Without a long-term sponsorship deal, I thought I might only get one kick at running a festival, so I wanted to do something that I would be proud of the rest of my life,” said Pickering, who booked the event out of his Black Swan record shop.

As the Pacific Jazz & Blues Association (since renamed Coastal Jazz), Pickering and Orysik had already promoted some concerts and a small festival, but 1986 offered a one-time opportunity for funding and publicity. That year, Vancouver was the site of a World’s Fair, so the duo, along with a third partner—Robert Kerr—decided to take advantage.

“Being native Vancouverites, we’d seen boom-and-bust cycles in the city’s creative music scene and thought we could make a difference,” Orysik said. “Our vision was to present jazz in all its forms and create something that would sustain itself beyond the festival season.”

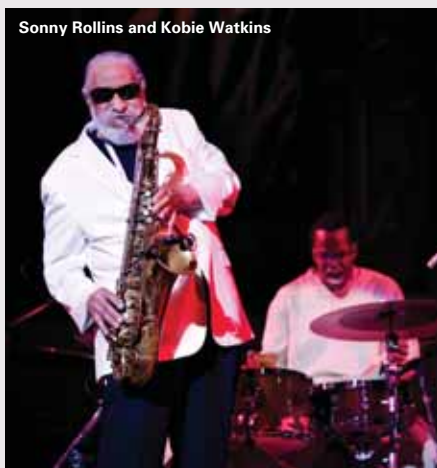
With a budget of \$500,000, that initial year left the non-profit organization with a deficit, but in the wake of Expo ’86, “We had the city to ourselves in 1987,” Orysik said. Helping to fill the gap, Pickering provided John Zorn with his first major international showcase, one of the events that Pickering said continues to resonate. “Another significant event,” he said, “was Ornette Coleman’s original Prime Time in our



Wynton Marsalis and Miles Davis



Dr. Lonnie Smith (left) and Cory Weeds



Sonny Rollins and Kobie Watkins



Sun Ra

first year. That show influenced so many musicians who were there: They still talk about it.”

By 1990, the festival was out of debt and beginning to regularly feature Europeans who seldom performed in North America.

“I remember the first time I put [pianist] Paul Plimley together with Han Bennink,” Pickering said. “Those types of collaborations positioned Vancouver as a creative hotbed and won the trust of both artists and our audience.”

“The spirit of collaboration at the festival was unique,” said Vancouver singer Kate Hammett-Vaughan. “It helped build an audience with open ears, and was a galvanizing force for local musicians who saw the opportunity to work with international artists.”

“People tend to focus on the free improvised music we’ve presented,” Orysik said. “But we’re proud of the role we’ve played in giving a platform to more mainstream artists. I think we’ve really been a catalyst for younger people like Cory Weeds.”

Weeds, a saxophonist who also runs The Cellar jazz club and a record label, Cellar Live, agrees.

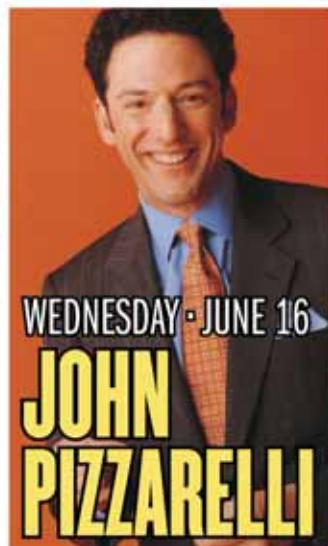
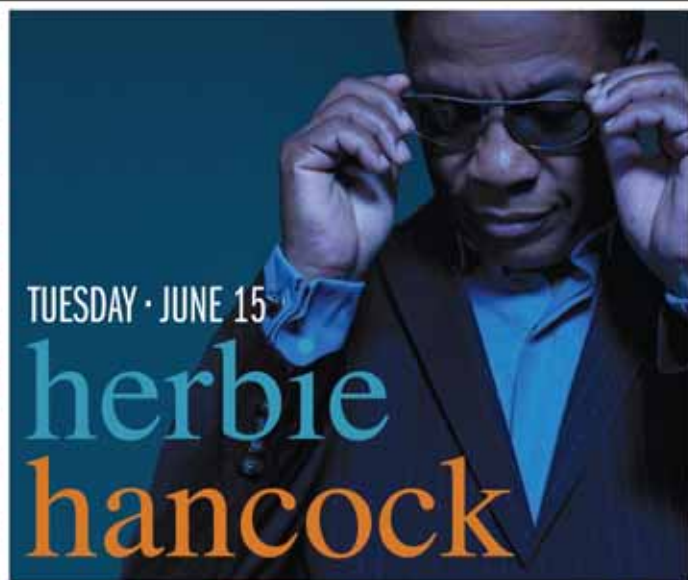
“Coastal Jazz was my introduction to the music,” Weeds said. “They put a lot of local musicians up in lights alongside the international players, and they set themselves apart because they didn’t just swoop in for 10 days—they’re extremely present in the community year ’round.”

Today, with a budget eight times larger than that allotted to the 1986 festival and a commitment of multi-year sponsorship by Canada’s TD Bank, Pickering and Orysik are looking at consolidating their strengths. Among their goals is a tighter focus on shows in Vancouver’s downtown area so audiences can walk between venues. With the media spotlight back on the city following the 2010 Winter Olympics, the time is ripe for another step in the festival’s evolution.

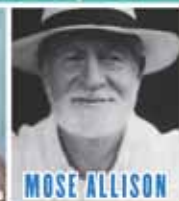
As Orysik put it: “We’re building on the boldness we’ve been known for.”

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# Europe

## International Jazz Festival Bern

Bern, Switzerland

**March 13–May 22**

This Swiss festival, now celebrating its 35th year, continues hosting jazz and blues artists on multiple nights with ticketed shows at such venues as Marian's Jazzroom and free events in the park of the Hotel Innere Enge.

**Lineup:** 35th Anniversary All-Star Jazz Band (Warren Vaché, Wendell Brunious, John Allred, Bill Allred, Bill Easley, Allan Vaché, Johnny Varro, Andy Cleyndert, Joe Ascione, Bob Wilber), Allen Toussaint, Marcia Ball, Chucho Valdes Quintet, Les McCann and Javon Jackson Band, Dick Hyman All-Stars, Dianne Reeves.

**More info:** [jazzfestivalbern.ch](http://jazzfestivalbern.ch)

## Jazzfestival Basel

Basel, Switzerland

**April 21–May 2**

At the annual festival from the jazz organization Offbeat, concerts take place in theaters and clubs throughout Basel. The programming focuses on many top European performers, but they also feature plenty of North American artists and others on the international scene.

**Lineup:** Richard Galliano & Sextet, Goran Bregovic & His Wedding & Funeral Orchestra, Jim Hall Trio featuring Joey Baron, John Scofield New Quartet, Rigmor Gustafsson & Radio String Quartet Vienna, Joshua Redman & Brad Mehldau.

**More info:** [jazzfestivalbasel.ch](http://jazzfestivalbasel.ch)

## Barclays Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Cheltenham, England

**April 28–May 3**

Held in association with BBC Radio 2, this festival has featured mainstream and cutting-edge jazz from around the world including young British talent. The Cheltenham Jazz Festival is located 100 miles west of London.

**Lineup:** John Scofield, Carla Bley & The Lost Chords with Paolo Fresu, Dave Holland & Pepe Habichuela, Jamie Cullum, Fly, Cuong Vu, Empirical & Polar Bear.

**More info:** [cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz](http://cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz)

## Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon

Ulrichsberg, Austria

**April 30–May 2**

This concise, adventurous festival in northern Austria, close to the Bohemian Forest, expertly programs a series of cutting-edge improvisation dominated by important groundbreakers in

Medeski Martin and Wood @ Ljubljana Jazz Festival



LJUBLJANA JAZZ FESTIVAL

European music, with a meaningful nod to some American vanguardists.

**Lineup:** Henry Threadgill Zooid, Lotte Anker/Gerald Cleaver/Craig Taborn, Johannes Bauer/Elisabeth Harnik/Clayton Thomas, Tobias Delius/Joe Williamson/Steve Heather, more.

