

58th Annual Critics Poll

Complete
Results Inside

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Muhai Richard Abrams
Enters Hall of Fame

Darcy James Argue

Keith Jarrett &
Charlie Haden

Vijay Iyer

Hank Jones
Remembered

Shemekia
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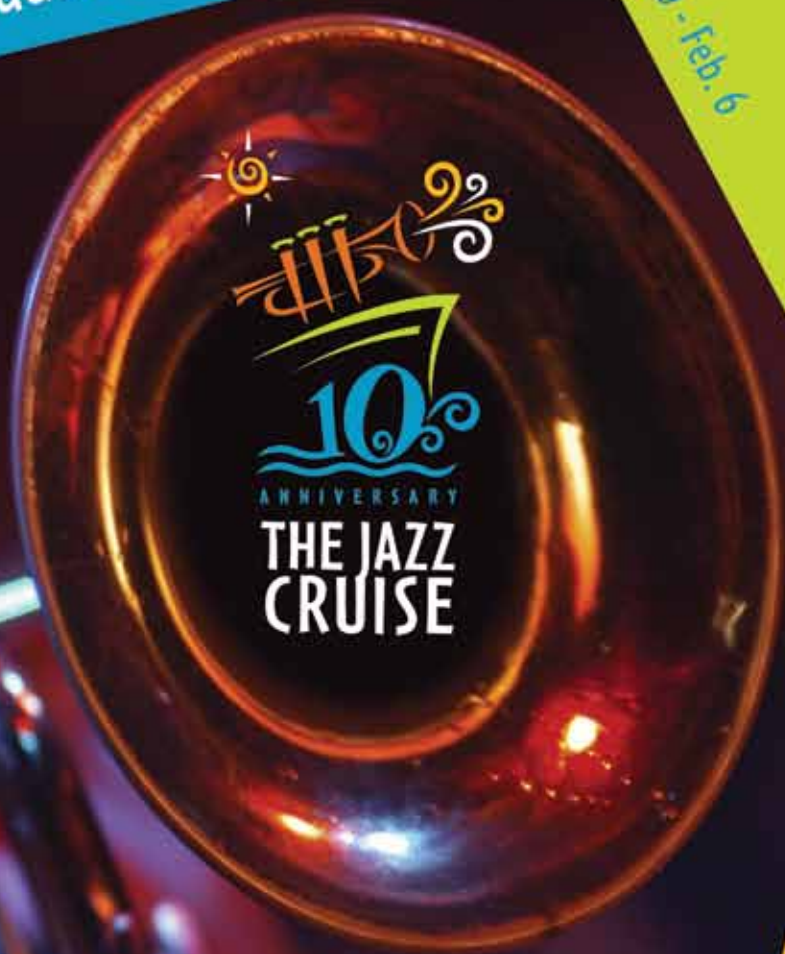
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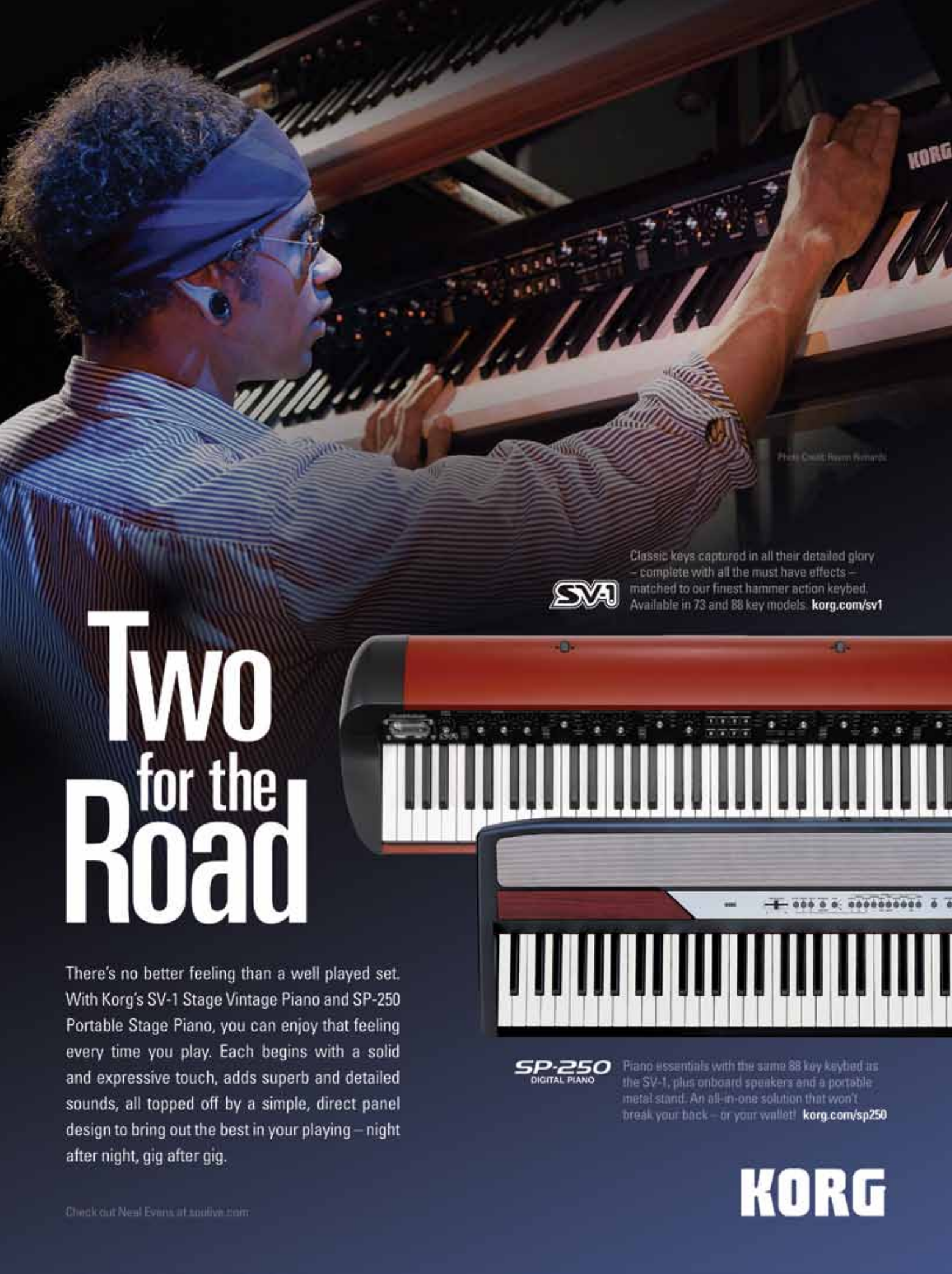


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AUGUST 2010

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BY DAN OUELLETTE

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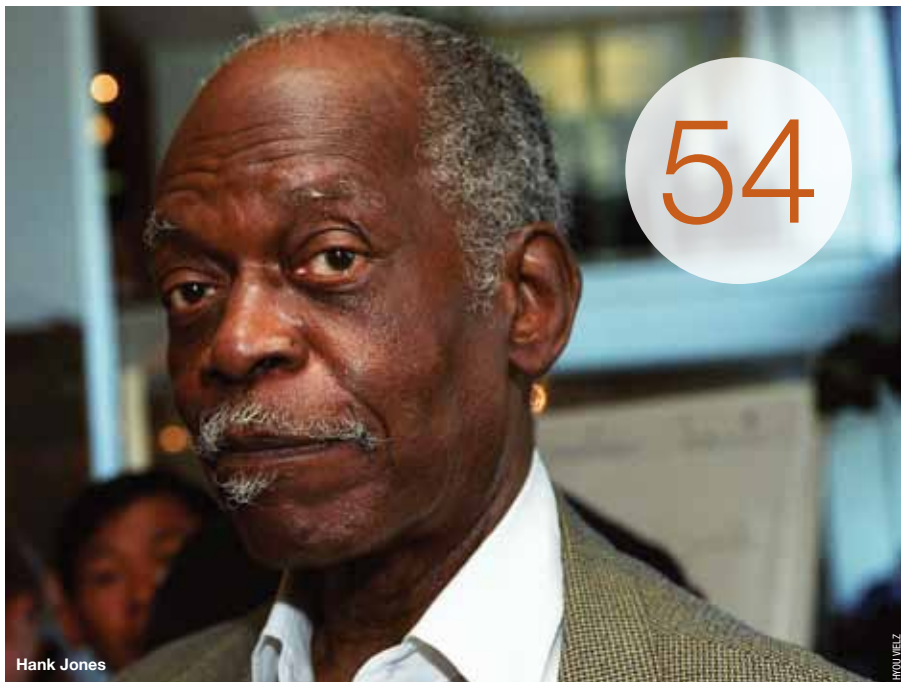
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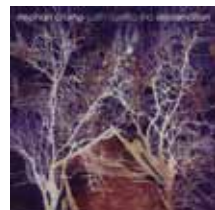
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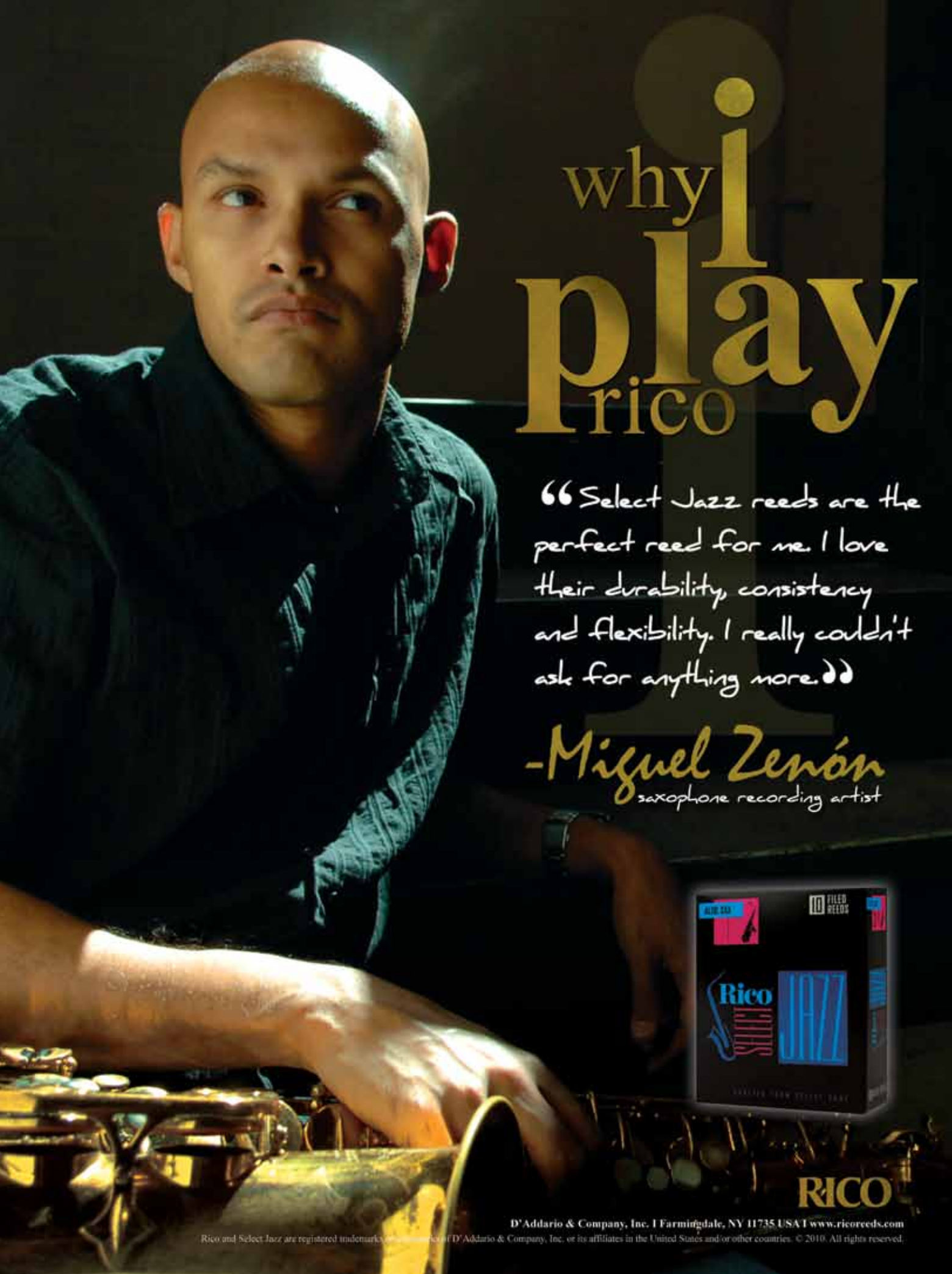
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Shemekia Copeland

A man with a shaved head, wearing a dark blue patterned shirt, is shown from the chest up, playing a saxophone. He is looking off to the side with a focused expression. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and the instrument, and deep shadows elsewhere. The background is dark and out of focus.

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First Take | BY AARON COHEN



Historicity and History

When I spoke with Vijay Iyer about his group's recent Critics Poll victories (primarily for the disc *Historicity*) for this month's article on page 46, I asked him about his teaching at New York University. He emphasized the need to have students look beyond the work of their contemporaries.

"I keep bringing people back to fundamentals, early decades of this music," Iyer said. "I force people to transcribe Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington. What I found is a lot of students today, their main points of references are Chris Potter, Dave Douglas, Bad Plus, Robert Glasper—I love all those guys, but they came from somewhere, they learned from this huge history of music. In a way, I'm trying to reintroduce this sense of continuity."

Iyer has been a great example of that continuity. His own work reflects not just an immersion in the canonical jazz stars, but several who always stood further apart. And even though he's primarily lived on the East and West Coasts, he has taken particular cues from the collective mindset and compositional emphasis that often defined the work of such one-time Chicago musicians as Steve Coleman and this year's Hall of Fame inductee, Muhal Richard Abrams (page 34). There's even a song on Iyer's upcoming solo disc, "One For Blount," which takes its name from Sun Ra.

The DownBeat Critics Poll has always carried a certain historical significance. Winners throughout the years have gone on to fortify the jazz lineage, and the poll itself has helped them claim early on the recognition that would make their success possible (at least, according to the Ray Charles biopic *Ray*). Among this year's winners is Darcy James Argue, who draws on, and twists, the big band tradition with his Secret Society. Howard Mandel's profile of Argue, who won three Rising Star awards (Big Band, Composer, Arranger), is on page 44. Then there are musicians we applaud for constantly reinventing themselves over the long haul, like Jazz Artist of the Year and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year Joe Lovano, who talks about his new, pan-generational Us Five (Jazz Group of the Year) with Dan Ouellette on page 26.

Still, with all the awards bestowed during the Critics Poll, none of them have the impact of lessons that come directly from the actual masters. We lost one of the great ones recently, pianist Hank Jones, a true inspiration as he continued working up until his passing at age 91. John McDonough's moving tribute to him begins on page 54.

With excellent teachers like Iyer and bright students across the country, there's no reason to believe that lessons from and about historic legends and today's greats are being lost. And it's not just budding jazz musicians who are getting the message. In early June my wife and I saw the exciting young r&b artist Janelle Monáe perform in Chicago. While she sang, a film screen in back of her showed clips of Sun Ra.

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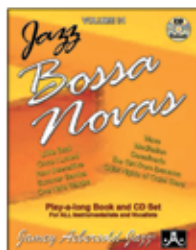
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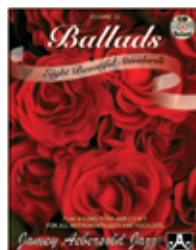
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Influential McCoy Tyner Deserves Inclusion

I must take slight exception to Marius Nordal's statement, in his interview with Chick Corea (June), that Corea, Herbie Hancock and Keith Jarrett are the most influential pianists of the last 40 years. I don't disagree with these choices, although if he's going to name these three, he must expand the category to four to include McCoy Tyner. Tyner has certainly been as stylistically influential as the other "big three," and if you look at his recorded output, has probably been stronger, particularly during the '70s. While Corea was giving us *The Leprechaun* and *My Spanish Heart*, and Hancock was putting out "Rockit," Tyner was releasing strong, acoustic jazz records such as *Echoes Of A Friend*, *Enlightenment*, *Atlantis* and *Supertrios*. Leaving out Tyner would be a mistake and a real omission.

BOB ZANDER
PALO ALTO, CALIF.

Evans' Words Bring Tears

To read Bill Evans' own words explaining his personal feelings of what he presented to his listening audience moved me emotionally (July). For a man who was pretty secretive about his music and gave interviews rarely during his active performing years, I gleaned information that made me understand what I believe was soul-baring to Len Lyons. A couple of his statements brought tears to my eyes and his music has had that effect on me more than once.

DONNA SHORE
ROHNERT PARK, CALIF.

Art Van Damme's Keys Swung

As a long-time novice jazz pianist, I was somewhat dismayed that the passing of jazz accordionist Art Van Damme in April was not mentioned in *DownBeat*. I began my musical exploration with the accordion as a child and moved to the piano in my mid-30s, but my love for jazz was inspired with Art. Granted, the accordion is not accepted as a jazz instrument. However, there were a number of great jazz accordion players (Leon Sash, even George Shearing) who could really swing and played great bebop. I had hoped that your magazine would at least pay a bit of homage to one of the great jazz players on the instrument.

THOMAS M. ZIELINSKI
GRANGER, IND.

Audio Counts, Too

Thanks for including the audio engineering categories in the *DownBeat* Student Music Awards (June). There are many film and video festivals but very few for audio. It provides a great motivation for the students and more



have chosen to enter each year. It's quite an honor to have winners from the New Orleans Center For Creative Arts program.

STEVE REYNOLDS
NOCCA MEDIA ARTS—AUDIO

Logan's Journey

One needs only to look at the photo of Giuseppe Logan accompanying the brief column on his "return" to the music to realize his struggle to get there ("The Beat," June).

LYN HORTON
WORTHINGTON, MASS.

McLaughlin's Trane Tributes

In the article "Gratitude For Coltrane" ("The Beat," June), Ken Micallef states that John McLaughlin's "first foray into Coltrane" was in 1994 with *After The Rain*, when in fact, he recorded Coltrane's "Naima" and "A Love Supreme" in 1973 with Carlos Santana on *Love Devotion Surrender*, and in 1978, a thinly disguised version of "Giant Steps" on *Johnny McLaughlin, Electric Guitarist*.

MARK JONES
OYGEVALT@OPTONLINE.NET

Corrections

- The review of Jeff Lashway's *Reunion* ("Reviews," July) should have indicated that Vinnie Colaiuta plays on all but two tracks.
- The Bertram and Judith Kohl Building at Oberlin College was misidentified ("Jazz On Campus," July).

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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Beat

Kind Of Kaleidoscopic

Montreal Exhibit Shows Miles Davis' Influence As Visual Artist

Miles Davis, the musician, is a legend. Miles Davis, the painter, is still making his mark, with a little help from a visual-art exhibit in Montreal.

"We Want Miles: Miles Davis vs. Jazz," a multimedia retrospective currently on display at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, explores Davis' re-workings of the sound and language of jazz, offers insights into his world and demonstrates his impact on music and visual art. Designed and organized by the Cité De La Musique in Paris, with the support of Miles Davis Properties, the exhibition had a successful run in Paris last winter, testifying to Davis' enduring ability to captivate the imagination. It will be showing in Montreal through Aug. 29.

Davis had a special relationship with Paris for more than 40 years. At 22 he travelled there for the first time to play the 1949 jazz festival and was moved by the warm reception he received. In Paris he met Pablo Picasso, Jean-Paul Sartre, Boris Vian and Juliette Gréco.

But Montreal was also significant for Davis. MMFA Director Nathalie Bondil notes in the exhibition's catalog that Davis played the Montreal Jazz Festival several times (his 1985 concert at the Théâtre Saint-Denis is screened at the exhibition). He performed at various Montreal venues in the '60s and '70s prior to the festival's inception.

"The connection between Paris and Montreal was natural," explained André Ménard, co-founder and artistic director of the Montreal Jazz Festival, one of the exhibit's 14 partners. "The exhibition has a strong French element; *Ascenseur Pour L'Echafaud (Lift To The Scaffold)*, for example, is a big Miles Davis opus."

Eight chronological and thematic sections—from Davis' childhood to his last concert at La Villette in Paris in 1991—trace the various stages of Davis' artistry, "like you would for a painter," explained curator Vincent Bessières. Davis' fa-



ther had encouraged him to draw from a young age; it "took the edge off things," Davis told writer/photographer Ken Franckling in 1986. "It takes a lot of anger out. If you're gonna get mad, and you sit down and sketch a bit, it will leave."

The exhibit showcases a number of Davis' original paintings and sketches. His influence on other visual artists is evidenced in paintings and sculptures by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Niki de Saint Phalle and Mati Klarwein. Also on display are archival materials and objects—some of which were discovered by Bessières as he sifted through boxes of Davis' estate—including rare concert footage, original scores, several of Davis' trumpets and band members' instruments, stage outfits, vintage pressings of records and revealing portraits. Among the 350-plus items, several unique to the Montreal installation, is a 4-minute video of Davis

boxing, illustrating a lesser-known aspect of his complex persona. Mute-shaped listening rooms placed throughout the installation constitute one of the exhibition's main features, facilitating a direct encounter with Davis' seminal works.

Marcus Miller, producer and co-composer of Davis' 1986 album *Tutu*, played at Montreal's L'Astral with his *Tutu Revisited* project on the eve of the exhibition's opening.

"I was asked to play music from *Tutu* to close the exhibition in Paris, and hesitated because Miles would never go back," Miller said. "So I decided to get a bunch of young players and see what they could bring, thinking, 'Miles would like that.'"

"It's overwhelming to see this exhibit again," mused Erin Davis, Davis' son, addressing the media at the opening. "Miles would have wanted this to be done right." —Sharonne Cohen



Peter Erskine

Erskine Honor: The Drum Museum in Cegléd, Hungary, unveiled a lifetime achievement exhibit, "40 Years At The Top," which celebrates Peter Erskine. Erskine, who attended the opening gala on May 14, has donated instruments and other personal memorabilia to the museum.

Details: petererskine.com

Frisell Debut: Bill Frisell's label debut with Savoy Jazz, *Beautiful Dreamer*, is slated for an Aug. 31 release. The disc also features Eyvind Kang on viola and drummer Rudy Royston. Details: savoyjazz.com

Silent Satchmo: Wynton Marsalis, pianist Cecile Licad and a 10-piece ensemble accompany Dan Pritzker's new silent film, *Louis*, which is an homage to Louis Armstrong and imagines his life growing up in early 20th century New Orleans. The concert/screenings will be held in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., Aug. 25–31. Details: louisthemovie.com

Buffalo History: The Colored Musicians Club, which was founded in Buffalo, N.Y., in 1935, has received city and county grants to re-open as a museum in the fall of 2011. The planned renovations include a new stage.

Details: coloredmusiciansclub.org

Tokyo Rediscovery: A new series of historic recordings feature recently unearthed tapes from the Tokyo club New Latin Quarter, which operated from 1959–1989. The first disc, *The Best Of New Latin Quarter, Jazz & Blues, Volume 1*, includes performances from Nat "King" Cole, Nancy Wilson and the Harry James Orchestra.

Details: nationalleagueofmusic.com

Sister Cities: Chicago and Aulnay-sous-Bois, France, signed a sister-festival agreement at the Chicago Blues Festival in Grant Park on June 12. The Aulnay All Blues Festival and Larry Skoller co-produced *Chicago Blues: A Living History* (Raisin' Music), which features Billy Boy Arnold, John Primer and Billy Branch.

Details: chicagobluesalivinghistory.com

Hilliard Greene (left), Jimmy Scott, T.K. Blue and Dwayne Broadnax



JACK VARTOGIAN/FRONTLINEPHOTOS

Stars, 'Sopranos' Turn Out For Jazz Foundation's Harlem Benefit

In the Green Room at New York's heralded Apollo Theater, saxophonist Jimmy Heath waited patiently for the band he was piloting, the Bebop All-Stars, to take the stage for their single big-swinging number. It was like a reunion of old bandmate friends, including bassist Ron Carter and pianist Barry Harris, who were hanging for a cause: the annual Jazz Foundation of America benefit. The concert on May 20 featured an array of blues, jazz and pop artists, including Jimmy Scott, Vince Giordano, Jessye Norman and Roberta Flack. Called "A Great Night in Harlem," the ninth-annual event fosters kinship around a common passion for the legacy of jazz and blues.

"I'm here to help people who can't help themselves," Heath said. "I'm always asked to perform, and if I'm around, I always do because I know friends who need help with their medical expenses. This is a great evening, and I don't take it lightly."

For 21 years, the JFA has been at the forefront in New York (and since Katrina, New Orleans) in not taking lightly older, often forgotten, musicians. Being relegated to forced retirement is one thing; to be bereft of hearth and health is quite a different matter. Under the executive directorship of Wendy Atlas Oxenhorn, the JFA has aided thousands of musicians with medical care and rent, including jazz artists such as the late Freddie Hubbard and Cecil Payne, blues singer Johnnie Mae Dunson and Fats Domino. Last year alone, the nonprofit ministered to more than 5,000 cases, thanks to a support team that includes doctors, donors and philanthropists. Many of the JFA supporters were recognized for their contributions, most notably Spirit of Greatness honorees Agnes Varis and ambassador Andrew Young, who said, "We have to keep the soul of America alive."

Confined to a wheelchair but dressed immaculately, Scott made his first appearance at a JFA Apollo concert. Before going onstage, he quipped

when asked how he was feeling: "No sense kicking. I'm looking forward to more." Turning 85 in July, Scott noted how impressed he was with the JFA event. "This really brings people together, and it's so important for us to stay together," he said. "This concert is all about people showing love for each other."

Scott sang a stirring rendition of "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child," which reigned as the highlight of the evening. (Scott dedicated it to both Lena Horne and Hank Jones.) He imbued the tune with melancholy, giving it his distinctive touch of clipped phrasing sung behind the beat. Scott received the first standing ovation of the evening, even though he followed Flack's jazz-steeped, funky, but ultimately flat take on "Sweet Georgia Brown."

Throughout the evening, there were several high-profile emcees, including Chevy Chase, Kevin Kline, David Johansen and Michael Imperioli, who commented backstage, "Last year's show blew me away. So many musicians gave their lives to the art form and now they're living in poverty. People forget how much they enriched our lives. What the JFA is doing is a beautiful thing."

There were frequent plugs to pledge support via texting for the JFA during the show, but the best came when Imperioli introduced two of his fellow cast members from "The Sopranos," Steven R. Schirripa and Vince Curatola. The three easily adopted their mob roles to faux-bully the crowd to start texting, warning, "We know exactly where you live."

After that comic arm-twisting, the show ended with a raucous blues number sung by Sweet Georgia Brown and the Blues Crusaders (and featured Oxenhorn, a one-time blues band player, on a torrid harmonica run) and then the anthem "Stand By Me," which featured nearly everyone on the evening's bill and got the house on its feet.

—Dan Ouellette

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New Disc, Documentary Highlight Star Producer Arif Mardin's Jazz Compositions

During his career as an arranger and producer, Arif Mardin helped create wildly successful r&b and pop albums for artists ranging from Aretha Franklin and Dusty Springfield to Norah Jones and Bette Midler (not to mention the Bee Gees). But his recently released final recording and a new documentary emphasize that at heart, Mardin was primarily a jazz composer.

"The world needed to see other sides of this great music man," said Mardin's son, Joe Mardin. "Not that he was just a great producer of great popular music, but that he was also a serious jazz and classical composer, not a dabbler."

In June, Joe Mardin's label, NuNoise Records, released *All My Friends Are Here*, which Arif Mardin had been working on in the months before his death of pancreatic cancer in 2006 at 74. Arif Mardin wrote most of the songs, and participants included Jones, Joe Lovano and Di-anne Reeves. Joe Mardin also helped produce the documentary *The Greatest Ears In Town: The Arif Mardin Story*, which is intended for theatrical release this year.

Arif Mardin's love of jazz began when he was growing up in Istanbul and discovered Duke Ellington and early Charlie Parker 78s. Largely self-taught, Mardin's scores impressed Quincy Jones, who was touring Turkey in 1956 as part of Dizzy Gillespie's band and provided a scholarship for Mardin to study at Berklee College of Music



Arif Mardin (left) and Duke Ellington

two years later. Then he met another Turkish immigrant, Nesuhi Ertegun, at the Lenox School of Jazz. In 1963, Mardin joined Ertegun, his brother Ahmet and Jerry Wexler at Atlantic Records.

"You had all these impresarios and music lovers—Jerry, Ahmet and Nesuhi—but they weren't trained musicians," Joe Mardin said. "They couldn't write the chart, conduct, know when somebody was playing the wrong note. So Arif was unique at Atlantic."

Franklin, who is interviewed in the film, was particularly responsive to his skills and insights, according to Joe Mardin.

"She trusted him implicitly, and they had an extraordinary relationship. She would call him up in the middle of the night with an idea for a string line, and two days later they'd be recording it."

—Aaron Cohen

Chicago Musician Couple Open New Jazz Club

Guitarist Greg Pasenko has played in all sorts of situations, but he said when he's onstage at Chicago's Club Blujazz, he can be more self-conscious about the audience. It's the venue that he runs with his wife, violinist Diane Delin.

"I enjoy it, but I feel so visible at so many different angles," Pasenko said. "My employees are watching. Diane and I have to turn on our musician heads. But we have fun with it."

Pasenko and Delin opened the 100-seat venue in the city's Wicker Park neighborhood in March. They've had experience being entrepreneurs, as well as musicians, through their own Blujazz label. The club has featured Chicago-based musicians, like saxophonist Pat Mallinger, but they have also booked such nationally known artists as pianists Fred Hersch and Denny Zeitlin.

"Musicians have reached out to us, more than

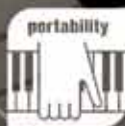


Greg Pasenko

I ever dreamed," Pasenko said. "Musicians want to play here. Being musician-owners has been a positive thing. They know we're not trying to put something over on them."

—Aaron Cohen

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New Welsh Label Reaffirms Depth, Range Across U.K.

When it comes to jazz in the United Kingdom all eyes tend to be on London, the unequivocal heart of the scene. But the pianist and bandleader Dave Stapleton made a conscious choice to plant his roots away from its bustle and grind. Over the last few years he's been proving that one can make a splash from the periphery.

"I felt that I could build up my music from Cardiff," he said of his base in Wales. "In some ways it's kind of easier because you're coming from outside London with a different sound or whatever, rather than trying to compete with 20 different piano players living there."

Since forming Edition Records in early 2008 in the Welsh capital, Stapleton's been proving his hunch right. He's released three strong albums by his ambitious post-bop working quintet, a pair of duo albums with fellow pianist Matthew Bourne and organist Deri Roberts, and an octet record, all of them capturing his nuanced arrangements and compositions performed by agile players unknown on these shores. Perhaps more striking is what he's done with the label he founded with photographer Tim Dickeson. With a richly varied 20-album catalog—and several more on the way by this fall—the label has quietly made a strong case for new sounds and older traditions in the U.K. As the label's reputation has grown, more prominent names have been turning up on its records: pianist Keith Tippett, trumpeter Nils-Petter Molvaer and saxophonist Martin Speake, among others.

Stapleton and Dickeson have accomplished all of this with a DIY approach, overseeing an organic development.

"We borrowed a bit of money from family, but not much," Stapleton said. "The whole thing is about reducing costs where we can. Because Tim is a photographer, we do all of the artwork in house."

Because the label licenses finished recordings from its various artists, its overhead is even lower. Although Stapleton says that in most cases the label only needs to sell about 450 copies of a particular title to break even—increasingly feasible with a distribution network including Asia, Europe and the United States—the vagaries of cashflow still force prudence in choosing what they release. So the label is increasingly focused on varying its output, mixing up straightahead offerings (the young pianist Ivo Neame, Secret Quartet, Geoff Eales) with more free-jazz-oriented fare (Dave Kane, Polar Bear saxophonist Mark Lockheart) and edgy, envelope-pushing jazz-rock (Troyka, Tamco—which includes Portishead bassist Jim Barr).

"That's the thing, to create different fan bases and get them interested in other artists on the label," he said. "When we set out we wanted to make sure that when journalists and the buying public get an Edition record they know it's going to be high quality."

With each new release musicians around the U.K. and, recently, in Europe, have taken notice; Edition has been increasingly swamped by demos. "As an artist myself I knew what I would want from a label, and so I thought, 'Let's give it to 'em,' and you start to build their trust and develop a relationship."

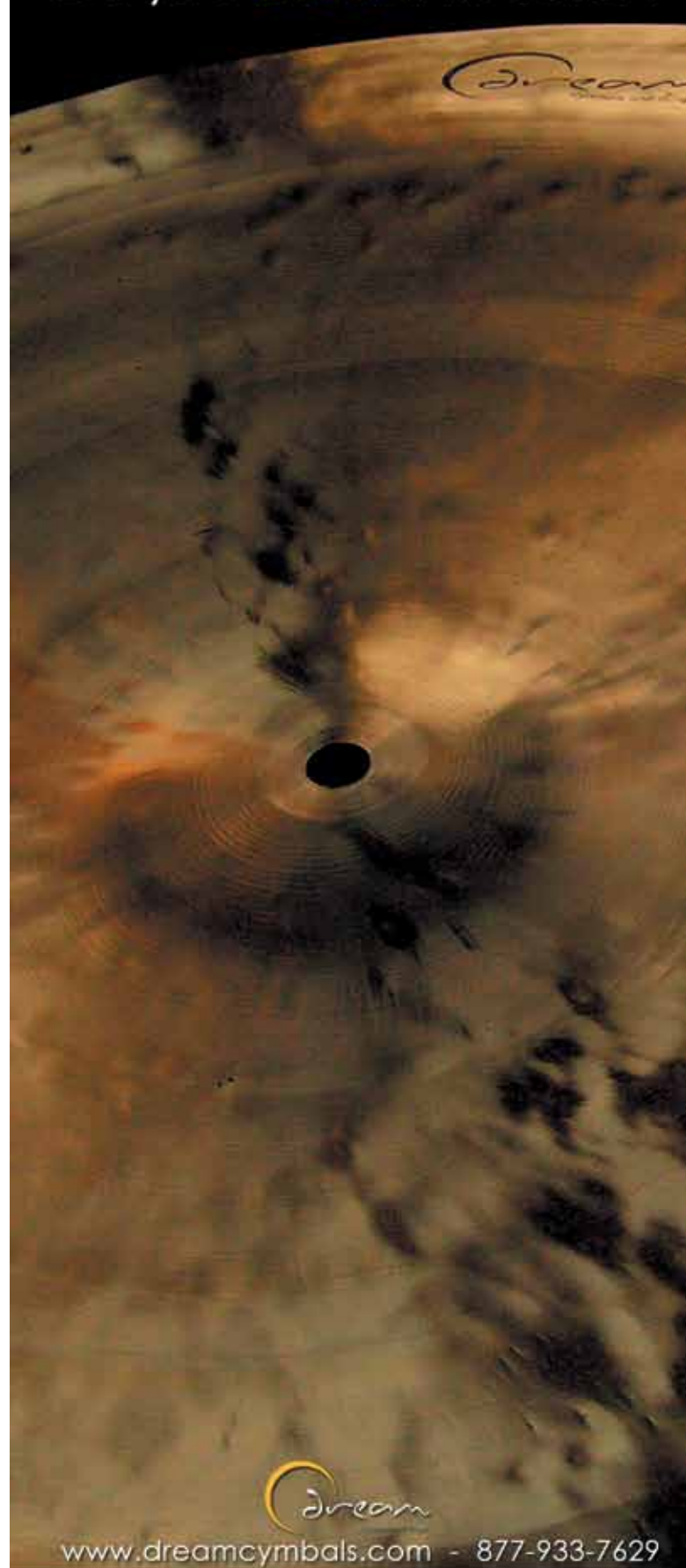
"It's far exceeded our expectations," Stapleton said of the label's performance thus far. "But we're very realistic and everything has been a struggle."

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Dave Stapleton

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Italian Jazz Meets American Gospel In Harlem

On May 4, Italy embraced Harlem when the Umbria Jazz Festival came to remind New York jazz aficionados of the 37th edition of its annual gathering in Perugia each July. While a high-profile, weeklong gig for trumpeter Enrico Rava's quintet was slated at Birdland, uptown the billing promised an unprecedented cross-cultural affair: the melding of adventurous jazz from Italy's finest with the rousing gospel music of the Convent Avenue Baptist Church's Inspirational Ensemble Choir, conducted by Dr. Gregory Hopkins. But before all the week's festivities even started, it was announced that Rava would be missing all the shows on his doctor's order because he suffered a fall in his home a few days earlier and broke a couple of ribs.

But, the music played on as planned at the church, a stone-solid house with vaulted ceilings and brightly colored stained glass windows, located on jazz-historic Sugar Hill. Longtime Rava trombonist Gianluca Petrella piloted the group, which was augmented by a last-minute sub, tenor saxophonist Dan Kinzelman. The gospel group had home court advantage, which meant that the free-admission event played out like a two-hour Baptist church service, complete with the Prayer of Invocation, the passing of the offering plate at one of the pauses in the program, a sermon-like altar call and a benediction.