**More info:** [jazzatelier.at](http://jazzatelier.at)

## International Oeiras Jazz Cycle

Oeiras, Portugal

**May 7–22**

Two weekends of jazz concerts in the town of Oeiras, beautiful gardens and palaces and a historical area with many restaurants. The town is by the Atlantic Ocean, 15 miles away from Lisbon. The concerts will take place at the Eunice Muñoz Auditorium

**Lineup:** Donny McCaslin, Don Byron, Edward Simon, Jamie Baum.

**More info:** [cm-oeiras.pt](http://cm-oeiras.pt)

## New Conversations—Vicenza Jazz

Vicenza, Italy

**May 7–15**

This energetic, sprawling festival, now in its 15th year, presents a heady mix of concerts in a variety of venues and clubs, including the Renaissance-era Teatro Olimpico, opened back in 1585—the oldest active indoor theater in the world. International and local artists make for a superb line-up, including night jam sessions.

**Lineup:** Brad Mehldau & Joshua Redman, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, McCoy Tyner Quartet, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jeff Ballard Trio, more.

**More info:** [vicenzajazz.org](http://vicenzajazz.org)

## Matosinhos Jazz

Matosinhos Portugal

**May 13–15**

In this fishing town close to Oporto, the new architecture and historical monuments create this festival's unique setting. This year has an emphasis on pianists. The festival will take place at Exponor Auditorium.

**Lineup:** Matosinhos Jazz Orchestra,

Bernardo Sasseti Trio, Dianne Reeves, more.

**More info:** [cm-matosinhos.pt](http://cm-matosinhos.pt)

## Moers Festival

Moers, Germany

**May 21–24**

Americans may know this festival primarily through the recordings it once released by some of the most progressive jazz and new music artists of the '70s and '80s—Fred Anderson, Rhys Chatham, Anthony Braxton—but the event that spawned all of them carries on with a dynamic mixture of artists.

**Lineup:** Terje Rypdal's Crime Scene with the Bergen Big Band, Steve Lehman Octet, Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet, Matana Roberts, Bill Frisell-Arve Henriksen, Arto Lindsay Band, more.

**More info:** [moers-festival.de](http://moers-festival.de)

## Stockholm Jazz Festival

Stockholm, Sweden

**June 10–12**

This year's concerts for the 27th Edition of the Stockholm Jazz Festival will be held at the Museum of Modern Art on the beautiful island Skeppsholmen, with additional concerts and jam sessions each night at Fasching, the most history-rich club in Sweden.

**Lineup:** Wayne Shorter, Steve Gadd, The Brand New Heavies, Gretchen Parlato, more.

**More info:** [stockholmjazz.com](http://stockholmjazz.com)

## Iford Festival 2010

Brandford on Avon, England

**June 11–12, August 14**

Three nights of jazz make up the Iford Festival. The first night features Clare Teal as well as Swinging the Classics. The second night, Midsummer Jazz, includes The Red Stripe Band and The Kremlinaires and the final night, labeled Another World, is held in August and features La Timbala.

**Lineup:** Clare Teal, Swinging the Classics with Tim Kluhuis, more.

**More info:** [ifordarts.co.uk](http://ifordarts.co.uk)



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### JazzAscona

Ascona, Switzerland

June 24–July 4

"New Standards" is the theme for this festival by Lake Maggiore. Around 250 artists will perform 200 concerts on 12 stages. Traditional jazz with an emphasis on New Orleans is the focus.

**Lineup:** Wycliffe Gordon, Herlin Riley, Jay Leonhart, Milano Jazz Gang, more.

**More info:** [jazzascona.ch](http://jazzascona.ch)

### Jazz À Vienne

Vienne, France

June 25–July 9

With 160,000 people attending the various concerts, Vienne is one of the major jazz events in Europe. The festival will celebrate its 30th anniversary this summer, mixing straight-ahead jazz with pop acts. The festival makes the most of its various stages, including the prestigious Roman theatre for the bigger names, the Midnight Club devoted to the rising stars.

**Lineup:** Roy Hargrove, David Sanborn, Diana Krall, Keith Jarrett, more.

**More info:** [jazzavienne.com](http://jazzavienne.com)

### Ljubljana Jazz Festival

Ljubljana, Slovenia

June 29–July 3

Jazz Festival Ljubljana is an expertly programmed, wide-spectrum festival. The venues range from club spaces to a covered amphitheater and are within walking distance. Check out the view from the hilltop castle.

**Lineup:** Joe Lovano and Big Band RTV Slovenia, Kip Hanrahan & Beautiful Scars, Mulatu Astatke & Heliocentrics, Moscow Art Trio, Samo Salamon Trio, more.

**More info:** [ljubljanajazz.si](http://ljubljanajazz.si)

### JazzBaltica

Salzau, Germany

June 30–July 4

This northern Germany event will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Longtime musical companions will perform in a variety of projects. The audience can also look forward to many new faces in the program. In 2010 there are two Artists in Residence: Nils Landgren and Michael Wollny.

**Lineup:** Hank Jones, Don Friedman, Joe Locke, Charles Lloyd, Dave Holland, Chris Potter, more.

**More info:** [jazzbaltica.de](http://jazzbaltica.de)

### Jazzfest Wien

Vienna, Austria

June 30–July 9

This splendid European capital plays host to nearly six dozen acts from around the globe in a variety of historically important venues and small clubs. This year features a big open-air

concert at Fernwärme, an architecturally dazzling, environmentally green heating plant.

**Lineup:** James Carter Quartet, Gerald Clayton Trio, Manu Katché, Portico, Melody Gardot, Wolfgang Muthspiel/Ralph Towner/Slava Gregorjyan, more.

**More info:** [viennajazz.org](http://viennajazz.org)

### Lakeside (Puisto) Blues Festival

Jarvenpaa, Finland

June 30–July 4

One of Europe's premier festivals, started in 1978, takes over this modest-sized city north of Helsinki for five days with dozens of musicians on "Blues Street," in four clubs and at a grand concert, July 3, in an attractive park setting alongside Lake Tuusula.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [puistoblues.com](http://puistoblues.com)

### Copenhagen Jazz Festival

Copenhagen, Denmark

July 2–11

Copenhagen always delivers with a sublime program of international A-list talent that never edges out its own Nordic jazz greats. This festival takes up the entire city; its friendliness and walkability make the event all the more attractive.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jazzfestival.dk](http://jazzfestival.dk)

### Estoril Jazz

Estoril, Portugal

July 2–11

Estoril Jazz takes place in the sea-coast town of Estoril near Lisbon. All the concerts will take place at the Casino Estoril.

**Lineup:** Renee Rosnes, Wallace Roney, Grace Kelly, Charles Lloyd, Esperanza Spalding, Dee Dee Bridgewater, more.

**More info:** [projazz.pt](http://projazz.pt)

### Montreux Jazz Festival

Montreux, Switzerland

July 2–17

Now in its 44th year, the Montreux Jazz Festival continues its music extravaganza in style with an array of ticketed concerts in large halls and daily free concerts along the lake and in hotels around the festival site. Not a pure jazz festival, but a well-balanced mix of jazz, blues and beyond.

**Lineup:** Mark Knopfler, Sophie Hunger, Mumford & Sons, more.

**More info:** [montreuxjazz.com](http://montreuxjazz.com)

### Kongsberg Jazz Festival

Kongsberg, Norway

July 7–10

Every summer this lovely old silver mining town—the inspiration for Sonny Rollins' classic "Silver City"—located 90 minutes from Oslo doubles in size for the four days of this eclectic festival. The varied lineup is always impressive,



but what sets Kongsberg apart is the focus on Scandinavia's best artists.

**Lineup:** Lonely Women with David Murray, Ketil Bjørnstad-Svante Henryson, McCoy Tyner Trio with Joe Lovano, Bill Frisell Trio, Jaga Jazzist, more.

**More info:** [kongsberg-jazzfestival.no](http://kongsberg-jazzfestival.no)

### Funchal Jazz Festival

*Funchal, Portugal*

**July 8-10**

While hit with devastating mudslides a few months ago, Funchal still intends to celebrate its 11th annual jazz festival.

**Lineup:** Al Di Meola, Esperanza Spalding, Kenny Barron, David Sanchez, Jane Duboc, Colina Serrano Project, Vozes 3.

**More info:** [funchaljazzfestival.com](http://funchaljazzfestival.com)

### Gent Jazz Festival

*Gent, Belgium*

**July 8-18**

This picturesque port and university town in Flemish Belgium hosts a major jazz festival, along with numerous examples of medieval architecture. It also presents its Django D'Or Award to outstanding musicians from around Europe.

**Lineup:** Vijay Iyer, Ornette Coleman, Norah Jones, Pat Metheny, Chick Corea and Roy Haynes, more.

**More info:** [gentjazz.com](http://gentjazz.com)

### North Sea Jazz Festival

*Rotterdam, The Netherlands*

**July 9-11**

This year the expansive North Sea Jazz Festival celebrates two anniversaries: its 35th year overall, and its fifth year at the Ahoy Complex in Rotterdam. Attendance estimates range from 60,000 to 70,000 people at this three-day bash that teems with 200-plus jazz, blues and pop acts on 15 stages. The majority of the shows are free for general admission.

**Lineup:** Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, Chick Corea Freedom Band, Sonny Rollins, Toumani Diabate and Bassekou Kouate, Concha Buika and Darcy James Argue's Secret Society.

**More info:** [northseajazz.com](http://northseajazz.com)

### Umbria Jazz Festival

*Perugia, Italy*

**July 9-18**

One of Europe's most grand and classy affairs, the Umbria Jazz Festival celebrates its 37th year complete with street parades, midnight concerts, headliner shows in the 5,000-capacity outdoor Arena Santa Giuliana and premiere jazz performed in the exquisite Morlacchi Theater opera house. Most of the shows are ticketed, but there's a wide variety of open-air free music throughout the day on three stages, including rousing performances at Piazza IV Novembre, which holds 10,000 people.

**Lineup:** Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny, Chick Corea Freedom Band (with Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride and Roy Haynes), Melody Gardot, Manhattan Transfer and Mark Knopfler's band.

**More info:** [umbriajazz.com](http://umbriajazz.com)

### Aarhus Jazz Festival

*Aarhus, Denmark*

**July 10-17**

While not as well known as the Copenhagen Jazz Festival, this Danish festival packs a wallop of talent, culled from the U.S., Cuba, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and Scandinavia.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jazzfest.dk](http://jazzfest.dk)

### Jazz Vitoria-Gasteiz

*Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain*

**July 10-17**

Set in an ancient city in the heart of Spain's Basque region, the festival keeps traditional Spanish time. Events begin with late-afternoon recitals in a gorgeous theatre, move to a local basketball arena for headline concerts and continue late into the night with well-organized jam sessions anchored by some of the New York City's best players.

**Lineup:** Freedom Band with Chick Corea, Roy Haynes, Kenny Garrett and Christian McBride, Paco de Lucía, Buddy Guy, more.

**More info:** [jazzvitoria.com](http://jazzvitoria.com)

### Festival Jazz À Sète

*Sète, France*

**July 12-17**

Set in the beautiful Theatre de la Mer that looks out on the sea, Jazz À Sète has been growing steadily for the past 14 years. They have also secured a place for the original spirit of the festival with artists in the Django Reinhardt tradition.

**Lineup:** George Benson, Melody Gardot, Angelo Debarre, Brand New Heavies, more.

**More info:** [jazzasete.com](http://jazzasete.com)

### Bohemia Jazzfest

*Various Cities, Czech Republic*

**July 13-17 & July 22-25**

The largest jazz festival in the Czech Republic offers a series of free outdoor jazz concerts on beautiful town squares in the cities of Domazlice, Plzen, Tabor, Brno, Prachatice, Ceske Budejovice and the stunning baroque capital of Prague. Run by Rudy Linka, the Prague-born, internationally acclaimed jazz guitarist, Bohemia Jazzfest has succeeded in presenting a dynamic mix of top European and North American artists since its inception in 2005.

**Lineup:** Yellowjackets, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Stanley Clarke Group, Bela Fleck/Zakir Hussain/Edgar Maier Trio, more TBA.

**More info:** [bohemiajazzfest.com](http://bohemiajazzfest.com)



TD

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photo: Peter Juranka

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## Jazz À Juan

Antibes-Juan Les Pins, France

July 14–25

To celebrate its 50th birthday anniversary, Jazz À Juan is conducting a series of events from April to August that feature lectures, parades and exhibitions. The Gould Theatre, which is right by the sea, has always hosted prestigious bills.

**Lineup:** Keith Jarrett, Marcus Miller, David Sanborn, more.

**More info:** [antibesjuanlespins.com](http://antibesjuanlespins.com)

## MoldeJazz

Molde, Norway

July 19–24

This Norwegian seaside town hosts one of Europe's most innovative festivals and this year marks its golden jubilee. Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer is this year's artist-in-residence, and the rest of the schedule mixes Americans with European innovators in jazz, experimental music and a touch of pop.

**Lineup:** Sonny Rollins, Peter Brötzmann, Jeff Beck, Herbie Hancock, Fly, Bobby McFerrin, Sidsel Endresen, Farmers Market, Irene Schweizer, more.

**More info:** [moldejazz.no](http://moldejazz.no)

## Heineken Jazzaldia

San Sebastian, Spain

July 21–25

Spotlighting straightahead and modern jazz in a scenic and culinary paradise, the 45th edition of this event brings together a diverse program of global artists. Many free shows are held on a terrace beside a beach, which accommodates more than 10,000 people.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's performers included

Roy Haynes,  
Esperanza Spalding,  
Hank Jones.

**More info:** [jazzaldia.com](http://jazzaldia.com)

## Siena Jazz

Siena, Italy

July 24–August 7

Jazz students attend the educational workshop components of this fest while its concerts are open to the public. Master classes and jam sessions mix Italian artists and students with international players.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's performers included Miguel Zenón, Eddie Henderson and George Garzone.

**More info:** [sienajazz.it](http://sienajazz.it)

## Pori Jazz Festival

Pori, Finland

July 17–25

One of the oldest jazz events in Scandinavia, the Pori Jazz Festival continues to bring world-class jazz talent while also expanding the musical scope to include hip-hop, soul, funk, Cuban and Brazilian music, not to mention its home-grown European talent.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [porijazz.fi](http://porijazz.fi)

## Jazz In Marciac

Marciac, France

July 30–August 15

As one of the main European festivals, Marciac has always offered high-profile bills for the general public and has represented a wide spec-

trum of the contemporary jazz scene. The music outside the main venue during the day is plentiful and by no means a lesser program than the evening concerts. The village of Marciac and the surrounding countryside in the southwest of France is also of particular interest in itself as a place for summer holiday.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jazzinmarciac.com](http://jazzinmarciac.com)

## Jazz Em Agosto

Lisbon, Portugal

August 6–8 & August 13–15

Occurring over two consecutive weekends, this is one of Europe's most thoughtfully curated festivals. Concerts, films and discussions feature some of the leading lights in European and American improvised music, with influential veterans sharing the stage with edgy newcomers. Concerts take place at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, a modern art center.

**Lineup:** John Surman-Jack DeJohnette, Evan Parker Electro-Acoustic Ensemble, Circulacione Totale Orchestra, more.

**More info:** [musica/gulbenkian.pt/jazz](http://musica/gulbenkian.pt/jazz)

## Gouvy Jazz & Blues Festival

Gouvy, Belgium

August 8

"Gouvy is Groovy" is again the rallying cry for Claude Lentz's friendly outdoor show at Madelonne Farm, close to the Luxembourg border. The host family brews its own festival beer. Top talent is imported from the United States and Great Britain.

**Lineup:** Shawn Pittman, Eugene Hideaway Bridges Blues Band, Stan Webb's Chicken Shack, others TBA.

**More info:** [gouvy.eu/jazz&blues](http://gouvy.eu/jazz&blues)

## Nisville Jazz Festival

Nis, Serbia

August 12–15

This long-running, truly international festival will feature artists from 35 countries. The nucleus of the party is the grounds of a



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Cheltenham Jazz Festival

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**Lineup:** Roy Hargrove, Kenny Werner, Manu Dibango, Solomon Burke, Slivovitz, more.

**More info:** [nisville.com](http://nisville.com)

### At the Borders of Sardinia and Jazz

*Sant'Anna Arresi, Italy*  
**August 24–30**

This Italian festival, on the island of Sardinia, is a trusted, forward-thinking showcase of both adventurous jazz explorers and more straightahead masters.