The music—choir first, followed by the quintet, climaxed by the pairing of both groups along with two opera singers—featured exhilarating moments, hand-clapping energy and melodic soul. The choir, in red robes and white vestments, was accompanied by Hopkins on grand piano as well as a drummer and bass guitarist. With rich harmonies and bold dynamics, they rocked and hushed the packed house with such church-fare spirituals as “Standing In The Need Of A Blessing,” “Thy Will Be Done” and “Good News.”



Gianluca Petrella (left) and Giovanni Guidi with Convent Avenue Baptist Church's Inspirational Ensemble Choir

When Petrella and company arrived, the church was shepherded into the rarefied territory of Rava compositions. The energetic opener, “Fearless Five,” was angular, lyrical and humorous, and featured Petrella singing into the blue-plungered bone. With its memorable head, “Serpent” was delivered as a soul-jazz groove with sax and trombone intertwining snake-like lines. The band took another tack with “Planet Heart,” which featured pockets of fractured lyricism, dreamy musing and rambunctious rhythms, and ranged from light touches to speedy gusts. The short set ended with “Tribe,” a rollicking affair highlighted by the pianistic poise and playfulness of Giovanni Guidi, who proved to be the revelation of the evening. The Italians were rewarded by the ecumenical congregation with a standing ovation.

Part three of the program was disappointing in that the two groups never fully gelled, due in large part, one supposes, to the lack of rehearsal time to plot out the collaboration. The repertoire was

largely conventional, the delivery slightly disjointed. The spirited take on Edwin Hawkins' hit “Oh Happy Day” was a choir spotlight with trombone and sax embellishments, while “Amazing Grace” played out as a waltz with deep soul provided by guest singer Nathaniel Thompson's bass-baritone vocals and Petrella's plunger solo. Sax and trombone provided coloring for a fine rendition of “Summertime,” featuring soprano Josette Longmore. But it wasn't till the end of the short set that choir and ensemble played as one with a frolicsome run through “When The Saints Go Marching In.” All stage parties danced and clapped, while the audience stood and joined in.

That opened a window on what could have been if the two groups had tightened the collaboration, made it more adventurous and more call-and-response. Perhaps a gospel take on a Rava composition. Or an Italian jazz interpretation of a piece of sacred music. Hopefully, next year.

—Dan Ouellette



Lyle Mays

Lyle Mays Highlights Gilmore Keyboard Festival's 20-Year Anniversary

This spring, the 20-year-old Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival pumped more fresh blood into the artistically virile southwest portion of Michigan. The biennial event has been a constant source of nourishment for piano and keyboard lovers and players, focused primarily within the classical and jazz music genres. Indeed, they bill themselves as “the largest piano music festival in North America.”

With shows popping up in Grand Rapids, Lansing, Battle Creek and mostly Kalamazoo, this

three-week event kept its promises for mainstream audiences looking to find some swing and strut (e.g., Cedar Walton, Henry Butler, Alfredo Rodriguez, Dr. John) next to their high art (Kirill Gerstein, Louis Lortie, Sarah Rothenberg) along with master classes and films. While there have been stronger festivals in years past (at least in terms of the jazz programming), one of the shows stood out for its premiere qualities and local outreach. The May 2 performance of the Lyle Mays Quintet at the Western Michigan University Jazz Club had

heads spinning. Joined by reedist Paul McCandless, drummer/percussionist Mark Walker, bassist Steve Rodby and WMU alum Aubrey Johnson on vocals, whiz kid Mays seemed to be the only one without charts during some complex, exhilarating new performances that also included members of the school's celebrated vocal jazz ensemble Gold Company.

Despite being hemmed in by Mays' preference for samba rhythms, the music itself was a series of marvelous events that fit perfectly with the festival's unique mix of classical and jazz attitudes. Mays' "Highland Aire" allowed two members (McCandless and Walker) to flex their international inclinations with Oregon. With what became a signal development, Mays used a compositional approach that featured a flowing, almost classical delivery. Johnson used wordless vocals (with her own electronics) in a way that recalled Mays mate Pat Metheny's groups, with unison lines between Mays (doubling piano with electronic keyboards), Johnson and McCandless (on soprano sax) showcasing a typical upbeat mood to the music.

"Kali Sienna" offered a welcomed contrast, its dreamy, more lyrical style goaded on by a lilting pulse and featuring a Mays piano solo of single notes and chords with an uncanny rhythmic sensibility. "Chorinho" was fiery, with opening lines giving way to an almost swinging, rolling beat, with McCandless using his room to blow on his soprano, followed by some nice counterpoint between Mays and Walker. The tightness of this band made the lead-in to an "Au Lait" segment (lifted from Metheny's *Off Ramp* album) a natural development, one that gave Johnson an opportunity to reinvent Nana Vasconcelos' original, haunting wordless vocals to this beautiful, intricate melody. This calm refrain inevitably returned the music to the song's original active start and a somewhat predictable overstated orchestral climax.

Later in the performance, Mays announced that Johnson is his niece. His story included a message that he tried to discourage her from pursuing a career in jazz early on. Oh well, Mays owned up, "she wouldn't listen to me, so I just hired her."

—John Ephland

Vocalist Theo Bleckmann Runs Up Kate Bush Songbook at New York's Joe's Pub

Refurbishing Kate Bush's music can prove as intimidating as deconstructing Thelonious Monk, because there's so much to wrap heart and head around. Her lyrics lean toward the esoteric and epigrammatic; she writes diaphanous arrangements and luring melodies that require octave leaps. And her songs are often specific to their relative song-cycle albums, so it's difficult to address them singularly. Vocalist Theo Bleckmann not only exhibited the necessary musicality to give Bush's material meaningful makeovers, he showed the moxie to pull it off in a manner that didn't devolve into hagiography during his concert at New York's Joe's Pub on April 2. As he fronted a deft ensemble that included drummer John Hollenbeck, keyboardist Henry Hey, electric bassist Skuli Sverrisson and violinist Caleb Burhans, Bleckmann transfixed the jam-packed audience.

Bleckmann has demonstrated an affinity to Bush in the way he uses electronic gadgets and toys and powers his three-and-a-half-octave vocal range. He kicked off the program with a poignant reading of "Running Up That Hill" in which rumbling drums, suspending cymbals, plinking small percussion and subterranean chords crested and fell, before giving way to a galloping rhythmic gait more akin to the original. Along with that song, a good portion of the songs came from Bush's *Hounds Of Love*. Bleckmann rendered other songs from that album such as the requiem-like "Hello Earth," the dramatic "Cloudbusting" and the spectral "And Dream Of Sheep" with unalloyed soul matched with smartness.



Bleckmann's quartet was the perfect foil for his flights of fancy, even providing anti-phonic background vocals on the rousing waltz "Army Of Dreamers." Sometimes, though, the sonic heft dampened his singing, making it difficult to decipher the lyrics. The arrangements were decidedly song-based, retaining the succinct sophistication with pop but imbued with cogent jazz interplay. Burhans delivered a blistering solo on "Saxophone Song," his electronically enhanced violin taking on the steely characteristics of an electric guitar.

From start to finish, Bleckmann's explorations of this cult hero in the pop world could provide the ideal vehicle for him to rise above his own cult status in modern jazz.

—John Murph

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Dan Weiss ▶ *Tabla-Informed Concentration*

When drummer Dan Weiss refers to doing chilla, he doesn't mean consumption of the dal-based roti from India's Rajasthan region. Rather, Weiss deploys the term to denote his occasional practice of a Hindustani ritual practice in which, he states, "the only time you take your hands off the drums are when you sleep, eat and go to the bathroom."

He elaborated: "I've done that a few times—the longest one was five days. It brings your focus to another level. Playing a three-hour set on drums is nothing compared to practicing from the time you get up until you go to bed."

As Weiss spoke, he tapped a rhythm on the table before him with his three middle fingers. "It's a specific tabla technique I've been working on," he explained. "A very difficult movement. Wherever I go, I'm trying to get that."

Weiss occupies his own niche. A student of tabla virtuoso Samir Chatterjee for more than a decade, he deploys tabla outside its ritualistic function as a dialoguing instrument in creative contexts (hear Rudresh Mahanthappa's *Apti* [Innova]), and has conceptualized a way to translate South Indian rhythmic concepts—the specific mnemonic syllables known as bols, the fractally complex meters and extended beat cycles—with idiomatic fluency onto the drums and cymbals (Rez Abbasi's *Things To Come* [Sunnyside] and Mahanthappa's *Code Book* [Pi]).

Three Criss Cross recordings since 2004 with David Binney, most recently *Aliso*, are ample evidence that Weiss is also fully conversant with the full complement of grooves that propel 21st-century jazz expression. This interview took place five days after a pair of Paris performances of Miguel Zenón's new project "Rayuela." On the following day, he would depart with Binney and pianist Jacob Sacks for a fortnight of gigs in Switzerland and Germany with a quintet led by trombonist Christoph Schweizer, mirroring a late-'90s engagement with Schweizer on which Binney and one of his key rhythm sections of the '00s first broke bread.

"Dan is an original, one of the most incredible drummers ever," Binney said. "His tabla knowledge informs a lot of what he's doing, but he's also a very well-read musician. He can sing every bebop solo, not just drums, but everybody's solo—the same with Indian music, pop music, funk and rap."

Weiss coalesces his various interests on *Timshel* (Sunnyside), his second recording of original music with Sacks and Morgan. The unified 12-piece suite evokes, Weiss notes, "my life in the past couple of years, summed up on a record." A classical piano student since high school, he references much vocabulary from the 19th-century European canon, interpolating tabla ideas, and even "re-enacting" dialogue from David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* on the drumset "to illustrate how the intricacies of language and music are similar."

"In practice rooms, I'd set up different scenarios and parameters to experiment with," Weiss recalls. "I could try to depict a scene from a play or a movie, or a boxing match, or someone ice-skating, or a painting." The trio interprets the repertoire with an equivalently open attitude. "When you feel



JACK WITKOWSKI/FRONT ROW PHOTOS

comfortable with someone, you can say anything to them at any time, without barrier or restraint. That's how I feel with Jacob and Thomas—or Dave, for that matter. No one is going to judge."

An EPK promo clip shows an adolescent Weiss, who started drums at 6, snapping off rock beats with crisp panache, but by high school—inspired by recordings of Count Basie with Papa Jo Jones and Max Roach with Clifford Brown—he was deep into jazz, crossing the Hudson several times a week from his home in Tenafly, N.J., to see New York's top drumfolk up close and personal. He studied composition in high school, too, and continued those explorations from 1995 to 1999 at Manhattan School of Music, where he encountered Sacks—he describes the event as akin "to finding a long-lost brother"—and Morgan.

"I was trying to absorb as many drum influences as I could, so as not to sound like anybody else," Weiss said. "I started to play tabla just to broaden my musicality. But the teaching and absorption process of playing tabla runs deep—the principles are bigger than just rhythm. I'm more aware now of the music's power and spirituality. When and why to restrain yourself. Ways to develop phrases that are alien to Western music."

"But if you listen to some of the solos Jo Jones and Sid Catlett and Max Roach played, we're really not doing anything new," he continued. "A lot of homework needs to be done, and then you play what needs to happen in the moment—you don't need to think about it, you just play." —Ted Panken

Whitney James» *Breathing Spontaneity*

Even one-off recording sessions can spark musical serendipity. That's what happened when trumpeter Ingrid Jensen joined singer Whitney James in a Brooklyn studio for the vocalist's debut album, *The Nature Of Love* (Damselselfly). James had played around Seattle with pianist Joshua Wolff and drummer Jon Wikan, who is married to Jensen. But the singer had never worked with the trumpeter and flugelhorn player, who would go on to play on five of the disc's nine tracks. The two rehearsed together once, and recorded just three takes of each tune on the standards-dominated project. They nevertheless make surprisingly natural foils, their instruments dovetailing and intertwining particularly well on the extended endings of a laid-back "Tenderly" and a Latin-to-swing take on "How Deep Is The Ocean."

"There was a synergy that just sort of automatically happened," James said, sipping green tea at a cafe in St. Petersburg, Fla., not far from her townhouse in Tierra Verde. "Just the tone of my voice and the tone that she gets with her horn sometimes sound like one voice, and that was really spectacular, and startling. She was very encouraging, like 'Sing, don't hold back, do your thing.' We didn't really have to worry about stepping on each other's toes. We just let each other breathe. We had the skeleton for the tunes. Our job was just to open our ears and try to make something beautiful come out."

Those moments of synchronicity between a newcomer and an established player came via a circuitous route. Growing up in the San Francisco Bay area, the Chicago native took classical vocal lessons and put on dime-a-seat performances with her sister and neighborhood kids. Exposed to '60s and '70s soul music, the Bee Gees and Barbra Streisand via her parents' record collection, she became a jazz convert at 13, after hearing a pair of cassettes by Charlie Parker and Sarah Vaughan. Her list of jazz favorites soon expanded to include Miles Davis and Bill Evans, as well as Carmen McRae and Shirley Horn.

"There's something juicy and melancholy about the way those three women sing," she said. "They have this sickly delicious way of getting into the lyric."

James' musical education continued in Seattle, where she studied with singer Jay Clayton at Cornish College of the Arts, took on various jazz and neo-soul gigs and recorded commercial jingles. Her dual training in musical theatre and opera shaped her approach to jazz singing, she said.

"I try to ask, 'What does the lyric need?' It's sort of acting but still being me. The problem I always had with acting was like, 'I just wanna be me. I don't know how to be these other people.' So it's really cool that in jazz I get to be me and also inhabit the song and give it artistically what I feel it needs."

—Philip Booth



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- Jazz Album for This Brings Us To, Volume 1
- Jazz Artist
- Composer
- Alto Saxophone
- Flute
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Players ▶



Jason Adasiewicz ▶ *A Blacksmith's Dance*

It goes without saying that to play the vibraphone, you have to hit it. But the force with which Jason Adasiewicz bring down his mallets sets him apart. Raising his hands far behind his head, the Chicago-based musician—who used to be a drummer—strikes the keys like a blacksmith. And when he works the damper pedal, he looks like an over-caffeinated tap-dancer. The result flows around his horn players' tricky angles in his post-bop combo Rolldown and fills up broad swathes of the frequency range in cornetist Rob Mazurek's electrified ensembles.

"The force with which I hit the vibraphone has become my sound," he said. "I've discovered that the amount of energy that I need to put into it is like hitting a drum, and the sound that comes out is completely different than just playing it lightly or just playing it normally. Philly Joe, Elvin Jones, Max Roach—they're all very, very loud drummers."

Adasiewicz's physical playing also corresponds to his engagement with the physical qualities of sound. He's put up his own money to ensure that Rolldown's albums came out on vinyl and recorded the group's second record, *Varmint* (Cuneiform), on analog tape.

"You can push tape," he said "It has this soul. You can't push a digital signal, it just dies, but with analog, the sound of being able to push that is so beautiful. And I hear that on the way that my instrument is recorded; that format has always been the truest sound to me."

He first gravitated to jazz drumming as a teenager in Crystal Lake, Ill., and his ability to swing behind big band charts earned him a place in DePaul University's jazz program. But he quickly became disenchanted there and switched to classical percussion, which in turn brought

him around to the vibraphone. He had owned one since high school, (he purchased one on a whim from his drum teacher), but it was just a hobby instrument until he began delving first into classical technique and later into rock. After dropping out of college in the late '90s, Adasiewicz first drummed and then played vibes with several rock bands associated with Chicago's Truckstop Studio, including Pinetop Seven.

At the same time, he lived with a circle of young jazz musicians including cornetist Josh Berman, who remains an enduring collaborator. Their rehearsal group Andiamo (Italian for "let's go") gave Adasiewicz a venue for the jazz compositions he had begun developing out of solitary improvisational sojourns at the piano.

The music he has written for Rolldown, which he formed with Berman after Andiamo's demise, has similarities to the sound of early '60s Blue Note recordings by Andrew Hill, Bobby Hutcherson and Eric Dolphy, with an added intention to emphasize musical freedom. Everyone in the group—drummer Frank Rosaly, bassist Jason Roebke and clarinetist/alto saxophonist Aram Shelton—is also a bandleader, and everyone plays in everyone else's bands. Collectively they've become associated with the Hungry Brain, a Chicago tavern that hosts a weekly jazz night booked by Berman and drummer Mike Reed. Adasiewicz's self-named trio with Reed and bassist Nate McBride recently signed to release an upcoming disc on Delmark. The vibraphonist appreciates the collective support of the scene, especially since he actually works more as a sideman for other groups than he does as a leader. "I love playing other people's music," he said. "That's my biggest inspiration to write music."

—Bill Meyer

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Pharez Whitted ► *Indiana Bop Dynasty*

Imagine a trumpet player from a large family of jazz-oriented musicians accepting an invitation from John Mellencamp to not just appear on the pop singer's album in 1991, but also to tour with his band. This was the case with Pharez Whitted (whose father, Thomas Whitted, played drums with Wes Montgomery and Freddie Hubbard, and whose uncle is Slide Hampton).

But Mellencamp's invitation had a catch.

During rehearsals, Whitted recalled, "Mellencamp says, 'All right we're doing that tune that you soloed on, as well as a couple of other ones, and we want you to play your solo.' I said, 'Cool, I can play a solo on that.' He said, 'No, we want you to play that solo.'"

Whitted had to replicate the trumpet solo note-for-note that he improvised on Mellencamp's album, *Whenever We Wanted*—a widely held taboo in the jazz world. But Whitted's attitude remains surprisingly egalitarian, one of the reasons he never moved to New York from his hometown of Indianapolis.

"Not going to New York didn't bother me," Whitted said, "because I felt I was surrounded by a lot of inspiring musicians, people who helped shape who I am today. Me staying in the Midwest, I was able to play in wind ensembles, I was able to play in orchestras, I was able to play in funk bands, I was able to play in rock bands, I was able to play in straightahead bebop bands. I had a lot of different opportunities that I was able to take advantage of."

Whitted recorded two albums in the mid-1990s for Motown Records' MoJazz imprint and performed around the country. But personal issues, apart from music, began to weigh on Whitted. After being denied tenure at Ohio State University, he accepted a faculty position at Chicago State Uni-

versity in 2001. He and his wife split up in 2005; he also stopped composing. His new disc, *Transient Journey* (Owl Studios), is his first release in 15 years.

"Just life," said Whitted, who turns 50 in August. "I was playing, I was making music ... [but] I didn't have anything to say. I had too many things on my mind."

Whitted rediscovered his muse around 2005, attributing his renewed outlook in part to sitting in with guitarist Bobby Broom's trio one night at Pete Miller's in Evanston, Ill. "It was like we knew each other our whole lives," said Broom, "because of when we grew up and the music that we listened to."

"As a 1970s kid, you're listening to everything; it's not just about straightahead jazz," Broom continued. "He is concerned with communicating the spiritual aspect of music to the person that doesn't necessarily know about jazz and the history of jazz and all of that."

Broom introduced Whitted to pianist Ron Perrillo, who shares their sensibilities, and Whitted soon began composing the tunes that appear on *Transient Journey*. The album carries a strong hard-bop flavor, although Perrillo plays keyboards on three tracks that season the music with a cross-over sensibility.

While Whitted plays with assurance, showcasing an attractive tone and impressive range, Broom singles out the leader's compositions. "Every tune has a melody that is attractive and memorable," said Broom, who appears on the album. "And Pharez does beautiful things with harmony so that it bolsters those beautiful melodies in a way that now we can see them as something else, something modern, something that has some depth."


—Eric Fine

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58TH ANNUAL CRITICS POLL

JOE LOVANO

The Titan Among Us

By Dan Ouellette // Photography by Jimmy Katz

The best jazz saxophonist in the land tumbled and was laid low—at least momentarily—but rebounded, albeit slowly.

Last November, Joe Lovano ambled cautiously into the breakfast room at the Hotel Alexandra in Barcelona, Spain, on the day he was to perform with his nonet at the city's jazz festival. His left arm heavily bandaged so as to be immobilized, he had the fingers of his left hand exposed so that he could play the keys of his saxophones.

He arrived the day before, which was when he contacted the festival's artistic director, Joan Cararach. "Don't be shocked when you see me," Lovano told him and explained his situation. "But don't worry, I can play." That night Lovano had dinner with Cararach and his good friend Bruce Lundvall (head of Blue Note Records), then rose early the next morning to get ready to play his third gig since the unfortunate accident.

What happened? "I had a little misstep," Lovano said, mildly irked but not downtrodden by the disability. Per usual, the jovial saxophonist smiled and downplayed the mishap that happened two nights earlier in Lausanne, Switzerland. He was fine, he insisted. "We had a late concert, and in the wee hours of the morning, I headed back to the hotel with my horns and the music over my shoulder," he said. "I took a step, and the surface was uneven. I fell on my left shoulder to protect my horns and went straight down. I broke my humerus bone."

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Lovano visited the emergency room in Lausanne where he was told that he'd have to have surgery once he returned to New York. He still had a handful of nonet gigs as well as a show in Berlin with Hank Jones, all of which he envisioned performing. After Lausanne, he and the nonet played a jazz festival in Belgrade, Serbia, and then a concert in Salzburg, Austria, before arriving in Barcelona.

After breakfast, Lovano walked a block down the street to a pharmacy to refill his prescription of painkillers. He took another awkward step and fell again, this time dropping on his right shoulder to protect the left. The injury wasn't as extreme as his first crash, but he suffered another broken humerus bone. He was unable to get up. He waited for an ambulance and ended up at the Clínica Quirón hospital. The nonet tour was cancelled.

Lovano's wife, jazz singer Judi Silvano, who had been performing in France, flew to Barcelona and took charge of her husband's misfortune. Cararach visited the couple the next day. "It was the first time I'd ever seen Joe depressed," he said. "He was concerned about the nonet, but I assured him that everything for the nonet and him was being taken care of by the festival."

Rather than fly back to New York for surgery, Lovano opted to be operated on in Barcelona by Dr. Andrés Combalia, who was not only the doctor for the Barcelona soccer team but also a big jazz fan and friend of the festival. A week later, Lovano and Silvano ("my guardian angel," the saxist says) arrived at the Barcelona airport for the long flight home. Lovano was fully bandaged across his chest like a mummy, and was wheelchair-bound. Yet, he was upbeat, even though in looking back, he admits that "it probably wasn't the wisest idea on my part to continue touring after I hurt my left arm." He adds, "Actually, Judi was coming to Barcelona before my second fall to stop my tour, anyway."

Six months later, fully recovered, Lovano reflects on the experience while giving a casual tour of his sunny, four-acre yard at his Villa Paradiso home near Newburgh in New York's upstate Hudson River region. "I'm a possessed tenor saxophone player within the history of a lot of possessed tenor saxophonists," he says with a hearty laugh. "I was really lucky, 'cause anyone can have an accident and be down. It's the springing back up that's important."

Certainly, you can't keep a heavyweight champion jazz lifer down for the count for too long. Two months after the surgery, Lovano was making good on his commitment to play a scattering of dates with his killer Us Five quintet, including a week at the Village Vanguard in February that served as the rain date for the band's scheduled performances in November. And, he proudly says, a couple of days earlier he played his first 18-hole round of golf since the accident with no ill effect.

But what Lovano is most proud of is his triple crown in this year's DownBeat Critics Poll, where he was voted Jazz Artist and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year as well as leader of the Jazz Group of the Year, Us Five—also comprising pianist James Weidman, bassist Esperanza Spalding, and drum-



mers Otis Brown III and Francisco Mela—which released its debut album, *Folk Art* (Blue Note), in May 2009. "All I can say is that I'm overwhelmed and overjoyed," Lovano says while sitting in his living room, which today is filled with the music of the outdoors—chirping birds and sonorous wind chimes. "I'm really pleased that people heard Us Five and got absorbed in the presentation of the quintet. I'm excited to be carrying on with the band and developing new music in that formation."

Lovano is taking it all in stride, not getting caught up in all the kudos that have been flowing his way these days. His manifesto that has driven his career: Do your homework, pay your dues, find your voice, follow your passions and reap your rewards when the time is right. He's a brawny guy who could look tough if he wasn't always grinning. He's a grizzly bear in appearance, but a teddy bear in spirit, who frequently inserts the descriptor "beautiful" into a conversation about a fellow musician or a piece of music. He's a jazz-talk artiste who's like an old friend who's genuinely pleased to see you.

When he plays one of many horns (on the Us Five album, he displays quite an arsenal, including tenor, straight alto, taragato, alto clarinet and aulochrome, leaving soprano and bass clarinet in the closet for the session), Lovano can flutter like a first-flight nestling or blow like he's bursting seams. He's

a hefty sight onstage, but when he loses himself in a soulfully lyrical improvisation he nimbly dances in step. His firm roots in jazz tradition don't hinder him from playing with robust glee.

Not long ago, a pop music blogger identified Sonny Rollins as the last jazz titan, implying that he was the sole torch-bearer remaining, given that all the other greats of the music—Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk et al.—lived in a bygone era. Of course, he was oblivious that two other iconic saxophonists who shined in jazz's golden days of the '60s—Ornette Coleman and Wayne Shorter—are also still creating extraordinary music in their twilight years. But the writer missed the point about the nature of titanic jazz forces, figuring that once Rollins was sidelined the authority of jazz would cease to be.

Given the accolades the 57-year-old Lovano has received over the length of his career and the creative drive that is elemental to his music, the saxophonist indeed is a modern day jazz titan in our midst—a powerful force whose recording career as a leader (21 CDs and counting on Blue Note alone) has found him exploring new vistas with a range of fellow musicians from such elders as Hank Jones and Elvin Jones to peers like Greg Osby and Kenny Werner to youngsters making an impact like Spalding and Mela. He's also an ac-

Congratulations to DownBeat's 58th Critics Poll Alexander Reed Artists



Joe Lovano
Triple Crown Winner,
#1 in Tenor Saxophone, Jazz Artist, & Jazz Group (Us5),
& nomination for Jazz Album.

Branford Marsalis: Nominations for Tenor Saxophone, Soprano Saxophone, Jazz Artist, Jazz Group, Producer & Producer, Rising Star (#1).

Joshua Redman: Nominations for Tenor Saxophone, Soprano Saxophone.

Ornette Coleman: Nominations for Alto Saxophone, Jazz Artist.

Greg Osby: Nominations for Alto Saxophone, Producer, Rising Star.

David Liebman: Nomination for Soprano Saxophone.

Ravi Coltrane: Nomination for Soprano Saxophone, Rising Star.

Seamus Blake: Nomination for Tenor Saxophone, Rising Star.

Jaleel Shaw: Nomination for Alto Saxophone, Rising Star.

Greg Tardy: Nomination for Clarinet, Rising Star.



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complished sideman who at the drop of a straw fedora is eager to find new sounds in collaboration with the likes of Paul Motian and Bill Frisell in their long-standing trio or in a new quartet with longtime friend John Scofield or as the solo foil in McCoy Tyner's touring quartet. In addition, Lovano somehow found the time to be an integral member of the SFJAZZ Collective (in arguably its best lineup in 2008 spurred on by works composed by Shorter). He continues to serve in the Gary Burton Chair at Berklee College of Music (conferred on him in 2001), where he teaches with a select group of aspiring improvisers on a quarterly basis.

Twenty, thirty years from now, jazz aficionados will talk about seeing Lovano live or listening to his array of recordings with the same lofty reverence reserved for the masters of old. He's still relatively young, but his impact will continue to be felt in each passing year as he embarks on vibrant new paths. Depending on the project, Lovano can bring to the fore spiritual radiance, a sublime sense of balladry, smoky-toned intuition, a blustery hard-bop charge, a jolting/ramming assault or an edgy/abstract meander.

He said several years ago, "I'm not trying to play a different record every time out. But every time you play with different people, it should be a different experience; the music should be something new. That's been my approach all my life in terms of improvising. I can play the same tune every day with different people and it's always going to be new music."

And that's what forms the core of Lovano's oeuvre. Lundvall, who signed the saxophone maestro in 1991, recalls that he "slept on Joe" for a stretch while seeing him perform in the '80s, especially in Woody Herman's band. "But it was one night at Sweet Basil where he was playing in a group that also included Peter Erskine and Randy Brecker that did it for me," Lundvall says. "Joe is one of my best signings, and he has become a dear friend. Dexter Gordon was like a soul brother to me. When he passed away in 1990, I thought, there will never be another Dexter. But then God gave me Joe."

The two share lunch once a month to talk music and future projects. "Joe eats five courses and has 15 ideas," Lundvall says. "I can never say no to him.

Well, I did once, when he wanted to make a big band album. But I had seen him do a show with Hank Jones, and I said do this first. They ended up making three albums, and there's a fourth in the can."

Lundvall gushes over Lovano's "boundless enthusiasm" and marvels that the saxist is "so adventurous that he tries everything. He's a complete master player who has his own sound. One or two notes and I know it's Joe. His legacy is immensely important, and right now he's at the height of creativity."

In a jocular moment, Lundvall says, "Joe can never say no" when it comes to playing with other artists, then adds with a laugh, "I wish he'd stop guesting on so many records."

That's unlikely to change any time soon, as Lovano has flourished in different environments and with diverse personalities throughout his career. In one stretch of May, the still-recovering Lovano was omnipresent on New York's jazz scene. He guested along with Osby during one evening with Chick Corea at the Blue Note during a two-week stand the pianist hosted. (It was Lovano's first-ever onstage meeting with Corea, which was a thrill, he says.)

The next week at the club Lovano served as the featured soloist for two nights in Odean Pope's Saxophone Summit. Before the second evening of that date, the 72-year-old Pope, who played alongside all the jazz noteworthies who hailed from Philadelphia, noted that he was honored to have such "an extraordinary saxophonist play with us. Joe is one of the great, great forerunners of contemporary music today. He's a walking institution for the tenor sax as well as a great humanitarian—on or off the stage. Plus, he's so humble. He's an unusually gifted artist, the kind that doesn't come around that often."

A few days later, Lovano spent a full week at Birdland with pianist and regular collaborator Steve Kuhn for a date that was originally scheduled to be yet another evening of grace and soul with the late Hank Jones. "In today's world of music, each situation fuels the next for me," Lovano says. "I thrive

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in that energy. The collaboration of sharing the stage and sharing the musical moment with whatever ensemble is something I've always strived for. That's when you discover different energy and new ideas."

But if there's one thing that his enforced sidelining taught him, it was that he's got to slow down, at least a little. "I have to admit that I was a little overworked," he says. "When I first fell, I was in the middle of back-to-back tours, with Us Five and the nonet, and in the prior two months I was doing all kinds of things with all kinds of folks, whether it was Hank or McCoy, or the SFJAZZ Collective." He sighs, then says, "Actually, it was nice to have a period off so that I could think about how I wanted to proceed in the future. I'm at a point in my career where I don't have to do everything, but I can schedule what I want to do."

Even though Lovano exudes positivity, he concedes that when he first came home, he "didn't know if it was harder to be awake or to try to sleep. But I didn't want to go into any kind of a funky depression even though I know I put some people through some funky exchanges."

But the fighter that he is, Lovano was playing his soprano within the first week after his return home from Barcelona, with his flutes shortly thereafter. The heavier tenor came a month later ("the issue wasn't with playing the horn, but taking it out of the case and holding it"). His family was supportive. Silvano kept an eye on making sure her husband didn't overstretch himself, and friends such as James Moody, Jimmy Heath, Frank Wess, Cedar Walton and Toots Thielemans called him to wish him well and commiserate about the rigors of touring. Soon, locally based friends such as Adam Nussbaum, Steve Slagle and others began to come over to jam. Meanwhile Lovano started musing about music that he wanted to work through with his groups, especially Us Five. There was no time for the saxophonist to feel sorry for himself. Rejuvenation became the aim.

"I had an accident, I'm healthy and I'm not sick," he says. "I worked my way back with a renewed attitude, with a stronger foundation. Once you realize that, your trust gets stronger and you carry on to the next stage. Setbacks can be like building blocks. Different episodes in your life take you to different places you weren't expecting to go."

That sounds like a page out of Lovano's youth when he was studying the saxophone under the tutelage of his father, Cleveland saxophonist Tony "Big T" Lovano, who gigged with Tadd Dameron and jammed with Trane but never left his Ohio home base. The youngster, who often was called upon to fill in for his dad when he double-booked gigs, says he learned how to be a musical risk-taker. Starting on alto at age 6, Lovano eventually graduated to tenor. He was home-schooled in the music, with a wealth of field trips into the clubs. That formed the foundation of his confidence as a musician and his desire to seek adventure.

Lovano's upbringing was rich. "My dad had all these records in the house by saxophonists like Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt and John Coltrane," he says. "Plus, there was Miles [Davis], Max [Roach]. That's what captured me as a teenager. So even though I grew up with the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and especially Motown, I was totally into the music of my father's generation. When my dad sent me to a gig that he was hired for, I'd show up and the guys would say, 'Who are you?' But word got around quickly that I could play all night long without music. I wanted to be accepted by my father's peers. I wanted them to dig me, and not cringe when I walked in the room."

Again, because of his father's expansive record collection, Lovano went from being a sonic clone of his father's saxophone style to developing his own post-bop voice. In addition to Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster discs at his fingertips, there was the entire collection of Trane music from the beginning to the end, such as *Kulu Se Mama* and *Meditation*, as well as Trane with Cecil Taylor, plus albums by Ornette Coleman.

"As a young player, I heard a variety of improvising, which meant that I learned to have an open approach," he says. "You listen to the beboppers because they teach you how to play your horn, but I was also hip to Albert Ayler, who I discovered early on was also from Cleveland. He was a force of nature who executed on his horn like a marching band saxophone player. He studied jazz, but then played with his own energy. That struck me. I preferred Jackie McLean, Bird, Sonny for their technique, their phrasing and lyricism. But I was also into the energy of Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp and later Trane. That was all more like folk music to me."

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All of Lovano's influences come to play in his rhythm-oriented quintet Us Five, which bowed with *Folk Art*. Beyond merely blowing with avant-tinged, Coltrane-inspired tenor gusto, Lovano employs multiple strategies on several reeds, setting up melodic motifs, rhythmic start-and-stop phrases and playful dance-like romps. The 10-minute title track, with its tempo changes and thematic shifts, typifies the free architectural designs throughout, while the grooved and spirited "Dibango" is a sonic treat thanks to Lovano's performance on aulochrome, a double soprano sax with a keyboard attached. As for live, the Us Five show in Dizzy's

Den at last fall's Monterey Jazz Festival was the long weekend's highlight, as Lovano led his band through a rambunctious, whirlwind set that captivated the rapt crowd.

"This band is so special to me, and the repertoire is expanding," Lovano says. "I love the approach of a group with piano, bass and two drummers, and the range of music we're developing all the time. Every concert moves to another place as far as the communication among us."

As for the youthfulness of the band members, he adds, "These artists are hungry to play. They're constantly searching for music they haven't touched

on yet. I go back to my early 20s, my first bands, my first trips to Europe with Woody Herman. You get so much energy and inspiration from that that you can't describe in words. You're so open for everyone's contribution to impact the music and move it into new directions. All of a sudden, you mature and you develop a trust. It's like Miles with his band in the '60s, with Herbie [Hancock], Wayne [Shorter], Ron [Carter] and Tony [Williams]. They were all hungry to play and be heard because they were filled with ideas. They were fearless. If you can stay like that throughout your career and develop new ideas and feed off each other within the intergenerational, multicultural world, now, that's beautiful."

Currently in its third year as a working unit, Us Five's origins date back to Lovano meeting Spalding and Mela at Berklee. She was taking Lovano's ensemble classes, and the drummer was teaching classes. "The first time Esperanza played, I could hear how she contributed creative ideas to the music, and she was quick to memorize," says Lovano. "She played with personality, which struck me."

When Spalding graduated, Lovano formed a trio with her and Mela. Their first gig was playing at the inauguration of Berklee President Roger Brown. Lovano had met Otis Brown III at a Thelonious Monk Institute workshop, and he ended up enlisting him to sub on drums for some of his bands, including his trio and nonet. James Weidman was a friend from Cleveland who subbed for John Hicks in Lovano's nonet.

"I got the idea to put Otis and Mela together because I enjoyed the way they both played," Lovano says. "Each had his own approach to the drums, even though they were both influenced by the same drummers. Mela is from Cuba, and Otis is from Newark, so he has this funky New York sound. Their personalities are very different, but they work together perfectly." While Lovano has worked in double-drum situations before (including a couple of tracks on his 2002 *Viva Caruso* album), this is his first full-fledged experimentation with the rhythmic concept. "You can have two saxophonists play together—why not two drummers?" Lovano says. "I was inspired by Ornette playing with Ed Blackwell and Billy Higgins and Coltrane playing with Elvin Jones and Rashied Ali."

As for being a mentor to his band members, Lovano acknowledges that he's a steady influence. "I remember when I was young playing in bands with people I looked up to and admired," he says. "They gave me direction. They also gave me the energy and inspiration that became part of my personality."

While she's in the midst of launching her burgeoning career as a leader (with three CDs to her credit already), Spalding says her experience in Us Five has been "growth by rising to the occasion. Joe's a great teacher. He'll pull me aside and tell me, 'Just listen to what I'm doing and follow.' He's such a laid-back bandleader and teacher."

Spalding went to see Lovano perform with Kuhn at Birdland recently and took in the saxophonist from a different vantage point, as audience member. "Sometimes it's easy to overlook Joe's playing," she says. "But there I was discovering

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anew the power and mastery of his musicianship. When he plays, he is completely liberated. That's what moves me the most. He's so free, so in the moment, so true and natural. He's not limited to an idea; he's uninhibited to try anything on his saxophone. It's like he's on a quest to find everything out there. It's all about the next step in his evolution."

Mela agrees. "I come from a different culture, but we really put things together," he says. "Joe tells us all to play what we feel. For me, this is the first real jazz band that I've been a part of. I've played with Sco and Kenny Barron, but this band is going to be something that people will be talking about in the future."

In terms of what to look for next, Mela mentions the band's second album, which will be a Charlie Parker project, where the bebop master's music will be completely re-envisioned by Us Five. The group experimented with a couple of Bird tunes at the Barbados Jazz Festival in January, and then continued at the Village Vanguard and on a short tour in California, the Southwest and Chicago. "We're going to take a different approach with those tunes that are originals Bird wrote with wonderful harmonic sequences," Lovano says. "The way we played those songs gave me a lot of ideas, especially how the rhythm section was playing and how I was responding."

But knowing Lovano's penchant for breaking out even further, there's no doubt that the coming year will find him going even deeper with an array of artists.

With that given, are there any artists he's yet to play with that he'd like to link up with? Lovano says he'd love to do a project with Ornette Coleman, whom he mustered up the courage to join onstage at the Baltica Jazz Festival in 2008. "Ornette always told me to just come up and play, you don't have to ask," Lovano says. "That would take me aback. But finally at Baltica, where I was the artist-in-residence that year, I noticed that Ornette was playing. He told me again, don't ask, just come. He was playing in his quartet with two basses and Denardo [Coleman] on the drums. I was backstage, I knew the set list, but I was too nervous."

Then Lovano had a visitation from his late friend Dewey Redman, who told him, "Jo-el, if you want to play, you'd better go." Lovano walked out to sit in on one tune, integrating his voice into the rhythm section between the two basses, in essence creating his own part. Coleman liked that. Lovano planned to play only one tune, but he was urged to stay for the rest of the set, plus the encore, "Lonely Woman."

"Ornette was so gracious and inviting," Lovano says. "I told him later that I hesitated to come onstage, and he said, 'I knew that before you told me.'" Lovano laughs and says he would love to do some kind of collaboration with him in the future.

But the one artist he has never performed with is Keith Jarrett. He's at the top of his wish list. "Keith's influence on me has always been pivotal in my development," Lovano says. "I'll never

forget seeing his quartet in Boston in 1972, with Paul Motian, Charlie Haden and Dewey. To me, that was the quartet after Trane's that made a statement. They all played from their own voices and worlds in such an amazing creative flow. I thought to myself then, that's how I want to get my own bands together someday."

Looking at his own past adventures, specifically the early-aughts album *Flights Of Fancy: Trio Fascination, Edition Two*, Lovano doesn't consider the music to be ancient history. "All these tunes and feelings and putting the sessions together stays with you," he says. "It's a funny thing in the

world of jazz. You live in this library of sounds and spirits. It's a timeless thing. You may not be able to walk into a room and physically hear people like Coleman Hawkins or Bird or Miles or Michael Brecker, but their spirit is still with us in their recordings. The music will be here forever. That's the beauty of jazz, especially when people have an approach that's not tied down to a style. Creative improvisers can be inspired by those spirits."

So, one assumes there will plenty of more beauty in store by the ebullient saxophonist. "I'm still scratching the surface to figure it all out," he says, flashing that big smile.

DB

The advertisement features a central photograph of saxophonist Kim Waters, a man with a mustache wearing a grey suit, holding two silver saxophones. Above the photo is the 'Orpheo SIGNATURE' logo. Below the photo, the text reads 'SOULFUL. INDELIBLE. EMOTIONAL. SENSUAL.' and 'KIM WATERS PLAYS ORPHEO SIGNATURE SAXOPHONES.' At the bottom, it says 'KIM WATERS PLAYS SMOOTH URBAN JAZZ ON ORPHEO SIGNATURE SAXOPHONES. THE PURSUIT OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE LIVES IN THE ORPHEO SAXOPHONE LINE. FOR MORE OF THE LEGENDARY ORPHEO STORY, VISIT WWW.MUSICFACTORYDIRECT.COM'. To the right of this text is the 'MUSIC & FACTORY DIRECT.COM' logo and the phone number '888-368-7770'.

MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS

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By Ted Panken

Hall Of Fame

52 **Muhai Richard Abrams**

40 Randy Weston

34 Lee Konitz

28 Benny Golson

24 Charlie Haden

24 Ahmad Jamal

23 Don Cherry

23 Oliver Nelson

20 Jimmy Giuffre

20 Herbie Nichols

20 Muddy Waters

13 George Russell

“Interesting,” Muhai Richard Abrams said over the phone upon receiving the news of his election to DownBeat’s Hall of Fame. After a pause, he said it again.

Arrangements were made to speak the following day, and, in conversation at the midtown Manhattan highrise where he has lived since 1977, Abrams explained his laconic response to the honor, bestowed on the heels of his selection as a 2010 NEA Jazz Master.

“Well, why me?” he said. “There are so many worthy people. The only claim I make is that I am a pianist-composer.” He added: “I’m honored that people would want to honor me, and I have no objection, because people have a right to make the decisions they arrive at.”

It was noted that Abrams had communicated

precisely the latter dictum 45 years ago at a series of meetings on Chicago’s South Side where the bylaws and aesthetic guideposts by which the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) continues to operate were debated and established.

“Oh, in terms of individuals being free to be individuals, of course,” Abrams said. “It is a basic principle of human respect.”

Informed of Abrams’ reaction, George Lewis, the Case Professor of Music at Columbia University, who painstakingly traced the contents of these gatherings in *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press), hollered a deep laugh. “‘Why me?’ Are you kidding?” Assured of the quote’s accuracy, Lewis, an AACM mem-

ber since 1971, settled down. “That’s Muhai for you,” he said. “He’s not an ego guy. Originally, the book was supposed to be about him. He said, ‘I think it should be about the entire AACM.’”

Lewis then opined on his mentor’s “Why me?” query. “Muhai transcends genres, categories and the little dustups that often happen in the jazz world,” he said. “He’s his own person. He spent his life reaching out to many musical constituencies. So it makes a lot of sense to have him represent a new way of thinking about the whole idea of jazz. Muhai’s major lesson was that you’d better find your own path, and then, once you do, learn to be part of a group of people that exchange knowledge amongst each other. He provides support for an autodidact way of doing things.”

Hall Of Fame

Legends in jazz, blues and beyond can be elected into the DownBeat Hall of Fame by way of the annual Readers Poll (designated by "R"), Critics Poll ("C") or Veterans Committee ("V"). It all started in 1952 with the Readers. The Critics got into the game later, in 1961, and the Veterans Committee began voting in 2008. With this month's addition of Muhal Richard Abrams, Baby Dodds, Chick Webb, Philly Joe Jones and Billy Eckstine, there are currently 124 DownBeat Hall of Famers, listed below in chronological order of their induction.

1952 Louis Armstrong R	1986 Stan Getz R
1953 Glenn Miller R	Gil Evans C
1954 Stan Kenton R	1987 Lionel Hampton R
1955 Charlie Parker R	Johnny Dodds C
1956 Duke Ellington R	Thad Jones C
1957 Benny Goodman R	Teddy Wilson C
1958 Count Basie R	1988 Jaco Pastorius R
1959 Lester Young R	Kenny Clarke C
1960 Dizzy Gillespie R	1989 Woody Shaw R
1961 Billie Holiday R	Chet Baker C
Coleman Hawkins C	1990 Red Rodney R
1962 Miles Davis R	Mary Lou Williams C
Bix Beiderbecke C	1991 Lee Morgan R
1963 Thelonious Monk R	John Carter C
Jelly Roll Morton C	1992 Maynard Ferguson R
1964 Eric Dolphy R	James P. Johnson C
Art Tatum C	1993 Gerry Mulligan R
1965 John Coltrane R	Ed Blackwell C
Earl Hines C	1994 Dave Brubeck R
1966 Bud Powell R	Frank Zappa C
Charlie Christian C	1995 J.J. Johnson R
1967 Billy Strayhorn R	Julius Hemphill C
Bessie Smith C	1996 Horace Silver R
1968 Wes Montgomery R	Artie Shaw C
Sidney Bechet C	1997 Nat "King" Cole R
Fats Waller C	Tony Williams C
1969 Ornette Coleman R	1998 Elvin Jones C
Pee Wee Russell C	Frank Sinatra R
Jack Teagarden C	1999 Betty Carter C
1970 Jimi Hendrix R	Milt Jackson R
Johnny Hodges C	2000 Lester Bowie C
1971 Charles Mingus R	Clark Terry R
Roy Eldridge C	2001 Milt Hinton C
Django Reinhardt C	Joe Henderson R
1972 Gene Krupa R	John Lewis C
Clifford Brown C	Antonio Carlos Jobim R
1973 Sonny Rollins R	2003 Wayne Shorter C
Fletcher Henderson C	Ray Brown R
1974 Buddy Rich R	Roy Haynes C
Ben Webster C	McCoy Tyner R
1975 Cannonball Adderley R	2005 Steve Lacy C
Cecil Taylor C	Herbie Hancock R
1976 Woody Herman R	2006 Jackie McLean C
King Oliver C	Jimmy Smith R
1977 Paul Desmond R	2007 Andrew Hill C
Benny Carter C	Michael Brecker R
1978 Joe Venuti R	2008 Joe Zawinul C
Rahsaan Roland Kirk C	Jimmy Blanton V
1979 Ella Fitzgerald R	Harry Carney V
Lennie Tristano C	Erroll Garner V
1980 Dexter Gordon R	Jo Jones V
Max Roach C	Jimmie Lunceford V
1981 Art Blakey R	Keith Jarrett R
Bill Evans C	2009 Hank Jones C
1982 Art Pepper R	Oscar Pettiford V
Fats Navarro C	Tadd Dameron V
1983 Stephane Grappelli R	Freddie Hubbard R
Albert Ayler C	2010 Muhal Richard Abrams C
1984 Oscar Peterson R	Baby Dodds V
Sun Ra C	Chick Webb V
1985 Sarah Vaughan R	Philly Joe Jones V
Zoot Sims C	Billy Eckstine V

"I don't characterize myself as a teacher," Abrams remarked. "It's my contention that one teaches oneself. Of course, you pick up information from people whose paths you cross. But I'm mainly self-taught—I found it more satisfying to do it that way."

It is one of Abrams' signal accomplishments to have been the prime mover in spawning a

collaborative infrastructure within which such AACM-trained composer-instrumentalists as Lewis, Roscoe Mitchell, Joseph Jarman, Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill, Leo Smith, Amina Claudine Myers and himself could conceptualize and develop ideas. Another is his own singular corpus, as documented on some 30 recordings that present a world in which blues forms, post-bop themes with jagged intervals, and experimental pieces in which improvising ensembles address text, sound and space coexist in the same breath with through-scored symphonic works, solo piano music, string, saxophone and brass quartets, and electronic music. His arsenal also includes formidable pianistic skills, heard recently on "Dramaturns," an improvised, transidiomatic duo with Lewis on *Streaming* (Pi)—it's one of five performances on which Abrams, Lewis and Mitchell, grouped in duo and trio configurations, draw upon an enormous lexicon of sounds while navigating the open spaces from various angles.

"It's a vintage collaboration," Abrams said of the project. "Our collaborations date back to Chicago, and the respect that transpires between us on the stage, the respect for the improvised space that we use, is special. Of course, they're virtuoso musicians, but I'm talking about silence and activity, when to play and when not to play, just from instinct and feeling and respect."

Asked about influences, Abrams said, "I find different ways of doing things by coming out of the total music picture." His short list includes pianists James P. Johnson, Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Bud Powell, Hank Jones and Herbie Nichols, who "individualized the performance of mainstream music and their own original music"; Vladimir Horowitz and Chopin's piano music; the scores of Hale Smith, William Grant Still, Rachmaninoff, Beethoven and Scriabin, as well as Duke Ellington, Gerald Wilson and Thad Jones. "So many great masters," he said. "Some influenced me less with their music than the consistency and level of truth from practice that's in their stuff."

The influence of Abrams' musical production radiates consequentially outside the AACM circle. Vijay Iyer recalled drawing inspiration from Abrams' small group albums *Colors In 33rd* and *1-OQA+19* (both on Black Saint).

"Muhal was pushing the envelope in every direction, and that openness inspired me," Iyer said. "The approach was in keeping with the language of jazz, but also didn't limit itself in any way; the sense was that any available method of putting sound together should be at your disposal in any context."

"I think my generation clearly heard the effect that the AACM and Muhal had on Steve Coleman and Greg Osby, who played with Muhal," Jason Moran added. "We took some of that energy into the late '90s, and it continues on to today. He defines that free thinking that most jazz musicians say they want to have."

Both Lewis and Moran cite the methodologies of Joseph Schillinger—whose textbooks Abrams pored over during set breaks on late-'50s gigs in Chicago—as a key component of Abrams' pedagogy. "It helped me break the mold of sitting at a piano and thinking what sounds pleasing to my ear, and instead be able to compose away from the instrument—to almost create a different version of yourself," Moran said.

"Schillinger analyzed music as raw material, and learning the possibilities gives you an analytical basis to create anything you want," Abrams said. "It's basic and brilliant. But I don't want to be accused of being driven by what I learned from Schillinger. I am the sum product of the study of a lot of things."

This was manifest at the January 2010 NEA Jazz Masters concert at Rose Theater, when the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, encountering an Abrams opus for the first time, offered a well-wrought performance of "2000 Plus The Twelfth Step," originally composed for the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. As the 15-minute work unfolded, one thought less of the predispositional differences between Abrams and Wynton Marsalis, and instead pondered Abrams' 1977 remark: "A lot of people will pick up on the [AACM's] example and do very well with it ... who those people will be a couple of years from now, who knows?" Indeed, it seems eminently reasonable to discern affinities both in the scope of their compositional interests and their mutual insistence on constructing an institutional superstructure strong enough to withstand the vagaries of the music marketplace.

When asked to comment, Abrams said, "It's two different setups, but both very valid. There's no real underwriting for the music of the streets. Never was. It's very important for an entity to maintain a structure in which work can be expressed to the public, whatever approach or style they use."

For the AACM, he continued, "the organizational structure was necessary to the extent that we were involved in the business of music. But it did not supersede or overshadow the central idea, which was to allow the individuals within the group a forum to express their own particular worlds. There was no hierarchy. Everyone was equal. As time has shown, every individual from that first wave of people came out as a distinct personality in their own right."

"If you want a house with 10,000 rooms, you don't complain because nobody has a house with 10,000 rooms to give you. You build it yourself, and do it with proper respect for the rest of humanity. You're busy working at what you say you are about—doing it for yourself. When you take a different way, people often get the impression that you are against something else. That certainly wasn't true in our case—we never threw anything away."

"I just go as far as the eye can see in all directions. There's no finish to this stuff." **DB**

Veterans Committee Hall Of Fame

A number of important jazz artists who are no longer living clearly deserve to be included in the DownBeat Hall of Fame. Our Veterans Committee, designed specifically to rectify that situation, recently voted to induct four historic jazz legends who have been overlooked in the past.



BABY DODDS *The Pulse*

In Warren “Baby” Dodds, jazz found its first steady pulse—simple, rudimentary and largely overlooked today by those whose sense of history is measured in months or years rather than decades and centuries. But it was Dodds and a handful of other early drummers who broke the first pathways into a basic concept of jazz rhythm. Though rarely a leader himself, he was part of several early recording groups that bent the trajectory of everything to come in jazz history. These included the first Gennett and Okeh records of the King Oliver Creole Jazz Band beginning in April 1923, the Jelly Roll Morton Red Hot Peppers from 1926 and the legendary Louis Armstrong Hot Sevens of May 1927. They spanned a crucial four-year timeline that largely marked the evolution of jazz from an ensemble to a solo art.

Born in New Orleans on Christmas Eve in 1898, Dodds was swept north during the years of the Great Migration and settled in Chicago, which remained his base until the New Orleans Revival took him to New York after the war. In Chicago during the 1920s Dodds recorded prolifically, beginning with all 10 of the 1923 Oliver sessions, widely regarded as the first important records of jazz history. There is much to hear from Dodds on those early Oliver discs, especially considering how little he had to work with. There were no steady ride-cymbal triplets yet, just choked punctuations to mark stop-time breaks or amplify afterbeats. There were no rimshots, either, and the hi-hat had not even been invented. Jazz was still largely a music anchored in quarter notes in which the horns often became their own rhythm section



or relied on piano and banjo. This was partly because acoustic and early electronic recording was adverse to the drums, especially the bass. So Dodds embroidered the heartbeat of the music with light, dancing rhythm figures on the woodblock, whose rapid clip-clop came straight out of New Orleans and could be recorded with remarkable accuracy. Also used by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's Tony Sbarbaro as early as 1917, it became a defining element of early traditional drumming. Dodds produced a similar effect on the washboard.

But Dodds was a creature of jazz antiquity, and when its time passed he seemed to disappear. Dodds went completely unrecorded between 1929 and 1940. By then, though, the swing era had seeded a fresh interest in the origins of the music, and Dodds began a busy decade as an object of living history. Still working in a manner almost completely untouched by the influences of swing drummers Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Chick Webb, Jo Jones and Sid Catlett, he resumed recording at a time when improved technology could now capture details of his style that had been lost in the records of his prime years. In a September 1940 session with Sidney Bechet, the press rolls, terse cymbal splashes and soft, brief flights of fancy on the snare rims, cowbell and woodblock were inscribed with all their more subtle particulars vivid-

ly intact. The fact that Dodds had never outgrown or set aside his New Orleans origins meant that one of the music's formative architects was about to pick up where he had left off as if the '30s had never happened.

By the mid-1940s the cult of Old New Orleans was in full flower, a kind of retro-enclave surrounded by the rampant modernism of bebop. He recorded extensively for a procession of small niche labels dedicated to the purity of traditional styles as they were imagined as the war was ending. One of them was Circle Records, a project of early jazz historian Rudi Blesh. Early in 1946 Dodds recorded two rare extended solos called “Drum Improvisation,” perhaps the truest and most sustained look into the surprisingly delicate art of early jazz percussion, driven by the unswerving pulse of the bass pedal. “Journeys of genius,” Blesh called them. Dodds also appeared weekly on the 1947 *This Is Jazz* radio series, all of which later appeared on record and which constitute his major body of post-war work. As the New Orleans Revival faded in the late '40s, Dodds returned to Chicago and retreated back into lore of jazz history, where he made his last record in 1954. He died five years later in 1959 at 61, his work securely fixed in the basic canon of early recorded jazz.

—John McDonough

CHICK WEBB *The Matrix*

If Baby Dodds' drums gave jazz its first pulse, then it was Chick Webb a generation later who gave the music its first taste of raw, sovereign power. After years in the shadows, the drums suddenly caught fire with the big swing bands of the 1930s. Yet, it is easy to forget these many decades removed that the drummer who actually struck the match was Chick Webb. A congenital hunchback who barely broke 4 feet, he was, by all accounts, a sight and a sound to behold on his throne at the Savoy. In the history of jazz drums, before there was Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich, there was the matrix, Chick Webb.

Krupa may have become the first public face of the quintessential swing drummer. "But Gene's god was Chick Webb," producer and legendary talent guru John Hammond told me in a 1967 interview. It was Webb, Hammond said, who really showed how a brass and reed section could be piloted and propelled from the drum chair. No one was in a better position, either, because his was the first important big band to actually be led by a drummer. Yet, his legacy has been largely trapped in a curious confluence of mortality, technology and—yes—success.

Born in 1907, his strong personality made him a natural leader among musicians from the beginning. The one thing he lacked was time. He died in July 1939 at age 32 of tuberculosis during the height of his fame. In surveying the evidence of his recorded work, his early 1927-'34 recordings for Brunswick and Columbia provide only a hazy picture. Drum solos were tricky to record and thus discouraged. More to the point, Webb's goal was to build a total band, not a personal showcase. So his work typically played discreetly within the sleek ensembles fashioned by his chief musical architect, Edgar Sampson.

Webb's reputation among New York musicians began to build seriously after 1933 when he and his orchestra settled into the Savoy Ballroom on 140th Street and Lenox Avenue as house band, a gig he would hold, with many sabbaticals for touring, until his death. It was at the Savoy where the Webb legend among musicians really was born, especially when guest bands such as Ellington, Basie and Goodman would come in, challenge the home team and ratchet up the heat. When Decca Records was formed in the fall of 1934, Webb was promptly signed and began his fast rise to national success.

That success, however, was largely due to the popularity of the teenage singer he added in the spring of 1935: Ella Fitzgerald. Her immense popularity turned the band inside-out. With few exceptions, the Webb orchestra that record buy-



ers heard from then on was simply the band that backed Fitzgerald. From Decca's viewpoint, *she* was the star. Almost immediately, nearly every Webb disc featured her vocals on commercial and often puerile songs. When "A-Tiskit, A-Taskit" swept the country in 1938, the Chick Webb band became hostage to her success.

Still, there are a handful of Decca instrumentals and a few World Transcriptions that give some sense of the command Webb could project from the drums. To understand his power to drive and shape a band and to imagine the Dionysian turmoil he could stir up on the floor of the Savoy, consult such instrumentals as "Go Harlem," "Harlem Congo," "Naughty Waltz," "Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie," "Liza," or "King Porter Stomp." His brief, crackling solos are like hand grenades of rapid, furious precision. Had more showstoppers such as these been recorded, Webb would surely be remembered more directly for his genius as a drummer rather than indirectly through the influence he projected through Krupa, Rich and many others who had the opportunity—and the time—to become stars and record the evidence.

When Webb died, the band remained at the Savoy and at Decca, officially becoming what it had, in fact, already become: Ella Fitzgerald and her Orchestra. Premature death, of course, is no guarantee of obscurity in a jazz legend, as Bix Beiderbecke, Charlie Christian and Charlie Parker can attest from their pedestals in Valhalla. But they didn't have Fitzgerald to contend with. So while the world may remember Webb as the bandleader who bequeathed to posterity perhaps the greatest singer who ever lived—hardly not the worst thing to be remembered for—the DownBeat Hall of Fame properly (if belatedly) welcomes him as the man who distilled and defined the essence of great big band drumming at the moment it counted most.

—John McDonough

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PHILLY JOE JONES

The Third Man

With Philly Joe Jones, *DownBeat* puts into his proper place the third man of the great triumvirate of hard-bop drummers of the 1950s—the ones who made the final break with the swing generation and solidified the nervous, polyrhythmic, edgy essence of modern jazz percussion. First to the trilogy was Max Roach. Then Art Blakey. And now comes Joseph Rudolph Jones, born in Philadelphia in July 1923.

Roach and Blakey are remembered today as drum “brands” because they fashioned much of their best work as leaders in groups that bore their names and their visions. Jones, on the other hand, logged about 245 career sessions between 1948 and 1985, but only 17 percent of them as leader—mainly a cluster of Riverside and Atlantic albums in the late ’50s and early ’60s and a series of European dates later on. Yet, it hardly mattered, because he was defined most famously by his work in one of the most luminous working groups in the history of jazz.

In the mid-1950s the Miles Davis Quintet was becoming the most elevated and restless test track in music. While Davis and John Coltrane were extending the conceptual perimeters of the front line, Jones was not-so-quietly reshuffling the resources by which the drummer shaped and managed the thrust of the music. Rhythm is an elusive concept to reduce to words, sometimes because it is often more felt than noted. It was hard not to note Philly Joe, though. He was not one to lurk in the background. Critic John S. Wilson heard in his playing a “cacophonous, battering drum style.” But in 1959 Whitney Balliett in *The New Yorker* caught a more subtle method in his madness. He is, Balliett wrote, “like any revolutionist, both a violent development of the best of Roach and Blakey and a throwback to earlier methods [Dave Tough and Buddy Rich]. He is a master of silence, dynamics and surprise. He will keep a steady, unobtrusive beat on the ride cymbal, repeatedly dotting it with flickering snare-drum accents, and, like Blakey, occasionally heighten it with double-time excursions, which, however, do not expunge the original beat, but, instead, set up a fascinating undertow beneath the basic rhythm.”

While Jones’ place in the “classic” Davis combo certainly fastened his profile in the music’s upper pantheon, he was no stranger to the scene beforehand. In his mid-teens at the height of the swing period, he was weaned on the likes of Buddy Rich, Cozy Cole, Jo Jones, O’Neill Spencer and, above all, Sid Catlett. In New York by the late ’40s, he fell in with the early bebop generation, especially Tadd Dameron. By 1953 he started turning up on occasional Blue Note and Prestige sessions.



Probably the most storied was the Miles Davis All-Stars date of January 1953, which found Jones not only in his first studio encounter with Davis but also Sonny Rollins and Charlie Parker, both playing tenors. It was, by most accounts, a scene of some disarray, but Jones’ playing on the medium-tempo “Serpent’s Tooth” was a conspicuous example of measured aggression that penetrated deeply into the music with striking authority without ever falling out of register or competing with it.

Davis and Jones would resume their partnership in June 1955, and then with the quintet in October, in which Jones would become linked forever with his rhythm section mates, Paul Chambers and Red Garland. He was there for the group’s startling arc of growth from the informal but prolific Prestige sessions to the more concept-oriented Columbia albums

Milestones, *Round About Midnight* and *Porgy & Bess*. Concurrently, he also freelanced on several celebrated dates, including Coltrane’s 1957 *Blue Trane* session for Blue Note and the Rollins-Coltrane *Tenor Madness* Prestige date. It was a heady time.

He left Davis with a relatively prominent name within an increasingly insular jazz world in the spring of 1958 to form his own group, while also doing frequent sideman dates with Bill Evans, Dexter Gordon, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, Ben Webster, and later in Europe with Archie Shepp. It was a varied menu, indeed. In the years before his death in 1985 at 62, Jones focused intensely on the music of Dameron. Both Davis and Evans would later go on record citing Jones as the best drummer they ever worked with. He had the touch.

—John McDonough

BILLY ECKSTINE

More Than A Voice

The jazz world is loath to forgive those of its own who have forsaken it for the wider, richer but often lower lures of commercial success. Nat Cole, Quincy Jones and a few others have all felt that distinct chill. And so did Billy Eckstine, but only after failing with great nobility as leader of perhaps the hippest, most leading-edge (if least documented) big band of the mid-1940s.

More about that in a moment, though.

Eckstine came to music and made his greatest mark as a ballad singer, a distinct achievement that produced an impressive succession of inheritors including Joe Williams and Johnny Hartman, and later Lou Rawls and Kevin Mahogany. All built on what he had done. This is because it was Eckstine, more than any other single performer outside of Nat Cole, whose striking good looks and downy baritone expanded the field of opportunity for black singers from blues and jive tunes to the intimate romantic ballad.

There had been a few who tried in the '30s. In a handful of vocal efforts by Benny Carter, in fact, you'll find a remarkable similarity to Bing Crosby's smooth baritone style. But the race codes of the time did not recognize the black singer as an agent of intimacy or romance. "It sounds ridiculous, but it's true," Eckstine told writer Lee Jeske years later. "We weren't supposed to sing about love. We were supposed to sing about work or blues and some dumb crap."

Eckstine joined Earl Hines in 1940 to do romantic ballads. But it was that "dumb crap" that landed him his first big hit with the band, a blues with a country accent called "Jelly Jelly." At exactly the same time, Duke Ellington was using a handsome baritone of his own for ballad material, Herb Jeffries. Together they were the Ray Eberles and Frank Sinatras of the black music world. It would be Jeffries who would make the romantic breakthrough with his rather arch 1941 hit "Flamingo." But Eckstine would be the one to build on that breakthrough and turn it into a sustaining genre.

When success with Hines made him a star by the mid-1940s, the only question was whether to go out as a single, as Sinatra had, or to become a singing bandleader in the Cab Calloway tradition. In May 1944 he chose the bandleader route and took with him from Hines Dizzy Gillespie and Budd Johnson, who became joint music directors, as well as Charlie Parker. There was never any question as to whether the band would be a sweet dance orchestra or a swinging jazz unit. It would be both, as most of the best bands were. The surprise, perhaps, was how deeply a band fronted by a handsome singer reflected the modern insurgency of bebop. (Parker left before



any recordings, commercial or otherwise, got made. The only surviving meeting between the two came in a privately recorded jam session in 1943 with Eckstine on trumpet, a skill he honed in the Hines band.)

The 41 recordings of the Eckstine big band between April 1944 and April 1947 for various small labels (available complete today in *The Legendary Big Band Of Billy Eckstine* on Savoy Jazz) are his most enduring single legacy to jazz. At various times the personnel included an astounding procession of eager post-war talent: Gillespie, Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons, Wardell Gray, Fats Navarro, Sonny Criss and Sarah Vaughan. This was the band that produced the original "Blowing The Blues Away" with the great tenor exchanges between Gordon and Ammons. At the same time, it was here that Eckstine began to overturn the expectations that a black singer could only sing the blues. There were luscious renditions of "A Cottage For Sale," "Prisoner Of Love," "What's News" as well as occasional crossovers to bop-pish scat pieces ("Rhythm In A Riff"). His ability to move with complete poise and distinction between jazz and popular forms became an inspiration to many, including Quincy Jones.

After 1947 Eckstine gave up the band and went on to greater heights as a sophisticated popular singer, gaining the career momentum that would sustain him as a headliner for the rest of his life. But he never cut his ties to the jazz world, reuniting with Gillespie at Newport/New York in 1972 and recording projects with Count Basie, Vaughan, and his final session in 1986 with Benny Carter. Until his death in March 1993 at 78, "Mr. B" was one singer who was always welcome in any gathering of the greatest musicians.

—John McDonough

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KEITH JARRETT & CHARLIE HADEN

Rare Collaborators

By Howard Mandel

Keith Jarrett is a grand romantic pianist. Trim and youthful at age 65, he's one of the most popular and critically acclaimed international concert stars of the past 40 years. His audiences come from across all music genres to hear a man who shuns trends and gimmicks in pursuit of spontaneous, transcendent beauty.

Jarrett proudly makes this music himself. Since *Facing You*, his first album released in 1971 by ECM (which has issued his every legitimate recording thereafter), solo piano performance has been a focus of his attention, though not the only one. Over the decades he's engaged in some highly creative relationships, but also pared these collaborative associations to a very few. Which makes the return of bassist Charlie Haden after 34 years to Jarrett's side on a newly released recording—*Jasmine*, an extraordinary collection of duets recorded in 2007—one of the most gratifying surprises and significant reunions of the year.

Prior to *Jasmine*, the only musicians to have recorded with Jarrett since 1985 were bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette, the stalwarts of his Standards Trio. But Jarrett and Haden share a long history. The pianist famously emerged in the late '60s from Charles Lloyd's quartet to join Miles Davis during his halcyon *Bitches Brew*—*Live/ Evil* era. He recorded his debut as a leader, *Life Between The Exit Signs*, in 1967—and Haden was there at the start, bassist with drummer Paul Motian in Jarrett's trio.

Those three recorded live at Shelley's Manne-Hole in 1968, and again with saxophonist Dewey Redman in 1971, initiating Jarrett's American Quartet. That ensemble exemplified the rugged, experimental nature of its era. Jarrett dabbled with soprano saxophone, steel drum, conga and Pakistani flute besides piano; Redman sometimes played clarinet or musette instead of tenor, and Haden once (only once!) hooked his upright instrument up to a wah-wah pedal, for "Mortgage On My Soul."

The American Quartet performed and recorded together until 1977, Haden also cutting a date with the Lee Konitz-Chet Baker-Keith Jarrett Quintet. Haden had Jarrett on *Closeness*, his own duets album in 1976, including their ballad "Ellen

David." He accompanied Jarrett and the Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart, on *Arbour Zena*, which also featured Jan Gabarek, the Norwegian saxophonist with whom Jarrett formed his European Quartet in 1977. The American foursome had come to its end. Jarrett recorded in '77 under the auspices of the Gary Peacock Trio, with Jack DeJohnette, for release by ECM.

From then to now, Jarrett and Haden shared no public profile. The two remained in touch but followed divergent paths. Their first steps towards getting together were not about performing or recording: Jarrett asked Haden to be interviewed for the 2005 documentary film *Keith Jarrett: The Art of Improvisation*, and Haden asked Jarrett to do the same for *Charlie Haden: Rambling Boy*, the bio-doc released in 2009. That movie's climax is a sequence shot in Jarrett's home studio of the two musicians making music, impromptu.

"I told Charlie I'd talk, not play," Jarrett recalled of that meeting during a recent phone call.

"I went with the film crew and my wife, Ruth, to see Keith interviewed," Haden remembered, speaking from California, "and Ruth said, 'Put your bass in the car.' After the interview, Keith asked me, 'Do you have your bass in the car? Bring it in!' We started playing and it was unreal. They started filming it. After we finished, Keith hugged me and said, 'This was magical. You've got to come back. We're going to record.'"

The episode in *Rambling Boy* is uniquely free-flowing and close-up. At points the camera seems to be in Jarrett's lap. "We were having enough fun playing that it didn't matter what they did," said the pianist, who has a reputation for being sensitive about disturbances during performances. "I hadn't played with Charlie or thought about playing with him for 33 years. Charlie wasn't clean most of the time I had the American Quartet. This was the

first time we worked together when he was cool, when everything was all right for him. It made a big difference."

Haden's past struggles with substance abuse are well known. So is his devotion to his art. "I felt we took up where we left off," the bassist said about the day they were filmed. "We both have the same musical values."

Did he find Jarrett's music changed after 33 years? "It's just gotten deeper," Haden claimed. "We feel the same way about improvisation: It's like your whole being is concentrating, and you want to play something that's never been played before, to put your life on the line. That's the way he plays. And he really put a lot of thought into everything that had to do with this record. He did that when we had the quartet, too."

The Jarrett-Haden session occurred just as in *Rambling Boy*, at Jarrett's place. According to Jarrett, "I called Charlie and said, 'We've got to do this, record, but without worrying about whether or when it will be released.'" He didn't tell Manfred Eicher, his ECM producer, of the session for two years.

"I thought this is something that very likely would not come out," Jarrett explained. "My studio is not meant for this kind of recording, it's too small. But I brought in Martin Weiland, my favorite sound engineer, from Switzerland. He took out the problematic things about the piano and brought out the good things about the piano very slightly, with just a tiny, tiny bit of echo. At first he had added more, but I said, 'No, we want it dry, just the way it is.' Martin made it work."

"Charlie and I were there with the same intention. We wanted to hear exactly what we heard when we played. I had to play to the dynamics presented. With a drummer there's a whole different set of dynamics. Usually I'm the one who's hard to hear, but in this case I used the soft pedal a lot, to play the volume down to Charlie's level. And Charlie tried to blend his dynamics up to mine."

"You know when you're playing in a certain room why you play a phrase with a certain dy-

Piano

112 Keith Jarrett

- 52 Kenny Barron
- 51 Hank Jones
- 51 Brad Mehldau
- 51 Jason Moran
- 33 Herbie Hancock
- 32 Vijay Iyer
- 30 McCoy Tyner
- 24 Geri Allen
- 24 Cecil Taylor
- 23 Myra Melford
- 20 Chick Corea

namic, because you're actually in the room with it and you can hear the room. But when you leave the room and the dynamic is messed with in a mix, you can lose reality. You wonder, 'Why would I play that loud or that soft there?' On *Jasmine*, you hear it as it was in the room's ambiance, and it makes sense.

"Listen to the sound of Charlie's bass on the record, for example. It has his depth without heaviness. That's Charlie's sound," Jarrett announced with satisfaction. "I think he felt it was the best

he'd been recorded."

Haden concurred. "When I sat and listened, heard the clarity and brilliance of the sound—I mean, you can hear Keith's fingers on the keys, the mallets hitting the strings of the piano, my fingers on the neckboard!"

Jarrett resumed: "I don't like to mess with purity when it's already there. Charlie and I knew what we felt when we worked on the film, and we didn't want to mess with that. I was not going to say, 'Let's play free,' or something like that. I don't

really like duos and I don't like chamber music in general, so I had to find my way into this such that it would have everything jazz has, the essence of it, but without a drummer. I think what we did was manage to make a statement not about how to play in duo without a drummer, but how to play music *as though there are no drummers*. It takes two people who have incredible time not to rely on somebody hitting things, making cymbal sounds.

"Charlie's virtue is the quality of his listening while he plays. He's developed the center, the core, from the listener's point of view. Even if he's not given chords, he still knows how to move along with the soloist."

How does playing with Haden compare to playing with Gary Peacock?

"It's apples and oranges," Jarrett said quickly. "They haven't had the same kind of musical education, for one thing. Gary's contribution to music has been very technical; he raised the bar back in the '60s by attacking the challenges with passion, and taking risks.

"He's a hero for me, in part because he's gone through so much physical craziness [a bout of cancer, a serious operation, hearing loss] and he's a decade older than I am. But Gary and I have never played duos. One thing about him is that he is not attuned to lyrics. A couple of years ago he asked me, 'Keith, do you know the lyrics to all these ballads?' He had finally figured out how I could be phrasing the way I do.

"Charlie listens to singers, and so do I. He's very aware of lyrics, maybe because he started out as a singer. Due to that, I thought ballads would be good for both of us, because we know what they're about. If you know the thrust of the message of a piece, it really helps.

"I wouldn't call Charlie a technician, but he's so good at what he does *he has* to be a technician," Jarrett asserted. "At one point he looked over at me and said, 'Keith, I had no idea you have such good time, I don't remember that about you.' To which I answered, 'You *and* I have impeccable time.' It's easier to know that about a bassist than a pianist, because a pianist can phrase outside the beat while the bassist has to stay with it. You might notice on the record that Charlie and I always know where the 'one' is. Whatever we're doing, we come in together almost as if someone's conducting. Even after the double-time parts."