**Lineup:** Sunny Murray, Charles Gayle, Henry Grimes, Alan Silva, Radu Ben Juda, David Pleasant, Geg Montgomery, Nick Gianni, Mikel Prester, William Parker, Evan Parker, more.

**More info:** [santannaresijazz.it](http://santannaresijazz.it)

### Jazz Festival Willisau

*Willisau, Switzerland*  
**August 25–29**

A mix of straightahead, avant-garde and African music is usually presented at this festival in a medieval Swiss town. Visitors can spend the weekend camping at the festival.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jazzwillisau.ch](http://jazzwillisau.ch)

### Ischia Piano and Jazz Festival

*Lacco Ameno, Ischia Island, Italy*  
**August 25–28**

In its debut year, the Ischia Piano & Jazz Festival features marquee star Chick Corea performing unique shows—playing solo, duo with Stefano Bollani and in a trio setting with Miroslav Vitous and Roy Haynes. At the Hotel Regina Isabella, Allan Harris kicks off the opening gala and then settles in each evening.

**Lineup:** Chick Corea, more.

**More info:** [pianojazz.it](http://pianojazz.it)

### International Jazz Festival Saalfelden

*Saalfelden, Austria*  
**August 26–29**

This ambitious festival occurs every August in this small city in the state of Salzburg, in the Alps. Last year's event marked the forward-looking festival's 30th anniversary.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year included Ornette Coleman, ROVA, Vijay Iyer.

**More info:** [jazzsaalfelden.com](http://jazzsaalfelden.com)

### Roma Jazz's Cool Festival

*Rome, Italy*  
**August 30–September 5**

This festival, which is associated with an international jazz workshop, features musicians teaching classes during the day and performing

at night. Expect collaborations among Italian and other international jazz artists.

**Lineup:** Roberta Gambarini, Clarence Penn, Jonathan Kreisberg, Aaron Goldberg, more.

**More info:** [jazzscool.it](http://jazzscool.it)

### Akbank Jazz Festival

*Istanbul, Turkey*  
**September 23–October 3**

Turkey's most progressive festival, now celebrating its 20th anniversary, features formal concerts at the Cemal Resit Ray theater and more cutting-edge fare at the Babylon nightclub and other intimate spots.

**Lineup:** John Surman, Miroslav Vitous, Nils Petter Molvaer, Ahmad Jamal, more.

**More info:** [akbankcaz.com](http://akbankcaz.com)

### Voll-Damm Barcelona

*Barcelona, Spain*  
**October 17–November 27**

Try to revel in this fest's two-month entirety, since in addition to the shows you'll want to explore every alley and museum in the city. Throughout the course of the marathon jazz party there will be 50 concerts. This year Barcelona will present its honored third gold medal award to Sonny Rollins on Nov. 3 at the Auditori de Barcelona.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [barcelonajazzfestival.com](http://barcelonajazzfestival.com)

### Salzburger Jazz-Herbst

*Salzburg, Austria*  
**October 28–November 7**

With more than 50,000 visitors attending more than 100 events, Salzburger Jazz-Herbst has been expanding since its inception in 1996. Performances take place in elegant concert halls as well as in clubs and outdoor venues.

**Lineup:** Terence Blanchard Quintet, Brad Mehldau, Jane Monheit, Ron Carter, Roy Hargrove, Dianne Reeves.

**More info:** [salzburgerjazzherbst.at](http://salzburgerjazzherbst.at)

### JazzFest Berlin

*Berlin, Germany*  
**November 4–7**

Germany's most prestigious jazz festival typically makes room for important international figures as well as local up-and-comers.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [jazzfest-berlin.de](http://jazzfest-berlin.de)

### London Jazz Festival

*London, England*  
**November 12–21**

Jazz in the London metropolis gets even bigger during this festival, which is held across the city in large venues (such as the Barbican) and venerable clubs like Ronnie Scott's.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [londonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://londonjazzfestival.org.uk)

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[hydeparkjazzfestival.org](http://hydeparkjazzfestival.org)

## Other International

### Melbourne International Jazz Festival

Melbourne, Australia

May 1-8

This year's edition is built around several "program streams" like Modern Masters, which includes Charles Lloyd with both his new quartet and Sangam, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Metropolis Series, which explores connections between improvisation and symphonic music, and Underground: A Festival Within a Festival, featuring Han Bennink, Peter Brötzmann and a strong contingent of Australian improvisers like pianist Anthony Pateras and trumpeter Scott Tinkler.

**Lineup:** John Abercrombie, Mutatu Astatke, The Claudia Quintet, Nels Cline, Ahmad Jamal, Jason Moran, Mike Nock, more.

**More info:** [melbournejazz.com](http://melbournejazz.com)

### Rio Das Ostras Jazz and Blues Festival

Rio Das Ostras, Brazil

June 2-6

This outdoor and indoor festival held on the stunning beach in Rio de Janeiro state offers hours of music on various stages. The numerous bars and restaurants involved offer a harvest of Brazil's cuisine and cocktails.

**Lineup:** TBA.

**More info:** [riodasostrasjazzblues.com](http://riodasostrasjazzblues.com)

### Red Sea Jazz Festival

Eilat Harbor, Israel

August 23-26

The festival provides something of a biblical setting for jazz. The bookings at the 4,000-seat Arena afford a view of the Red Sea. Under the direction of bassist Avishai Cohen, Israel's best-known jazzman, the four-day festival presents no less than nine acts each night, covering a wide spectrum of music. The bookings of leading guitarists such as John Scofield, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Lionel Loueke could set the tone for this year's edition.

**Lineup:** John Scofield, Dafnis Prieto, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Paquito D'Rivera, Lionel Loueke, Jean-Michel Pilc, more.

**More info:** [redseajazzeilat.com](http://redseajazzeilat.com)

### Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival

Piscadera Bay, Curaçao

September 3-4

This is the introductory year for Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival, which will feature a Caribbean flair fitting for this island in the Lesser Antilles.

**Lineup:** John Legend, Sergio Mendes, Michel Camilo Trio, George Benson, La India and Lui Enrique.

**More info:** [curacaonorthseajazz.com](http://curacaonorthseajazz.com)

### Tudo É Jazz

Ouro Preto, Brazil

September 15-19

Located about 275 miles north of Rio, this festival is a world-class event. The main indoor venue for paid concerts seats less than 1,000, and free performances are staged in a nearby churchyard.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year included Brad Mehldau, Avishai Cohen, Leonardo Ciaglia.

**More info:** [tudoiejazz.com.br](http://tudoiejazz.com.br)

### International Jazzuv Festival

Xalapa, Mexico

November 9-14

This is the third year of an this festival in Veracruz, which is connected with the local university (Universidad Veracruzana). The interaction among artists, students and audiences includes concerts, master classes, jam sessions and conferences. The Gulf of Mexico beach is one hour away.

**Lineup:** McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette, Mulgrew Miller, Ray Drummond, Lewis Nash, John Ramsay, Jason Palmer, Francisco Mela, more.

Listings compiled by: Fred Bouchard, Aaron Cohen, Jenny Domine, Ed Enright, John Ephland, Eric Fine, Frank-John Hadley, James Hale, Michael Jackson, Katie Kailus, Yoshi Kato, Peter Margasak, John Murphy, Dan Ouellette, Antônio Rubio, Bill Shoemaker and Jean Szlamowicz.



# WIN A TRIP FOR 2 TO MONTREAL!

Here's your chance to win a trip for 2 for a weekend at the Festival, which takes place from June 25<sup>th</sup> to July 6<sup>th</sup>. Some of the artists scheduled to appear include: David Sanborn and Joey DeFrancesco, Harry Manx, Taj Mahal, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, John Scofield, George Benson, Laurie Anderson, Lou Reed, John Zorn and many more.

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Official rules: to enter, print name, address and daytime telephone number on entry form. This entry form may be photocopied. The Montreal Jazz Getaway contest drawing will take place May 31, 2010. The prize is non-transferable. If winner is unable to accept prize, it will be given to the next name drawn. No substitution or changes are possible. This offer is void where prohibited by law and is subject to all applicable federal, state and local regulations. Taxes are the responsibility of the winner. The rules and conditions of The Montreal Jazz Getaway contest may be changed without prior notice.