Jasmine has an intense yet understated sway that Jarrett suggests will have couples dancing intimately in their living rooms. Its mood is reflective and tender, reminiscent of *The Melody*, *At Night*, *With You*, the solo album he recorded in his home in 1999 after recovering sufficiently from myalgic encephalomyelitis (aka, chronic fatigue syndrome), which had stricken him in 1996. As such, *Jasmine* is a far cry from *Testament*, his previous double album of solo Paris and London concerts from Nov. 26 and Dec. 1, 2008, respectively. Those were his first public performances after being left by his wife of 20 years. Like all of

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BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

Jarrett's solo concerts, they are models of transparency, of virtually unmediated expression. In London, he was inspired to conjure unusual atonal stretches. But he tries not to edit himself in solo performance—spontaneity is his whole point.

"This is what I do. This is who I am," he had said during an interview conducted in autumn 2009 at his home in the New Jersey woodlands, about 50 miles from New York City. "It's a ritual that I sort of invented, and also a bio-feedback mechanism for me. I don't actually know how I'm doing sometimes until I hear what just came out from my hands."

If such description makes Jarrett's solo discipline seem self-absorbed, his duos with Haden are explicitly a gift intended to be people-pleasing. In liner notes to *Jasmine* Jarrett wrote, "It [the album] is not for us alone; it is also made for you, the listener, to feel these same feelings along with us, to participate and to also be uplifted by it. ... Here is some music for you. Take it and it's yours."

So why surround the project with secrecy? Why did it wait three years to be released? Jarrett wanted to get it just right.

"I was responsible for the first year-and-a-half," he acknowledged. "I think Charlie simply wanted to get the album out, then I think he realized, 'Keith does these things methodically; I'll trust him,' and he became a great ally working

on this. I don't think I'll ever have a better partner choosing tracks.

"Usually a jazz player will say, 'I didn't like how I played on this one, let's use the other take.' But in the end we chose the music that kept its integrity throughout the entire track, and the virtuoso or solo concept became secondary."

Haden had never played "Where Could I Go Without You," "One Day I'll Fly Away" and "Don't Ever Leave Me" prior to the sessions. "We didn't rehearse," he said. "Keith wrote down some chords for me, and turned on the machine. These tracks, we agreed, were our most consistently perfect." He laughed. "We accepted the imperfection of perfection."

"Over three years," Jarrett said, "we spent nighttime after nighttime listening to the songs. I'm sure I listened to them hundreds of times. I never got tired of them. Charlie's told me he did the same thing. He'd do a session, or teach, then come home, get ready for bed and put on our duo thing. It was a kind of grounding for him.

"After two years we told Manfred about the tapes and let him hear them. Then he and Charlie and I had arguments about the takes. OK, so we'd listen and investigate some more. I'd say, 'We're talking about the overall feeling of the track, not one moment of the track. Does it actually speak with continual integrity?' In the end, everybody

agreed with everybody. Luckily, the final selections were the ones I chose. I'm good at that."

He's also expert at sequencing songs—a challenge in this case because the pieces were in similar tempos and the same keys, yet of varying lengths. "The way it finally popped out, after all the trial versions I made, was completely irrational, but just right," Jarrett said. "It was like going nuts for three years, then going very sane.

"That first E-flat chord after the B-flat pickup, where we come in together on 'For All We Know,' that's the beginning of something. It *had* to be first. From there, 'Where Can I Go Without You' is almost the same tempo, almost the same length. Then there are two shorter pieces [the uptempo 'No Moon At All' and 'One Day I'll Fly Away'], two longer tracks side by side [including a definitive 'Body And Soul'], a medium-long version of 'Goodbye' and a short 'Don't Ever Leave Me.' When I arrived at that, I knew there was no way it could be better."

"When Keith sent me the order of the songs, then called me, I said, 'Man, how did you ever figure this out?'" Haden enthused. "It's really perfect!"

"An incredible amount of work went into the sequencing," Jarrett sighed. "People have no idea what I put into every release. They really don't."

Charlie Haden does.

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DARCY JAMES ARGUE

Changing Attitudes

By Howard Mandel

Composer/conductor/ring-leader Darcy James Argue, age 35, has won the Down Beat Critics Poll as Rising Star in the Big Band, Composer and Arranger categories for the music of his Secret Society, which in 2009 issued its debut *Infernal Machines* on the independent New Amsterdam label. Argue's victory was a good bet, based on the wave of critical ac-

claim his album has earned, the support he's enjoyed from prestigious institutions including BMI, Meet the Composer, the American Music Center and the Canadian Council on the Arts, and the attention he's gained over the past five years while his ensemble sound has cohered and he's deftly used the Internet to offer free MP3 downloads of music from the band's early gigs.

His sound has been dubbed "steampunk," in reference to the 1980s science fiction subgenre that asks what if unlikely inventions were available during lower-tech eras. But Argue's compositions are not throwbacks. They comprise a future-forward blend of dramatic narrative structures, spiky and tart improvising soloists, rich and often dark ensemble colors, contemporary grooves and minimalist compositional devices, while maintaining links to the progressively cool school.

"My first jazz record was Miles Davis' soundtrack to *Siesta*," Argue said in a telephone interview from his Brooklyn apartment. "I also discovered Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Big Band records around then, and Charlie Parker's Dial recordings. I loved this stuff. I found it to be as thrilling as Guns 'N' Roses' *Appetite For Destruction*, Living Colour's *Vivid* or any of the other rock I was into at the time.

"I never envisioned I would be the big band guy," he continued. "I blame that on Bob Brookmeyer. I had a reasonable local career as piano player and composer for small groups in Montreal when he invited me to come study at New England Conservatory. That's when I became a lapsed piano player and full-time big band composer, for better or worse."

Argue was being wry, of course, but a sense of being drawn into something rather unexpectedly complex—if surprisingly successful—pervades his music and his story. Like a novelist, he envisions and tries to express what he finds as multiple layers of plot, mood, cause and effect.

For instance, here's his explanation of his changing attitudes about musical purity: "I learned somehow



JACK MARGOLIS/FRONTROW PHOTOS

that if you were going to be a jazz musician you had to listen to jazz exclusively, with maybe a little bit of classical music. But then I realized jazz is so incredibly influential in all sorts of under-recognized and subtle ways that trying to wall it off from popular culture, to make it a museum piece to be appreciated rather than music that's going to change your life, is clearly misguided."

Of *Infernal Machines*, he said, "It's been kind of surreal, but incredibly gratifying, the extent of popular impact the record has had. The reaction to it has been beyond any reasonable expectation we had when we went into the studio. I was just hoping to get something out there. I figured it would be like everyone's first record: a business card to hand out, maybe opening doors at some different venues or festivals. I couldn't imagine we'd be on all those 10-best lists, or win this poll. It's a little scary. It raises the game in terms of what to do next. Which is great, but ..." he trailed off before reclaiming his point. "It puts the band in a new world, transformed from my own private addiction into something a little larger."

Such self-deprecation is an Argue trademark. He called his establishment of the Web site SecretSocietyMusic.org "a fortuitous

coincidence. I needed to set up a Web site for the band quickly before our first gig at CBGB way back when. I could set up a temporary site because I knew the software. My girlfriend was a blogger, and I realized I should use the site as a blog. It took on a life of its own," becoming a guide to the perplexed about new developments in instrumental music, and not only his own.

"Blogging is a way of communicating with people and humanizing the music," Argue explained. "It's kind of different from the way people are used to communicating with jazz artists. I'm not distant, mysterious, or standoffish; I don't think that approach flies anymore. There's an expectation of full access to artists and to their 140-character thoughts online now."

He doesn't believe, however, that visitors to his blog are hanging on his every word. "For me, the most important thing about having a Web site was being able to record live shows, put them up shortly thereafter, have the documentation and get the music out. 'Hey, we played a gig, a handful of people showed up, but here's what it sounded like.' That message is powerful." Powerful enough, obviously, to attract audiences, including critics who like what they hear.

DB

Big Band RISING STAR

80 Darcy James Argue's Secret Society

- 61 John Hollenbeck
Large Ensemble
- 33 Charles Tolliver Orchestra
- 31 Jason Lindner Big Band
- 22 Roy Hargrove Big Band
- 20 Marcus Shelby
Jazz Orchestra
- 19 Steven Bernstein Millennial
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- 19 Satoko Fujii Orchestra
- 16 Bob Mintzer Big Band
- 15 Exploding Star Orchestra
- 14 Chicago Philharmonic
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- 28 Ben Allison
- 28 Rudresh Mahanthappa
- 17 Steve Lehman
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- 13 Dave Douglas
- 13 Jason Moran
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- 23 Guillermo Klein
- 21 Ted Nash
- 20 Marcus Shelby
- 19 Gordon Goodwin
- 16 Billy Childs
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- 15 Uri Caine
- 15 Dafnis Prieto

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VIJAY IYER

Communication Counts

By Aaron Cohen

Shortly before Vijay Iyer performed at the London Jazz Festival last year, he wrote an article for the British newspaper *The Guardian* that, initially, he didn't want to do. The pianist had asked to write about music, but the editors insisted it be about the combination of that art with mathematics. He's more than qualified to describe both, with prestigious undergraduate and graduate degrees in the sciences and accomplishments in jazz that include two of this year's DownBeat Critics Poll awards. So, he says with a laugh, "I worked hard to make it non-threatening."

As it turned out, the resulting article (available on his Web site, vijay-iyer.com) reaffirms why Iyer is such an extraordinary musician and conceptualist. He set out to explain 13th century Italian mathematician Fibonacci's numerical sequence and how its scaling property connects to everything from John Coltrane and Steve Coleman's pitch ratios to the Egyptian Pyramids to Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean." All of which is written to engage: Essentially, he makes quantitative analysis do the moonwalk.

The same principle is true for his trio's disc, *Historicity*, which has been named Jazz Album of the Year. While Iyer's article describes the asymmetry in his group's interpretation of Ronnie Foster's "Mystic Brew," the recording sounds conversational. In some key regards, it's his continuation of concepts that echo Coleman, George Lewis and Muhal Richard Abrams, all of whom emphasized compositional originality along with game plans to make it all work.

"As a composer/performer, you can offer a vision of music that's building on what came before, but drawing on as broad a spectrum of information that you can put your hands on," Iyer said when asked about this lineage. "It doesn't mean that being influenced by Olivier Messiaen means that you're aligning yourself with that person. It's information that you have. I think of music as the history of ideas as much as anything else. People make discoveries in the course of working on this music all day and every day. We should learn from those things. We're not doomed to repeat what's already discovered."

Iyer's trio with bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Marcus Gilmore plays out new discoveries as they unfold. With Iyer's studying the violin for 15 years, it would seem that he would have an affinity for Crump's countermelodies. He does say, "Something is happening with the application of arco to the trio format in our group that's a welcome surprise—to not just act soloistically, but anchor things, be a different kind of way in to the rhythm section." But Iyer also says that it's Crump's playing that inspires him.



Stephan Crump (left), Marcus Gilmore and Vijay Iyer

"Stephan has been bold in offering these things in the course of performance, which is one thing that I like about him. He won't do what's expected. At the most intense point he'll drop out all of a sudden, then he'll get the bow and play these long tones and you realize it opens the sonic space in a different way."

Even though Gilmore is the youngest member of the trio by almost a generation, Iyer said he's learned as much from the drummer, particularly what he calls "the liquidity in his playing."

"It's not about patterns, or about genre or style. It's coming from a deep place inside him. He's so centered as an artist, it's stunning to watch, almost feels like it came from another planet. He's so balanced. Everything is in service of the music and everything is so refreshing with clarity, originality and purpose. Marcus shares something with his grandfather [Roy Haynes]: not copied licks, it's a generative sensibility, always creating, always inventing. Always something new coming out of him that suits the moment and is full of purpose. You hear that in Roy Haynes' ride cymbal and in Marcus' ride cymbal."

In a departure from the trio, Iyer recently recorded his first solo disc, *Solo*, which is due out later this year (on ACT). Along with five originals, Iyer also interprets Coleman, Duke Ellington and Michael Jackson's "Human Nature."

"There are plenty of piano players out there who are way more virtuosic than I am, and it's not an attempt to put that kind of thing on display, but I hope it creates a statement." **DB**

Jazz Album of the Year

58 Vijay Iyer Trio, *Historicity* (ACT)

- 55 Joe Lovano *Us Five, Folk Art* (Blue Note)
- 37 Miguel Zenón, *Esta Plena* (Marsalis)
- 28 Henry Threadgill, *This Brings Us To, Vol. 1* (Pi)
- 23 Allen Toussaint, *Bright Mississippi* (Nonesuch)
- 21 Darcy James Argue, *Infernal Machines* (New Amsterdam)
- 18 Keith Jarrett, *Paris/London Testament* (ECM)
- 17 Tomasz Stanko, *Dark Eyes* (ECM)
- 13 Branford Marsalis Quartet, *Metamorphosen* (Marsalis Music)
- 11 Wadada Leo Smith, *Spiritual Dimensions* (Cuneiform)
- 10 Brian Lynch Afro Cuban Jazz Orchestra, *Bolero Nights For Billie Holiday* (Venus)

Jazz Group RISING STAR

49 Vijay Iyer Trio

- 39 Mostly Other People Do The Killing
- 28 Miguel Zenón Quartet
- 25 Fly
- 23 Matt Wilson Arts & Crafts
- 22 Rudresh Mahanthappa Indo-Pak Coalition
- 18 Kneebody
- 16 Plunge
- 13 Mary Halvorson Trio
- 10 Joe Locke Force Of Four
- 7 Gerald Clayton Trio
- 7 Robert Glasper Trio



Harry Connick, Jr., Chick Corea,
Dianne Reeves, Ahmad Jamal,
Angelique Kidjo, Roy Hargrove,
Billy Childs, Les Nubians,
Roy Haynes, Kronos Quartet,
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ECM Records



Roberta Gambarini



Luis Bonilla



Anat Cohen



Jeremy Pelt

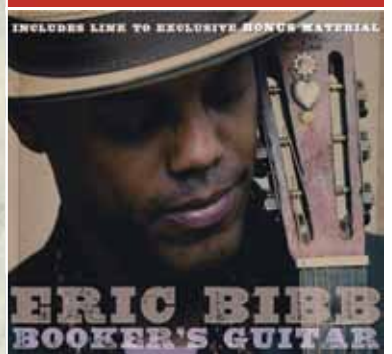
58TH ANNUAL CRITICS POLL COMPLETE RESULTS



Marcus Strickland



Hamid Drake



Historical Release

76 Ella Fitzgerald, *Twelve Nights In Hollywood* (Hip-O Select)

- 63 Freddie Hubbard, *Without A Song* (Blue Note)
- 56 Louis Armstrong, *Complete Louis Armstrong Decca Sessions* (Mosaic)
- 35 Tony Bennett & Bill Evans, *The Complete Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Recordings* (Concord)
- 24 John Coltrane, *Side Steps* (Concord)
- 22 Billie Holiday, *Complete Commodore & Decca Masters* (Hip-O Select)
- 21 Don Cherry-Nana Vasconcelos-Collin Wolcott, *Codona* (ECM)
- 20 Miles Davis, *Complete Columbia Album Collection* (Legacy)
- 14 Philly Joe Jones' Dameronia, *Look, Stop And Listen* (Uptown)
- 11 Artie Shaw, *Classic Bluebird And Victor Sessions* (Mosaic)
- 10 Charles Mingus/Eric Dolphy Sextet, *Complete Live In Amsterdam* (Phantom)
- 10 Denny Zeitlin, *Columbia Studio Trio Sessions* (Mosaic)

Jazz Artist

RISING STAR

- 50 Anat Cohen
- 42 Esperanza Spalding
- 40 Vijay Iyer
- 33 Robert Glasper
- 25 Lionel Loueke
- 24 Miguel Zenón
- 21 Christian Scott
- 19 Darcy James Argue
- 19 Miguel Zenón
- 16 Mary Halvorson
- 16 Ted Nash
- 11 Julian Lage

Big Band

125 Maria Schneider Orchestra

- 69 Mingus Big Band
- 68 Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra
- 56 Vanguard Jazz Orchestra
- 46 Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra

- 33 ICP Orchestra
- 27 Charles Tolliver Big Band
- 24 Roy Hargrove Big Band
- 21 WDR Big Band
- 21 Gerald Wilson Orchestra
- 16 Dave Holland Big Band
- 15 Bill Holman Big Band
- 15 Vienna Art Orchestra

Trumpet

- 83 Dave Douglas
- 78 Wynton Marsalis
- 68 Terence Blanchard
- 47 Tomasz Stanko
- 46 Tom Harrell
- 41 Roy Hargrove
- 37 Nicholas Payton
- 36 Enrico Rava
- 36 Wadada Leo Smith
- 35 Terrell Stafford
- 23 Brian Lynch
- 20 Jon Faddis

Trumpet

RISING STAR

- 71 Jeremy Pelt
- 48 Christian Scott
- 43 Peter Evans
- 43 Sean Jones
- 39 Ambrose Akinmusire
- 29 Taylor Ho Bynum
- 29 Ingrid Jensen
- 23 Joshua Berman
- 21 Cuong Vu
- 17 Maurice Brown
- 16 Dominick Farinacci
- 15 Avishai Cohen

Trombone

- 106 Roswell Rudd
- 102 Steve Turre
- 84 Wycliffe Gordon
- 81 Conrad Herwig
- 64 Robin Eubanks
- 43 Ray Anderson
- 42 George Lewis
- 34 Bob Brookmeyer
- 21 Steve Davis
- 21 Wayne Wallace
- 18 Jeb Bishop
- 17 Steve Swell

Trombone

RISING STAR

- 41 Luis Bonilla
- 39 Marshall Gilkes
- 36 Josh Roseman
- 35 Jeb Bishop
- 35 Steve Davis
- 29 Vincent Gardner
- 25 Alan Ferber
- 24 Scott Whitfield
- 21 Gianluca Petrella
- 21 Wayne Wallace
- 20 Troy Andrews

- 16 Chris Washburne

Soprano Saxophone

- 120 Wayne Shorter
- 101 Branford Marsalis
- 76 Dave Liebman
- 70 Evan Parker
- 67 Jane Bunnett
- 51 Jane Ira Bloom
- 35 Chris Potter
- 31 Steve Wilson
- 21 Roscoe Mitchell
- 19 Anat Cohen
- 19 Sam Newsome
- 19 Joshua Redman

Soprano Saxophone

RISING STAR

- 77 Anat Cohen
- 68 Marcus Strickland
- 50 Steve Wilson
- 29 Sam Newsome
- 28 Ravi Coltrane
- 25 Michael Blake
- 22 Chris Potter
- 20 Jane Bunnett
- 18 Jane Ira Bloom
- 17 Donny McCaslin
- 15 Ted Nash
- 13 John Butcher

Alto Saxophone

- 125 Lee Konitz
- 121 Ornette Coleman
- 87 Phil Woods
- 53 Kenny Garrett
- 52 Rudresh Mahanthappa
- 39 Miguel Zenón
- 34 Bobby Watson
- 30 Henry Threadgill
- 29 Greg Osby
- 20 Donald Harrison
- 19 Gary Bartz
- 16 John Zorn

Alto Saxophone

RISING STAR

- 102 Miguel Zenón
- 88 Rudresh Mahanthappa
- 55 David Binney
- 34 Jaleel Shaw
- 23 Steve Wilson
- 20 Ted Nash
- 18 Darius Jones
- 17 Sharel Cassity
- 17 Jon Irabagon
- 16 Darius Jones
- 16 Dave Rempis
- 15 Grace Kelly

Tenor Saxophone

RISING STAR

- 53 Marcus Strickland
- 48 Donny McCaslin

- 40 J.D. Allen
- 39 Chris Potter
- 34 Eric Alexander
- 34 Mark Turner
- 28 Tony Malaby
- 28 Grant Stewart
- 27 Seamus Blake
- 22 Joel Frahm
- 19 Jon Gordon
- 18 Hakon Kornstad

Baritone Saxophone

192 Gary Smulyan

- 132 James Carter
- 57 Ronnie Cuber
- 56 Joe Temperley
- 49 John Surman
- 47 Hamiet Bluiett
- 41 Scott Robinson
- 34 Mats Gustafsson
- 17 Howard Johnson
- 17 Ken Vandermark
- 16 Dave Rempis
- 10 Charles Evans

Baritone Saxophone

RISING STAR

- 84 Claire Daly
- 40 Scott Robinson
- 34 Mats Gustafsson
- 31 Charles Evans
- 30 Vinny Golia
- 25 Alex Harding
- 19 Roger Rosenberg
- 19 James Carter
- 14 Joe Temperley
- 13 Lauren Sevian
- 11 Brian Landrus
- 10 David Mott

Clarinet

111 Don Byron

- 90 Paquito D'Rivera
- 89 Anat Cohen
- 80 Ken Peplowski
- 55 Eddie Daniels
- 40 Marty Ehrlich
- 39 Ben Goldberg
- 37 Buddy DeFranco
- 31 Perry Robinson
- 30 Michael Moore
- 29 Victor Goines

Clarinet

RISING STAR

- 104 Anat Cohen
- 75 Chris Speed
- 42 Evan Christopher
- 38 Ben Goldberg
- 22 Greg Tardy
- 21 James Falzone
- 20 Rudi Mahal
- 19 Gebhard Ullmann
- 15 Francois Houle

- 15 Ken Peplowski
- 13 Frank Glover
- 12 Marty Ehrlich

Flute

- 86 Nicole Mitchell
- 86 Lew Tabackin
- 71 James Moody
- 67 Charles Lloyd
- 62 Frank Wess
- 38 Jane Bunnett
- 37 Jamie Baum
- 34 Sam Rivers
- 32 James Newton
- 30 Henry Threadgill
- 21 Dave Valentin
- 20 Holly Hoffman
- 20 Hubert Laws

Flute

RISING STAR

- 73 Nicole Mitchell
- 53 Jane Bunnett
- 43 Jamie Baum
- 43 Ali Ryerson
- 42 Anne Drummond
- 37 Holly Hoffman
- 22 Robert Dick
- 18 Ted Nash
- 9 Dave Valentin
- 7 Chris Byars

Piano

RISING STAR

- 75 Gerald Clayton
- 50 Vijay Iyer
- 39 Robert Glasper
- 31 Bill Charlap
- 25 Jason Moran
- 23 Luis Perdomo
- 22 George Colligan
- 20 Craig Taborn
- 19 Taylor Eigsti
- 18 Stefano Bollani
- 13 Danny Grissett
- 10 Enrico Pieranunzi

Electric Keyboard/Synthesizer

119 Uri Caine

- 104 Chick Corea
- 80 Herbie Hancock
- 61 Craig Taborn
- 43 John Medeski
- 13 Hiromi
- 12 Geoffrey Keezer
- 10 Wayne Horvitz
- 9 Jim Baker
- 9 Jason Lindner

Electric Keyboard/Synthesizer

RISING STAR

- 48 Craig Taborn
- 35 Geoff Keezer
- 32 Matthew Shipp

- 31 Jamie Saft
- 29 Marco Benevento
- 23 Uri Caine
- 23 Robert Glasper
- 23 Jason Lindner
- 19 Wayne Horvitz
- 18 Sam Yahel
- 16 Adam Benjamin
- 12 Larry Goldings

Organ

194 Dr. Lonnie Smith

- 190 Joey DeFrancesco
- 102 Larry Goldings
- 50 John Medeski
- 22 Wayne Horvitz
- 22 Sam Yahel
- 21 Gary Versace
- 20 Mike LeDonne
- 20 Amina Claudine Myers
- 11 Barbara Dennerlein
- 9 Carla Bley

Organ

RISING STAR

- 95 Gary Versace
- 68 Sam Yahel
- 51 Tony Monaco
- 30 Mike LeDonne
- 25 Chris Foreman
- 22 Akiko Tsuruga
- 21 Barbara Dennerlein
- 21 Larry Goldings
- 21 Jamie Saft
- 20 Will Blades
- 20 Jared Gold
- 11 Dan Kostelnik

Guitar

98 Bill Frisell

- 97 Jim Hall
- 77 Pat Metheny
- 63 John Scofield
- 47 Russell Malone
- 39 Nels Cline
- 33 Peter Bernstein
- 31 Marc Ribot
- 30 John McLaughlin
- 26 Kurt Rosenwinkel
- 20 Lionel Loueke
- 19 Ralph Towner

Guitar

RISING STAR

- 64 Lionel Loueke
- 43 Mary Halvorson
- 38 Kurt Rosenwinkel
- 35 Julian Lage
- 31 Anthony Wilson
- 27 Ben Monder
- 26 Nels Cline
- 22 Joe Cohn
- 20 Russell Malone
- 15 Roni Ben-Hur
- 14 Peter Bernstein
- 11 Will Bernard

Acoustic Bass

158 Christian McBride

- 118 Dave Holland
- 77 Ron Carter
- 68 Charlie Haden
- 35 John Patitucci
- 33 William Parker
- 31 Gary Peacock
- 30 Barry Guy
- 25 Charnett Moffett
- 21 Peter Washington
- 18 Esperanza Spalding
- 17 Reggie Workman

Acoustic Bass

RISING STAR

- 100 Esperanza Spalding
- 52 Larry Grenadier
- 45 Ben Allison
- 31 Avishai Cohen
- 28 Scott Colley
- 27 John Hébert
- 19 Nicki Parrott
- 18 Linda Oh
- 18 Reuben Rogers
- 17 Drew Gress
- 16 Ben Williams
- 13 Devin Hoff

Electric Bass

133 Steve Swallow

- 95 Stanley Clarke
- 90 Christian McBride
- 51 Marcus Miller
- 47 John Patitucci
- 45 Victor Wooten
- 42 Richard Bona
- 10 Stomu Takeishi
- 9 Jamaldeen Tacuma

Electric Bass

RISING STAR

- 41 Stomu Takeishi
- 38 Drew Gress
- 34 Richard Bona
- 25 Nate McBride
- 23 Esperanza Spalding
- 22 Hadrien Feraud
- 22 Matthew Garrison
- 15 Skúli Sverrisson
- 12 Tim Lefebvre
- 9 Avishai Cohen

Drums

105 Roy Haynes

- 84 Jack DeJohnette
- 81 Paul Motian
- 75 Matt Wilson
- 74 Brian Blade
- 49 Jeff Watts
- 35 Hamid Drake
- 30 Lewis Nash
- 27 Han Bennink
- 23 Jeff Hamilton

- 23 Herlin Riley
- 18 Eric Harland
- 15 Andrew Cyrille

Drums

RISING STAR

- 61 Eric Harland
- 49 Dafnis Prieto
- 40 Matt Wilson
- 33 Gerald Cleaver
- 30 Nasheet Waits
- 29 Marcus Gilmore
- 29 Allison Miller
- 21 Scott Amendola
- 21 Francisco Mela
- 17 Paal Nilsson-Love
- 14 Jamire Williams
- 13 Antonio Sanchez

Vibes

- 162 Gary Burton
- 140 Bobby Hutcherson
- 126 Stefon Harris
- 116 Joe Locke
- 61 Steve Nelson
- 16 Terry Gibbs
- 15 Jason Marsalis
- 10 Jason Adasiewicz
- 10 Steve Hobbs
- 10 Mike Mainieri

Vibes

RISING STAR

- 60 Warren Wolf
- 54 Jason Adasiewicz
- 53 Steve Nelson
- 36 Stefon Harris
- 33 Bill Ware
- 31 Bryan Carrott
- 31 Joe Locke
- 27 Chris Dingman
- 26 Matt Moran
- 20 Matthias Lupri
- 20 Mark Sherman
- 19 Cecilia Smith

Violin

201 Regina Carter

- 104 Billy Bang
- 100 Mark Feldman
- 74 Jenny Scheinman
- 30 Mat Maneri
- 25 Mark O'Connor
- 20 Jean-Luc Ponty
- 18 Jason Hwang
- 14 John Blake
- 12 Carla Kihlstedt
- 11 Svend Asmussen
- 11 Charles Burnham

Violin

RISING STAR

- 105 Jenny Scheinman
- 49 Christian Howes
- 29 Carla Kihlstedt
- 24 Eyvind Kang

- 21 Jason Kao Hwang
- 19 Diane Monroe
- 19 Mads Tollings
- 18 Mark Feldman
- 17 Zach Brock
- 15 Aaron Weinstein
- 13 Miri Ben-Ari
- 16 Jeff Gauthier

Percussion

- 95 Hamid Drake
- 87 Poncho Sanchez
- 85 Cyro Baptista
- 52 Airtio Moreira
- 44 Zakir Hussain
- 41 Han Bennink
- 38 Giovanni Hidalgo
- 30 Trilok Gurtu
- 23 Kahil El'Zabar
- 21 John Santos
- 20 Adam Rudolph
- 20 Bobby Sanabria

Percussion

RISING STAR

- 64 Susie Ibarra
- 40 Daniel Sadownick
- 32 Hamid Drake
- 23 Satoshi Takeishi
- 19 Dan Weiss
- 18 Sunny Jain
- 16 Kahil El'Zabar
- 14 Leon Parker
- 13 Cyro Baptista
- 10 Arto Tuncoboyan

Male Vocalist

163 Kurt Elling

- 83 Andy Bey
- 60 Mark Murphy
- 44 Freddy Cole
- 40 Bobby McFerrin
- 35 Tony Bennett
- 32 John Pizzarelli
- 31 Kevin Mahogany
- 21 Ernie Andrews
- 21 Theo Bleckmann
- 21 Jon Hendricks
- 20 Giacomo Gates
- 20 Phil Minton

Male Vocalist

RISING STAR

- 56 Sachal Vasandani
- 41 Giacomo Gates
- 40 Jamie Cullum
- 26 Kenny Washington
- 25 José James
- 23 Theo Bleckmann
- 22 Ian Shaw
- 22 Curtis Stigers
- 20 John Pizzarelli
- 20 Ed Reed
- 13 Andy Bey
- 12 Tony DeSare

Female Vocalist

107 Cassandra Wilson

- 85 Dianne Reeves
- 73 Dee Dee Bridgewater
- 57 Luciana Souza
- 39 Tierney Sutton
- 30 Sheila Jordan
- 28 Roberta Gambarini
- 27 Claudia Acuña
- 26 Diana Krall
- 24 Abbey Lincoln
- 20 Faye Victor
- 17 Karrin Allyson
- 17 Melody Gardot

Female Vocalist

RISING STAR

- 47 Roberta Gambarini
- 42 Gretchen Parlato
- 25 Kate McGarry
- 25 Luciana Souza
- 24 René Marie
- 24 Esperanza Spalding
- 19 Tierney Sutton
- 17 Claudia Acuña
- 17 Melody Gardot
- 13 Dee Alexander
- 11 Dena DeRose

Composer

118 Maria Schneider

- 47 Wayne Shorter
- 36 Dave Douglas
- 36 Henry Threadgill
- 33 Dave Holland
- 30 Carla Bley
- 27 John Hollenbeck
- 26 Vijay Iyer
- 25 Randy Weston
- 23 John Zorn
- 22 Bob Brookmeyer
- 19 Ted Nash

Miscellaneous Instrument

69 Béla Fleck (banjo)

- 64 Toots Thielemans (harmonica)
- 48 Richard Galliano (accordion)
- 40 Gregoire Maret (harmonica)
- 37 Dino Saluzzi (bandoneon)
- 34 Erik Friedlander (cello)
- 33 Steve Turre (shells)
- 28 Scott Robinson (bass sax)
- 20 Anouar Brahem (oud)
- 20 Myra Melford (harmonium)
- 20 David Murray (bass clarinet)
- 19 Howard Johnson (tuba)

Miscellaneous Instrument

RIISING STAR

- 31 Edmar Castaneda**
(Colombian harp)
- 26 Hendrik Meurkens
(harmonica)
- 25 Ted Reichman
(accordion)
- 21 Scott Robinson
(bass sax)
- 20 Erik Friedlander (cello)
- 20 Gary Versace
(accordion)
- 16 Peggy Lee (cello)
- 15 Howard Johnson (tuba)
- 15 Daniel Smith (bassoon)

Arranger

- 140 Maria Schneider**
- 53 Bill Holman
- 49 Gerald Wilson
- 39 Carla Bley
- 29 Steven Bernstein
- 29 Jim McNeely
- 25 Vince Mendoza
- 21 Uri Caine
- 20 Muhal Richard Abrams
- 20 Dave Holland
- 14 Gil Goldstein
- 12 Claus Ogerman

Producer

148 Manfred Eicher

- 137 Michael Cuscuna
- 33 Bob Belden
- 27 Orrin Keepnews
- 26 Bob Koester
- 22 Todd Barkan
- 21 Matt Balisaris
- 20 Mat Domber
- 20 Branford Marsalis
- 19 John Zorn

Producer

RIISING STAR

- 29 Branford Marsalis**
- 28 Greg Osby
- 23 Larry Klein
- 23 Delfeayo Marsalis
- 19 Bob Belden
- 17 Mat Domber
- 17 Craig Street
- 16 John Corbett
- 15 Lee Townsend
- 12 Matt Balisaris
- 10 Bruce Barth
- 10 Bruno Johnson

Record Label

133 ECM

- 83 Sunnyside
- 80 Blue Note
- 42 Clean Feed
- 39 Mosaic
- 32 Nonesuch
- 29 HighNote

- 26 Arbors
- 23 Concord
- 18 ACT
- 18 Cryptogramophone
- 18 Delmark

Blues Artist/Group

- 47 Buddy Guy**
- 45 B.B. King
- 40 Taj Mahal
- 37 Shemekia Copeland
- 36 Otis Taylor
- 26 Bettye LaVette
- 22 Derek Trucks
- 19 James Blood Ulmer
- 18 Lil' Ed & The
Blues Imperials

Beyond Artist/Group

- 23 Neko Case**
- 17 Medeski, Martin
& Wood
- 12 Carolina Chocolate
Drops
- 12 Omar Sosa
- 12 Wilco
- 11 Grizzly Bear
- 11 Anthony Braxton
- 11 Caetano Veloso
- 9 Bob Dylan

Blues Album

- 31 Eric Bibb, Booker's
Guitar (Telarc)**
- 23 Otis Taylor,
Pentatonic (Telarc)
- 21 Shemekia Copeland,
*Never Going
Back* (Telarc)
- 20 Corey Harris, *blu.
black* (Concord)
- 16 Carolina Chocolate
Drops, *Genuine Negro
Jig* (Nonesuch)
- 12 Tommy Castro, *Hard
Believer* (Alligator)

Beyond Album

- 17 Béla Fleck,
Throw Down Your
Heart (Rounder)**
- 17 Caetano Veloso,
Zii e Zie (Nonesuch)**
- 13 Grizzly Bear,
Veckatimest (Warp)
- 13 Egberto Gismonti,
Saudacoes (ECM)
- 13 Tom Waits, *Glitter
And Doom Live* (Anti)
- 11 Rosanne Cash,
The List (Manhattan)
- 10 Medeski Martin &
Wood, *Radiolarians*
(Indirecto)
- 9 Dirty Projectors,
Bitte Orca (Domino)

Critics

Following are the 84 critics who voted in DownBeat's 58th Annual International Critics Poll. The critics distributed up to 10 points among up to three choices (no more than five points per choice) in each of two categories: Established Talent and Rising Stars.