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### P. Mauriat PMT-700: Well-Balanced Trumpet

The P. Mauriat PMT-700 B-flat professional trumpet balances its lightweight bell with a heavy-weight mid-section. The light finger buttons, recessed valve caps and heavyweight bottom caps not only add to the distinctive look of the horn but simply feel great to the touch. The horn features a free-blowing 11.68 mm medium-large bore, a 122 mm yellow brass bell and stainless steel, hand-lapped valves.

I tried both the lacquered matte and silver plated models. Both horns feel very light and balanced in your hands, and both slotted well and responded evenly throughout all registers. I was particularly struck by how live the lacquered matte horn felt. It was incredibly responsive, requiring very little effort to produce a warm, full sound. After playing only a few notes, I was drawn to toss on a Jamey Aebersold play-along to see how soloing on the horn would feel. It didn't disappoint. The horn simply requires less work—once I backed off on the pressure and effort, it really began to sing for me.

Jazz and lead trumpet player Pete Olstad, who endorses the 700G model, says he has found the one horn that he needs for all his work. "I was impressed by how well in tune the horn played and the ease

and stability of the upper register," he said.

"P. Mauriat didn't want to produce a copy of something already out there," said Dan Greenberg of MonteVerde Music, the North American distributor for P. Mauriat instruments. "They wanted to produce a new horn, but something well constructed with high-quality brass that they could still sell at a competitive price point."

If the company was looking to produce a solid, distinct horn, they've reached their goal.

—Mike Pavlik

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



### Zildjian K Rides: High-Definition Sticking

Zildjian has made three outstanding new additions to its K and K Constantinople lines with the 22-inch Bounce Ride, the 22-inch Thin Ride/Over Hammered Ride and the 20-inch K Light Flat Ride.

The 22-inch K Constantinople Bounce Ride was designed in conjunction with jazz drummer Kenny Washington. It features wide lathing, a relatively thin weight (2,400 grams on my review cymbal) and a wider, lower-profile bell. The Bounce Ride features eight different "over hammered" areas, giving the cymbals' sound a little more trashiness.

The K Constantinople Bounce Ride is one of the most outstanding jazz rides Zildjian has produced in more than 30 years. If you prefer the sound of the Turkish-made Zildjian K's from the 1940s–1960s (as most jazz drummers do), this cymbal comes really close. In a live situation the cymbal performed beautifully, providing great stick definition at all dynamic ranges coupled with a shimmering, dark wash underneath. The cymbal can explode when accented or shoulder crashed but quickly gets out of the way. The bell is sonically well integrated with the cymbal and has a darker sound. Mallet rolls on the cymbal draw out beautifully dark and complex colors.

The 22-inch K Constantinople Thin Ride/Over Hammered weighs a mere 2,250 grams (on my review cymbal), but has outstanding stick definition for being so thin. The cymbal has little flex to it and has a high bow, giving it a higher pitch with less wash and overtones. The



top surface of the cymbal features several small-peen "over hammering" areas to give the cymbal a drier sound.

In a live situation, this cymbal really shines on up-tempo stick patterns and faster straight-eighth patterns. There is a controlled, underlying wash that is present but never gets in the way. The overall sound of the cymbal is drier, but the thin weight makes shoulder crashing possible. The bell is excellent and blends well with the overall sound of the cymbal.

The 20-inch K Light Flat Ride has a beautiful combination of stick definition coupled with a wispy, breathy bed of wash underneath. It weighs in at an ultra-thin 1,785 grams (on my test cymbal). The top surface features very large hammering and tight pin-style lathing. This is not a particularly loud cymbal, but in a trio or quartet setting it really works well. From playing a straight-eighth feel to playing delicately behind a bass solo, it does it all and has a wide range of sounds available, which is rare in a flat ride.

Zildjian has three fantastic new offerings with these cymbals. While these sonically complex and thin cymbals are obviously targeted more toward jazz players, they would work well in a variety of other low- to medium-volume musical situations.

—Ryan Bennett

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



## Metal Mouthpieces From Remle: *The Bright Side Of Saxophonics*

Jazz saxophonists looking for a more contemporary pop sound can turn to a couple of different metal mouthpiece lines from Remle Musical Products for some serious tone-enhancing options.

The Beechler Bellite mouthpiece is cast from hard stainless steel that provides a quickened response time and brings out the brilliance of naturally produced overtones. The alto and tenor models have a medium-high baffle and an open chamber, which supports a bright, contemporary sound that's especially useful when playing in bands with electric instruments or recording with MIDI tracks. The Bellite baritone and soprano models feature an open baffle and open chamber, allowing for more rounded, yet still edgy, tonal production.

Remle's ARB metal sax mouthpiece has a high baffle and a step-off chamber (on alto, tenor and bari) to allow for a deep, versatile tone that transitions well from extreme brightness to a dark, mellow timbre that approaches woodiness. (The ARB soprano has a medium open chamber and medium baffle, making it a little easier to control.) Modeled after the old Level-Air mouthpieces designed by Arnold Brilhart, the ARB metal features a machined facing that combines geometric curves and parabolas for consistent response throughout the entire range of the sax.

I play-tested the Beechler Bellite tenor model in two different sizes (B82-6 and B82-7), filling the room with a pretty sound that required no pushing; when I applied a little muscle, the Bellite responded with enough grit to significantly sharpen the tonal edge. My low end sounded noticeably fatter and freer-blowing on the size #7, and the upper register felt a little more resistant on the #6.

On bari, I tried an ARB metal (A83-6) and was immediately impressed by the enhanced power and enormous sound it allowed me to produce up and down the horn. It played just like a Brilhart Level-Air, only brighter, with a focused tone that projected like a rocket.

The tenor ARB Custom metal (C13-6)—which has slightly more sophisticated internal contours than the regular ARB metal—was my



favorite of the tenor mouthpieces from Remle. It blew openly in all registers and had the best intonation of all the models I tried, plus a slightly darker, more sophisticated tone. Like the Bellite, the ARB metal sounded great on ballads, responding sweetly with a minimum of effort and wind support.

Remle's metal sax mouthpieces have a streamlined exterior design and are great for players with smaller mouths. They also fit tightly on the neck-cork compared to other mouthpiece lines. If you ever want to take a walk on the bright side of playing sax, check 'em out. They are also reasonably priced, as most models reviewed here list in the \$300-\$400 range.

—Ed Enright

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

## Kurzweil PC3LE Series: *High-Performance Keyboard Controllers*

Kurzweil has introduced the PC3LE6, PC3LE7 and PC3LE8 performance controller keyboards. The keyboards feature Kurzweil's PC3 with a new streamlined, intelligent user interface. The 61-, 76- and 88-note professional keyboards provide natural, semi-weighted actions with velocity- and after-touch-sensitive keys.

The user interfaces of the PC3LE6, PC3LE7 and PC3LE8 are designed for a quick learning curve and ease of use. Move any knob, button or wheel and the LE will display the name, value and parameter being controlled. All changes are tracked in real time, including changes to effects chains.

Keyboard setup is fast and flexible. Setup mode enables the PC3 LEs to act as MIDI controllers, with 16 independent, fully programmable arpeggiators that can be mapped to 16 zones and 16 simultaneous riffs.



The PC3LE series offers 64 voices of polyphony, all the DSP power of the PC3 and up to 10 available insert effects. String sections, vintage keys, virtual analog, B3 organs and pianos—as well as drums, basses, guitars, voices and horns—are all well represented in a sound set that numbers more than 1,050.

—Ed Enright

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

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## Toolshed

### 1 New Strength

Bari Woodwind Supplies has added two new strengths, medium hard (3.5–4) and medium soft (2.5–3), to its synthetic composite reed lines. The reeds play immediately and provide saxophone and clarinet players with consistent response. They don't warp or squeak, regardless of environment. MSRP: original, \$14.18; Star, \$21.

More info: [cavanaughcompany.com](http://cavanaughcompany.com)

### 2 Shaker On A Stick

Rhythm Tech has teamed up with NYC session player and educator Billy Ward to develop the Stickball, a percussive shaker effect that easily slips on and off any drum stick. With a list price of \$19.95, the Stickball offers a classic dry shaker sound that minimizes the weight/feel changes of putting a shaker on a drumstick. It holds securely without the use of a wing nut or other tightening mechanism.

More info: [rhythmttech.com](http://rhythmttech.com)

### 3 Signature Tenor Reeds

Légère has introduced Signature Series synthetic reeds for tenor saxophone. The reeds are made using the same technology as the company's Signature Series clarinet reeds, which are used by Barnaby Robson (principal clarinet of the Philharmonia in London), Larry Combs (former principal of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and John Moses (a leading session and pit pro in New York). Like all Légère reeds, the Signature Series for tenor are available in 1/4 strengths.

More info: [legere.com](http://legere.com)

### 4 Blue Note Sax Straps

Rico has developed a line of saxophone straps featuring Blue Note Records session photography and time-honored artwork from the catalog's classic album covers. Straps include the True Blue (from the 1960 album featuring saxophonist Tina Brooks), Afro-Cuban (the 1955 recording by trumpeter Kenny Dorham that featured the Jazz Messengers ensemble, including Hank Mobley on tenor sax and Cecil

Payne on baritone sax) and Black Fire (the 1963 Blue Note debut from pianist Andrew Hill featuring Joe Henderson on tenor sax). Each strap features Rico's curved hook and easy slide adjuster. Straps are available in two lengths, one for soprano/alto and one for tenor/bari. MSRP: \$35.

More info: [ricoreeds.com](http://ricoreeds.com)

### Remote Jamming (not pictured)

Jamming over the Internet in sync—with undetectable latency and uncompressed, CD-quality audio—is now a reality with the introduction of the jamLink. The jamLink is an Internet audio device that enables musicians to play together and collaborate in real time from multiple locations as far away as 500





## GEAR BOX



4

miles. Beyond that distance, jamLink users can still write songs together, produce remote sessions and give lessons in high-quality audio. All you need is your instrument and a high-speed broadband connection.

The jamLink works with guitars, keyboards, drums and vocals—any instrument or mic that has a 1/4-inch instrument output. Musicians, singers and songwriters are now able to collaborate without sacrificing audio quality or accounting for latency. Controlled easily by popular Web browsers, no additional software or audio hardware is required. The jamLink requires upstream bandwidth of 1Mbps (or 1,000 kbps) and downstream bandwidth of 2Mbps (or 2,000 kbps).

More info: [musicianlink.com](http://musicianlink.com)

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## Methods For Fighting The Epidemic Of Tune Illiteracy

For the past 20-plus years, I've had the honor of teaching in a wide variety of didactic situations, from jazz camps and performing arts high schools to universities and prestigious jazz institutes. If you were to approach each of the incredible jazz masters and pedagogues I've taught alongside and ask them, "What's the best way to learn how to play jazz?" you're sure to get many, many different answers: go to school, don't go to school, go to New York, go to New Orleans, transcription books are a great tool, using transcription books is cheating, look at your band-mates, close your eyes, and the contradictions go on and on.



However, while professional jazz musicians might disagree on just about everything else, I've found there are two areas in which just about everyone is in accord, and vehemently so. Whether their specialty is traditional, bebop, contemporary, or anything in between, it's been my experience that most great jazz players advocate that in order to play this music you must 1) listen to it constantly, and 2) memorize a whole lot of tunes—at least a couple hundred. Since virtually everyone's favorite players agree that these two activities are vital to becoming a jazz musician, it never ceases to amaze me that so many students have to run to a fakebook to play "What Is This Thing Called Love" or even "Billie's Bounce"! Tune illiteracy among young up-and-coming jazz players is far too rampant.

To help fight this malady, I've put together a systematic method for memorizing and, equally important, retaining the essential standard jazz repertoire (there's nothing worse than finding yourself on a gig and having a tune called that you "used to know"). Also equally if not more important is thoroughly listening to the definitive recordings; that is, learning the intros, rhythmic hits, harmony parts, backgrounds, endings and whatever else those in the know, know. And, of course, transcribing at least a phrase or two from your favorite solo on each tune provides you with additional vocabulary and insight, not to mention credibility when you quote it, indicating to your peers that you, too, are in the know.

Following is a list of nine sequential steps for learning any tune:

- 1) Listen to the definitive recording numerous times.
- 2) Memorize the form.

Common forms include:

- 12-bar blues (e.g., "Tenor Madness," "Now's The Time," "Mr. PC," "Footprints," "Blues For Alice")
- 16-bar tune (e.g., "Watermelon Man," "Cantaloupe Island," "Blue Bossa," "Summertime," "Doxy")
- AABA (e.g., "I Got Rhythm," "Impressions," "Maiden Voyage," "Satin Doll," "Body And Soul")
- ABAC (e.g., "All Of Me," "All Of You," "On Green Dolphin Street")

Uncommon forms include:

- AAB (e.g., "Song For My Father")
- AABC (e.g., "Autumn Leaves")

Be on the lookout for tunes with other odd forms, for example:

- "Alone Together": AABA' (14-bar first A, 14-bar second A,

8-bar bridge and 8-bar last A)

- "Moment's Notice": ABAB'V (8-bar first A, 8-bar first B, 8-bar second A, 6-bar second B, 8-bar vamp with B-flat pedal)
- "Peace": 10-bar tune
- "Stablemates": ABA (14-bar first A, 8-bar bridge, 14-bar last A)
- "Yes Or No": AABA (14-bar A sections with a 16-bar bridge)

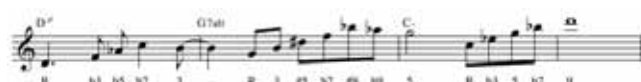
3) Memorize the root movement; play roots with definitive or play-along recording.

4) Memorize the chord qualities; play chords (arpeggios in quarter notes) with play-along recording as follows:

- 1-3-5-7-9 for chords lasting two bars (have the 9th sustain for the second bar)
- 1-3-5-7 for chords lasting one bar
- 1-3 for chords lasting two beats
- For II-V-I progressions in major, play:



- For II-V-I progressions in minor, play:



Also practice having the final 7th in the penultimate measure resolve to the 6th (instead of the 9th) in the last measure.

- 5) Play related scales in eighth notes (if the chord lasts for two bars, have the 9th sustain for the second bar; for chords lasting two beats, just play 1-2-3-4).
- 6) Memorize the head; play with definitive and play-along recordings while thinking of the changes.
- 7) Improvise with play-along recording.
- 8) Transcribe phrases from definitive recording.
- 9) Improvise with play-along recording, incorporating phrases transcribed from the definitive recording.

By executing these basic steps, you will not only thoroughly know the root movement, chord qualities and head of each new tune you learn, you will have internalized their definitive recordings, one of the most important aspects of becoming a good jazz player. And, through this process, you will also learn how chords progress, understand substitutions, have hundreds of quotable phrases for improvisation, develop your ear and time feel, have credibility and be employable.

The list of "must-know" tunes can be found in the book *Pocket Changes* along with their most common chord progressions. I also recommend David Baker's book *How to Learn Tunes* (both available through jazzbooks.com). Please stay tuned for my methodic procedure for memorizing, reviewing and retaining all the tunes on the list in part 2 of this article in an upcoming issue. **DB**

Dr. J.B. Dias currently serves as Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development for the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.



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Dexter Gordon



## Dexter Gordon's Rubato Tenor Saxophone Solo On Live Version Of "Round Midnight"

The amount of rhythmic virtuosity tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon exhibits on his "Round Midnight" solo from 1976's live album *Homecoming* is nothing short of sublime. The manner with which he plays with rhythmic elements, creating a sense of elastic time against the rhythm section's steady pulse, is a study in creative soloing.

First: his expertise with subdivisions. Gordon switches between duple and triple feels with ease, sometimes back and forth in the same measure. Measure 11, where he places a triplet in the middle of two groups of 16ths, is an especially good example of his mastery of these elements. Another example is measure 23, with Gordon playing a beat of triplets, two beats of 16ths and then another beat of triplets.