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

Don Albert: DB, Jazz Journal International, Financial Mail

Frank Alkyer: DB

Peter Bastian: Jazzthetik, Jazzpodium

Larry Birnbaum: Stereophile

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

Fred Bouchard: DB, All About Jazz

Michael Bourne: DB, WBGO-FM

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

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

Greg Buium: DB, CBC Arts Online

Nate Chinen: New York Times, JazzTimes, The Gig

Aaron Cohen: DB

Thomas Conrad: Stereophile, JazzTimes

John Corbett: DB, Chicago Reader, WNUR-FM

Owen Cordle: The News & Observer, JazzTimes

Joe Cunniff: DB

Paul de Barros: Seattle Times, DB

Alain Drouot: DB, WNUR-FM, Cadence

José Duarte: Jazzportugal.ua.pt

Ed Enright: DB

John Ephland: DB, Relix, Kalamazoo Gazette

David Franklin: Cadence, JazzTimes

Jack Fuller: Chicago Tribune

Frank-John Hadley: DB

James Hale: DB, Signal to Noise

Dave Helland: BMI.com, Grammy.com

Lee Hildebrand: San Francisco Chronicle, Oakland West

Geoffrey Himes: Washington Post,

JazzTimes, DB, Baltimore City Paper

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

John Howard: DB, L.A. Jazz Scene

Michael Jackson: DB, Jazzwise

Robin James: Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, DB

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

Fred Jung: All About Jazz

George Kanzler: JazzTimes, Hot House, All About Jazz

Bob Karlovits: DB

Yoshi Kato: DB, San Jose Mercury News

Larry Kelp: East Bay Express, KPFA-FM

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

David Kunian: Offbeat, Gambit Weekly, DB

John Litweiler: Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago Sun-Times

Jim Macnie: DB, Village Voice

Howard Mandel: DB, The Wire

Peter Margasak: DB, Chicago Reader, Signal To Noise, NPR

John McDonough: DB, Wall Street Journal

Peter McElhinney: Style Weekly

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

Ken Micallef: DB, Remix, Modern Drummer

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

Massimo Milano: Il Manifesto, Rumore

Bill Milkowski: JazzTimes, Jazziz, The Absolute Sound

Dan Morgenstern: Jersey Jazz, Annual Review of Jazz Studies

John Murph: DB, JazzTimes, JazzWise, Washington Post Express,

NPR, The Root

Michael Nastos: All Music Guide, Cadence

Ron Netsky: City Newspaper

Stuart Nicholson: Jazzwise

John Norris: Coda

Jennifer Odell: DB, msn.com

Dan Ouellette: DB, Stereophile, Napster.com

Ted Panken: DB, Jazziz

Thierry Peremarti: Jazzman

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

Norman Provisor: DB, KUVO-FM

Guy Reynard: Critic

Derk Richardson: The Absolute Sound, SFGate.com

Russell Arthur Roberts: L.A. Jazz Scene

Chris Robinson: DB, Earshot Jazz

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

Robert Rusch: Cadence

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

Phil Schaap: DB, Stop Smiling

Bill Shoemaker: DB, Point of Departure

Kirk Silsbee: DB, Jazziz, Arroyo, Jewish Journal

Zan Stewart: Star-Ledger

W. Royal Stokes: Jazzhouse.org, JazzNotes

Andrew Sussman: Critic

Laurence Svirchev: DB, Misterioso, Point of Departure

Jean Szlamowicz: DB, Jazz Hot

Ron Sweetman: Scena Musicale

Eliot Tiegel: Critic

Chris Walker: Mix, JazzTimes

Herb Wong: Critic

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

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

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Dream • I Ain't Got Nothin' but the Blues
• I Lotus Blossom • Love You Madly.
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Dexterity • Long Tall Dexter • So Easy.
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101. Bud Powell

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• Elegie • Oblivion • Un Poco Loco.
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a Wonderful World.
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17. Count Basie

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O'Clock Jump • Shiny Stockings.
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89. Irving Berlin Favorites

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13. John Coltrane

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Steps • Lazy Bird • Mr. P.C.
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75. Paul Desmond

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Suicide Is Painless • Take Five • Take Ten.
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57. Vince Guaraldi

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Great Pumpkin Waltz • Linus and Lucy.
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26. Charlie Parker

Confirmation • Donna Lee • Moose
the Mooche • My Little Suede Shoes •
Now's the Time • Ornithology.
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bye • I'll Be Around • My Ship.
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99. Swinging Standards

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• Love Is a Simple Thing • Pennies from
Heaven • All or Nothing at All.
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107. Motown Classics

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Grapevine • Let's Get It On • My Girl.
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Too Late • On Broadway • You Are So
Beautiful • What a Fool Believes.
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103. On Green Dolphin Street

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Green Dolphin Street • Robbin's Nest •
Rosetta • Pure Imagination.
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First Noel • Jingle Bells • O Christmas
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• Tico Tico.
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Rose Room • St. Louis Blues.
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A Knack For Accommodation

Remembering Hank Jones' Supreme Grace, Civility And Influence

By John McDonough

Among the many things people seem to agree on regarding Hank Jones—who died May 16 at age 91—was his self-effacing knack for accommodation. Perhaps that came from his background as a premier New York studio player at CBS for 17 years. Then again, that was almost certainly a prerequisite, not an outcome, of such work. By the time he came to CBS in 1959, he had already embraced and interpreted, through working experience, a vast vocabulary of American piano music. Such versatility was highly valued and, in Jones' case, happily rewarded, permitting him to live the life of a country squire in upstate New York when he wished. According to his longtime bassist, George Mraz, he owned a 300-acre retreat in Hartwick, N.Y., about 50 miles west of Albany, as well as a Manhattan apartment on the Upper West Side.

As a studio-slash-jazz musician, Jones shared much in common with Dick Hyman, who was both a CBS colleague and ardent admirer. The two often substituted for one another and were true peers in the realm of stylistic multi-tasking made to look easy. They are different in one fundamental way, though. Hyman came to his versatility consciously as a scholar and musicologist of American piano styles. Whereas Jones, whose roots were in the neighborhoods of Pontiac and Detroit in the '30s and '40s, seemed to arrive at a similar level of versatility, but in a more intuitive way.

"It's an interesting distinction," Hyman reflected recently in looking back over Jones' long career, which came to include more than a thousand jazz sessions between 1944 and 2010, making him, by one estimate, the seventh most recorded player in the history of the music. "I never heard Hank express himself much on those scholarly matters, while I'm afraid I may have gone too far in that direction sometimes. Or perhaps he was never asked. But when I address a particular idiom, I try to lose my individuality and become it. Hank, on the other hand, was always himself, even when he took on the cloak of some other style. He was never as chameleonic as I've enjoyed being. His playing was distinctive—always exactly right, but with a certain way of phrasing; a sort of measured way, almost behind the beat at times. But I would characterize both our styles fundamentally as swing-to-bop."

Mraz, who worked hand-in-glove with Jones on and off from 1972 on, agrees. "Before Hank," he said, "I had played with Oscar Peterson. So I was familiar with Hank's playing because Hank and Art Tatum were Oscar's favorites players." I can attest to that: When interviewing Peterson more than a decade ago at length in his home, I saw tears come to his eyes as he spoke with great sentiment and affection of Jones.

Last year, Jones was voted into the Down

Beat Hall of Fame the hard way: on his merits, still alive and not in a nimbus of emotional guilt as an overdue gesture of remembrance. The biographical details were covered then—the beginnings with Andy Kirk; the years as house pianist for Jazz at the Philharmonic and Ella Fitzgerald; and the years with CBS. By the time he died, he had evolved into the quintessential musician's musician (i.e. an artist too good for the public) and was admired as much for his personal style as his command of the keyboard. It was a total package of supreme grace and civility that quietly influenced and beguiled a procession of generations in the jazz world.

Among the younger inheritors of Jones' legacy—and his vast repertoire—are Bill Charlap and his wife, Renee Rosnes, who also share the Blue Note Records artist marquee with Jones. "His playing changed over the years," Charlap noted several weeks after his death. "It almost became more subtle, completely personal and inimitable."

Mraz made a similar point. "The older he got," he said, "the more adventurous he got in his music. He started to play different chords and push out a little. His mind was like the youngest pianist you could imagine. I don't mean *avant garde* things. More subtle than that. A lot of people wouldn't catch it, other musicians maybe."

Jones himself seemed to agree. He told Charlap last year that he often could not recognize himself on records made 30 or more years before.

"And one other point," Charlap added. "Hank once told Kenny Washington, 'Remember, Wash, always keep some chitlins on the side.' By that he meant always keep some blues in your playing. Always have that be a part of what you're doing, because that is such an integral part of playing this music. With all of his elegance, a piece of Hank always had the really deep blues feeling. And he had it all to the end. No melting



HANK JONES

With profound sadness, but also with deepest thanks, we salute the great master of the piano, Hank Jones, with whom we had the pleasure of working several times. God Bless you Hank, from all of us at Justin Time.



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- Raul d'Gama Rose, *All About Jazz*

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away of his skills." Charlap spoke with authority. The two had several recent encounters. They played "Tonk" as a four-hands/one-piano duet in 2006 for the soundtrack of *Billy Strayhorn: Lush Life*. And less than a year before Jones' death, they had spent an hour talking and performing on NPR's *Piano Jazz*. (You can find the program online at npr.org/pianojazz.) "At 91 he was playing at the top of his game."

Rosnes said she has been following Jones' career since she came to New York in the '80s. "I heard him many times at Bradley's," she recalled. "It was a very intimate room. You were practically sitting next to the piano and could hear every detail. Harmonically he would also surprise you. Logic would tell you he would go here, but then he'd find another path and go another place."

At the other end of the generational spectrum are the handful of Hank Jones contemporaries still active, including Marian McPartland, who celebrated the 30th anniversary of *Piano Jazz*

whenever I said that, but it's true. He really was a genius. I was fortunate to play with Hank on our album *Our Delight* a few years ago, and I will always be grateful for that experience."

Not long after Jones made that Dial session with Moody in 1947, he began a six-year stretch with Ella Fitzgerald. Already a major figure among musicians, the years with Fitzgerald made him one of the most in-demand accompanists for the best new singers as well, right down to his recent work with Roberta Gambarini. One of the very finest singers from the early period was Helen Merrill, a generation down from Hank who asked for and received him on her second EmArcy album in 1955. Still active today and looking and sounding half her age, Merrill would work with Jones a number of times in the years ahead, most recently during a 2002 tour of Japan. "During that trip we were told we had to do an unplanned concert," she said recently, "without rehearsal or anything. It

'Hank had a humility that opened his heart up and let him wrap his arms, musically speaking, around the artists he was working with. ... Sure, he had the chops. But he also had the heart to do it, to make the best of whoever was performing. Hank was truly a terminal for a high power.'

—Quincy Jones

in 2008-'09. She first recorded with Jones for RCA in 1974 in a piano quartet that included Hyman and Sir Roland Hanna. She also toured Japan with Jones and John Lewis in the 1970s. "I always admired Hank Jones," she said, "and when we did *Piano Jazz* [Jones was one of her earliest guests] I enjoyed our duets immensely. We played so well together, and he played some wonderful selections by himself, like 'St. Louis Blues' and 'Oh, What A Beautiful Morning,' [which he] played with great delicacy and taste, as only he can. I learned a lot from listening to him and playing with him. Hank Jones will always be a towering figure in the world of jazz."

Another contemporary who was present at the creation is James Moody, 85, who first recorded with Jones on a Dial date with Howard McGhee in December 1947. "Now I know what 'keeping up with the Joneses' means," he said. "There was Thad, Elvin and then there was Hank. He was in a class all by himself. The man was a genius ... period! Many years ago studio heads tried to get him out by giving him the most difficult music that they could find, and Hank would play the doo-doo out of it. I've always said if you threw a bottle of ink on some music paper, Hank Jones could play it. That used to make him laugh

was just the two of us, but I had nothing to fear. Hank asked what tunes we'd do, I gave him a list, and he knew them all, of course. And the performance came off perfectly. You see, Hank made you feel comfortable and that your talent was valued. He made you feel good."

Another young colleague of Merrill's at EmArcy in the '50s was Quincy Jones, who remembers the pianist in much the same way, but in a more spiritual paradigm that seems to explain not only Hank Jones' versatility, but perhaps Quincy Jones' as well, which has ranged from Clifford Brown to Michael Jackson. "Hank had a humility," Jones said, "that opened his heart up and let him wrap his arms, musically speaking, around the artists he was working with. It started with love. I know that sounds off the wall. Sure, he had the chops. But he also had the heart to do it, to make the best of whoever was performing. Hank was truly a terminal for a high power. It's not from you. It's through you, if you've got the humility. He gave the truth. Nelson Mandela talked about 'ubuntu' — it means the collective is always more important than the individual. In your presence, you make me feel like a bigger and better person. Hank was a personification of that humility."

Joe Lovano is a couple of generations down the road from Jones, but their musical partnership was no less close. The Blue Note quartets and duets they made produced perhaps the pianist's last important body of work. "When I first started to play with Hank," Lovano said recently with a measure of disbelief in his voice, "I was 42 and he was 76." It was at the Lionel Hampton Jazz festival in Moscow, Idaho, around 1995. Hank and Elvin Jones were serving as the house rhythm section, just as Hank had once done in the old JATP days. "It was amazing," Lovano said. "A couple of years later Hank called me to play with his trio at Birdland. I had been talking to Bruce Lundvall [at Blue Note] about doing a ballad project and that gave me the confidence to ask Hank. We did our first CD in June 2003, *I'm All For You*."

"Hank took shape from who he was playing with. Hear *Bags And Trane* [from 1959 on Atlantic]. The way he plays on that behind Coltrane has such energy in his rhythm. Like Elvin and Thad, they were amazing creative improvisers from within the groups they played with. The situation really fueled their ideas. Hank in our duets was amazing like that. Back when he was with Sonny Stitt, and Miles [Davis] and Cannonball [Adderley], we could all hear little moments on some records. When he was with [Charlie] Parker, you could hear the heat of the music inspire him. In the last 20 years when he started to play with Tony Williams and in more recent time with Lewis Nash, John Patitucci and Dave Holland, Hank's approach was so timeless and deep he didn't have to think about [age differences]. It just happened."

In the time they played and toured together, Lovano got a glimpse into some of Jones' vast musical and professional experience. "He loves those Artie Shaw things," he said. "His Artie Shaw experience was something he talked about a lot. Once we were doing a soundcheck, and Hank was playing a little. I mentioned one of those Shaw tunes, and he started playing his part in the original ensemble that he hadn't done in 50 years. It was an incredible Tatumish line he did purely from memory, a really through-composed written part. His personal history came through in all his playing. A lot of Hank came out of Teddy Wilson, Nat Cole and Tatum, so he fit in beautifully with guys like Shaw and [Benny] Goodman. But he was also in that crowd with [Thelonious] Monk and Bud Powell—that was really his generation. He was an elegant cat."

The elegance reached beyond the keyboard. Lovano recalled how on tour he would go to Jones' hotel room for breakfast and he'd be in a suit and tie at 10 in the morning waiting for room service. On a trip to Japan, Mraz remembered the departure scene. "Hank arrived at the airport with six huge suitcases, his wife and several friends," Mraz said in recent interview. "I assumed because of all the suitcases, they were all coming along, too. But they were all Hank's. He would always travel with many

suits—one for travel, one for dinner, one for the afternoon. He didn't travel light."

Jones also loved the glamour and buzz of show business, something he developed a taste for doing countless Ed Sullivan programs. "When he was in the CBS orchestra in the '60s and into the '70s," Lovano said, "he loved associating with the show business types he would meet. Comedians especially. He loved Milton Berle. He had a relationship with all these people whom he played behind and enjoyed meeting a lot of the entertainers who worked the Sullivan show. He spoke about

that stuff often and really enjoyed being on the scene with those people and riding in taxis with guys like Berle."

Lovano observed that Jones was also a spiritual man. Mraz found him to be religious in a quiet way. "He would always say grace before meals," Mraz said. "It was not something he ever talked about, of course, or expressed in any way in public. I just noticed it at dinner several times."

"He said he wanted to live to be 200. Then he went down to 150. In the end he almost made it to 92, which isn't bad."

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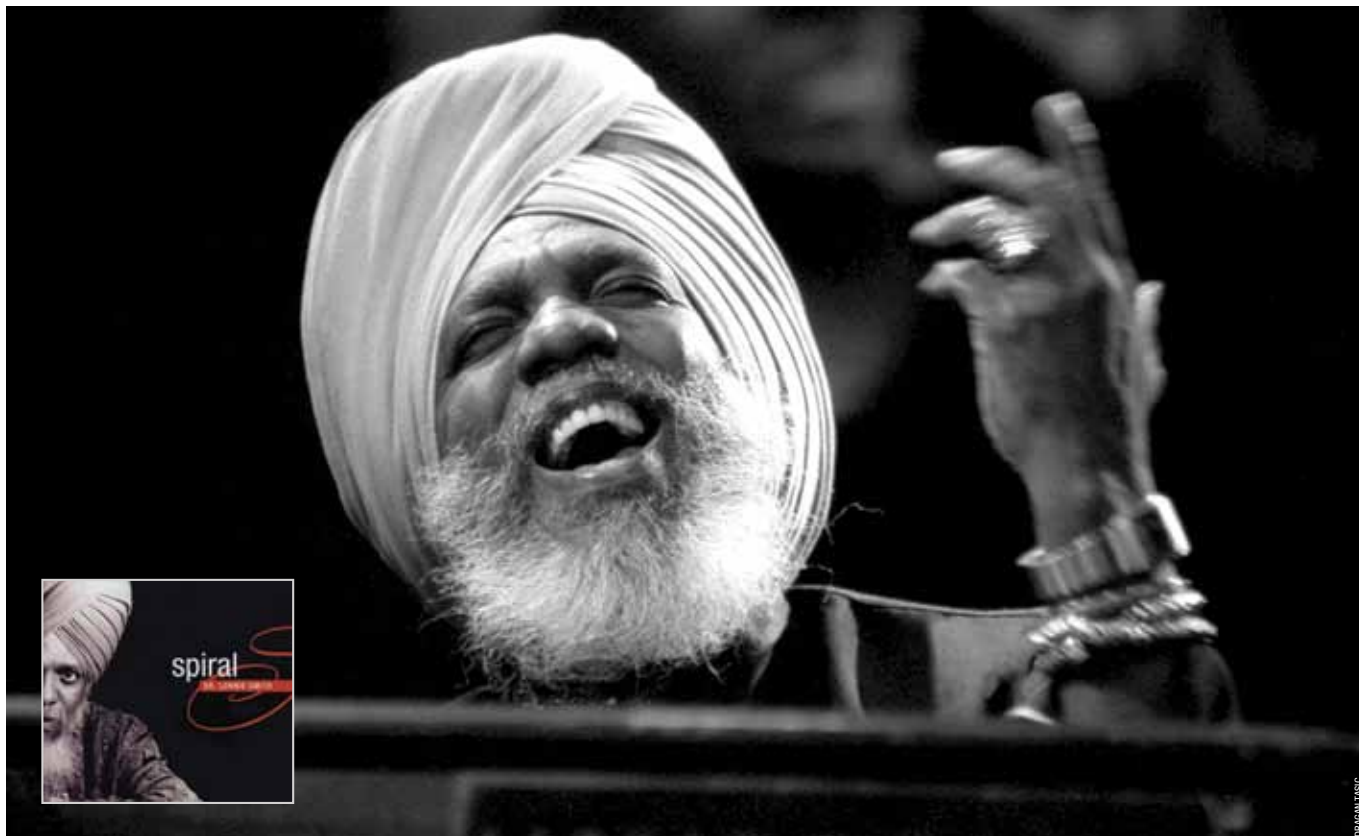
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Dr. Lonnie Smith *Spiral*

PALMETTO 2141

★★★

Lonnie Smith's virtuosity puts a jaunty spring in the step of an instrument that leans towards bulk to some ears, which probably is why the organ has thrived only at the margins of jazz. It's a blue-collar sound with ties to the church in an otherwise white-collar and secular jazz world. In Smith's world of soul, funk and B-3 organ combos, the music tends to answer to the beat rather than the horns, a field of play made for the tricky dynamics of that keyboard.

Yet, this lean little trio generally avoids full-frontal funk. Overall, its grooves are relatively light, and Smith's touch is often open and

even feathery, though it thickens as it builds. Thus, there's a certain refinement and intricacy in play here that generally stands aside from the usual soul-jazz genre, though you may have to listen through or around B-3 veneer to get at the group's higher qualities.

The other half of the front line belongs to guitarist Jonathan Kreisberg, a first-rate player who has turned out at least a half dozen CDs of his own in the last decade, mostly for Criss Cross. A lot of the refinement and lyricism that hold this trio in a firm jazz orbit comes from him. His clean solo lines and relaxed comping make him a smart match for Smith.

The tunes also have a nice breadth, from Frank Loesser and Rodgers & Hart to Slide Hampton, whose "Frame For The Blues"

wafts along at an almost freeze-frame tempo with frequent suggestions (to my ear, at least) of Hoagy Carmichael's "Rockin' Chair." The Dr. opens the CD with a dry, rolling "Mellow Mood," which quietly honors Jimmy Smith, who made a place for the organ sound in modern jazz some decades back. Loesser's "I've Never Been In Love Before" heats up with double-time bursts of energy that produce some splashes of perspiration. But note for note it's not fundamentally different from what a saxophonist or pianist might do with the same material. Rodgers' "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" plays against drummer Jamire Williams' churning hustle, while "Sweet And Lovely" cruises with a more relaxed, laid-back moderation.

"Spiral" (a Smith original, not

the 1959 John Coltrane tune) and "Sukiyaki" are slow, probing excursions flanking Harold Mabern's answer to Rimsky Korsakov. "Beehive" opens with a spooky chord so shrill and scary you expect to hear a creaking door in accompaniment. But the menace doesn't creak, it buzzes. The frantic sense of bustle and motion is sustained by Williams' urgency as much as Smith's dense clashing clusters.

The B-3 brings much tradition and baggage with it. But Smith is among the best of its few masters, and *Spiral*, while not surprising, is worthy of his reputation.

—John McDonough

Spiral: Mellow Mood; I've Never Been In Love Before; Frame For The Blues; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; Sweet And Lovely; Spiral; Beehive; Sukiyaki. (49:20)

Personnel: Dr. Lonnie Smith, Hammond B-3 organ; Jonathan Kreisberg, guitar; Jamire Williams, drums.

Ordering info: palmetto-records.com

Bill Charlap/Renee Rosnes *Double Portrait*

BLUE NOTE 33147

★★★★½

I had the privilege a couple of years ago of attending a session of Marian McPartland's *Piano Jazz* when Bill Charlap and Renee Rosnes were tandem guests. As a special surprise, Charlap and Rosnes prepared a lovely duet on McPartland's haunting ballad "Twilight World." The studio was quite crowded, as you can imagine—two grands and an upright—but the music never was, even when all three pianists played together.

And so it is on this elegantly turned-out album featuring the royal couple of jazz piano. Not surprisingly, Charlap and Rosnes appear to have an instinctive and intuitive sense of how to "marry" their sounds—as they have their lives—without creating a lot of collateral damage. The nine tunes here highlight both Charlap's linear, chromatic approach to popular song as well as Rosnes' more shape-shifting modal style, though since there is no consistent left-right separation between the two players, it's not always obvious who's who. (This was a deliberate decision, the idea being, no doubt, to deflect attention away from individual personalities. However, jazz fans being the natural puzzle-solvers they are, I'm afraid the blurring of roles may have precisely the opposite effect.) In any case, the two players spar, parry, push, tag, spur, support, comment, signify and—most of all—



dance together in a way that makes it sound as if they were having a wonderful time. If I have one complaint, it's that most of the tracks are a trifle polite—courtly, even—but the music nonetheless has a great deal of charm, and even, from time to time, magic.

The parlor conversation impression starts from the first track, a choro (by Lyle Mays), that Brazilian form of early jazz with churning left-hand rhythms and happy right-hand lines—a sprightly, inviting start. But the deep textural blending begins with Brazilian music of another stripe, Jobim's "Double Rainbow," with crisp sforzandos (Bill?—see, can't help myself) riding

over lush and expressive accompaniment. The same level of deep meshing of sounds occurs on Rosnes' "The Saros Cycle." These tracks, along with Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge," feel the most dramatic and appealing, especially in their use of dynamics and shapeliness of development. "Dancing In The Dark" swings mightily in a more traditional mode, and the seldom-played gem "Little Glory," a tender ballad by Gerry Mulligan, is a great choice. Both pianists draw yearning pathos from Wayne Shorter's ballad written for his wife, "Ana Maria." The only real non-starter is "My Man's Gone Now," played agonizingly slowly, with every note milked for melodrama.

The album closes with a cute, obviously tongue-in-cheek touch, the Dietz-Schwartz standard "Never Will I Marry." The couple builds a lovely swing edifice on this one, trading licks with elan. If improvisation is a truth serum—as some claim it is—then these duets reveal that Bill Charlap and Rene Rosnes are a quite happily married couple, with all the give and take, independence and dependence, support and assertion that's needed for a great marriage. I would still like to hear what happens when they move out of the parlor and into a situation that's a bit more dangerous. But maybe we'll hear that in the years to come.

—Paul de Barros

Double Portrait: Choro; Double Rainbow; Ana Maria; The Saros Cycle; My Man's Gone Now; Dancing In The Dark; Inner Urge; Little Glory; Never Will I Marry. (50:01)

Personnel: Bill Charlap, Renee Rosnes, piano.

Ordering info: bluenote.com

Lee Konitz & Minsarah *New Quartet Live At The Village Vanguard*

ENJA 95422

★★★★½

It makes sense that Lee Konitz occasionally reinvestigates "Out Of Nowhere." At the age of 82 the saxophonist seems dedicated to the process of perpetual inquiry, and as he rousts any of his beloved standards for improv options, he positions himself as a detective of sorts. No one, not even he, knows where the next melody line spilling from his horn will lead him.

That dynamic (though not "Out Of Nowhere" itself; for a wondrous version of that you'll have to check the performance Konitz gave at the Village Vanguard last February—it's archived on NPR.org's Music pages) saturates this live date from last year. The very pliable trio Minsarah, whom Konitz met years ago while living in Cologne, is attentive and agile, giving him all the elbow room needed to venture from the thematic paths at hand. The saxophonist has been dedicating himself to the beauty of the brambles for years now, and in cahoots with this outfit, he commandeers a deeply inquisitive excursion.



The quicksilver extrapolations work so well because Konitz is expert at banishing pro forma conclusions. Yep, the themes to "I Remember You" and "Cherokee" raise their heads during the performance, and it's easy to hear that he respects their essence, but he and Minsarah are aligned in a pact: reconstruction is paramount. At some points they barely touch their toes to home plate before making a break down the line. Wait—

that's a fumbled comparison; it assumes they're headed for first base, and that's not necessarily the case. This is a team that might hit the ball and run directly out to left field to catch it themselves. Pianist Florian Weber does something like that on "Kary's Trance"; there and elsewhere, bassist Jeff Denson and drummer Ziv Ravitz follow suit. Collectively, the trio is much looser than it was on last year's collaboration with Konitz, or their own impressive Enja outing from 2006.

Then there's the matter of the leader's sound. Unusually bulbous, slightly bruised, a bit more limp than you'd ultimately want it to be, Konitz's alto tone has something wonderfully magnetic about it. Sure, the improvisations themselves are engaging, but at various moments the personality of his sax can be a siren song. When he starts

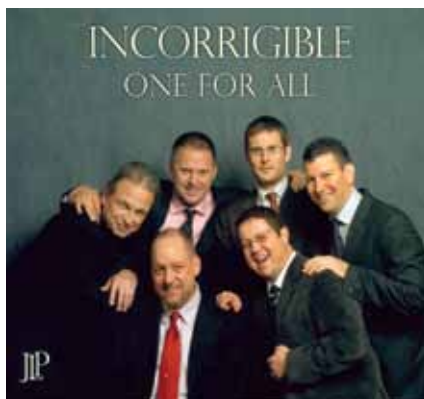
to twist apart "Polka Dots And Moonbeams," the idiosyncrasies of design and sonics are in full accord. I file it under lee-way, and I salute it for being a tack that keeps the music remarkably fresh.

—Jim Macnie

New Quartet Live At The Village Vanguard: Cherokee; Subconscious-Lee; I Remember You; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; Color; Thingin'. (58:28)

Personnel: Lee Konitz, alto saxophone; Florian Weber, piano; Jeff Denson, bass; Ziv Ravitz, drums.

Ordering info: enjarecords.com



One For All *Incorrigible*

JAZZ LEGACY PRODUCTIONS 1001005

★★★★½

Take six players who are all leaders in their own right, put them together and let them steep for 13 years, making 15 CDs in that span. What you get is a very special kind of unity, the old-fashioned band sensibility that made touring groups and ensembles with regular residencies so sensational. One For All has a hand-in-glove mutuality founded on the working-together principle of their name. It's not something that screams out at you, but in the details it makes all the difference.

The tunes, arrangements and program are well chosen (only gripe might be with the cover design, which leaves much to be desired!). The CD kicks off with a neatly retooled, up-tempo take on "Bewitched, Bothered, And Bewildered," the only piece not written by a bandmember. The horns blend beautifully on tunes like the title track, written by tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander (who is thoroughly fantastic throughout), and other hard-bop pieces, like pianist David Hazeltine's funky "Blues For Jose" and the McCoy Tyner-ish "Spirit Waltz," penned by trombonist Steve Davis. Drummer Joe Farnsworth and bassist John Webb show how working together regularly reinforces understanding—on the latter track, for instance, they're marvelously tuned-in on one another, fanning Alexander's flames.

When it comes to the soloing, the band changes into All For One, supporting and building together. It's all quite straightahead stuff, but it's gorgeously maneuvered, personal statements kept relatively concise. Jim Rotondi's tender tribute to Freddie Hubbard features his fluent, buoyant flugelhorn, where Hazeltine's "Petite Ange" starts with a dark, Latin-infused motif, leading to a hotter turn from the trumpeter and a bright, urgent tenor solo.

—John Corbett

Incorrigible: Bewitched, Bothered, And Bewildered; Petite Ange; Voice; Incorrigible; Blues For Jose; Spirit Waltz; Back To Back; So Soon. (55:10)

Personnel: Jim Rotondi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Steve Davis, trombone; David Hazeltine, piano; John Webb, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums.

Ordering info: jazzlegacyproductions.com

The Hot Box

	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Dr. Lonnie Smith <i>Spiral</i>	★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★
Bill Charlap/Renee Rosnes <i>Double Portrait</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½
Lee Konitz & Minsarah <i>New Quartet Live At The Village Vanguard</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★½
One For All <i>Incorrigible</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★

Critics' Comments ▶

Dr. Lonnie Smith, *Spiral*

Here's the home run we've been waiting for from the good doctor, and it's not based on a cool concept or unusual instrumentation, just killing performances and savvy arrangements. Great to realize that an organ trio can still throw its weight around in unique ways. Secret weapon: Jonathan Kreisberg. —Jim Macnie

Smith pulls such a variety of sounds from the Hammond B-3: "Frame For The Blues" sounds like the Basie band doing "Li'l Darlin'"; "Beehive" makes you think Sun Ra sneaked into the studio for a sec. He can hop from jaunty to jejune, friendly to ferocious and make it all sound perfectly normal. —Paul de Barros

Smith continues to do what he does best—he's one of the all-time greatest in the B-3 biz. Unexpected moves include clever, broiling, hip arrangements of "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" and Harold Mabern's "Beehive," the latter replete with neat buzzing effects, and Kreisberg's acoustic guitar on the closer. Jamire Williams kicks some heavy booty on this excellent program. —John Corbett

Bill Charlap/Renee Rosnes, *Double Portrait*

A serious, stately, almost epic recital where the virtuosity is expressive, never show-offy. Sweeps and swells in large, lyrical layers; but in its sheer elegance, tends to dampen rhythmic vigor. Comes most to life on "Inner Urge" and a couple of brief standards. Separation a bit subtle, diminishing the sense of dialog. —John McDonough

Four-handed piano rarely gets my pulse racing, but in this case the counterpoint and compatibilities are so perfectly balanced, the selections and arrangements so handsome, that "Double Portrait" is a prize. Especially good to hear Charlap tangle with another pianist, pushing him to go places he might not, take a few more chances. —John Corbett

Love the way that it just lifts off as soon as their four hands grab onto "Chorinho." Whether they're finding the poetry in Shorter or using Henderson as a way to throw punches, they keep the program's dynamic imperatives in clear site. You stay right with 'em throughout the entire thing. —Jim Macnie

Lee Konitz & Minsarah, *New Quartet Live At The Village Vanguard*

I'm digging this the way I dig late Pee Wee Russell. An off-center master, his ideas flowing without hesitancy, perhaps not making the definitive music of his youth, but always totally connected, suprising and ample. A fluid band helps, but my attention is trained on Konitz. —John Corbett

With an average of 11 prior Konitz recordings per song, this is not exactly a stretch. But backed by a lively pianist-provocateur (see "Cherokee"), the vet altoist is limber, as tartly unsentimental as a dry martini ("I Remember You"), and still the personification of a soft modernism that prefers swing over shock. —John McDonough

As with Pee Wee Russell, Konitz's severe application of an ironclad principle—be original all the time, no clichés!—results in music that veers wildly between the ridiculous and the sublime. It doesn't help that Konitz plays haltingly, out of tune (flat) and in a tone so willfully plain it sounds stale and stuffy. With the exception of "Color" and "Kary's Trance," this is a pretty dull album, even if the trio does support the grand old alto man quite intuitively. Florian Weber's a terrific pianist. —Paul de Barros

One For All, *Incorrigible*

OK, so it's genre music. These guys play hard bop with such verve and relaxed abandon—and what a treat, the three-horn front line arrangements—it's hard not to pop your fingers and go along for the ride. Eric Alexander really grabs one and runs on trombonist Steve Davis' "Spirit," and Jim Rotondi's flugelhorn on his "Voice" is a gem. —Paul de Barros

Sometimes the straight really is the narrow, and by now we know that the skilled sextet isn't out to upset any apple carts with its spins on standards and hard-bop doppelgangers. That said, craft is key to creativity and *Incorrigible* is a step above their usual discs. All hail pithy, punchy solos. —Jim Macnie

Behind the bland cover lies a spotless little band that personifies the finest in late '50s modernity. Modeled on Blakey, it also catches the softer, more rounded ensembles of the West Coast spirit and the early approaches into the '60s. Fifty years out, its modernity remains unsullied by nostalgia. —John McDonough

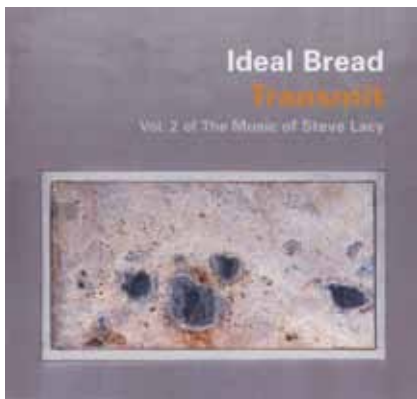
Ideal Bread *Transmit*

CUNEIFORM 296
★★★★½

As one of the most original and singular musicians in jazz history (to say nothing of being one of the first to form a repertoire band when he joined with trombonist Roswell Rudd to play the music of Thelonious Monk in School Days), it's about time some contemporary players have decided to fete the music of Steve Lacy. Ideal Bread was formed in 2006, and over the last four years the band made its mission to celebrate Lacy's quirky compositions. *Transmit* is the second collection of its work.

The band is led by baritone saxophonist Josh Sinton, who studied under Lacy at the New England Conservatory of Music during the last few years of the soprano saxophonist's life. But Ideal Bread aren't staid re-creationists; they embrace the fierce originality and rigor of Lacy's original music and remake it an utterly distinctive way.

Sometimes, as on a piece like "The Dumps," that means creating a kind of composite arrange-



ment drawing on several different versions of the tune Lacy had cut during his career. In other cases, the band members build their improvisations around terse passages from a Lacy score, mirroring the legend's meticulous practice of maintaining a clear, logical connection between the head and subsequent improvisation. Bassist

Reuben Radding and drummer Tomas Fujiwara provide a plush but deeply malleable foundation, smoothly flowing between elegance and deliberate bumptiousness. Sinton and trumpeter Kirk Knuffke display a strong connection, uncorking both sharp unison passages and out-of-sync lines, navigating the frequent repetitions in Lacy's writing with messianic zeal. Yet while Ideal Bread is drawing its template from Lacy, when it comes to the lengthy improvised sections all four members carve out their own turf.

—Peter Margasak

Transmit: As Usual; Flakes; The Dumps; Longing; Clichés; The Breath; Papa's Midnight Hop. (53:56)

Personnel: Josh Sinton, baritone saxophone; Kirk Knuffke, trumpet; Reuben Radding, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.
Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com



Avishai Cohen *Aurora*

EMI/BUE NOTE 5099969 491702
★★★★½

Israeli bassist Avishai Cohen first gained international attention working with Chick Corea's group Origin, and has been making his own recordings as a bandleader for more than a decade. Cohen's imposing bass style has earned many accolades, and he's shown himself to be an ambitious jazz artist willing to explore a variety of creative contexts.

Aurora is the latest manifestation of Cohen's eclecticism, showcasing his singing voice couched mostly in Sephardic and Middle Eastern melodies. A unique pop-folk collection with plenty of subtle, nuanced playing, Cohen de-emphasizes his famed instrumental prowess in favor of wholly integrated song-structure. Cohen sings in English, Hebrew and the Spanish-oriented Ladino, and while his voice is unremarkable, the songs he performs are still quite moving. Supported by pianist Shai Maestro, singer Karen Malka, percussionist Itamar Doari and oud player Amos Hoffman, the ensemble playing is top-notch. The mood is somewhat somber, but Cohen's thoughtful mix of original and traditional compositions feels quite earnest.

This disc was released elsewhere in the world in 2009, and evocative traditional tracks like "Morenika" and "El Hatzipor" have already struck a chord with his home audience. Karen Malka's singing provides a welcome counterpoint to Cohen's vocals, and Hoffman's oud blends well with Maestro's keyboards, providing atmospheric backdrops and impressive soloing. Cohen's longstanding interest (and skill) in Latin music helps push this recording from a rhythmic standpoint, and the instrumental tunes included help pace the overall programming. The natural synthesis of divergent musical influences makes *Aurora* an interesting, enjoyable and groundbreaking world music album.

—Mitch Myers

Aurora: Morenika; Interlude In C# Minor; El Hatzipor; Leclam; Winter Song; It's Been So Long; Alon Basela; Still; Shir Preda; Aurora; Alfonsina Y El Mar; Noches Noces/La Luz. (63:24)

Personnel: Avishai Cohen, vocals, double bass, electric bass, piano; Shai Maestro, piano, Wurlitzer; Amos Hoffman, oud; Karen Malka, vocals; Itamar Doari, percussion; Stephane Belmondo, trumpet, flugelhorn; Lionel Belmondo, flute.
Ordering info: avishaimusic.com

Rova Saxophone Quartet/ Nels Cline Singers *The Celestial Septet*

NEW WORLD 80708
★★★★½

Record labels might not have a problem developing the next high concept, but today's musicians are usually too preoccupied trying to scrape together a living wage to think big. You can't fault the Rova Saxophone Quartet for fearing to tackle the grand idea. The same goes for guitarist Nels Cline, whose twisted and hum-bucked tribute to Andrew Hill stands as one of the great high-concept recordings of the past decade. Since 2006, Cline's trio and Rova have been joining forces on projects like the saxophone quartet's *Electric Ascension*.