Also check out the variety of different subdivisions he uses. Besides the standard eighths, triplets and 16ths, we see sextuplets and 16th-note triplets (1, 4, 5, 9, 13, 21, 24, 33), 16ths inserted into eighth-note triplets (2, 13, 16, 18, 31), 32nds (15, 20, 26, 32), as well as some more esoteric rhythms such as in the last beat of the very first measure, where Gordon inserts a triplet within a triplet. In measure 4, a quintuplet is placed between the duple and sextuplet rhythms, creating a sense of speeding up.

There are other examples of Gordon creating this illusion of tempo change by varying his rhythms. In measures 6 and 7 he starts with 16ths, slows down to triplets and ends the phrase with 16ths again. In measure 23 Gordon does the opposite, starting with triplets, speeding up into 16ths and then back to triplets.

Another poignant example is the last lick he plays starting in measure 33, where from off-beat 16ths he builds the energy with a sextuplet, and then ends with an eighth note, giving it its full value, before the final held note.

Gordon also plays with his relation to the pulse, sometimes playing on or ahead of the beat, but mostly playing behind it. Some great examples are in measure 6 where he phrases on top of the beat, and over the bar line from bars 8-9, where Gordon plays way behind. There's also measure 14 where Gordon starts out on top, but by the first note of measure 15 he is far behind the beat. You'll notice throughout his solo there is this push and pull against the pulse of the rhythm section.

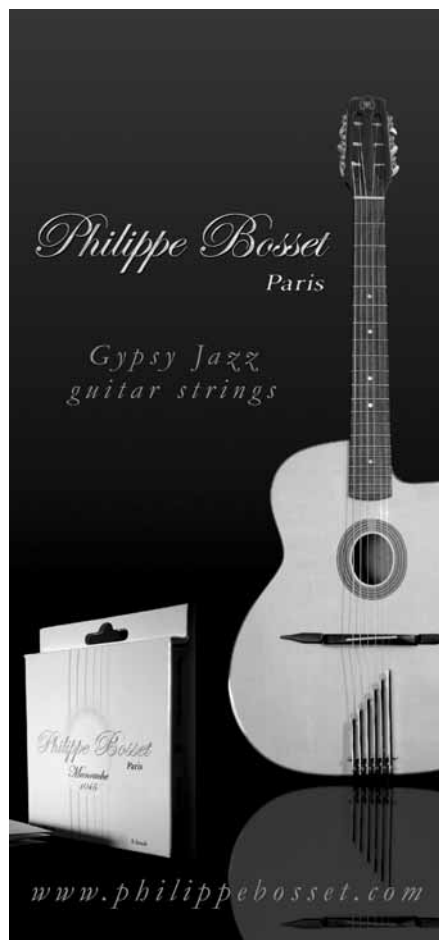
Two more techniques used effectively are varying his phrase length and phrasing over the bar line. We see a variety of phrase lengths, from as short as half a measure (13) to as long as three measures (8-10) and varying lengths in between. His phrases also end at different points. Though there is a tendency to phrase over the bar line, as done over measures 3-4, 6-7, 8-9, 23-24, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33 and 33-34, one of his phrases (11-12) ends squarely on the downbeat, and a few anticipate the downbeat (4-5, 5-6, 26-27 and 27-28). Coupling this with his deft use of subdivisions and relation to pulse makes for a gripping and evocative solo.

**DB**

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist in the New York area. He can be reached at [jimidurso.com](http://jimidurso.com).

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2:15

4

7

11

15

20

24

27

31

Chords: Ebmaj7, Eb-, Eb-/D, Eb-/Db, C-7(b5), Ab-7, Db7, Eb-7, F7, B-7, E7, Bb-7, Eb7, Ab-7, Db7, Gbmaj7, G7, Ab7, C-7(b5), F7, Bb7, Eb-, Eb-/D, Eb-/Db, C-7(b5), Ab-7, Db7, Eb-7, F7, B-7, E7, Bb-7, Eb7, Ab-7, Db7, Gbmaj7, G7, Ab7, C-7(b5), B-7, E7, Ebmaj7, C-7(b5), F7, Bb7(b5), C-7(b5), F7, Bb7(b5), Ab-7, F-7(b5), Bb7, Eb-7, C-7(b5), F7, Bb-7, Eb7, Ab-7, Db7, Eb-7, F7, B-7, E7, Bb-7, Eb7, Ab-7, Db7, Gbmaj7, G7, Ab7, C-7(b5), B7(b5), Bb7, Ebmaj7, Eb-Eb-/DEb-/Db

2:15

4

7

11

15

20

24

27

31

Chords: Ebmaj7, Eb-, Eb-/D, Eb-/Db, C-7(b5), Ab-7, Db7, Eb-7, F7, B-7, E7, Bb-7, Eb7, Ab-7, Db7, Gbmaj7, G7, Ab7, C-7(b5), F7, Bb7, Eb-, Eb-/D, Eb-/Db, C-7(b5), Ab-7, Db7, Eb-7, F7, B-7, E7, Bb-7, Eb7, Ab-7, Db7, Gbmaj7, G7, Ab7, C-7(b5), B7(b5), Bb7, Ebmaj7, Eb-Eb-/DEb-/Db



## New International Jazz Education Group Starts From Scratch in Midwest

In the three years since the International Association of Jazz Educators imploded, musicians, students and schools have wondered what will replace it. A small group in the Midwest is trying to fill that gap with its first conference this May.

The Jazz Education Network (JEN) will run its first annual conference May 20–22 at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL). Like the predecessor organization, JEN has as its mission statement to “build the jazz arts community by advancing education, promoting performance and developing new audiences.” A number of prominent musicians and educators have already signed on to take part, including John and Gerald Clayton, Victor Goines, Rufus Reid, Terrell Stafford, Ruben Alvarez and Bobby Shew. Performances will take place at UMSL’s Touhill Performing Arts Center. Information about the conference is available on the organization’s Web site, [jazzednet.org](http://jazzednet.org).

At a board meeting in Columbus, Ohio, last August, the fledgling group had initially planned on a 2011 launch.

“We were about planning long-term, postponing until next year, when [bassist and UMSL jazz studies director] Jim Widner jumped up and put in a call to his chancellor at UMSL, who came up with this date,” said board director Mary Jo Papich.

Papich, who had been president-elect of IAJE but resigned when many officers were held up to scrutiny, has regrouped and insists that the new organization will avoid its predecessors’ missteps.

“We want to build a new group with more transparency and openness, to regain the credibility and respect of musicians and educators worldwide,” said Papich, who serves as fine arts chair at Niles School District 219, which is outside Chicago. “We’re founded in the spirit of collaboration, creativity and commitment. Our

JEN board of directors has educators, businessmen, professional musicians, producers, industry vets. Since we have no staff, it’s a working board—committed to the core. They pay their own costs to attend meetings and conferences.”

Stafford, a board member, added, “It’s important that we maintain a forum to share ideas and concepts, for students to observe each other, and for all of us to recharge our batteries.”

Stafford will be on a panel for students to perform for college auditions and will perform with John Clayton’s group. He drily observed, “With all those hungry and healthy players out there, sparks can fly.”

Groups from at least 10 states will attend, including the Milton Academy (Mass.) student all-stars under Bob Sinicrope’s direction.

“JEN offers me a chance to network, learn and share ideas with others who care about jazz and jazz education,” Sinicrope said. “I’m very excited that JEN’s first conference has a first-rate lineup of clinics and performers. I look forward to hearing about new concepts in teaching and being inspired by top-notch performances.”

Along with the conference, JEN intends to launch inclusive Web sites, along with other new initiatives. One is the “JENerosity Project,” designed to donate used instruments to needy schools in New Orleans. Sponsors include Alfred Music, Symphony Publishing and such educational institutions as Columbia College Chicago.

“Membership is picking up steam,” Papich said. “We’re just two years old and we’ve attracted members in 44 states and 14 countries.”

Still, Papich is also clear about an immediate challenge that she faces with the first JEN conference.

“We know May is not ideal, at the end of the school year,” Papich said. “But we’re grateful to go with it, and we’ll return to the traditional January break for 2011.” —Fred Bouchard

## School Notes



**Oberlin Honor:** David Stull, dean of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, accepted the National Medal of Arts on behalf of his school from President Barack Obama at the White House on Feb. 25.