Big ideas and big sound. When Cline and his cohorts, bassist Devin Hoff and drummer Scott Amendola, add their sonic heft to Rova's multi-reed phalanx, the result is a highly textured wall of noise. They bring that to bear sparingly throughout these five compositions, most effectively at the climax of Larry Ochs' dramatically layered and segmented tribute to Albert Ayler, "Whose To Know." On Steve Adams' stuttering "Trouble Ticket" the horns blend in rich-if-thorny harmony to counter the Singers' skronky outburst, and on Ochs' brief "Head Count" Rova forms a processional worthy of Sun Ra's Arkestra behind Cline's layered guitar hysterics.



Best of all, though, is the coiled restraint the ensemble brings to Amendola's rearrangement of his composition "Cesar Chávez." With Hoff providing a variegated line that bumbles and throbs like one of Jimmy Garrison's rainbow-hued solos, Ochs and Cline explore a range of tonalities, culminating in a combination of spectral guitar and squawking tenor as Amendola splashes around with abandon.

There is much to explore here, and no shortage of high emotion and ecstatic release.

—James Hale

The Celestial Septet: Cesar Chávez; Trouble Ticket; Whose To Know; Head Count; The Buried Quilt. (68:58)

Personnel: Bruce Ackley, soprano, tenor saxophone; Steve Adams, alto, soprano saxophone; Scott Amendola, drums; Nels Cline, guitars; Devin Hoff, bass; Larry Ochs, tenor, soprano saxophone; Jon Raskin, baritone, alto, soprano saxophone.
Ordering info: newworldrecords.org

A Pride Of Leos

Last year Leo Records, run from England by Russian emigrant Leo Feigin, turned 30 years old. The label observed this milestone by doing exactly what it has done throughout its existence—putting out more than two dozen records of uncompromising improvisational music. Anthony Braxton and Joelle Léandre have both been around the block a few times and each has a healthy portion of Leo releases in their outsized discographies, but prior to the concert documented by *Duo (Heidelberg Loppin) 2007* (LR 548/549; 49:54/39:42 ★★★★★) they had previously performed just once. You wouldn't know it the way they play together. The poly-reedist (heard here on contrabass clarinet and sopranino, soprano and alto saxophones) and bassist rarely fall into comfy foreground and background positions. Each seems to trust the other to realize a statement so complete that it can stand alone and sets out to do the same. Which isn't to say that they ignore each other, they just don't let that mission give them license to slack. Léandre's roots are in classical music, but her mostly bowed playing still swings like mad; this is one of the lustiest Braxton-associated releases in a while.

Brazilian tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman is another frequent Leo client. His trio date *Mind Games* (LR 547; 61:26 ★★½) opens up with a blistering salvo of free-jazz balanced upon a rhythm matrix so visceral and multi-dimensional it could have Milford Graves' name on it. Elsewhere, Perelman indulges a gruff, muscular melodicism that has more to do with Sonny Rollins than fire music, riding the rhythm section's nimble machinations with imperious grace. There's nothing new happening here, but the music is deeply satisfying.

Shimmering (LR 541; 60:54 ★★½), another trio date by German alto and tenor saxophonist Joachim Gies and his group Sound/Body/Cells, proves less successful. Gies has superb technique and a strong imagination, and he's versatile enough to sound as persuasive sketching a soulful line as he does making birdcalls. He has a sympathetic and equally flexible partner in percussionist Denis Stilke. But Israeli singer Ronni Gilla seems woefully miscast in this setting. While she has immaculate control over her instrument, she seems clueless on how to fit into the ensemble. When they hang back while she intones what sounds like a Sephardic lament on "Pure White," the



Ivo Perelman: multi-dimensional strength

effect is haunting. But elsewhere she seems to confuse improvisation with domination, laying on affectations with little regard for the total effect.

Superimpose is trombonist Matthias Müller and percussionist Christian Marien, a Berlin-based duo who have recorded previously under their own names and as part of larger ensembles Olaf Ton and The Astronomical Unit. The title of *Talk Talk* (LR 555; 42:52 ★★½) is an apt representation of their methodology, which is to engage in voluble exchanges in a free improv idiom pioneered by the likes of Paul Rutherford and John Stevens. The action shifts rapidly and is dense beyond any expectation of what a duo should be able to achieve, but it's also thrilling in its sustained intricacy. If Superimpose gets deep into their chosen tongue, the Italian quartet Scoolptures is all about adding new words to its language. While bassist/leader Nicola Negrini, bass clarinet/alto saxophone player Achille Succi and drummer Philippe Garcia are evidently steeped in jazz, for every walking groove or pungent wail there's an electronic counterpoint—a degraded sample, a burst of triggered beats, or a filtered instrumental signal courtesy of each player's outboard effects, along with further glassy swells that issue from Antonio Della Marina's sine wave generator. But what makes *Materiale Umano* (LR 546; 57:14 ★★★★★) a keeper is not the modernity of its sounds, but the succinctly expressive ends to which they are applied.

DB

Ordering info: leorecords.com

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Rockin' Women

Shakura S'Aida: *Brown Sugar* (Ruf 1155; 55:01 ★★★) Overcoming hyper-dramatic guitarist Donna Gratis and a big-gesture, slam-blam producer, this Toronto-based singer breathes emotional authenticity into decent-to-good songs about self-rejuvenation and, of course, relationships. Most convincing of all is "Chasing The Sun," an affecting story about a lost soul.

Ordering info: rufrecords.de

Willie McBlind: *Bad Thing* (Free Note 0901; 47:01 ★★★★★) No other blues band in creation sounds like the one fronted by microtonal (notes-between-the-notes) guitarist Jon Catler and New England Conservatory-trained singer Meredith Borden. Their exhilarating approach to "Harmonic Blues" on adventurous originals and typically skewed arrangements of lesser-known Delta classics connect with the tonal and rhythmic subtleties in the language of Charlie Patton and Robert Johnson.

Ordering info: microtones.com

Laurie Morvan Band: *Fire It Up! (Screaming Lizard 0004; 54:28 ★★★★★)* For the course of a dozen original songs, it's encouraging to hear Morvan bring the guitar heat without crazily self-immolating like so many blues-rock performers do in a minute. With a smart band consisting of a rhythm section and two backup female singers, this Californian also sings well and crafts articulate lyrics from a woman's perspective. Minor debit: some stock and stale riffs.

Ordering info: lauriemorvan.com

Beth McKee: *I'm That Way* (Solo 2 Records 9465; 40:33 ★★★½) Floridian McKee, in love with Louisiana music, sings heartfelt and inviting interpretations of 10 r&b gems (including "Walking To New Orleans") by the recently departed Cajun songwriter Bobby Charles. We'll not see his like again, and more's the pity.

Ordering info: bethmckee.com

Christine Ohlman & Rebel Montez: *The Deep End* (Horizon 2009; 56:42 ★★★★★) She of the beehive hairdo and the Saturday Night Live Band brings the ringing endorsement of Charles Musslewhite to her excitedly sung and enjoyable roots-rock songs. Venturing beyond parody, Ohlman and guest Dion DiMucci pack plenty of heart into their version of rock 'n' roll pioneer Buzz Cason's "Cry, Baby, Cry."

Ordering info: horizonmusicgroup.com

CeeCee James: *Low Down Where The Snakes Crawl* (FWG Records; 60:00 ★★) Otherwise a passable singer, Washington State's James goes overboard with Janis Joplin mannerisms. Her attempts to re-create a foremother's mood only encourage listeners to go



Beth McKee:
heartfelt and inviting

hear Joplin instead.

Ordering info: blueskunkmusic.com

Pat Pepin: *In It For The Long Haul* (self-released; 42:55 ★★★) In the wilds of Maine, Pepin has recorded a pleasing little album whose program of mostly original songs carry sharp-witted, irony-inflected lyrics and spread good-time feeling. She's an assured singer, and the sublimated spirit of r&b's Red Prysock dances or purrs in her tenor saxophone. For entertainment value, Pepin sure beats many a more widely known modern blues performer.

Ordering info: patpepin.com

Karen Carroll: *Talk To The Hand* (Delmark 707; 60:55 ★★) The reissue of this 1997 release still doesn't have much going for it. The singer lacks consistency and the threadbare patchwork of pop-soul, gospel and Chicago blues ties your ears in knots.

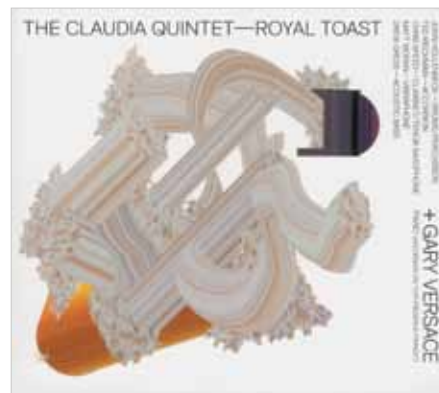
Ordering info: delmark.com

Debbie Davies: *Holdin' Court* (Little Dipper Records 001; 43:09 ★★★★★) Every phrase guitarist Davies plays carries ebullient spirit on an attractive program of instrumentals (she's a capable songwriter and smart about choosing outside material). Recommended for blues zealots, who'll have fun spotting Davies' references to her beloved late employer Albert Collins, as well as for anyone who would enjoy a stimulating change in their blues listening diet.

Ordering info: vizztone.com

Janiva Magness: *The Devil Is An Angel Too* (Alligator 4935; 42:25 ★★★★★) As a rule, Magness never sacrifices honesty for the sake of sentiment and steers clear of platitudes. Her latest album finds her handling genre-crossing material from Gladys Knight, Nick Lowe, Joe Tex, others. Not so good: overstuffed arrangements and roots-lavish production.

Ordering info: alligator.com



The Claudia Quintet with Gary Versace *Royal Toast*

CUNEIFORM 307

★★★★★

Feeling frazzled? Hassled? Heckled? "Crane Merit," the opening track of The Claudia Quintet's *Royal Toast*, will cure your ills. Like a sponge bath for your ears, the song repeats a slow, four-note melody over a floating pulse, piano and saxophone notes intertwining with brushed drums and glowing vibraphone. It never crescendos, it never dissipates. It's an unusual way to open an album, but The Claudia Quintet excels in transforming atypical elements into an original group sound.

Rare in any genre, The Claudia Quintet possesses a true group identity, created over the course of more than a dozen years, five albums and hundreds of live performances. The ensemble's music defies simple or easy categorization, melding disparate influences into a compelling and, at times, complex whole. Leader/composer/drummer John Hollenbeck's apparent love of Steve Reich, Frank Zappa and contemporary chamber music informs the record, and the group's glove-fit telepathy brings it to life. The quintet covers so much ground in the course of one album, e.g., the pastoral hynosis of "Crane Merit," the systems swells of "Keramag," the Balkan dance spirals of "Armitage Shanks" and the Zappa-esque 6/4 march "Sphinx." The group here is supplemented by pianist Gary Versace, a longtime collaborator of Hollenbeck's.

To dissect a single *Royal Toast* track might lessen its magic, but it's irresistible. "Sphinx," for instance, tumbles through multiple moods, ideas and some near-convulsions, Hollenbeck and bassist Drew Gress laying down a rumbling undertow to the song's interwoven saxophone-and-piano melody. The Claudia Quintet hits so many peaks—perfect moments where everything suddenly falls into place—the only response is wonder.

—Ken Micallef

Royal Toast: Crane Merit; Keramag; Prelude; Keramag; Paterna Terra; Ted Versus Ted; Armitage Shanks; Drew With Drew; Sphinx; Matt On Matt; Zurn. (60:23)

Personnel: John Hollenbeck, drums/percussion; Ted Reichman, accordion; Chris Speed, clarinet/tenor saxophone; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Drew Gress, bass; Gary Versace, piano.

Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com

**Ben Monder/
Bill McHenry**
Bloom

SUNNYSIDE 1247

★★★★

Taylor Haskins
*American
Dream*

SUNNYSIDE 1262

★★★★



Focus on guitarist Ben Monder and you will no doubt hear a guitarist going this way and that. "This way and that" meaning he has a consummate approach to his instrument. That's what makes him appealing and delightfully inscrutable at times. Appearing with saxophone marvel Bill McHenry on *Bloom* and in the rhythm section on trumpeter Taylor Haskins' *American Dream*, Monder's range (while perhaps not completely represented by these two recordings) is enough on display for listeners to get the idea.

For starters, *Bloom* is all about improvisation, being in the moment, making relatively radical departures that don't always hang out at one end of the "free" spectrum. In other words, *Bloom* is more nuanced, texturally and musically uneven, and very expressive. Recorded in 2000, *Bloom* is, not surprisingly, original mu-

sic by both players, Monder's electric guitar and McHenry's tenor together offering up sonic variations that suggest this isn't just about blowing or chops but, again, about nuance, sound and artful deviations.

These two young vets (via Paul Motian, Guillermo Klein, Norah Jones, Lee Konitz, Maria Schneider, among others) steer their wily ways through the sauntering and porous title track, hauntingly atmospheric "Ice Fields," meditative "The Shadow Casts Its Object," lively and slightly edgy "Heliogabalus" and spooky "The Shimmering Now That Breathes You." McHenry's tones and technique conventionally allude to ghosts from John Coltrane to Lester Young to Warne Marsh and Jimmy Giuffrè, while Monder hints at a sunny disposition with his whammy bar and use of space, transfiguring Bill Connors, Jim Hall, Jimi Hendrix, Bill Frisell, even some Derek Bailey. Bottom line: If you like the sounds of an electric guitar and tenor saxophone, hinged and unhinged, the mostly light and airy *Bloom* is a fun, aurally pleasing listen. It's also, truth be told, more melodic than one might think.

Haskins' *American Dream* is ambitious in another way: He takes on the meaning of said country in name and spirit through 12 tracks

that combine mostly original music. Haskins—whose credits include lots of composition for various media and work with the Dave Holland Big Band, Richard Bona and Guillermo Klein—takes a sweep through his own personal version of Americana with Monder, bassist Ben Street and drummer Jeff Hirshfield. Haskins' tone recalls Dave Douglas with its tart, compositely attributes but he's very much his own stylist, both formal and informal in his approaches. A soundtrack quality is reflected through the "scenes" he creates with Monder's caustic fuzztones on Neil Young's waltz "Theme From 'Dead Man'" and his gently swinging, mournful "Mustangs (Steve McQueen)," the hallucinogenic "Black Boxes" with Haskins on mute (his best voice here), the loosey goosey rockout "Monetary System Blues" and Tom Waits' relative ballad "Johnsburg, Illinois." The band is tight, Haskins' writing imaginative, with Monder's presence more pronounced as a schizo jazz lounge/rock guitarist, helping to fill out our picture of the plectrist. —John Ephland

Bloom: Bloom; Ice Fields; Chiggers; The Shadow Casts Its Object; Winter; Heliogabalus; Food Chain; Crocodiles; Poppies; The Shimmering Now That Breathes You. (54:25)

Personnel: Ben Monder, guitar; Bill McHenry, tenor saxophone.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

American Dream: Invocation-American Dream; Theme From "Dead Man"; Mustangs (Steve McQueen); Drifters; Black Boxes; No Regrets; Pyramids; Idlewild; Everlong; The Ballad Of Michael Jackson; The Monetary System Blues; Johnsburg, Illinois. (52:23)

Personnel: Taylor Haskins, trumpet, melodica; Ben Monder, guitar; Ben Street, bass; Jeff Hirshfield, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

REGINA CARTER

reverse thread

One of the most acclaimed artists of her generation, pre-eminent violinist Regina Carter has achieved another landmark in her rich creative history. Her newest release, *Reverse Thread*, begins with exquisite traditional African music, and infuses it with contemporary jazz and Afropop energy. The results are uplifting, stirring, and joyful.



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THE WYNTON MARSALIS QUINTET & RICHARD GALLIANO

FROM BILLIE HOLIDAY TO EDITH PIAF

LIVE IN MARCIAC

Wynton Marsalis and his quintet teamed-up with French accordionist Richard Galliano for a concert at the annual Jazz in Marciac Festival in France to pay tribute to the legends Billie Holiday and Edith Piaf.

From the dizzying waltz tempo of "La Foule" to the infectious swing of "Them There Eyes" to the haunting performance of "Strange Fruit," this live recording (CD/DVD combo) captures the performance of two modern icons as they revitalize classic jazz, vocal compositions with artful, instrumental arrangements that are alluring and delightful in their rhythmic variety.

THE WYNTON MARSALIS QUINTET & RICHARD GALLIANO
FROM BILLIE HOLIDAY TO EDITH PIAF
LIVE IN MARCIAC

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 Walter Blanding, Saxophone
 Dan Nimmer, Piano
 Carlos Henriquez, Bass
 Ali Jackson, Drums

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The Orchard Wynton JMM

Ken Peplowski *Noir Blue*

CAPRI 74098
★★★★½

Silky smooth, insinuatingly suave, light on his feet but lightning quick on the draw, Ken Peplowski sails along at 50, going like 60. He's electrifying and graceful on clarinet, and pretty (or gritty) and mellow (or gruff) on tenor. He leads to the fore a quartet of fellow-feeling vets who play most ably, with a burnished patina of sympatico swing and plenty of wholesome listening space. Their pacing's relaxed and their surprises small but pleasing—Berg's ringing choruses, Joe La Barbera's tricky choruses, Jay Leonhart's limber time, Pep's timeless cadenzas.

As winemakers make great wine from the best grapes, the band's platinum repertoire shines forth above all. Among seven under-familiar songs hand-picked for class and substance, three ne-



glected Strayhorn beauties are standouts. Peplowski's clarinet lines deliver on tip-toe Jimmy Hamilton-ian bittersweet purity on "Multicolored Blue" (capturing Al Hibbler's gravitas), swirls of airy arabesques with Berg on "Bourbon Street," while the title track laments in an ultramarine luminescence. Then they caress vintage standards from Kern, Noble, Carmichael,

—Fred Bouchard

Noir Blue: The Best Thing For You; Home With You; Bourbon Street; Jingling Jollies; Riverboat Shuffle; Love Locked Out; If Not For You; Multicolored Blue; Noir Blue; Nobody Else But Me; Little Dogs. (61:47)

Personnel: Ken Peplowski, clarinet, tenor saxophone (4, 5, 6, 9, 10); Shelley Berg, piano; Jay Leonhart, bass; Joe La Barbera, drums.

Ordering info: caprirecords.com

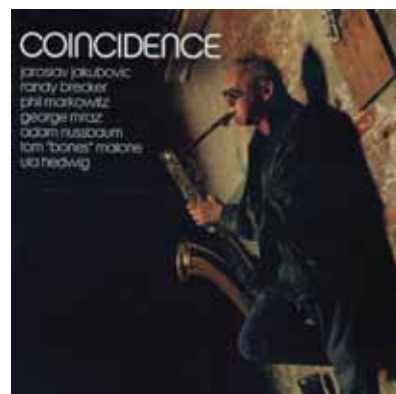
Coincidence *Coincidence*

VMM RECORDS 02
★★★★

Jaroslav Jakubovic's life has seemingly been a continuous cycle of exile and return. Mere weeks after Soviet tanks rolled into his native Prague, the saxophonist relocated to Israel, then to the States where he studied at Berklee and hit the road with the likes of Lionel Hampton and Buddy Rich. He returned to Israel in 1978, where he remained for more than two decades before heading Stateside once again at the dawn of the millennium.

Jakubovic's latest triumphant return is not to a country but to jazz and the baritone sax, both of which he left in the mid-1970s for work as a session tenor player and pop sideman. After finding success during his original U.S. tenure accompanying stars like Bette Midler and Paul Simon, he became a producer for CBS Records in Israel, overseeing many of the country's most prominent artists.

Assembling the band Coincidence for the resumption of his long-dormant jazz career at the encouragement of longtime friend George Mraz, Jakubovic hasn't completely forsaken his pop side, sharing the frontline with trumpeter Randy Brecker and Blues Brothers/David Letterman trombonist Tom "Bones" Malone, nei-



ther of whom are strangers to flexing their chops in the more commercial realm.

The music that Jakubovic has penned for the album also maintains a pop accessibility throughout, with strong grooves and vivid melodies that almost cry out for lyrics to sing along with. (Though the two cuts that do feature vocals are both digressions—"New York Blues" is just that, a straightforward blues belted by Broadway vet Ula Hedwig,

and "Gaudeamus Igitur" is a curious swing-vocal arrangement of the old Latin graduation song, too precious by far.)

Sixties soul-jazz is the well from which Jakubovic draws his strongest inspiration, the most obvious touchstone being Cannonball Adderley's Zawinul-era output. The gospel-tinged pining of "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" is evoked several times, most notably on the wistful "Good Ol' Days," which spotlights the fluttery suppleness of the leader's bari playing. "Say What?" is a fairly conscious echo of "Compared To What?" while "Bouncing Czech Dobry" is a Lee Morgan-style burner.

—Shaun Brady

Coincidence: Regards; Bouncing Czech Dobry; Good Ol' Days; Ladino Dessert; Gaudeamus Igitur; Say What?; Coincidence; Times Square Lullaby; Prague Spring; New York Blues; Walk Away; Jerusalem; The Truth. (72:48)

Personnel: Jaroslav Jakubovic, baritone saxophone, clarinet, flute; Randy Brecker, trumpet; Phil Markowitz, piano; George Mraz, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums; Tom "Bones" Malone, trombone; Ula Hedwig, Margaret Dorn, Emily Bindiger, Michael Lynch, vocals.

Ordering info: vmmrecords.com

Midnite Movers

Choices of multi-disc sets on 1960s pop-music are in ample supply for the serious listener, and the true standout among the spate of current releases is Wilson Pickett's ***Funky Midnight Mover—The Atlantic Studio Recordings (1962–1978)*** (Rhino Hand-made 07753; 77:15; 78:35; 77:41; 77:39; 79:43; 75:29 ★★★★★½). With endless reservoirs of energy, heart and soul, the street-tough soul man's great sledgehammer of a voice slams into 154 songs: 35 of them hits, 18 rare. Superseding fine Pickett collections issued in the past, this bounty of riches comes packaged as a linen-clothed 92-page book with essays, reminiscences and set co-producer Bill Dahl's massively researched notes on tracks.

The allure of hard, cold cash turned The Wicked One away from the gospel path, where he would have built grand cathedrals of song like R. H. Harris and Marion Williams. Instead, in 1959, he joined Detroit's Falcons r&b vocal group and soon used his commanding voice, soaked with the tonalities of sacred music, to push "You're So Fine" onto the Billboard charts. Starting off with that LuPine single, Disc 1 continues impressively with two more Falcons tracks then follows the meteoric rise of Pickett's solo recording career through stops on the Correc-Tone and Double-L labels into the terrifically big explosion of his Atlantic sides: the ultra-plea "In The Midnight Hour," "634-5789" and rousing non-hit singles. Triumphant sessions followed, savor Discs 2 and 3, with Pickett forcing passionate emotion out of Mack Rice's "Mustang Sally," the Beatles' "Hey Jude" (sparring partner: slide guitarist Duane Allman) and, to name just one more glittering gem from the late-'60s, Bobby Womack's ballad "It's A Groove." "His sound traveled well," Dahl told this reviewer. "Classic sides were cut in Detroit, New York, Memphis (where Atlantic veep Jerry Wexler took him to Stax Studios), Muscle Shoals and Philadelphia."

On Discs 4 and 5, amidst the mighty pleasing soul music generated at Gamble & Huff's Sigma Sound Studios and Rick Hall's Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, with first-call session players burrowing deep in grooves, are a few unremarkable tracks. The emotional



Wilson Pickett: return of The Wicked One

COURTESY ATLANTIC/RHINO RECORDS

directness of the man's singing is muted some by hack production by Dave Crawford and substandard material. Surprisingly, Pickett's soul-disco steps on his 1978 *A Funky Situation* LP, his return to Atlantic after a dismal interlude at RCA, are quite good. Almost all of the obscure tracks brought to light on Disc 6, including pure blasts of gospel, are revelatory because of his amazing gift. "Without question," said Dahl, nailing it, "Pickett boasted one of the greatest voices soul music ever produced."

Ordering info: rhino.com

In the last half of the '60s, Thee Midneters, with talented vocalist Willie Garcia (later known professionally as Little Willie G.), good blues-rock guitarist George Dominguez and horns, were an East Los Angeles band of Mexican-Americans that dazzled their fans with a wild musical agility rarely matched then or in the decades since. They trafficked in brown-eyed soul, British Invasion pop, proto-Chicano rock, r&b grunge, sentimental '50s-style r&b, jazz-rock, hippie rock, border-crossing polkas, even salutes to Cesar Chavez. Mostly cover songs, a few originals. All of their studio work—four albums, singles, B-sides, unreleased curiosities—gets bundled in the four-CD box ***Thee Complete Midneters: Songs Of Love, Rhythm & Psychedelia!*** (Micro Werks 002; 49:21; 49:52; 58:48; 47:32 ★★★★★). Fun listening all the way, beginning with, pardon, the minor national hit "Whittier Blvd."

DB

Ordering info: ccmusic.com



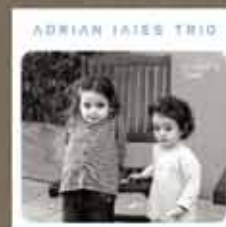
JAY CLAYTON IN AND OUT OF LOVE

JAY CLAYTON voice
JACK WILKINS guitar
JAY ANDERSON bass
SSC 1260 / In Stores July 20

Jay Clayton has long been an advocate for vocalists willing to challenge preconceived notions of jazz singing. As both revered performer and educator, she has proven her mettle by displaying a willingness to explore all disparate challenges her instrument provides. On her new recording *In and Out of Love*, Clayton brings her distinctive style of delivery and vocalizations to some jazz classics. She is assisted by the brilliant and supportive team of guitarist Jack Wilkins and bassist Jay Anderson.

JAY CLAYTON

ADRIAN IAIES TRIO



ADRIAN IAIES TRIO A CHILD'S SMILE

SC 1258 / In Stores July 27

Simple pleasures can derive from disparate sources; whether it be the joyful expressions of a child or the creation of music. On *A Child's Smile*, Argentine pianist/composer Adrian Iaies takes inspiration from the former and channels it through an expressive program of music. The three time Latin Grammy nominee leads his trio, featuring bassist Ezequiel Dutil and drummer Pepi Taveira, through some wonderful jazz compositions that hint at a tango flavor.



www.sunnysiderecords.com

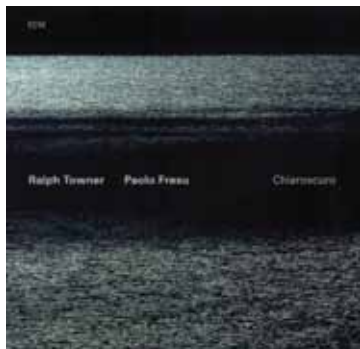
Ralph Towner/ Paolo Fresu *Chiaroscuro*

ECM 2085

★★★★

Hard to believe, but *Chiaroscuro* is Ralph Towner's 22nd title for ECM. Given how irregular Towner's output has been during the course of his sturdy yet now-you-see-him/now-you-don't career, this release can be heard as a cause for celebration for fans of the guitarist/pianist/composer's music. Recorded with trumpeter/flugelhorn player Paolo Fresu, it continues a long line of duets Towner's had going since the 1970s.

Fresu's connection with Towner stems from a commission Towner wrote for a local ensemble at a festival in Italy some 15 years ago. You could say the easygoing Towner takes his time, and, indeed, he did, recognizing Fresu's uncanny melodic sense right off, but only now getting around to recording with him. For *Chiaroscuro*, Towner leaves the piano at home, adding a baritone axe to his usual classical and 12-string guitars. Apart from the Miles Davis/Bill Evans "Blue In Green," the program is all originals, including old and new Towner compositions as



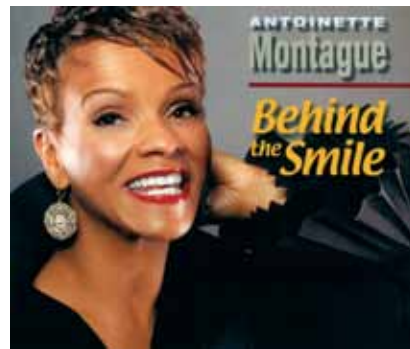
well as two improvisations credited to both artists.

Some songs previously recorded have been rearranged, including "Punta Giara," one of the songs Towner wrote for the commission, as well as, to a lesser extent, his "Wistful Thinking" and "Zephyr." The fact that the songs are played in duet form immediately places them in

another category and not just as revisitations. And the duet nature of this recording positions *Chiaroscuro* in a unique setting: Rather than double up with another guitarist (John Abercrombie), with vibraphone (Gary Burton), bass (Gary Peacock), even drums (Peter Erskine), the teaming up with a brighter-sounding instrument goes way beyond Towner's previous work with, say, Kenny Wheeler in an ensemble setting. Rather, the well-named *Chiaroscuro* is a more exposed outing, the alternating sounds of lyrical guitar and metallic horn a study in contrast, almost jarring at times, despite Fresu's most-often delicate style.

—John Ephland

Chiaroscuro: Wistful Thinking; Punta Giara; Chiaroscuro; Sacred Place; Blue In Green; Doubled Up; Zephyr; Sacred Place (reprise); Two Miniatures; Postlude. (46:41)
Personnel: Ralph Towner, classical, 12-string and baritone guitars; Paolo Fresu, trumpet, flugelhorn.
Ordering Info: ecmrecords.com



Antoinette Montague *Behind The Smile*

IN THE GROOVE

★★★½

Antoinette Montague's name and elegant physical appearance have the touch of royalty. It's silly to take the regal comparison too far, yet her singing on her second album suggests a fitting for a tiara isn't out of the question. Focused and with purity of intent, she skillfully advances stories that are open-hearted gifts to listeners rather than exhibits of showy technique or solipsistic disclosure. Long under the spell of Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald, mentored by Carrie Smith and Etta Jones, Montague has the vocal command and depth of feeling to make you believe the words to songs, even potentially mawkish ones.

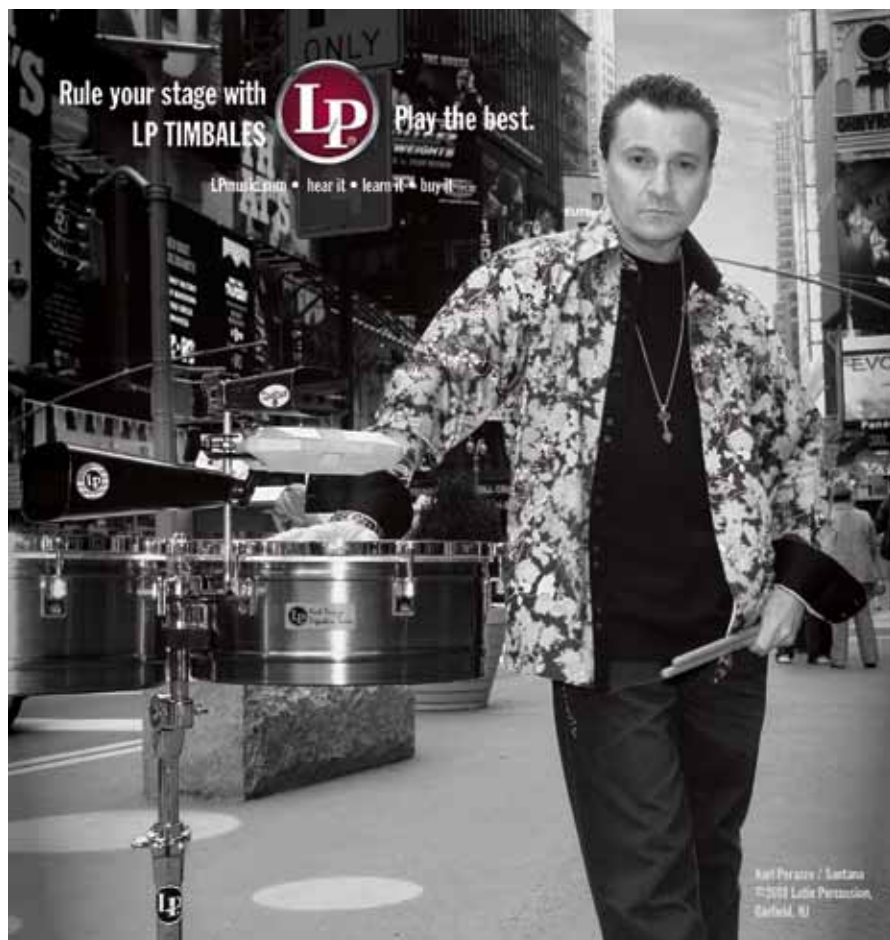
Impeccable in her choice of material, Montague brings the right expressive qualities to Duke Ellington's neglected "Lost In Meditation" and "23rd Psalm"; her reverie over a lost love in the former is pitched emotionally between romantic fantasy and hopelessness, while the inner strength taken from her time singing gospel fuels her delivery of the lyrics to the Bible-inspired song for Mahalia Jackson. Also underscoring Montague's appreciation of classics are the revival of the standard "The Song Is You" and the makeover of Ray Noble's "I Hadn't Anyone Till You" as a sprightly bossa nova.

The singer, who usually performs in New York, might have invited disaster doing Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On," but she wins out by making lyrics about the turbulent 1960s sound pertinent to the present time. The rather bold decision to interpret bluesman Big Bill Broonzy's mildly disreputable "Give Your Mama One Smile" pays off; her controlled excitement sits well with Bill Easley's clarinet. She sounds stagy, false in feeling, only on the chestnut "Somewhere In The Night." With Easley, Mulgrew Miller, Peter and Kenny Washington alongside, Montague is in good company. But she may actually be over-appreciative of the musicians as the arrangements sometimes give too much room to soloists at her expense.

—Frank-John Hadley

Behind The Smile: Behind The Smile; I Hadn't Anyone Till You; Give Your Mama One Smile; Ever Since The One I Love's Been Gone; What's Going On; The Song Is You; I'd Rather Have A Memory Than A Dream; Lost In Meditation; Get Ready; Summer Song; Somewhere In The Night; Meet Me At No Special Place; 23rd Psalm. (52:39)

Personnel: Antoinette Montague, vocals; Bill Easley, saxophone, flute, clarinet; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.
Ordering Info: antoinettemontague.com



Gail Pettis
Here In The Moment

OA2 RECORDS 22059
 ★★★★★

Pamela Rose
Wild Women Of Song

THREE HANDED 005
 ★★★



Gail Pettis and Pamela Rose are singers on the West Coast, the former found in Seattle and the latter in San Francisco. They have a common interest in avoiding the staleness and predictability that afflicts many of their peers. Their vocal abilities and their taste in material indicate they should be more than regional treasures.

A former orthodontist, Pettis finds new vistas of emotion in the words and music of standards and surprises on her second album. Her wonderful version of "I Thought About You," usually identified with Ella Fitzgerald, reflects the melancholy of a sad-faced train passenger with an intimacy that few singers in any genre have knowledge of. Another ballad, "How Did He Look?" a favorite of cabaret singer Mabel Mercer, is rendered poignantly with an easy elegance built of curiosity and lingering heartbreak over a lost love affair. This grand-

daughter of a Mississippi bluesman freshens Cole Porter's "Night And Day" with exhilaration over sharing "sweet love" with her partner. Similarly, the directness of feeling she reveals about a blossoming romance does more than ample justice to Etta James' old r&b hit "At Last." All the other songs, too, whatever the tempo or mood, each graced by the surety of her delivery, have an unmistakable air of honesty about them. Minor complaint: Pettis' two pianists and bassists are clearly talented but their solos don't so much develop songs as mark time between verses.

Rose is a blithe spirit with a real gift for entertainment. She's done something different for her fifth album, assembling an entire program of quality songs that were written or co-written by women. In lovely voice, she's both playful and decisive about an affair of the heart when

treating Dorothy Fields and Jerome Kern's "A Fine Romance." She applies her sure touch to the Peggy Lee-Dave Barbour composition "I Don't Know Enough About You," and, with characteristic confidence, rescues songwriters Vee Lawnhurst and Tot Seymour's 1930s pop hit "And Then Some" from obscurity. On her own tune "I'm Not Missing You," Rose articulates a strong will and a sassy streak as she addresses an undeserving beau; happily, she stops just short of theatrics. But she's way out of her element with the blues, too chipper and polite to go deep into the dirty emotional mines of Alberta Hunter's "Down Hearted Blues" and Ida Cox's "Wild Women." —*Frank-John Hadley*

Here In The Moment: In The Still Of The Night; The Very Thought Of You; Who Can I Turn To?; I Thought About You; Night And Day; Day In Day Out; Nature Boy; I Could Have Danced All Night; At Last; How Did He Look?; Snap Your Fingers. (46:26)

Personnel: Gail Pettis, vocals; Darin Clendenin (1, 2, 6, 7, 10), Randy Halberstadt (3-5, 8, 9), piano; Clipper Anderson (1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11), Jeff Johnson (3, 5, 8, 9), bass; Mark Ivester, drums and percussion.