**Details:** [oberlin.edu](http://oberlin.edu)

**Douglass Tribute:** The University of Rochester in New York celebrates the life of abolitionist Frederick Douglass on a new disc, *A Sky With More Stars*. The university’s vice president, Paul Burgett, recites from Douglass’ writings along with accompaniment from jazz bassist Tyrone Brown and violinist John Blake.

**Details:** [rochester.edu](http://rochester.edu)

**Mingus Winners:** The Rio American Combo from the Rio Americano High School in Sacramento, Calif., under Maxwell Kiesner’s direction, won the Mingus Spirit Award at the Charles Mingus High School Competition. The event was held on Feb. 13 at New York’s Manhattan School of Music. Other winners included The Rivers Big Band of The Rivers School in Weston, Mass., in the best big band (regular high school) category, under the direction of Philippe Crettien. **Details:** [msmnyc.edu](http://msmnyc.edu)

**Colorado Debut:** Students at the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts’ first summer program have released a CD of their compositions, *Fourteen Channels* (Tapestry). The 16 students involved in the project are between the ages of 16 and 24.

**Details:** [jazzarts.org](http://jazzarts.org)

**Sax Winner:** Danny Janklow, a junior at Temple University, won first place at the North American Saxophone Alliance jazz competition, which was held on March 6 at the University of Georgia in Athens. The prize, which Vandoren sponsored, includes a \$1,500 award.

**Details:** [saxalliance.org](http://saxalliance.org)



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Copenhagen Jazz Festival	74	jazz.dk	Sam Ash	112	samash.com
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Ljubljana Jazz Festival	72	en.ljubljana jazz.si			

Before his Saturday double bill with the Rosenberg Trio at Orvieto 2010, guitar legend Jim Hall—in residence for the week with Bill Frisell, Scott Colley and Joey Baron behind their CD *Hemispheres* (ArtistShare)—sat before a full house in the Sala del Quattrocento for a DownBeat Blindfold Test. Hall, 80, responded with acuity, wit and concision—as he did performing throughout the week.

## Julian Lage

“Li’l Darlin’” (from *Sounding Point*, Decca, 2009) Lage, guitar; Jamie Roeder, bass; Tupac Mantilla, percussion.

That’s Julian Lage. I’ve known him since he was 11. I admire him—he’s very different. That was a completely unique treatment of a standard Basie tune, “Li’l Darlin’.” Basie’s guitarist, Freddie Greene, really kept the Count Basie band together. When Freddie left, it just was not the same. I wrote a piece we’ll play this evening called “Owed To Freddie Greene.”

## Egberto Gismonti

“Águas & Dança” (from *Saudações*, ECM, 2009) Egberto Gismonti, acoustic guitar; Alexandre Gismonti, acoustic guitar.

Amazing guitar playing; I have no idea who it is. Egberto Gismonti wrote and played it? I know Egberto. He’s a fantastic musician. It’s kind of a gringo version [of Brazilian music]! I was in Brazil several times, starting in 1959 or 1960. It felt like everybody in Rio played the guitar.

## Bobby Broom

“In Walked Bud” (from *Bobby Broom Plays For Monk, Origin*, 2009) Broom, guitar; Dennis Carroll, bass; Kobie Watkins, drums.

“In Walked Bud.” Fantastic guitar playing. I could have used a little more harmonic sense, maybe a chord to just fill in now and then, but it sounded great. Bobby Broom? I just know the name. (*He’s played with Sonny Rollins since the early ’80s.*) I know Sonny Rollins. (*laughter*) That’s why Sonny doesn’t call me any more! Working with him was maybe my most important job—it was very challenging, because it got me practicing. I’m serious. I almost hesitate to get into this, but in those days a lot of racial crap was still going on, and Sonny made me aware of it. All my early heroes were African-American—Charlie Christian, Duke Ellington, Coleman Hawkins, and later Sonny.

## John McLaughlin

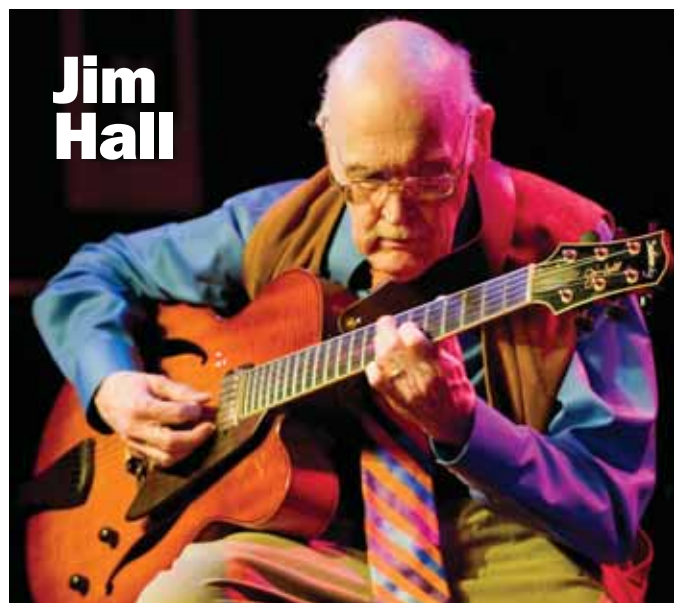
“Stella By Starlight” (from *Thieves And Poets*, Verve, 2003) McLaughlin, acoustic guitar.

Amazing guitar player. “Stella By Starlight” in what sounded like B-flat. I didn’t particularly like the way the song was treated. I don’t think I would have put in all that filigree. I would have concentrated on the melody and the words. Each piece, especially a song, should be presented in a different way; this is a love song, and it has nothing to do with flashy picking like “I Got Rhythm” or something. (*after*) I knew I’d insult a friend. I’m sure I have a lot of things which would embarrass me.

## Wolfgang Muthspiel—Brian Blade

“Heavy Song” (from *Friendly Travelers*, Material, 2008) Muthspiel, guitar; Blade, drums.

An excellent guitar player. That made me think about amplification. I still like the sound of the acoustic guitar amplified just a little bit, but that was a whole different genre, I guess. When we play, I like to be able to hear Scott Colley on bass fiddle, not necessarily amplified, and react to what he plays in the bottom of the texture, and react to Joey Baron, who is close to me and I can hear everything he plays. I understand amplification and the need for it, but I think it needs to be, in general, tuned down a bit. That’s just my personal preference. I don’t want to sound like some old foguey—I enjoy all this music.



JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

## Kurt Rosenwinkel Standards Trio

“Fall” (from *Reflections*, Word Of Mouth, 2009) Rosenwinkel, guitar; Eric Revis, bass; Eric Harland, drums.

I don’t know what they were performing, but it was in an odd meter, 7/4 or 5/4. A great ensemble, and I admire the guitar player, but I have no idea who it is. A lot of this is brand new to me. If I listen to music, generally it’s classical music. It would be depressing if I listened to great guitar players, Bela Bartok—he plays good guitar! It’s amazing how guitar playing has opened up and gotten better. One of the requisites of being involved in music, or any art form, is that it keeps growing, and if you’re open, then you will grow as well.

## Adam Rogers

“Sight” (from *Sight*, Criss Cross, 2009) Rogers, guitar, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Clarence Penn, drums.

I loved that—marvelous guitar playing. In relation to my earlier remarks, I could hear the whole texture very clearly. The guitarist would listen to what was happening and react. It seemed like people were listening. It sounded very original, too. The shape of the piece, the chord changes, the bass line—it really kept my attention.

## Pat Metheny—Brad Mehldau

“Ahmid-6” (from *Metheny Mehldau*, Nonesuch, 2006) Metheny, guitar; Mehldau, piano.

Another amazing guitar player. I wish there was some clarity at the beginning of the piece, so I’d know what they were improvising on. Both play great, but it sounded like playing over chord changes. I’d like it to be like a painting—you have a background and then some stuff added. I never had great facility, so I play slowly, and then, when I play a little bit faster, they say, “Ooh, it’s fantastic.”

## Jonathan Kreisberg

“The Best Thing For You” (from *The South Of Everywhere*, Mel Bay, 2007) Kreisberg, guitar; Matt Penman, bass; Mark Ferber, drums.

I enjoyed that a lot. Whoever it was presented “The Best Thing For You Is Me” very clearly. Again, the guitar player was amazing. **DB**

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.



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