Ordering info: gailpettis.com

Wild Women Of Song: I Don't Know Enough About You; That Ole Devil Called Love; Down Hearted Blues; I'm Not Missing You; What A Diff'rence A Day Made; Wild Women; Bruised Around The Heart; And Then Some; A Fine Romance; My Silent Love; I'm In The Mood For Love; Can't We Be Friends?; Close Your Eyes; If You're So Special. (63:45)

Personnel: Pamela Rose, vocals; Matt Catingub, alto (1, 6, 9, 12) and tenor (6, 9) saxophones, piano (9, 12); Joe Cohen, tenor saxophone (14); Doug Beavers, trombone (6, 9), Mike Olmos, trumpet (6, 9, 12); Jeff Massanari (2), Danny Caron (3-6, 9, 14), Mimi Fox (7, 10, 11, 13), guitar; Wayne De La Cruz, organ (4, 6, 11, 13, 14); Tammy Hall (3, 5), John R. Burr (2, 8), piano; Jim Zimmerman, vibes (2); Ruth Davies (1, 3, 5, 9, 12), Dewayne Pate (6, 14), Jon Evans (7, 13), bass; Jason Lewis (1, 2, 8, 12), Allison Miller (4, 7, 11, 14), Dave Rokeach (6, 9) drums; Jordan Koppleman, Linda Tillery, Jeanie Tracy, Glenn Walters, Gayle Wilhelm (4), backup singers.

Ordering info: pamelarose.com

danilo pérez
PROVIDENCIA
 new release!

"When the dust settles, the pianist Danilo Pérez will be looking like one of the best things that happened to jazz." — Ben Ratliff, *New York Times*

"Danilo is open to whatever comes, in that zero-gravity kind of way. When we become weightless, he doesn't start looking for things to hold on to." — Wayne Shorter

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Stan Getz Rises For Final Bow

Three months before his death on June 6, 1991, weak and ailing from liver cancer, saxophonist Stan Getz and pianist Kenny Barron embarked on a four-night stint at Copenhagen's Café Montmartre. Fourteen pieces from these concerts were released as *People Time* in 1992. On **People Time: The Complete Recordings** (Sunnyside 3084; 42:58/55:43/50:48/77:39/69:05/54:02/66:29 ★★½) Getz introduces the 48 songs the duo is about to play as "the good, the bad and the in-between." Indeed, there is no denying that Getz is not the musician he once was; his tone is more metallic and his breathing is sometimes shallow. His musical imagination sometimes leads him places he can't escape. That stated, there is much heroic, heart-rending playing here, and Barron is a deep well of resourcefulness who constantly rises to take control when Getz falters.

Listeners will invariably differ about the best set here, but if you could set the dial on your time machine for one hour at the Montmartre you'd do well to choose the late set on March 4. One hint of how it went is its length: eight minutes longer than its closest rival. Although Getz clearly tires near the end of his opening solo on "Stablemates"—one of seven pieces he would play on each of the first three nights (the fourth night was cut short by Getz's illness)—he rallies during Barron's exuberant two-handed runs. That spirit of rejuvenation, and the interplay between the two, is a common thread.

Following "Stablemates" comes one of the stand's highlights, a beautifully contemplative "I Remember Clifford" with a remarkably well-integrated sax and piano head. Getz runs on automatic pilot a bit on "Like Someone In Love" and falters on Charlie Haden's "First Song," but it's failure that breaks your heart. Raw and lonesome sounding, Getz's opening cues a compelling response from Barron, full of icy notes and lingering melancholy. Nothing prepares you for the electricity that crackles throughout "The Surrey With A Fringe On Top," which the duo tackled four times in Copenhagen. Barely touching on the melody, Getz sounds completely unfettered and at one with his horn, handing off to a long, up-tempo romp by Barron. A finely textured "Yours And Mine" closes the evening.

The joy of a collection like this, of course, is that you can cherry pick the very best, which would include a fast, assured "Night And Day" from Disc 3, a virtuosic "You Stepped Out Of A Dream" from Disc 5—the liveliest set of all, despite Getz's reed problems—and the one-two punch of "Hush-A-Bye" and "I'm Okay" from Disc 7.

Of course, there is no escaping the irony of that latter song, composed by Eddie Del Barrio, who had played synthesizer on Getz's *Apasionado*. Tender and wistful in its first appearance on opening night, the song gets



Kenny Barron and Stan Getz: compelling and resourceful

the better of Getz on March 4. He strives for breathy tenderness, but winds up sounding strident. Getz puts the song away until the final night, and then turns it into a thing of naked beauty.

The low point is reached on the sole take of "Bouncing With Bud." So flawed was Getz's playing that the piece was edited to cover a gaffe, yet again Barron rides to the rescue with a blazing solo. The breadth of the pianist's contributions over these seven sets is exceptional—ranging from the stride-influenced showcase on "(There Is No) Greater Love" on March 3 to the harmonically advanced playing on the closing night's "Hush-A-Bye." Given the timing, Getz is the obvious focus of this box, but Barron is the clear winner of the MVP award.

There is no question that Getz went down swinging. While he sometimes relied on abrupt shifts in dynamics to cover his diminished skills, he could still tear your heart with a few notes, and although his breathy phrases occasionally turned wheezy, he could still rip into an arpeggio or throw off a clever, crisply articulated quote.

DB

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



Ike Sturm *Jazz Mass*

(SELF RELEASED)

★★★★½

Bassist and composer Ike Sturm's *Jazz Mass* is an excellent work that melds jazz and the mass genre together extremely well, a feat I've not heard before. New York City's Saint Peter's Church commissioned Sturm to write *Jazz Mass* as a tribute to Pastor Dale Lind for his 40 years of service there. *Jazz Mass*, which exudes serenity, peacefulness and a still calmness, employs a choir, string orchestra, a top-notch rhythm section and the stellar front-line of saxophonists Donny McCaslin and Loren Stillman and trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. Sturm took four ordinaries from the Catholic Mass ("Kyrie," "Gloria," "Sanctus," "Agnus Dei") and added the hymns "Just As I Am" and "Shine." He also set the Lord's Prayer to music, included two shorter improvised instrumental solos from himself and guitarist Ryan Ferreira, and contributed the longer composition "Offertory: Stillness."

The writing is similar to Maria Schneider's recent work: implied time that's felt rather than directly heard, an emphasis on texture and color, several exposed parts and plenty of room for soloists to stretch out. Sturm uses the choir and strings strategically, often to increase emotional intensity, especially near the climax of one of the horns' several solos or to support solo vocalist Misty Ann Sturm's quiet, bell-like soprano. The strings are barely beneath her at the beginning of the "Sanctus," and as they build the choir enters to give full effect to the text's final two lines: "Hosanna in the highest/Blessed is he who comes in His name: Lord." The choral writing is rarely melismatic or polyphonic, making it easy to hear the mostly English text, although it betrays Sturm's breaking of some of the basic rules of vocal writing.

—Chris Robinson

Jazz Mass: Kyrie; Gloria; Interlude; Hymn: Just As I Am; Offertory: Stillness; Sanctus; Thanksgiving; Our Father; Agnus Dei; Hymn: Shine, (57:12)

Personnel: Ike Sturm, composition, bass; Misty Ann Sturm, voice; Loren Stillman, alto saxophone; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; Ingrid Jensen, trumpet, flugelhorn; Adam Benjamin, piano, rhodes; Ryan Ferreira, guitar; Ted Poor, drums; choir; string orchestra.

Ordering info: ikesturm.com



Emilio Solla & the Tango Jazz Conspiracy *Bien Sur!*

FRESH SOUND WORLD JAZZ 042

★★★★★

What begins as richly textured percussion and drum-filled moment turns quickly dissonant at the opening of *Bien Sur!* as the high pitch of Victor Prieto's Galician bagpipe squeals its way into the front of things, careening unexpectedly into an otherwise soft underbrush of rhythm.

The sounds of immediate climax and contrast, though, are tethered by the voice of the piano, which draws any variables together at once. From there, Emilio Solla's restrained leadership flirts in equal parts with 4/4 tango rhythms, improvised lines, Uruguayan beats and plenty of passion.

The classically trained Argentine pianist's Tango Jazz Project has morphed into the Tango Jazz Conspiracy, a more apt title if only for the implied contraband collusion of musical cultures.

And over the course of seven seamless tracks, the quintet invokes a wide gamut of traditional and modern concepts: Prieto's often frenetic accordion shuffle-steps alongside the drums where the bandoneon might be used in a more traditional take on tango. "Malena," the only track here not penned by Solla, is revisited as a passionate ballad, turning on the playful give-and-take between deep horn voicings and Solla's keys.

On "Tonos Lejanos," Colombian singer Lucia Pulido changes up the unison folkloric singing that swept "Candombley" to its finish. Supported by a foundation of rolling percussion and interspersed by lilting horn and piano interplay, her fiery and emotional performance on the album's last track would stand in stark contrast to the bagpipe on its first—except that those contrasts are the heart of this disc's beauty.

—Jennifer Odell

Bien Sur!: Remain Alert; Payos; Hartbeat; Malena; Chakatrik; Candombley; Tonos Lejanos. (51:61)

Personnel: Chris Cheek, soprano, tenor, baritone saxophones; Victor Prieto, Galician bagpipe (1), accordion; Emilio Solla, piano; Jorge Roeder, double bass; Richie Barshay, drums, percussion; Billy Hart, drums (3); Tim Armacost, soprano sax (5); Arturo Prendez, Manuel Silva, Ramon Echegaray, tambores (6).

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

New Releases from Capri Records!

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John Fedchock NY Sextet



Led by trombonist-composer-arranger **John Fedchock**, whom *Jazz Journal International* called, "a superb trombone soloist," the band on the CD features some of the most dazzling post-bop talent in the Big Apple, including trumpeter **Scott Wendholt**, tenor saxophonist **Walt Weiskopf**, pianist **Allen Farnham**, bassist **David Finck**, and drummer **Dave Ratajczak**. Inspired by the 2008 jazz festival crowd, this high-powered unit turns in a sleek set of fast-paced swinging music played with vitality, elegance and wit.



Legendary jazz trombonist Curtis Fuller's newest recording *I Will Tell Her* is a tribute to his wife of over 30 years. The sextet includes saxophonist Keith Oxman whom Fuller compares to the late great John Coltrane. Fuller has been working with this group for the last 5 years, which is evident in the tightness of their playing. This double CD features the sextet in both live and studio settings masterfully playing Fuller's original music



For the first time on CD! This iconic recording was made when Makoto Ozone was a student at Berklee and Phil Wilson was his professor. When it was originally released in 1982, the great jazz critic and author Leonard Feather gave the performance 4 ½ stars and wrote, "It can safely be predicted that Makoto Ozone, the 21-year-old phenomenon from Kobe, Japan, will very shortly make the giant step from virtual unknown to world figure." He was right!

The album avoids any hint of starchy obligation or misty nostalgia. **Mr. Peplowski** attacks these songs eagerly, as if tearing them out of their shrink wrap. His clarinet playing is, as always, sprightly and controlled, expressive but never shrill...The band, with **Mr. Berg, Mr. La Barbera** and the bassist **Jay Leonhart**, matches his high degree of enthusiasm and meets his high level of expertise.

Nate Chinen - *NY Times*



A Handful Of Stars is a most apt description for Los Angeles' first call baritone saxophonist Adam Schroeder's debut release as a leader. He has assembled a hard-swinging and sublimely sensitive quartet with veterans John Clayton, Jeff Hamilton and rising star guitarist, Graham Dechter. The eleven tunes include works by Cole Porter, Duke Ellington, Neal Hefti, Quincy Jones and other composers as well as two of Schroeder's elegant originals.



Chie Imaizumi's name translates to "Thousand Pictures" and through her music she generates those pictures in your mind. Every piece is part of a life journey written with her heart and from her soul. On her latest release, **A Time of New Beginnings**, she hosts an all-star band from both coasts, New York and Los Angeles and in between with John Clayton, Randy Brecker, Jeff Hamilton, Gary Smulyan, Steve Davis, Terrell Stafford, Scott Robinson, Steve Wilson, Tamir Hendelman, Mike Abbott, Greg Gisbert and Paul Romaine.



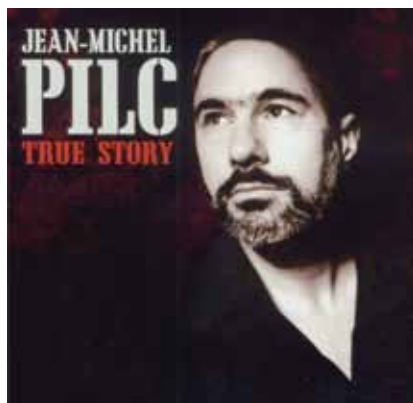
Distributed in the USA through City Hall Records, San Rafael, CA 94901

Jean-Michel Pilc *True Story*

DREYFUS 46050 369502

★★½

Pianist Jean-Michel Pilc has a number of admirable traits: a wide range of dynamics, an ability to conjure lyricism, a sense of the poetic, a varied touch and a taste for musical exploration. This collection of largely improvisational trio pieces



has much to recommend, yet not without caveat. With bassist Boris Kozloff and drummer Billy Hart, Pilc could scarcely have better support. Kozloff can provide a strong yet discreet arco bolster to aching piano pirouettes or a walking bass sinew that instantly strengthens the ensemble.

Yet these pieces often meander up blind alleys, with no resolution. Motifs can sprout and blossom and just hang elliptically. The no-time pieces tend toward static navel-gazing: probably more interesting to play than hear. At their most satisfying, the numbers evince development, like on the swelling, Keith Jarrett-esque “PBH Factor,” which pulls all three players along as a unit. Pilc can freeze a moment and turn it over repeatedly with the introspective focus of single treble notes, and there are few drummers as adept at rubato playing as Hart. A little such indulgence goes a long way.

No wonder, then, that one of the most satisfying selections is a slow blues, “Kingston, NY,” providing some much-needed *terra firma*. Again, Pilc commands a full syntax of sunny melody, out-of-tempo forays, crashing dissonance, contrary motion and other remarkable expressions. Yet so many selections on this album suffer from fragmentation and transitory incompleteness.

—Kirk Silsbee

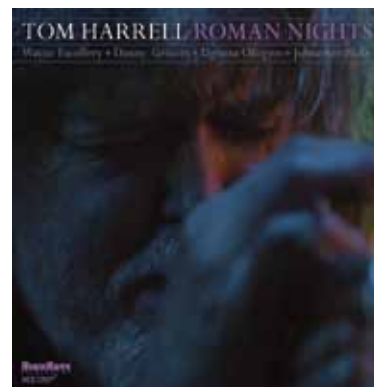
True Story: The Other Night; Relic; PBH Factor; A Brief History Of Time; High Sky—The Elegant Universe; Mornings With Franz; Kingston, NY; Try To Remember; B.B.B.; My Heart Belongs To Daddy; True Story—Scene 1; True Story—Scene 2; True Story—Scene 3; True Story—Scene 4; True Story—Scene 5. (66:50)
Personnel: Jean-Michel Pilc, piano; Boris Kozloff, bass; Billy Hart, drums.
Ordering info: jmpilc.com

Tom Harrell *Roman Nights*

HIGH NOTE 7207

★★★

When you’re blessed with strengths like Tom Harrell’s, it makes sense to play to them. His technique is faultless, his band tight the way that only a unit that’s worked together for years can be, and he has both the gift and inclination to write clear, accessible melodies.



Harrell makes use of all of these assets on *Roman Nights*, his third album in a row with his touring quintet. “Storm Approaching” kicks things off with a briskly paced statement of a streamlined theme, which opens the way for succinct and muscular solos by both horns and piano. Tenor saxophonist Wayne Escoffery is the gusty one, vaulting between the high and low registers with the unswerving determination of a twister cutting across the plains on a summer day. Harrell’s confident extrapolations on the next tune, “Let The Children Play,” combine vigor with poise, gliding effortlessly over the discretely overdubbed reed and brass backing, and he renders the ballad “Roman Nights” with such sweet tenderness and great fluency.

But, as is so often the case with CDs nowadays, the record runs out of strong material well before it runs out of time. A couple tracks are marred by Danny Grissett’s switch to electric piano, a gambit that loses the lucidity he brings to the acoustic instrument without gaining anything in texture. And despite its title, “Bird In Flight” feels more like an earthbound exercise, connecting the structural dots without connecting emotionally save for Escoffery’s Wayne Shorter-like navigation of its unusual (for Harrell) complexities. *Roman Nights* is a strong album that would be even better with a bit of unsentimental editing.

—Bill Meyer

Roman Nights: Storm Approaching; Let The Children Play; Roman Nights; Study In Sound; Agua; Obsession; Harvest Song; Bird In Flight; Year Of The Ox. (62:34)
Personnel: Tom Harrell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Wayne Escoffery, tenor saxophone; Danny Grissett, piano, Fender Rhodes; Ugonna Okwegwo, bass; Johnathan Blake, drums.
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Keith Jarrett/Charlie Haden *Jasmine*

ECM 2165

★★★★

Fitting for this instrumental recording, we begin with the words. Keith Jarrett has a way with language that mirrors in some respect his wizardry at the keyboard: His liner essay for *Jasmine* is as simple as the elements that he and Haden applied to these classic tunes, yet their meaning is complex and elusive, much like the emotions stirred by the songs themselves and their interpretations in particular. Jarrett doesn’t deny the romanticism of this project, which effectively takes up where he left off with his exquisite solo album *The Melody At Night, With You*. In fact, he suggests that each listener call his or her “wife or husband or lover late at night and sit down and listen” to these “great love songs.”

Jarrett would have us use this occasion to share treasures that are “dying in this world,” art being foremost among them. With its disappearance, so will we lose that capacity for emotion that defines the better sides of who we are. It’s likely that the composers of these tunes didn’t write with such a weighty mission in mind. But Jarrett has a point. In jazz, as in many aspects of life, the experiential pace has quickened and yet also grown shallower; water splashes faster through the sleeker creek, distracting us from seeing how little lies beneath its surface.



That depth is what *Jasmine* is all about. Jarrett and Haden play with what might be described as awesome restraint, given the razzle and dazzle each could have brought to the table, with Haden in his familiar mode of playing sparsely, sometimes investing each note with a weighty grace. Their method becomes clear especially on the brisker songs, though these tend to stroll rather than hurtle. On “No Moon at All,” Jarrett ramps up only very briefly to a 16th-note clip, right before Haden’s solo. Instead, he explores the melody thoughtfully, not through the usual right-hand line over a left-hand comp but through a kind of harmonic bloom, rustled by hints of counterpoint and more organic than static in the movement of its parts.

Jarrett’s eloquence peaks in his unaccompanied intro to “I’m Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life.” With chords alternately simple and clustered, centering briefly on a dominant pedal tone, then blossoming the harmony again before pulling back on the last four bars into a string of streamlined changes leading to Haden’s entrance, he makes exactly the point argued in his essay: It feels almost corny to describe what he’s doing as beautiful, because beauty has become either less of a priority or a cynical synonym for trendy. And yet beautiful is just what these moments are.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Jasmine: For All We Know; Where Can I Go Without You; No Moon At All; One Day I’ll Fly Away; I’m Gonna Laugh You Right Out Of My Life; Body And Soul; Goodbye; Don’t Ever Leave Me. (62:30)
Personnel: Keith Jarrett, piano; Charlie Haden, bass.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Sandro Dominelli *The Alvo Sessions*

SANDRO DOMINELLI PRODUCTIONS

★★★

When this jazz power trio abandons cliché and embraces its own peculiar uniqueness, good things happen. Guitarist Rez Abbasi has acquitted himself well on his six recordings and as a busy New York City sideman; celebrated electric bassist Chris Tarry is the winner of several Juno awards and possesses a serious resume; drummer/leader Sandro Dominelli is the album's mystery man.

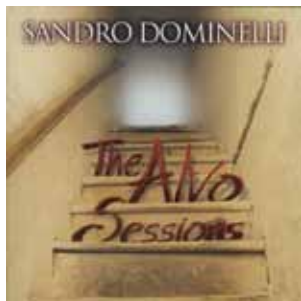
The Canadian-born drummer has recorded three prior albums, *The Alvo Sessions* cut at New York City and Alberta studios. Much of this trio's music seems stuck in some ECM, Mick Goodrick-seeking space (as in their version of Keith Jarrett's "Personal Mountains"), or perhaps it's an homage to Pat Metheny's *Bright Size Life*. Intimate melodies buck up against fusion-era rhythms and arrangements, sometimes successfully, sometimes laced with ennui. For example, "Number 11"'s tired 16th-note rhythms, unison riff mongering and psychedelic mood are so hackneyed as to be embarrassing. The album gets interesting with Abbasi's yearning performance on Chris Isaak's "Wicked Game," the trio imbuing the lonely torch song with considerable pathos and strength. Dominelli's "Hot Sauce" lets all involved forego rigidity for trouble-free swing, and it's a fun moment of repose. Straightahead isn't *really* this trio's bag, but their bouncy, relaxed performance refreshes. Gentle "Number 17" reprises the Metheny mold, but Abbasi holds the listener spellbound (no 16ths allowed). "Kata" closes the set, tumbling rim clicks and flowing tom punctuation asserting the drummer's final say-so.

—Ken Micallef

The Alvo Sessions: Personal Mountains; Foggy Bridge; Wicked Game; Number 11; Hot Sauce; S.B.; Number 17; Kata. (44:22)

Personnel: Sandro Dominelli, drums; Rez Abbasi, guitar; Chris Tarry, bass

Ordering info: sandrodominelli.com



Ernesto Cervini Quartet Featuring Joel Frahm *Little Black Bird*

ANZIC RECORDS OG-1104

★★★★

Bold Canadian drummer Ernesto Cervini exemplifies "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee," recalling none other than that masterful and exceedingly wry fellow drummer, Ralph Peterson Jr. Cervini's quick-witted commentary, almost comical percussive flurries and unpredictable bomb-drops are allied to a liquid ride-cymbal beat that flows somewhere between Roy Haynes and Jon Christensen. Also like Petersen (who recorded six acclaimed Blue Note album in the '90s), Cervini has a clever compositional style that finds perfect expression in the warm, roving lines of saxophonist Joel Frahm, Cervini's well chosen foil.

Cervini takes compositional inspiration from Radiohead on two songs: "Seven Claps," a hypnotic track of buoyant cymbal/snare accents, Adrean Farrugia's spidery electric piano and Frahm's spiraling wonders; and a cover of "2 + 2 = 5," here resembling a bubbling Nana Vasconcelos tapestry, not the Oxford-based rock band. "Coconut Bill," a mischievous blues inspired by Lenny Tristano, has all the forward motion of a circus parade. A woodpecker worthy solo of taps, dribbles and rolls opens the title track, Cervini turning drums into a rainforest symphony, soon accompanied by his group's excellent interplay.

—Ken Micallef

Little Black Bird: Coconut Bill; Mia Filgia; Little Black Bird; Nonna Rosa; Jimmy Rey; On Being Grand; Seven Claps; Cerebrau; 2 + 2 = 5. (60:25)

Personnel: Ernesto Cervini, drums; Joel Frahm, saxophones; Jon Maharaj, bass, Adrean Farrugia, piano.

Ordering info: anzicrecords.com



Stephan Crump *Reclamation*

SUNNYSIDE 1243

★★★★

The balance between instruments in a trio is always critical, but seldom are the parts as intertwined and equal as they are in bassist Stephan Crump's band with guitarists Liberty Ellman and Jamie Fox.

While, sonically, Crump's bass is the axis, the instrumental parts are so integrated that tonal variation and color become dominant. This effect is heightened by the fact that all three sets of strings have very dry tones, most particularly Fox's electric guitar. The lack of resonance brings all three instruments into sharp focus. There's a lightness to this band, too, which is most evident on "Overreach." With broad chords from Ellman—which sound like they would be massive power chords on an over-amped electric axe—and some restrained string slapping from Crump, the tune has the heft and momentum of a Rush song without the volume and resultant bombast. Fox applies a tart lead to cap things off.

"Shoes, Jump" pops along with sprightly motion as well, but the feel is more Brazilian here, while "Memphis"—with three independent-but-interlocking elements—meanders down a slower path.

At over 14 minutes, "Pernambuco" adds a suite-like approach, as Crump's arrangement travels from atmospheric string noises to a pastoral section and into a dark, slow movement that is anchored by his arco bass.

—James Hale

Reclamation: Memphis; Silogism; The Leaves, The Rain; Overreach; Here Not Here; Shoes, Jump; Escalateur; Pernambuco; Toward Fall. (48:27)

Personnel: Stephan Crump, bass; Liberty Ellman, acoustic guitar; Jamie Fox, electric guitar.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



michael musillami trio

old tea



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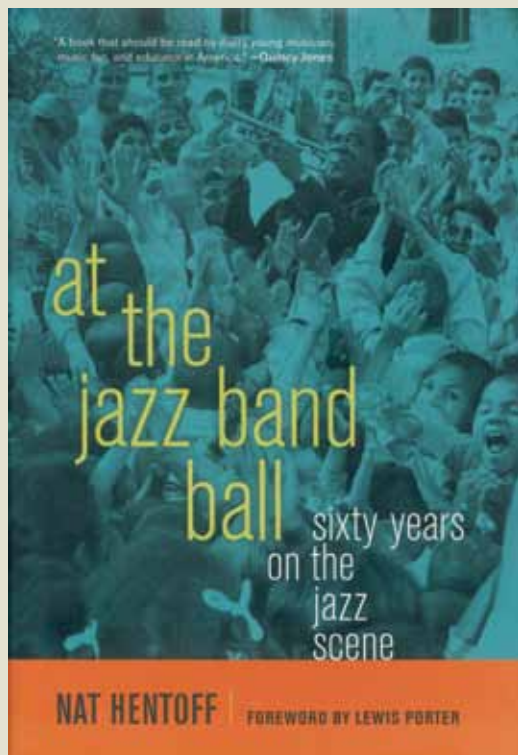
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Hentoff's Passion Makes Jazz Writing Personal

The newest collection of previously published columns by Nat Hentoff, *At The Jazz Band Ball: Sixty Years On The Jazz Scene* (University of California Press), is as much a book about jazz as it is a portrait of the author. A jazz insider who also reports on civil rights and the Constitution, Hentoff revisits time and again familiar places in his life. He recounts the Boston street where, after passing a record store as an 11-year-old, he heard an Artie Shaw recording of "Nightmare" and fell in love with the music so suddenly he shrieked with pleasure. In many of the articles, he remembers the Candid Records studio where he later worked on *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite* and other seminal albums. By writing about his personal associations with jazz, Hentoff explores major themes in the genre while inserting his own history into the canon.

The book is loosely grouped into 11 sections based on certain themes—chapters on Duke Ellington, singers and jazz's relationship with the First Amendment are among them. Many of the columns span only a page or two. The articles, encompassing 1956 to 2009, first ran in the *Wall Street Journal*, *DownBeat*, *JazzTimes*, *The Village Voice* and other publications. There are no fresh stories in the book (many of them can also be found online), but binding the work together in one place serves as a window into Hentoff's worldview. The most rewarding pieces here are thorough examinations of issues close to his heart: racial equality, education and the future of jazz.

Hentoff fills *At The Jazz Band Ball* with activism. The "Roots" section contains three columns about establishing a living jazz history in cities around the country. He writes about unearthing history in Queens, N.Y., based on interviews with local musicians, and he includes comments from readers all over the country about local jazz lore. Hentoff ends the section with a call to action, challenging listeners in Southern states to explore their cities' own associations with jazz. One of the longest essays in the book, "The Ladies Who Swung the Band," examines the history of women in jazz by focusing on the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. This mixed-race, all-female ensemble from the 1940s is the base for an exposition of gender stereotypes in jazz, a topic Hentoff revisits throughout the anthology.

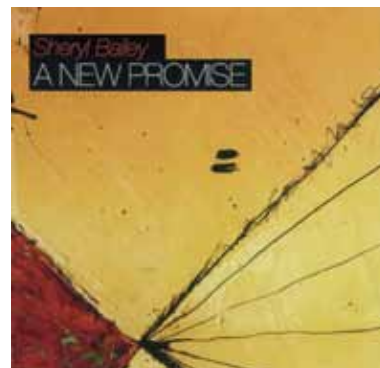


Offering the reader a look beyond the many anecdotes about Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie and Clark Terry, "Beyond the Process," is a response to a negative review of his 2004 book, *American Is*. The piece explains Hentoff's reportorial style and helps form a picture of the man as a professional writer. This is one of the rare columns where Hentoff uses his critical voice. In another, "Are Krall and Monheit Jazz Singers?" he unleashes his acid tongue to expose Diana Krall and Jane Monheit to a harsh, exacting light. "Diana Krall's time is, at best, sluggish," he writes. "If you wanted to tap your foot to her singing, it would fall asleep."

Reading these columns back to back is a bit disorienting due to the decade-spanning organization of the piece. In one section, an interview with Thelonious Monk is adjacent to a story about jazz Web sites that was written this decade. Though the information likely was necessary when the columns were originally composed, reading the same story three separate times can get tiring.

In *At The Jazz Band Ball*, Hentoff comes off as the cool uncle who weaves fascinating stories about historical figures, but tends to reiterate the same anecdotes with slightly different emphasis. Due to the personal nature of the stories, readers who have never met the author can, by reading the book, start to know the man. He's a life-long jazz-lover who has enjoyed "playing the electric typewriter," as he often writes, for many, many years. His life is jazz history.

Ordering info: ucpress.edu



Sheryl Bailey *A New Promise*

MCG JAZZ 1028

★★★½

For her sixth album as a leader, guitarist Sheryl Bailey departs from her usual setting—a trio with organist Gary Versace and drummer Ian Froman—for an altogether different soundscape, a tete-a-tete with the Three Rivers Jazz Orchestra. The inspired pairing, partly in tribute to late six-string great Emily Remler, juxtaposes the guitarist's warm, rich tones and inquisitive, darting lines against the bright swing and punch of the all-star Pittsburgh band. It's a fruitful two-fer approach, as Bailey gets to both solo with a small group—bassist Paul Thompson, drummer David Glover, and sometimes acoustic guitarist Marty Ashby (the CD's producer) and vibraphonist Hendrik Meurkens—and improvise atop hard-charging brass and reeds.

Bailey takes on three Remler tunes, all injected with bossa rhythms: "East To Wes," featuring a soli section with the guitarist, trombonist Jay Ashby and soprano saxophonist Mike Tomaro playing a line transcribed from Remler's solo on her original recording of the tune; "Mocha Spice"; and "Carenia," which has the leader letting loose on a solo that's a stunner of fluidity and intensity. The title track, written by Bailey in memory of Remler, is a somber ballad that opens with a back-and-forth between the guitarist and a brass choir, and moves forward with a pretty, poignant melody.

There are other gems here, too, including opener "Lament," an elegant J.J. Johnson waltz that showcases Tomaro; and Bailey's "Unified Field," a pensive ballad, with an unaccompanied guitar intro, that regularly swerves from brassy big-band drama to Bailey's soloing, with a small group augmented by vibraphonist Hendrik Meurkens. Another gorgeous guitar prelude sparks the tender-to-swaggering closer "You And The Night," one of several pieces confirming Bailey's status as one of the new greats of her chosen instrument.

—Philip Booth

A New Promise: Lament; East To Wes; Miekkanieri; A New Promise; Mocha Spice; Unified Field; Carenia; You And The Night. (45:13)
Personnel: Sheryl Bailey, guitar; Jay Ashby, trombone, percussion; Marty Ashby, acoustic guitar; Hendrik Meurkens, vibes; Three Rivers Jazz Orchestra: Mike Tomaro, soprano and alto saxophone; Jim Guerra, alto saxophone; Eric DeFate, Rick Matt, tenor saxophone; Jim Germann, baritone saxophone; Steve Hawk, Joe Herndon, Steve McKnight, James Moore, Ralph Guzzi, trumpet; Reggie Watkins, Clayton DeWalt, Ross Garin, trombone; Christopher Carson, bass trombone; Paul Thompson, bass; David Glover, drums.
Ordering info: mcgjazz.org

Peter Erskine Trio
The Interlochen Concert

FUZZY MUSIC 019

★★★★

The Trio
"Live" @ Charlie O's

FUZZY MUSIC 016

★★★★½



Here we have two trio recordings, both of them live and both of them featuring drummer Peter Erskine. It should also be noted that both releases come straight out of the jazz piano tradition, thus offering two good looks at Erskine with two sets of pianists and bassists.

On both *The Interlochen Concert* and *"Live" @ Charlie O's*, Erskine alternately plays someone approaching the mantle of the late Ed Thigpen ("Mr. Taste") on the more subdued, subtle tunes while the more outsized drummer used to larger ensembles and concepts (from Stan Kenton to Weather Report and then some) emerges when it's time to turn up the heat. Either way, these dates are audible proof of Erskine the consummate trio accompanist who somehow, tastefully manages to steal the show. One only has to listen to the opening number

Terry Trotter and bassist Chuck Berghofer.

The Charlie O set is all standards, apart from the medium-tempo swinger "Charlie's Blues," and a straight-down-the-middle musical experience. No surprises, just top-drawer execution all around, the songs a balance of ballads with a few more driving pieces. And while I like the spirited runs where Trotter trots out his stuff full of chords and forward motion and Berghofer stays right in the pocket, it's the softer touches that linger, as with their slow, delicate takes on "Ghost Of A Chance" and, especially, J.J. Johnson's "Lament" and Billy Strayhorn's "Blood Count," where we get to really hear how comfortable these three are as musical crawlers, their respective instruments heard as if right in your living room.

That delicate touch also pervades *The In-*

terlochen Concert, another well-recorded show. A 1971 graduate of the famed Michigan arts school, Erskine returned last year for this concert with his touring band of pianist Alan Pasqua (who performed with Erskine there in '71) and bassist Darek Oles. This one is a mix of covers and fetching originals by Erskine and Pasqua, featuring creative reinterpretations of Dizzy Gillespie's sweet "Con Alma," Jimmy Webb's heartfelt "Wichita Lineman" and an elegant, swinging take on Jaki Byard's blues "Chandra." Erskine's "Autumn Rose" is a quiet, meditative piece that hearkens back to his trio days at ECM in the '90s, when delicacy and controlled passion were the rule. As for the setting, this is a "concert," so the hall's acoustics lend a bit of reverb. That said, each player's presence remains close-in in yet another intimate trio recording, full of delightful Erskine solos, segues and straight-throughs (his track-long solo on Pasqua's township jive "Stickslap" is both lively and as playful as the song itself).

—John Ephland

The Interlochen Concert: Chandra; Autumn Rose; Con Alma; Stickslap; Wichita Lineman; The Music Of My People; Barcelona; Bulgaria; I Hear A Rhapsody, (73:12)

Personnel: Peter Erskine, drums; Alan Pasqua, piano; Darek Oles, bass.

Ordering info: fuzzymusic.com

"Live" @ Charlie O's: Put Your Little Foot Right Out; Afternoon In Paris; Ghost Of A Chance; How Deep Is The Ocean?; Blood Count; Charlie's Blues; Lament. (61:18)

Personnel: Chuck Berghofer, bass; Terry Trotter, piano; Peter Erskine, drums.

Ordering info: fuzzymusic.com

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Impressions of Ebullience

A quiet strength pervades *Marimba Madness* (Big Round Records 8906; 83:48 ★★★★★), a concert video that showcases veteran Japanese musician Mika Yoshida. Any band anchored by rhythm stalwarts Steve Gadd and Eddie Gomez is in good hands, and the pair keeps things at a low boil here without ever seeming to strain. The music—a mix of contemporary compositions and a pair of Duke Ellington standards—is arranged as a series of tightly interlocking parts, notably Mika's rippling countermelody on "Take The 'A' Train." Much of the video features a deep-focus two-shot of her and Gadd, and their flawless interplay is a treat for percussionists.

Ordering info: bigroundrecords.com

A documentary about underexposed pianist Jean-Michel Pilc, *A Portrait* (Living Jazz Archive; 60:39 ★★½) emphasizes impressionism over explication, providing a snapshot of a mature artist without any biographical context. Pilc is introduced as a philosophic elder—his beard gray and his tone professorial—as he lectures youthful brothers John and Joe Beaty about music and musers aloud about his art. The scenes skip between Pilc's rural home and various New York City clubs, as collaborators like drummer Ari Hoenig and percussionist Abdou M'Boup sing his praises. The lack of context—we can surmise Pilc is French from his accent, but what else do we know?—slowly becomes beside the point. His playing, particularly in a trio with Hoenig, is compelling enough that we want to know more.

Ordering info: livingjazzarchive.com

It's hard not to like pianist Hiromi Uehara as a performer. *Live In Concert* (Telarc 73698; 94:39 ★★), recorded in 2005, captures the intensity and sense of fun that makes her irresistible, but her gleeful mugging for the audience can't disguise the fact that her music is somewhat repetitive. Her compositions are highly cellular, relying on a series of dramatic movements—highlighted by her taut rhythm

section of eight-string bassist Tony Grey and drummer Martin Valihora—rather than melodic development. The camera work and editing play to Hiromi's strengths, capturing her ebullience, as well as her dazzling keyboard technique, so it's easy enough to overlook the limitations of her musical vision at this relatively early stage in her career.

Ordering info: telarc.com

Hiromi's love for Chick Corea's music made it a natural for her to start an electric band, and Hiromi's *Sonicbloom Live In Concert* (Telarc 73699; 105:57 ★★★★★) is a fine showcase for the quartet's power and precision. This 2007 performance is extremely well shot and directed, and the editing matches the music's extreme dynamics. As with any Hiromi performance, the high-wattage interaction with her bandmates and the audience is integral, and the camera catches every one of her gamine smiles and ecstatic facial expressions. Her constant emoting forms a strong contrast to the stoic guitarist David Fiuczynski, who just stands and burns, particularly during his slashing solo on "Deep Into The Night." Fuze fans won't be disappointed.

Ordering info: telarc.com

Shot in high definition in an Athens recording studio, *The Acoustic Sessions* (Self-released; 60:18 ★★) features five Greek musicians performing six mainstream standards and a drums-and-electronics improvisation. Drummer Panos Vassilopoulos plays with passion, but the interpretations are predictable and dry. Husky singer Alexandra Pashali adds some spark on a pair of songs, but producer Nick Papadopoulos' four-minute laptop feature seems to run at odds with the acoustic conceit of the project. Papadopoulos is also responsible for the dizzying array of editing and zoom techniques—the nadir of which is a spinning shot from directly above the piano keyboard. In HD, it's vertigo-inducing. **DB**

Ordering info: panosonline.com



Chris Greene Quartet *Merge*

SINGLE MALT RECORDINGS 004

★★½

The Chris Greene Quartet's third album, *Merge* delivers a mix of compelling originals and covers along with less-than-effective standards, but it's at its best on the tunes with a nasty backbeat. Drummer Tyrone Blair's pocket and Marc Piane's bass are beyond rock-solid, and Greene is a stupid-funky soprano and tenor player who kills when mining that musical vein.

Greene is highly adept at ratcheting up the tension, which he does by repeating and sequencing his phrases, using less and less space, and by playing faster and more complex rhythms. The rhythm section builds with him, adding to the excitement. It is as if the whole band slowly stretches a rubber band as far as possible and then eases the tension just before it snaps. For example, dig Greene's "Good Riddance!" and "You'll Thank Me Later," keyboardist Damian Espinosa's "In Confidence" and especially the Black Eyed Peas' "Let's Get It Started."

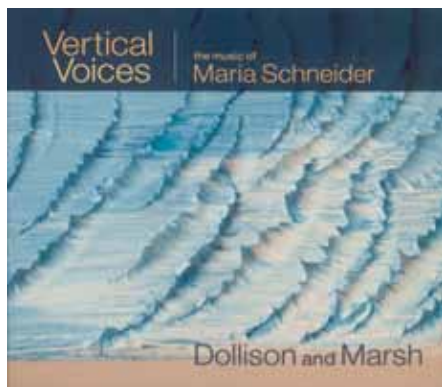
The quartet doesn't quite make it though on the straightahead numbers, such as on Greene's "M. Tati" and "Coffee 'N' Scotch," Johnny Green's "Out Of Nowhere" and Billy Strayhorn's "Lotus Blossom." The rhythm section feels stiff and doesn't quite swing with the elan and confidence they display when laying down the funk. The group doesn't sound comfortable enough to let the music flow unimpeded. And I never understand why a piano would be out of tune on a studio date, as it is here; some notes are even out of tune with themselves. As such, Espinosa's work on Fender Rhodes and synthesizer is more effective and pleasing. Almost 78 minutes long, *Merge* is too long and would have been better served by cutting a couple of the weaker tracks.

—Chris Robinson

Merge: Good Riddance!; You'll Thank Me Later; M. Tati; L.F.E.I. (Let's Get It Started); Coffee 'N' Scotch; Lotus Blossom; Out Of Nowhere; In Confidence; Borderline. (77:54)

Personnel: Chris Greene, saxophone; Damian Espinosa, piano, keyboards; Marc Piane, bass; Tyrone Blair, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: chrisgreenejazz.com



Julia Dollison/Kerry Marsh
Vertical Voices: The Music Of Maria Schneider

ARTISTSHARE 0103

★★★★

Sofia Rei Koutsovit
Sube Azul

WORLD VILLAGE/HARMONIA MUNDI 498035

★★★★½

Two new vocal releases share a connection with Maria Schneider, the New York big band leader/composer and perennial poll-topper.

Julia Dollison and Kerry Marsh sing, wordlessly, all of the brass and woodwind parts of five Schneider compositions on *Vertical Voices*. The married couple, who also improvise their own solos, do an amazing job of covering the full instrumental range of a big band, from the low-down bari sax and bass trombone parts all the way up to sizzling lead trumpet. Their multi-tracked voices blend in near-perfect transparency—thanks in part to careful manipulation of vowels and tonal colors (not to mention complete agreement on pitch)—illuminating the sweet dissonances and quartal zing of Schneider's chord voicings. Melodic lines seem to float on air, most noticeably on the soaring finale "Hang Gliding." Their secret weapon: Schneider's actual rhythm section, as well as complete access to her written charts.

Sofia Rei Koutsovit wrote and arranged most of the tunes on her sophomore CD, *Sube Azul*. This time out, the Argentinian singer assembled a multinational band with a strong Latin American contingent—one highly capable of integrating diverse influences, from ancient folkloric traditions to modern jazz. Koutsovit's all-Spanish vocals convey deep passion and a full spectrum of emotions.

—Ed Enright

Vertical Voices: The Music Of Maria Schneider: The "Pretty" Road; Journey Home; Dança Ilusória; Sky Blue; Hang Gliding. (52:28)

Personnel: Julia Dollison, Kerry Marsh, vocals; Ben Monder, guitar; Frank Kimbrough, piano; Jay Anderson, bass; Clarence Penn, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: juliadollison.artistshare.com

Sube Azul: Coplera; Sube Azul; Cardo O Ceniza; Instante De Vos; El Lío; Las Cáscaras; El Mayoral; Segundo Final; La Chongoyapana; Imaginaria; Jardines De Aalto; Entre Paredes. (55:07)

Personnel: Sofia Rei Koutsovit, vocals, caja vidalera; Anat Cohen, clarinet; Geoffrey Keezer, piano; Leo Genovese, piano, melodium; Jorge Roeder, bass; Dana Leong, cello, trombone; Eric Kurimski, acoustic guitar; Juancho Herrera, guitars, cuatro Venesolano; Yayo Serka, drums, cajón, udu, bombo; Celso Duarte, harp; Dan Blake, soprano saxophone; Diego Obregon, tres; Samuel Torres, Juan Medrano, Corito, Jorge Pérez, Abela, Morris Cariate, Ronald Polo, Nestor Gómez, percussion.

Ordering info: worldvillagemusic.com

ALP049CD

AXIS TRIO ANTHEM

"If the members of Radiohead ever laid down some jazz tracks, they might sound a lot like Axis Trio's upcoming album—a dramatic combination of *Kid A*-esque electronic blips and sighs, romantic piano, crashing percussion and funky hyper bass—a memorable and successful blend."

—Alana Harper of WNYC Radio

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Nord C2 Combo Organ *Worthy Upgrade*

When Nord released the C1 organ in 2007, it garnered a lot of attention as a lightweight, good-sounding alternative to breaking your back moving a B-3. Not only that, but Nord went head-to-head with the established leaders in this market

and came out smelling like a rose. The C1 instantly became a favorite of many live players, and with the C2, Nord is extending its appeal into the more traditional worship and classical markets—and the results are good.

The build quality of the C2 is solid. This model introduces a new stiffer action that does feel pretty close to my old Hammond A100—still a little lighter, but I think you would be hard-pressed to notice the difference without having them right next to each other to test. The C2 sports the traditional Nord styling, bright-red chassis with black and gray accents, and it definitely is eye-catching. The most amazing thing about it is its weight (or lack of it). At 34 pounds, it is almost startling the first time you pick it up—but definitely welcome when it's time to load in. Nord also offers a collapsible aluminum stand specifically designed for the C2, with room to accommodate a pedalboard.

The most controversial element of the Nord organ models is still here—the virtual drawbars. Rather than physical bars that you push and pull to set the levels of the different harmonics, you have two buttons for in and out, and LED lights that represent the stops. This system was on the C1 and is present on the Nord Stage pianos as well. Speaking as a traditional Hammond player, this takes a little getting used to, and there are some limitations for real drawbar players. The time to push and pull is slower, so it will take some adjustments to your style of changing tones in real time. I have heard varying reactions to this, but I found them pretty easy to settle into, and after a while, I hardly noticed them at all. Not the same, but completely useable. One distinct advantage introduced on the C2 is the ability to set your drawbars in preview mode without affecting the sound you're playing,

and then to switch instantly to the new settings—pretty cool.

The “classic tonewheel” (aka Hammond) sounds of the C2 are great. They have enough beef to feel like you're driving something mechanical, and enough variance to not sound digitally sterile. These are not samples—all of the sounds are modeled, and the result is a lot more faithful to the original than any sample library. I thought the overtones produced were pretty close to what I get from my Hammond, though not exactly. This is not a criticism—in fact, it felt more like the variations you might find between different individual B, C and A series organs than something synthetic.

Nord moved the percussion and vibrato controls (both of which sound fantastic) on the C2 to a position more closely mirroring the traditional placement on the Hammond—this seems like a small thing, but it will make a huge difference to a Hammond player. There are also pedal drawbars included, which can be used with the “Pedal Keys 27” accessory, or can be placed on a lower split of the lower manual—this is a really nice touch, and I found myself using it a lot. The playing experience was thoroughly enjoyable.

Nord also includes modeled reproductions of Vox and Farfisa compact organs. These were a ton of fun to play with, and sounded very good to my ear. The drawbar system and other controls get re-purposed to mimic the controls on each of these when you select these models. That can be a little disorienting at first because the controls do not map exactly, but once you understand it and use it for a while, it's easy enough. This really opens up a new sound palette for live playing that many players will find hard to resist.

The most notable and newest feature of the C2 is the inclusion of a baroque pipe organ.

This is a multisampled instrument, not a model, and it sounds amazing. There are 21 stops represented—nine Swell, nine Great and three Bass. There are also seven couplers, which allow for a very complete range of pipe organ tones. The sound ranges from delicate to thunderous, so much so that I had to dial back the volume a little to protect my speakers when I went to full-out on the bass stops. I thought it sounded authentic, and would be useable in any traditional pipe organ scenario. This feature will make the C2 extremely attractive to churches.

The other new feature on the C2 that caught my attention is the flexible output routing. Included on the back are traditional stereo outs, as well as a high output 1/4-inch jack and an 11-pin Leslie jack. All of the different organs can be routed to any of the outputs, either globally or per program—this means you can send your B-3 out to the Leslie, but when you switch to the Vox, it'll go to your Fender Twin (awesome!). If you're not carrying all that extra amplification, not to worry: The Leslie simulator sounds really good, and there is also an amp simulator on board. Nord also has included separate delay, EQ and reverb sections, so there is a lot of versatility available for sound sculpting here.

The Nord C2 is a worthy upgrade to the C1. It has retained all of its strengths, and added significant functionality, all at a very competitive price. This is not a budget piece of gear, but it is less expensive than any other double manual solution on the market. Nord has built its reputation on producing really good unique instruments, and the C2 fits into its philosophy nicely. If you are an organ player, the C2 deserves a good look—you may not look back.

—Chris Neville

Ordering info: americanmusicsounds.com



Thorell 'Sweet E' *Fine Archtop Design*

Luthier Ryan Thorell has come a long way since building his first guitar at age 14, and the "Sweet E" model is a testament to his mastery of the craft. This hand-carved instrument represents the finest in traditional archtop design along with some innovative advancements.

It's no surprise that Thorell understands the needs of the jazz guitarist, since he himself is an accomplished and award-winning player. Like many luthiers, he cut his teeth doing repair work and then moved on to eight years of apprenticeships. As Thorell's interest in jazz grew, he began to explore the world of archtop guitar-building. Gathering inspiration from some of the world's greatest masters (John D'Angelico, Jimmy D'Aquisto and the acoustic guru Lloyd Loar), Thorell produced his first archtop in 2000.

The "Sweet E" model is simply a world-class instrument, and each guitar is individually hand-crafted to the customer's specifications. Our review model had a 17-inch bout, but the guitar is also available in 15- to 18-inch body sizes. Standard body depth is 3.25 inches with a 22-fret neck and 25.4-inch scale length. Following in the tradition of the great archtops of the 1930s and '40s, the "Sweet E" is constructed from highly figured maple on the back, sides and neck with an aged spruce top. The body, neck and peg head are beautifully bound with multi-ply black-and-white binding, as are the custom-designed f-holes. The bridge, tailpiece and pick guard are all

hand-made from solid ebony. The "Sweet E" has an ebony fingerboard and custom-designed headstock and an ebony inlay pattern on the back. Tasteful gold hardware and a meticulously applied nitrocellulose finish complete the package.

Without a doubt, this guitar is a work of art, and holding it in your hands you can't help but feel the care and patience that went into its construction. Thorell describes his concept as "traditional design with art nouveau styling." Once you start to play this instrument, you quickly realize that Thorell has also paid very close attention to the tone and playability of his axes. The "Sweet E" feels great and sounds full and rich when played acoustically—the first true test of a great archtop.

For amplifying the guitar, Thorell uses a single floating humbucker, which is custom-wound by Pete Biltoft at Vintage Vibe Guitars. There is a standard volume knob mounted on the pick guard with a hidden "stealth" tone control placed underneath.

The tone is warm and thick, reminiscent of the classic full-bodied jazz boxes. "I have tremendous amount of respect for the tradition but am very interested in expanding the sonic possibilities," said Thorell, who hand-tunes each top with amplification in mind so the guitars are less prone to feedback when amplified but still retain good



acoustic qualities.

The "Sweet E" represents the best in fine craftsmanship, tradition and innovation. As Thorell says, "I am dedicated to connecting the musician to the guitar." I say, "Job well done."

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: thorellguitars.com

EA iAMP Doubler, Wizzy 12 M-Line *High-Fidelity Bass Rig*

Euphonic Audio has been making portable high-quality bass gear for a while now. I took two of their newer offerings for a spin, and for such a diminutive rig, there sure is a lot to talk about.

The iAMP Doubler is a solid state class D power amp that provides 550 watts into 4 ohms, 350 watts into 8 ohms. Oh, by the way, it weighs 2 lbs. 10 oz. and fits in the outside pocket of your gig bag! I have played through numerous Class D bass heads in the last few years, as they are becoming quite popular because of their high power-to-size ratio. Some of them even sounded pretty good, but I had yet to experience a "wow" moment with any of them. The second I powered this rig up I knew it was different. Running a P-Bass completely flat was a joy.

The iAMP Doubler, like its slightly smaller counterpart, the Micro, has two dedicated inputs, each with their own gain, low, mid and high controls. The player can use two different instruments, and easily switch (foot-switchable) back and forth and set the levels to match (take notice, electric/

upright doublers). Where the Doubler differs is in its dedicated microphone input with phantom power complete with notch filter (to help with feedback) and a phase control (to dial in the perfect tone when blending a pickup and a mic or two pickups). I tested a double bass with an AKG C 4000 B along with an Underwood pickup and was able to dial up an amazing tone at substantial volume.

The Wizzy 12 M-Line is a powerful cabinet despite its light weight (34 lbs.) and single 12-inch speaker. This is no ordinary 1x12 configuration. EA has put a "wizzy" high-frequency cone in the middle of its custom 12-inch Super Woofer. This gives the speaker fantastic clarity—you can really "hear" your fingers. The "M-Line" name comes from a side-ported M-shaped transmission line. This cabinet packs a lot of punch and exhibits some surprising lows.

From a Hungarian Double Bass, to a J-Bass



with roundwounds, to a P-Bass with flats, to a vintage Hofner, this small yet powerful rig captures the instrument's sound in pure form.

—Jon Paul

Ordering info: eaamps.com

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[1] SPEAKER POWER

Bridging the gap between fixed installations and portable applications are the new Auro D412 and D415 two-way active speaker systems from Samson. Both provide 400 watts of output power and house a 1.34-inch compression driver. The D412 employs a 12-inch extended low-frequency driver, while the D415 features a 15-inch woofer for extra bottom end.

More info: samsontech.com

[2] FUNKY SNARE

Gretsch and funk drummer Stanton Moore have collaborated to create a Stanton Moore signature series snare. The 4.5- by 14-inch single-ply, solid birdseye maple snare produces a range of clear tones with quick response. Other features include maple reinforcement hoops, a signature Moore badge and emblem, 30-degree bearing edges, die-cast hoops, a Dunnett throw-off, a Gretsch 5471 mini lug, 20-strand snare wire and natural gloss finish.

More info: gretschdrums.com

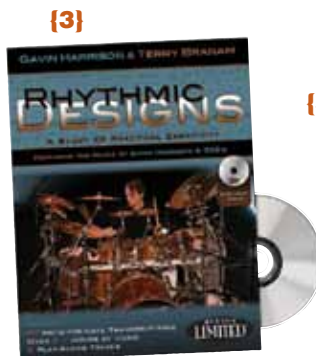
[3] CREATIVE RHYTHM

Hudson Limited has released *Rhythmic Designs: A Study Of Practical Creativity* by Gavin Harrison and Terry Branam, which expands on the polyrhythmic concepts covered in Harrison's previous *Rhythmic Illusions*, *Rhythmic Visions* and *Rhythmic Horizons* book/videos. The 204-page book offers note-for-note transcriptions and practice exercises, while the companion DVD features video containing descriptions and discussions of the drum parts, setups, tunings and recording process.

More info: hudsonmusic.com

[4] STRING MAINTENANCE

Planet Waves has added the Lubrikrit friction remover and Renew string cleaning system



[3]

[5]



[2]



[1]



to its line of guitar accessories. The Lubrikrit helps provide tuning stability, combats string breakage and prevents premature wear at the bridge and nut. The Renew system helps preserve tone and prolongs string life in general; it can also be used to stretch and seat new guitar strings, one or two at a time.

More info: planetwaves.com

[5] PITCH VERIFICATION

The new TU-3 chromatic stompbox tuner from Boss is an updated version of the pedalboard standard TU-2. It has a high-brightness meter mode to improve visibility under bright sunlight, as well as a newly designed 21-segment meter light. An Accu-Pitch function visually verifies



[6]

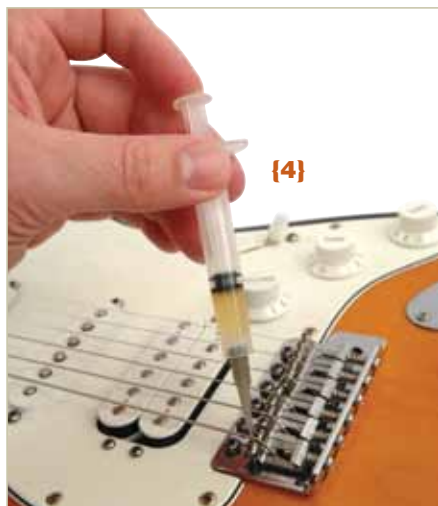
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[4]

when the target pitch is reached. The sound output is muted while the tuner is on, letting players tune silently onstage. Tuning modes include chromatic and guitar/bass, now with support for seven-string guitars and five-string basses. Flat tuning mode lets players calibrate the TU-3 for tunings up to six half-steps below standard pitch.

More info: bossus.com

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[6] TOP-TUNING CONGAS

LP has introduced a series of top-tuning congas, which can be tuned without having to turn, lift or remove the drum from its stand. The congas are fitted with modified Comfort Curve II steel rims that allow access to the top of each tuning bolt.

More info: lpmusic.com



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Methods For Fighting The Epidemic Of Tune Illiteracy {Part 2}

Perhaps the only thing worse than not knowing a tune when it's called on a gig or jam session is not knowing a tune you *used* to know. It's disheartening (and embarrassing) not to be able to play something you once could, simply for lack of review.



On the other hand, having every tune you've ever learned right under your fingertips, while you still continue to add to your repertoire, makes for a higher level of confidence that allows you the freedom to actually create jazz rather than worrying about what the next change is.

Following is a systematic method for learning new tunes and reviewing old ones. The three-component system is based on spending one hour per day divided into three 20-minute sessions: 1) Learning a New Tune, 2) New Tune Review and 3) Old Tune Review. Note that this method, based on the principles of short-term, medium-term and long-term memory, will only work if you do not skip days. Practicing seven days in a row over a period of time is key.

Long-term memory requires "rehearsal," that is, doing or thinking about something over and over. What makes one forget is twofold: lack of rehearsal and "interference," that is, thinking of things other than what you're trying to remember. The longer you go without reviewing, the more interference there is, hence, the sooner you forget.

Think of your memory as a large funnel: As you pour information into the wide end at the top, it slowly drips out the narrow end at the bottom. In order to keep the funnel full, you must continually replenish (review tunes). If you allow the funnel to empty, you have to start over, that is, *re-learn* the tunes (which takes a lot longer than simply reviewing them once they're memorized). It's not how *much* you practice that matters, it's how *often*. Indeed, practicing one hour per day/seven days a week is usually far more productive than practicing, say, 14 hours on the weekend only. Even though the latter adds up to twice as many hours at the end of the week, the funnel tends to empty during the five days off.

The good news is that the more you review, the less you'll have to. Eventually, the tunes will become part of your long-term memory, meaning they'll be with you forever (like becoming fluent in a language). The goal is to speak jazz as effortlessly as you speak English or whatever

your native language is. The following steps will help get you there:

- 1) **Learn New Tune (20 minutes)**—This could be the whole tune, just the changes, or even just the root movement. The point is to learn something new *daily*. (For a systematic method on learning new tunes, see Part 1 of this article in the May 2010 issue).
- 2) **New Tune Review (20 minutes)**—Once a tune is memorized, play two choruses (the changes as described in Part 1 of this article for the first chorus, then the head while thinking of the changes for the second) every day for seven days *in a row*. This helps put the tune in your long-term memory. Once you've played it by heart for seven consecutive days, list it in your "old tune review bin."
- 3) **Old Tune Review (20 minutes)**—Each day, review five tunes in your old tune review bin. This should take no longer than four minutes per tune (two minutes to review the form and changes, another couple to review the head). Circulate through the bin, always picking up where you left off. For example, if you know 50 tunes you would review tunes 1–5 on day one, tunes 6–10 on day two, 11–15 on day three and so on. By the time you finish practicing on day 10, you will have reviewed them all. And if you kept up with steps 1 and 2, you will have added a few more tunes to the bin during that time. Review those, then start with tunes 1–5 again, then 6–10, etc., and continue to circulate through your list. By the time you have 150 tunes in the bin, you'll be reviewing each of them once per month. When you have 300, they'll only get reviewed once per two months, but that will be enough provided you have followed the steps religiously.

Executing these three steps *daily* for a couple of years will put the tunes in your long-term memory; they'll become part of you. You will not only have significantly increased your repertoire, you will have gained the sense of confidence and freedom that only comes from truly *knowing* tunes.

A list of the must-know tunes along with their most common chord progressions can be found in the book *Pocket Changes* (available online through jazzbooks.com). Regarding the order in which to learn them, I suggest you make a tune checklist as in the following example:

- 1) Take inventory of the tunes you really *know* (K). "Really" knowing a tune means that you can write the chord changes down

quickly on a cocktail napkin, and if you're playing with someone you want to impress and the tune is called, you feel an overwhelming sense of relief! Check those tunes first and put them into your old tune review bin.

- 2) Next, check the tunes you "sort of know" (SK). This means you pretty much know them but they don't quite meet the criteria above.
- 3) Work on the "sort-of-know" tunes, getting them up to speed so they meet the "know" criteria; then move them into the "know" column. This should go relatively quickly.
- 4) Once you have all the "sort-of-know" tunes in the "know" column, work on the "don't know" (DK) tunes.
- 5) Before learning any tune, make sure you own the definitive recording. If you do, check the ODR (own definitive recording) box; if not, purchase or download the recording, listen to it *a lot*, then check it off in the ODR column.

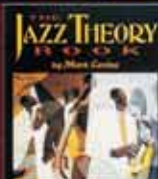
Tune	DK	SK	K	ODR
1 After You've Gone				
2 Afternoon In Paris				
3 Ain't Misbehavin'				
4 Ain't She Sweet				
5 Aileen				
6 Alice In Wonderland				
7 All Blues				
8 All My Tomorrows				
9 All Of Me				
10 All Of You				
11 All The Things You Are				
12 Almost Like Being In Love				
13 Alone Together				
14 Along Came Betty				
15 Am I Blue				
16 Angel Eyes				
17 Anniversary Song				
18 April In Paris				
19 Are You Real				
20 As Time Goes By				
21 Ask Me Now				
22 Autumn In New York				
23 Autumn Leaves				
24 Avalon				
25 Bauble, Bangle And Beads				
26 Beautiful Love				
27 Beyond The Blue Horizon				
28 Bill Bailey				
29 Birth Of The Blues				

And finally, don't forget to learn the lyrics. This will not only help inform your interpretation during performance, it will also provide you with additional mnemonics, giving you the ability to forever remember which heads go with which titles. **DB**

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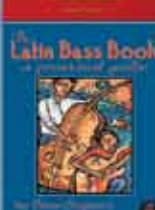
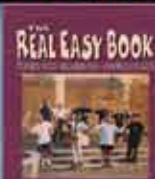
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Woodshed | BY MATT SHEVITZ

Kenny Wheeler's Flugelhorn Solo On 'Smatter'

Kenny Wheeler's sense of lyricism and harmony in his work as a sideman and a bandleader has been highly regarded for decades. In 1976, after playing with various groups on both sides of the Atlantic, he began to record his own albums for ECM. One of the first for Wheeler was *Gnu High*, featuring Wheeler on flugelhorn, Keith Jarrett on piano, Dave Holland on bass and Jack DeJohnette on drums. Wheeler's solo on "Smatter," the second track on the album, is a great example of how effective tonal color (particularly through the use of pentatonics) and rhythmic variety can be.

Tonal color refers to the sound a pitch has against its harmony. An easy way to hear this is to sit at the piano, pick a single note to play with your right hand, and play through various major triads with your left. While your right hand does not change, the note has a different quality to it because of the changing harmony underneath it. This phenomenon is widely used in classical music (particularly Impressionism) and jazz, and is evident in the beginning of almost every chorus of this solo.

For every chorus but the last, Wheeler plays with a motive that consists of the notes C and B \flat . Over the F \sharp Maj7(#11), these notes are the #11 and third (think enharmonically, B \flat is the same as A \sharp), while over the Fmin7 they are the fifth and fourth. Even though he is playing the same notes over each chord, the change in the harmony causes a change in their color.

In the third chorus, Wheeler extends the F minor sound over the C \sharp Maj7(#11), using notes from the F minor pentatonic scale, and then changes the idea to one that uses the C minor pentatonic scale. The latter idea, using a minor pentatonic scale built off of the seventh of a major chord (again, think enharmonically, C is the same as B \sharp), is extremely



Kenny Wheeler

effective. All of the notes in the C minor pentatonic scale can be found in the C \sharp Maj7(#11). Since it is based off of C, most people have a tendency to emphasize the G in the scale, as it is the fifth. In relation to the C \sharp Maj7(#11), though, it is the #11 and therefore brings out the alteration nicely.

Another component worthy of mentioning is Wheeler's rhythmic imagination. The variety of rhythms throughout the solo makes the melody feel fresh throughout. Check out the quarter-note triplets in the first and third choruses in particular.

Wheeler's soloing on this tune is a great example for musicians at any level. The use of tonal color and rhythm are valuable tools for an improviser. They can open up melodic possibilities that would not otherwise be apparent. **DB**

MATT SHEVITZ IS A SAXOPHONIST AND EDUCATOR BASED IN CHICAGO. HE TEACHES AT HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE, WHERE HE IS ALSO THE MUSIC PROGRAM COORDINATOR. SHEVITZ COMPLETED HIS DOCTORAL DEGREE IN MAY 2009 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SHEVITZ GO TO MATTSHEVITZ.COM.

CHORUS 1



Ellen Seeling (center) teaching Michelle Neu (left) and Angelique Hall

Girls' Jazz & Blues Camp Breaks Down Barriers, Opens Doors in Musical Education

When a big band is made up of only men, many audiences won't give a second thought to the gender gap on the bandstand. But when it's made up of all women, trumpeter Ellen Seeling, the director of the Montreal Women's Big Band, points out, "That's something they'll notice right away."

Despite all the progress women have made in breaking through glass ceilings in jazz, the fact remains that even the most prestigious female players encounter discrimination in the course of their careers. In Seeling's view, these experiences might be mitigated if some players were just exposed to a more female-oriented music education early on.

"I constantly hear comments like, 'I went to jazz camp and nobody paid any attention to me,'" said Seeling, who teaches at the Jazzschool for Music Study and Performance in Berkeley, Calif. "They'll say, 'The boys just wanted to play louder and faster, they're too competitive, they ignored me, there are no girls to hang out with and no women on the faculty.'"

So Seeling decided to apply her mission to some of these complaints and developed a plan with her partner, Jean Fineberg, to open a different kind of summer music camp.

Based out of the Jazzschool, the week-long Girls' Jazz & Blues Camp opened its doors last summer to 30 students. Seeling and Fineberg expect about 50 girls when camp kicks off Aug. 9 this year, and have started evaluating options to expand the program to two sessions next year in order to accommodate the growing interest.

"We have an all-women faculty," Seeling said. "It's designed so it's much more interactive."

Fineberg, who co-directs the camp and is an education specialist with a graduate degree in secondary education, elaborated, explaining various ways in which the program is fine-tuned to the learning needs of young women.

"Having an all-women's faculty is key because women do teach differently from men and girls learn differently from men than they do from women," Fineberg said. "Boys raise their hands more than girls, for example, and teachers tend to give their attention to the loudest, most present students, which are the boys."

A typical day at camp involves ensemble playing, classes in specific instruments as well as electives that range from songwriting to the history of the music and jam sessions.

When asked which female players the campers tend to cite as their idols, Fineberg was quick to explain that she almost never hears the names of female professionals uttered by her female students.

"They have not been exposed to any professional women players, so [this year's elective in jazz history] will involve a large component of women. It won't be all women, but it will be a different view of jazz history."

Seeling and Fineberg aren't alone in their view that providing young women with opportunities to study music in a single-gender setting is key to breaking down the barrier that remains for adults in a male-dominated profession. Child psychologist and Director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education Leonard Sax pointed out that boys can also benefit from studying music in an environment where gender stereotypes are less pronounced.

"We live in a sexist society which sends the message that jazz improvisation is something boys and men do; a society which says that flute and harp are for girls," Sax said. "The single-gender format can break down those stereotypes. I don't think it's coincidental that Jean-Pierre Rampal and James Galway, two of the great flautists of the 20th century, both attended all-boys schools."

—Jennifer Odell



Top Sax: Adam Larson won the saxophone category in Yamaha's Young Performing Artists Competition. This fall, Larson will be a junior at the Manhattan School of Music.

Details: yamaha.com/band

Drs. Coleman and Franklin: Ornette Coleman received an honorary doctorate of music from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and Aretha Franklin was awarded the same degree from Yale University.

Berklee Flights: Berklee College Of Music's student-run label, Jazz Revelation Records, has released *Birds Of A Feather*, its seventh compilation disc. The CD features compositions by 11 of the college's student bandleaders. Also, the school's Jazz Tellers ensemble performed in Hong Kong and mainland China in June. Details: berklee.edu

Monterey Stars: The Monterey Jazz Festival has announced the members of its 2010 Next Generation Jazz Orchestra. Twenty-one high school students from six states make up the ensemble, which will perform with Dianne Reeves at the festival on Sept. 9. Details: montereyjazzfestival.org

Online Funk: Bassist Bootsy Collins has started the Web-based Funk University. Students will receive his weekly lectures on music history, online discussions about rhythm, exercises and lessons from Collins and his staff and student playing reviews. The site also has an online student discussion forum. Details: thefunkuniversity.com

Songbook's Voices: Kutztown University Jazz Ensemble I in Pennsylvania has released *Come Rain Or Come Shine*, a disc of jazz standards. Kevin Kjos directs the ensemble, and vocalist Kristin Grassi appears on four tracks. Details: kutztown.edu



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Shemekia Copeland

Shemekia Copeland is widely recognized for her blues singing, but she confidently moves beyond the genre on *Never Going Back* (Telarc). This is her first Blindfold Test.

O. V. Wright

"A Nickel And A Nail" (from *A Nickel And A Nail And Ace Of Spades*, Back Beat, 1971) Wright, vocal; Willie Mitchell's rhythm section and horns.

That's "A Nickel And A Nail" by O. V. Wright. Music is healing for me so if I'm having a bad day, I pop in O. V. and all I have to do is listen to that voice and I'm good. Oh, the soulfulness and power. I always wanted to sing like a man when I was a girl, and it was great for me when I discovered Koko Taylor and Tina Turner because they had that rough *arrgh* sound. I love that, and I love that about the male voice. 5 stars.

Ruth Brown

"Stormy Weather" (from *The Songs Of My Life*, Fantasy, 1993) Brown, vocals; William Galison, harmonica; Rodney Jones, acoustic guitar; Mike Renzi, piano; Mark Sherman, vibes; Rufus Reid, acoustic bass; Akira Tana, drums.

"Stormy Weather." I've never heard this record, but I know the voice because Ruth Brown was a great friend of mine. When I first started singing and my father had died, I had no money, no anything, and she gave me two boxes filled with clothes—sequined vests, hats and stuff. Her phrasing makes me want to say she was sort of a rapper. I love the way the words just flow from her, and she has her own way of approaching a song. From the first note, I just knew it. She's fantastic. 5 stars.

Bessie Smith

"Down Hearted Blues" (from *The Complete Recordings*, Vol. 1., Columbia, 1991, rec. 1923) Smith, vocal; Clarence Williams, piano.

Bessie was fantastic. It reminds me about the fact that women created this genre, when you think of blues in the 1920s and '30s. It was all about the women singing until later on when guitar came into play. Then when they electrified the guitar, forget about it; the women almost got outcast from the music. You go to a festival and they have eight or nine acts, and they might have one singer on it and the rest are all screaming guitar players. The respect for the singers has gone completely out the window. 5 stars.

Mavis Staples

"Have A Little Faith" (from *Have A Little Faith*, Alligator, 2004) Staples, vocal; Larry Beers, drums; Erik Scott, bass; Jim Weider, electric guitar; Jim Tullio, acoustic guitar; Chris Cameron, keyboards.

I cannot believe that somebody can just moan and make you have goosebumps. It's ridiculous. All she has to do is go, "Ow! Ow!" and you're done! She's just ridiculous, crazy. I give it 25 stars. That's what it's all about, I think, when you're an artist: to move someone. And I've seen her just have everybody in tears all at once, even big grown-up men crying. She's exceptional. So I hate that about her. But I love her, she's a sweetie pie.

Johnny Copeland

"Everybody Wants A Piece Of Me" (from *Copeland Special*, Rounder, 1981) Copeland, guitar, vocal; Ken Vangel, piano; Don Whitcomb, bass; Mansfield Hitchman, drums; John Liebman, guitar; Arthur Blythe, alto saxophone; George Adams and Byard Lancaster, saxophones; Joe Rigby, baritone saxophone; John Pratt, Yusef Yancey, trumpets; Garrett List, Bill Ohashi, trombones; Brooklyn Slim, harmonica.

"Everybody Wants A Piece Of Me." I remember Dad playing it in the house when I was a little girl. He wrote most of his songs on a red Ovation guitar that I still have to this day. I remember him writing all those songs, then to have them come to life on the record was always fun for me. 5 stars.



JACK WITDOGAN/FREEMANPHOTOS

Otis Taylor

"Mama's Got A Friend" (from *Below The Fold*, Telarc, 2008) Taylor, vocal and guitar; Cassie Taylor, bass; Ben Sollee, cello; Ron Miles, trumpet; Rayna Gellert, fiddle; Brian Juan, organ; Greg Anton, drums.

I know this, Otis Taylor. Damn, I'm good. That almost stumped me. The only reason I know this is because I was recently in Europe at the same festival with him and his daughter Cassie, and he plays this trancey music. Anytime someone's doing something different, I'm into it. 4 stars.

Big Mama Thornton

"Sweet Little Angel" (from *Ball 'n' Chain*, Arhoolie, 1989; rec. 1965) Thornton, vocal; Buddy Guy, guitar; Fred Below, drums; Eddie Boyd, piano; Jimmy Lee Robinson, bass.

At the time, Big Mama was a mess. She was, oh my God, soulful. She influenced everybody, all of us who sing the blues, even more so than Bessie Smith, because Bessie was earlier. Big Mama came a little bit later, so she was a little closer to us. It was like, this woman can sing. I love that. And that's a young Buddy Guy on guitar. 5 stars.

Koko Taylor

"I Got What It Takes" (from *I Got What It Takes*, Alligator, 1975) Taylor, vocal; Mighty Joe Young and Sammy Lawhorn, guitars; Abb Locke, saxophone; Bill Heid, keyboards; Cornelius Boyson, bass; Vince Chappelle, drums.

I adored Koko. When she passed, it was rough for me. There was no one like her. She's another one who attacks the song differently from anybody else. I love the power in her voice. You don't find women singing that way. 5 stars.

Johnny Adams

"There Is Always One More Time" (from *The Real Me: Johnny Adams Sings Doc Pomus*, Rounder, 1991) Adams, vocal; Dr. John, piano, Hammond B-3; Duke Robillard, guitar; James Singleton, bass; Johnny Vidacovich, drums.

A friend of mine introduced me to Johnny. I did not know him until about six years ago. He can really sing. When I think of him, I think of Jackie Wilson, not because they sound alike or sing alike but because of the things they could do with their voice. It's almost like they were trained somehow. 4 stars.

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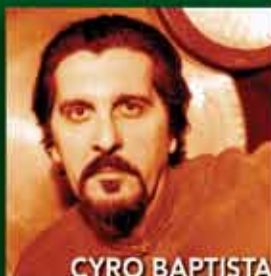
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